

# WHAT CAN A CORPSE DO?

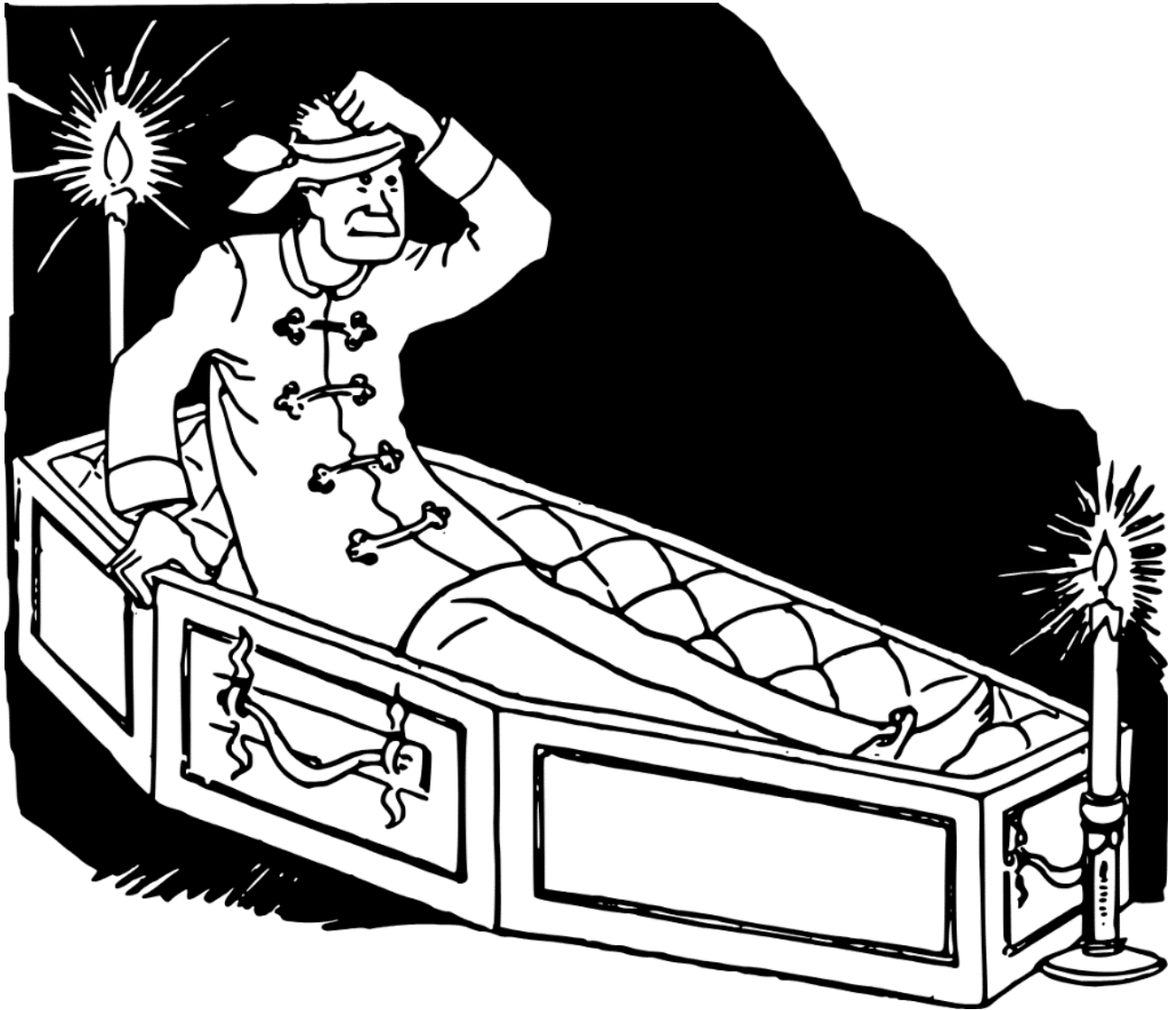
SOTERIOLOGY: THEOLOGY OR THEORY?  
AND THE ADVERSE EFFECTS ON THE GOSPEL OF GOD



# What Can A Corpse Do?

## Soteriology: Theology or Theory?

### And the adverse effects on the gospel of God



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## Introduction

This book is intended for discussion within the family of God. And as such we are reminded by the Lord to be loving and gracious to one another. Our love for the Lord and His glorious appearing, which includes a commitment to His mandate of the great commission should always be our unified motivation in our devotion to Him.

I am a layman with no formal bible education of any kind. I do not in any way pretend to have any authority or credentials, but rather personal spiritual convictions, which should not be considered authoritative. I just love the Lord and His word and, in this case, wanted to express my thoughts on this matter from the layman's perspective. I certainly realize the giants of Theology in recent decades that have become household names in many Christian circles. It is certainly the last thing I would want to do to dishonor any of the church fathers in any way and I truly understand the emphasis placed upon Church Tradition as it relates to many longstanding theological standings.

I have spoken to many brethren throughout my decades of being a Christian and I have seen a range of fervor with regard to this topic. Some appear to be completely indifferent while others are incapable of speaking without having a soteriological bent in their discussion.

I am not a deacon nor have I ever served on a church committee. I consider myself lucky to be able to be a door greeter. But may I request a favor of you? Could you please take off your soteriological glasses and be objective regarding what God's word says? I promise to make the effort to be respectful and follow sound hermeneutics to the best of my layman's ability. Can we agree to refrain from derogatory labels of each other in our hearts or minds toward one another?

See, I simply want to be more careful with my faith. I find what appear to me to be egregious errors on both sides. Therefore, I refuse to embrace either. Why do you? Or perhaps my spiritual discernment is sorely lacking. At the moment I prefer to be Asoteriological if that's even a word. I fail to see the benefit, and am surprised to see how prevalent it permeates into the family of God. To what end? Division within the body?

So, the Theology professor asks the class of students the question "What can a corpse do?" Which of course is meant to be rhetorical, to which a student in the back of the class responded "stink". And they all had a few laughs. Well, let's talk about that rather than just scoff, or be intimidated into believing something that may very well be inaccurate. It's your faith, and I think it is quite valuable, and I think God does too. You need to be 100% sure with your faith when you are forming an image of who God is in your heart and mind.

## The Lay of The Land

I have often said “God will save you regardless of your theology, simply receive the Lord Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, and enter into the kingdom of God. Then, God will spend the rest of your life straightening out your theology.”

Reformed theology, also referred to as systematic theology, covenant theology, or Calvinism traces its roots back to the reformation in the mid-15th century. Most of us have had at least some education on church history. We have all read or heard the stories of Luther, Calvin, and Augustine. I consider all of these men to be much bigger giants of faith than I will ever be. But does that mean I have to agree with them 100%? Do you? Let's talk about it with scripture, shall we?

Look, I understand the pressure to take a stand against traditional teachings. After all that is how the reformation began is it not? Well, consider this my 95 theses on the biblical repudiation of total depravity, which is the foundational cornerstone of the TULIP theory regarding soteriology.

I personally do not believe that soteriology is theology at all. Theology is the study of God, a person. Soteriology is the study of the process of salvation, and not a person. Yet you cannot present it without defining God.

I was raised by parents that were determined to keep me in church as a child and young adult. And I am eternally grateful. I went through a period however of not attending church as much after leaving home. Then I became a parent and realized I was an idiot.

But there were some teachings I learned growing up in church that did not sit well in my spirit. At that time being a young father, I read about this topic, and also read a book on Denominations so that I could match them up according to their respective soteriological leanings. Since then, the Lord has blessed me with opportunities to share the riches of His word without any soteriological slant at all. But it was a process.

I love the Lord immensely but I will stop short of saying with all my heart because I am not convinced any of us are really doing that. I do know this, the love I have for Him is more than for any other person! But I fail the Lord daily and that is just the truth. And I am quite disappointed in myself much of the time. I also love the body of Christ, and it is never my intent to publish or say anything that does not achieve edification within the body.

That being said, I have had conversations with many brethren over the decades on this topic, not because it was on my mind, but because it was on theirs. In fact, what I have seen is that some of the brethren can be quite enamored, and be very passionate because they feel that unless you believe the right way then, you are

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just a heretic! Listen if that person is you, maybe you should put this down now. I am going to make an argument against Total Depravity as defined by at least modern-day pastors and theologians. I think we can agree; without Total Depravity as defined; the rest of the flower just wilts away because at least the next 3 other pedals of this 5 (or 7) pedaled flower, all rest on this single tenet.

Total Depravity is defined as of the effective date of this writing:

Merriam Webster: a state of corruption due to original sin held in Calvinism to infect every part of man's nature and to make the natural man unable to know or obey God

Wikipedia: Total depravity (also called radical corruption or pervasive depravity) is a Protestant theological doctrine derived from the concept of original sin. It teaches that, as a consequence of man's fall, every person born into the world is enslaved to the service of sin as a result of their fallen nature and, apart from the efficacious (irresistible) or prevenient (enabling) grace of God, is completely unable to choose by themselves to follow God, refrain from evil, or accept the gift of salvation as it is offered.

There was a time when I simply accepted these just as they are written here, and still agree with most of it. I have no problem with the conclusions regarding the doctrine of original sin. I do believe that man's very DNA is corrupt with sin that appears to be irreversible based on my observations in this short life. I warn myself regularly not to try to make sense of what I see, because that is how you can be led astray from the truth. Stick to the truth of scripture, so let's dig in.

## Original Sin



When did Adam die?

Let's just start with original sin. When was the exact moment of Adam's fall? Well in my view if we listen to James, it was the moment it was conceived in his mind. Perhaps the very moment he gave consideration to Eve's invitation. Have you ever wondered what would have happened if Adam had resisted? But the fact is that Adam did sin, and when he sinned, he died instantly. And according to Romans 5, everyone born a descendant of Adam is born into death. Born into a depraved state. Born outside of a relationship with God, who is life. But definitely born with an eternal soul that is from God also. Born into an existence, but totally separated from God. After all God put Adam and Eve out of the garden, out of the place of fellowship with Holy God. Adam may have not died biologically that day, but he died spiritually that day, and ensured he would die biologically in the near future. I think until the fall, man's body did not age at all. But starting that day, the aches and pain of death entered his body, and corrupted him even into his very DNA.

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Did God predetermine that Adam would sin? Certainly not! You have a real theological problem if you say yes to that. We know very little about what happened in heaven prior to Satan being cast to the earth. We are told in scripture that he wanted to be God, and that was sin. We are not told much about the angelic realm. But we are taught in the word that it is Satan that tempted Eve, not God. God created Satan, but we know very little about that, only that Satan's fall took place after God created the earth, because God declared it very good when He completed it.

Remember that God is the creator of time, space and matter, and exists outside of it. God looks at time completely differently than we mere humans. Did God know Satan would sin? Don't know, and not entitled to know. You do not have to know either. Did God know that Adam would sin? Again, don't know, and don't need to know. We are not owed the answer to every question we can muster. God tells us what He wants to. Deal with it.

I have a General Contractors license currently in retired status. I am also a Certified General Appraiser. As a GC, you work with plans a lot in order to bid on contracts. As part of that process conversations with Architects and Engineers is common in order to fully understand the scope of work. Also, the GC is responsible for job safety. If the General Contractor foresees a health and safety risk his role is to mitigate or eliminate that risk if at all possible. If the job simply has too many health and safety risk factors, the General Contractor may decide not to take on the contract at all. Because the risk of someone's death is just too great a loss for him to bear.

Just for the sake of argument let's pretend that God knew in advance that Adam would sin, and the only remedy for that would be that Jesus would have to set aside His current glory and be born a mere human so He could die a humiliating death on the cross at the hands of wicked humans. Should He have moved forward with the project? Well He did! You see what happens when you start asking questions you have no business and likely not even the comprehensive skills to understand the answers to such questions? Is it also possible that God did not know what Adam would do, and wanted to see what Adam would do? Oh but that would mean that God would be taking a risk. Yes, He did. He did take a risk, and it cost Him dearly.

Here is the problem with thinking like that. God's word does not address some of these questions. Therefore, it is in my view incredibly dangerous to attempt to place yourself back there when time itself did not exist, let alone space and matter. Have you ever stopped to wonder just how puny the universe is compared to Almighty God? He may have created millions of other universes at the same time. We are just mere humans. Who are we? If you are reading this and you are a chosen teacher or preacher of God's word, may I encourage you? Just teach what God's word says using prayer, devotion, a humble walk before Him and sound

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hermeneutics. God will lead you to teach what He wants you to teach to the people He has given you to teach. That is God's sovereign will for your life! Just do that and trust the rest to Him.

So then what is death? What does it mean theologically? It means that you are separated from God who is life. God is the source of all life, especially spiritual life, and as a holy God the life He supplies is holy as He is holy. Death in this sense is a cessation, but not a cessation of the soul which is created by God in His image and is eternal.

Adam and Eve both walked out of the garden with eternal souls still living inside the tent of the human body. Death at its very core means separation. When we die biologically, our soul becomes separated from our physical bodies. The physical body may cease to be alive, but the soul lives on because it was given by God and is eternal. The question is, where does your soul go when your physical body dies? If your soul goes to be with the Lord, then it will be connected to the life source. If your soul is banished from the presence of the Lord, then you are eternally separated from Him who is life. He is not the essence of life, God is life. Remember that without God there would be no life of any kind whether physical, spiritual or otherwise.

What is life? That is a more complex question because God created it in layers if you please. There is the life of your soul, that is the eternal spirit God grants to every one conceived in the womb. It is that spirit that makes you original and unique. You may have a body double out there somewhere, but there is no spirit double of you my friend.

Then, there is the biological life God has graciously given to all who come out of the womb. This life as we know is very limited, and that is due to Adam's fall and our imputed depravity. God never intended for Adam to die physically, which is why he had access to the tree of life in the center of the garden. When Adam fell, he guaranteed the biological death of every soul thereafter, because God separated him from the tree of life.

The death rate is 100%, everything dies biologically. We in our biological lives literally live in a world that is surrounded by an endless circle of death. Every autumn, the leaves fall and in winter the trees are bare and the grass turns dormant. Every pet we have ever had, died or is going to die. Our loved ones die. This is the picture that God wants you not to escape from, but it is intended to humble you toward Christ.

Finally, there is spiritual life. Although you have an eternal soul that currently resides inside your biological body, that soul is also a sinner and is still born into spiritual death at biological birth. The spiritual life that God offers through Christ is a Holy Spirit that none of us are born with. Spiritual life is therefore only available by the grace of God, who gave His only Son to be your substitute. He died a death

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you and I deserved, to pay a debt you and I owed but could not pay. Since death is the wages for sin, Christ rose from the dead proving He alone is holy and righteous and that He is Life.

Now His righteousness of which the wages is life, can also be substituted in place of our sinful one, and you and I can now enter into a reconciled relationship with God by faith in Christ. The sovereign plan of God is to get this message called the gospel out to everyone so that anyone can receive the only life that really matters, spiritual life in Christ.

Since God is life, and the source thereof. And since God is the only person to ever exist that is holy in every respect. This Holy Spirit that man is born without, is that Holy Spirit which God places inside of every soul that receives the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. The Bible teaches us that every believer is baptized (dunked) by the Holy Spirit, and is sealed by the Holy Spirit until the day of Jesus Christ.

God places into the believer His very own Spirit which can never be separated from God. The Spirit of God enters the believer and brings life into the dead spirit man was born with, regenerating the believer so that all things are new. The mind and soul are changed by this event forever. The believer can be ensnared and entangled in sin still because this new life that God gives by the riches of His grace does not destroy or replace the dead spirit inside all of us. But rather we are given power over sin through God's Spirit that was placed in us when we believed. And we are now commanded to submit ourselves to the Spirit of righteousness, and not to sin in Romans 6 among other passages.

The Life therefore is a personal relationship with God in good standing. When His Spirit seals us in Christ, we are declared righteous with the very righteousness of Christ, even though we still sin. We walk and live by faith agreeing with God about our sin, battle against it, confess it, and grow our faith by spending time in His word and doing what it says to show that we trust Him.

However as of today, the gospel is available to all, since the Lord Himself commanded that believers work to spread the gospel to every nation. This is the mandate of God to humanity. The gospel. That's it. When you meet Jesus face to face, don't you think the first question is going to be something having to do with your stewardship of His gospel?

What a corpse can never do!

A corpse cannot bring life into itself! If Salvation is passing from death to life, then a corpse is simply unable to do that. No arguments here. A corpse is not born into a sinful world full of death seeking to know God of his own accord. No arguments on that either. The Christian confession is "I am a sinner before God

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worthy of the penalty of death, and I accept the death of Jesus in my place before God. I believe Jesus is God because He was sinless and was raised by God from the dead. And He lives today making intercession for me, because I am still a sinner that deserves to die for my sin, but my substitute lamb continues to cleanse my sin away before the Father." So you will get no argument from me that unless God moves, and unless God acts, and intervenes in the affairs of men, no one would be saved!

Later in the book I am going to elaborate on my 3 pillars of Theology. They are:

God is Love  
God is Life  
God is Spirit

In my view these are the primary attributes of God and I will unpack that in later chapters. If God is Life, then you cannot have life apart from Him granting it. He is the source of life and there is no other. If you are not in Christ, you are dead in your trespasses and sins and you cannot have life in you except it be granted to you by the Father. No arguments here. I have read and studied John 6, and will talk about it more later as well.

The bible also makes it very clear that without faith it is impossible to please God. Where does faith come from? Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. So, in that sense faith does come from God because God provides us an object for our faith, that is His Son who is the Word. The gift of Christ alone means that faith comes from God. You cannot have faith without an object of it. The question is, "Does God sovereignly choose by name those who will have saving faith leading to the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and those by name that will be denied that grant?" You cannot have 1 without the other and you know that. Now I have heard all the softening down of this. That unless God saved some none would be saved. There is no other way. He didn't even have to save them. You just need to trust God and stop questioning His sovereignty.

Oh ok, well let's talk a little more about it shall we? Because if that is true the bible should bear that out perfectly with 100% consistency. Let's see how God interacts with corpses in scripture. All scripture quoted in this book are from the New King James Version, copied and pasted from [studylight.org](http://studylight.org) with reference hyperlinks removed.

# Adam to Noah



## Adam and Eve

**So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.<sup>7</sup> Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings. <sup>8</sup> And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.**

**<sup>9</sup> Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, "Where are you?" <sup>10</sup> So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself."**

**<sup>11</sup> And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?" <sup>12</sup> Then the man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate." <sup>13</sup> And the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." (Genesis 3)**

Adam and Eve became corpses at the very least the moment that they ate. That was sin no doubt about that. But look, these 2 corpses can already hear God walking in the garden in the cool of the day. Furthermore, God only called to Adam once and Adam heard, and immediately replied to God. God conducts an interrogation, and Adam and Eve respond truthfully.

**So the LORD God said to the serpent: "Because you have done this, You are cursed more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you shall go, And you shall eat dust All the days of your life. <sup>15</sup> And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel."**

**<sup>16</sup> To the woman He said: "I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; In pain you shall bring forth children; Your desire shall be for your husband, And he shall rule over you."**

**<sup>17</sup> Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, "You shall not eat of it": "Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life. <sup>18</sup> Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, And you shall eat the herb of the field. <sup>19</sup> In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you are, And to dust you shall return." (Genesis 3)**

We are remaining focused on the interaction between God and fallen man. There does not seem to be any barrier preventing communication from God to them. They understand who it is that is speaking with them, and they accept the verdict and God's sovereignty to execute judgment.

**And Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.**

<sup>21</sup> **Also for Adam and his wife the LORD God made tunics of skin, and clothed them.**

<sup>22</sup> **Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever" --<sup>23</sup> therefore the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken.<sup>24</sup> So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life. (Genesis 3)**

God made clothes for these 2 corpses, and drove them out of the garden. God also placed a protection detail and a barrier barring Adam and Eve from access to the tree of life that was in the center of the garden. God is separating Adam and Eve from a place of relationship, peace with God, the blessing of God's presence, and the tree of life. They will certainly die biologically, now that they are separated from that tree. But the death referred to as the wages for sin is spiritual death, which is a banishment from God from the perspective of relationship. From this time on, God will interact with whomever He pleases but anything at all mankind gets from God is by His grace, and only His grace.

But as gracious as God was to Adam and Eve, that boundary and protection detail will remain until the great worldwide flood at which time, the garden is assumed now to be buried under earth or even sea. Mankind cannot get back to Eden, not physically and not spiritually unless God makes a way for him. We are told in Revelation regarding the new heaven and the new earth that is yet future:

**And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. <sup>2</sup> In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.<sup>3</sup> And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him.<sup>4</sup> They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads.<sup>5</sup> There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever. (Revelation 22)**

In the future when God has completely conquered and removed all sin from His presence, the people of God will once again have access to the tree of life again, and will live in the very light of God, free from the presence of sin before holy God. What a wonderful picture. But what can that picture tell you about God? By His sovereign will He will bring to pass that which He originally intended. That creation and relationship of which He said "behold it is very good" and declared the 7th day as holy for on that day He rested from His work? Well cheer up my friend, God will perform this! He is going to remove the sin, restore sinners to good standing, and we will eat from the tree of life, whose leaves alone bring healing to the nations. I have a very vivid view of God's sovereignty, and He has already shown us what He is doing, will do and accomplish.

Cain and Abel



**By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks.** (Genesis 4)

Adam and Eve were created innocent and fell into spiritual death. Able and Cain were both born corpses. They were both depraved at birth. Why were they bringing sacrifices at all? Most of us speculate that Adam and Eve taught their children about God, and explained why life was such a struggle since being banned from the garden of Eden. This teaching from their parents is their introduction to God which they would have never come to on their own.

Notice that "he being dead still speaks". People of faith do not die, not in the Old Testament, and not in the new. "Your brother's blood cries out to Me" God said. Abel's faith made him speak beyond death.

**And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD.<sup>4</sup> Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering,<sup>5</sup> but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.** (Genesis 4)

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Now, *both* of these corpses bring an offering to the Lord. But Abel's offering was an offering by faith. How? Abel simply said amen to God. Something like this "Yes God I am a sinner just like you say. And I deserve to die for my sin, just like you say. So, I brought this little lamb to die in my place."

I cannot find anywhere in this text where a certain measure of grace was granted to Abel, but not to Cain! They are both dead until faith is exercised and there is no indication God manipulated the results. Quite the contrary, let's just keep on reading here.

**So the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it." (Genesis 4)**

In case you missed it, God almighty just spoke directly to a corpse. But the corpse did not respond to God verbally at this time. Perhaps he couldn't hear God? If so, why did God bother to talk to Cain? Doesn't God know that Cain cannot hear? We read on.

**Now Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him. (Genesis 4)**

Cain did not respond to God verbally, but he sure spoke to Abel about it. Now I have a brother (now with Jesus), and also have 2 sons and I know that brothers will argue. It is part of our depravity after all. What did these 2 boys argue about? Well, I will tell you what I think and this is just me speculating. We know that satan tempted their mother in this way "Surely you will not die..." I think satan tempted Cain with "Surely, you do not *deserve* to die...". So, I think Cain attempted to make that argument to Abel, but Abel stood his ground and contended we are worthy of death for our sin. Cain probably said something like "Well if you believe that then fine!" and he killed his brother.

Now if you were not convinced of Cain's depravity before, he is a murderer now. So surely now he is completely unable to hear the voice of God or respond to it, right?

**Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" He said, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?" <sup>10</sup> And He said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground."<sup>11</sup> So now you are cursed from the earth, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand.<sup>12</sup> When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you. A fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth."**

<sup>13</sup> **And Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is greater than I can bear!"<sup>14</sup> Surely You have driven me out this day from the face of the ground; I shall be hidden from Your face; I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth, and it will happen that anyone who finds me will kill me."** <sup>15</sup> **And the**

**Lord said to him, "Therefore, whoever kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold." And the Lord set a mark on Cain, lest anyone finding him should kill him.**

**<sup>16</sup> Then Cain went out from the presence of the LORD and dwelt in the land of Nod on the east of Eden.** (Genesis 4)

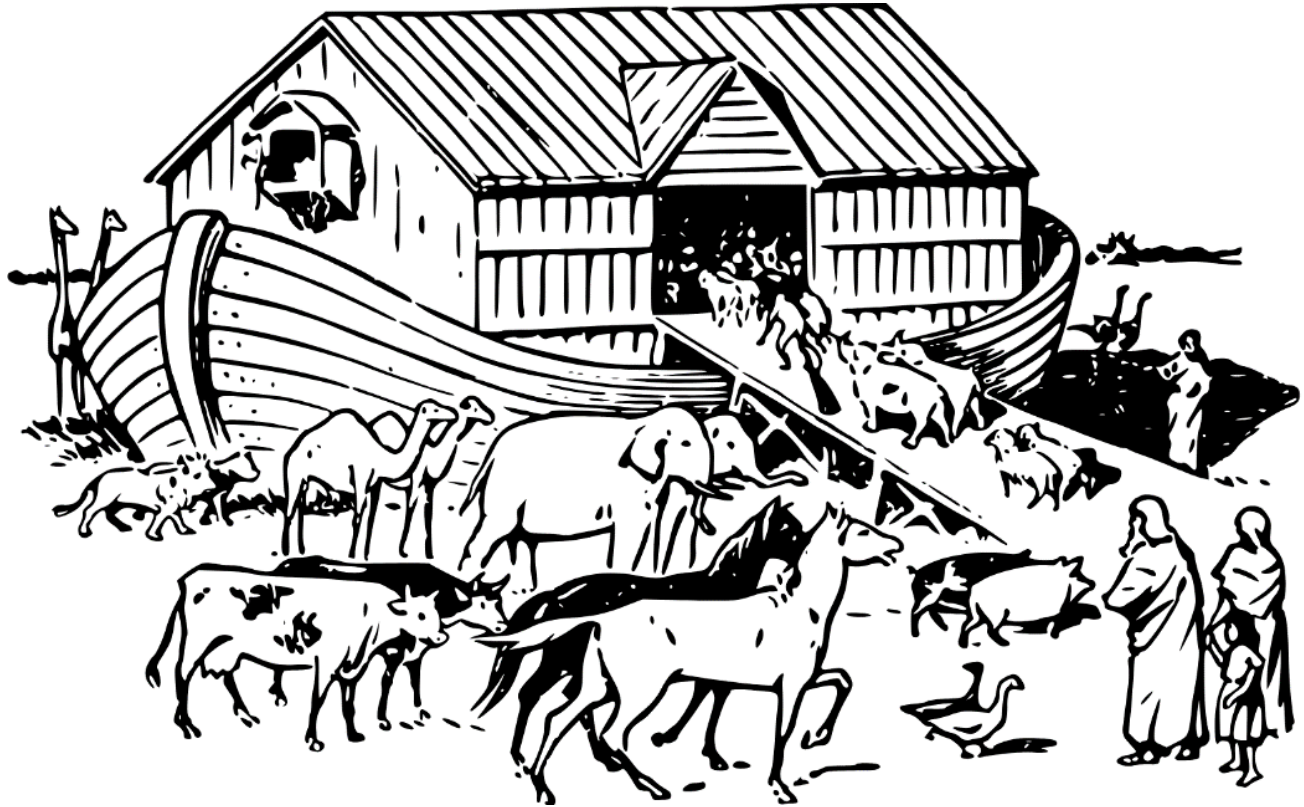
Now brethren this is what you call a conversation. God is having a conversation with a corpse. The corpse knows who is speaking to him, and the corpse even in the face of judgment asks for mercy, and the good Lord grants some to Him. Did you notice he said "my punishment is greater than I can bear"? I think Cain just did not believe *his* sin was all that bad, and being punished for it is unfair. He just did not believe God, that is all.

Then the corpse left the presence of the Lord. But apparently this corpse never really wanted a relationship with God on God's terms, but rather his own. Abel came to God with humble faith, simply taking God at His word. Abel did not perform a work of righteousness worthy of atonement. God's grace was offered to both of these corpses. Abel had faith as a little child, and Cain embraced skepticism. I do not see how you can view this any other way. God even pursued Cain in spite of his lack of trust. God did not cause Abel to have faith, nor deny grace to Cain. There is absolutely nothing in this text that would support that conclusion. For me, total depravity as described dies right here. It's already over. Death on arrival. But this is just the tip of the iceberg.

Question: Do you deserve to die for your sins? I mean the sins you have committed today, or perhaps the sins of omission today. Have you ever thanked God in your evening prayer for allowing you to live through the day? My Christian brothers and sisters, we would do well to remind ourselves daily that we are commanded to take up our cross and walk humbly before our God. That imagery of that command from the Lord Jesus is spiritual in nature, it is a spiritual cross He is asking you to take up daily. You cannot do that if you are not in the right mind set. You will do well to remember that you deserve death for every sin you commit or omit. Period. This is why Jesus tells us to get the log out of our own eye, and to judge not lest you be judged, for as you judge so you will be judged. That language has a lot more teeth in light of the understanding of what you and I deserve for our sins. None of us deserves another breath, hour, day, week, month or years. Grace is there for us daily from the Lord. But this is a big issue when sharing the gospel. Do we cover sin well enough when sharing, and are we taking ownership of it in our own lives?

Now we are going to cover people that are not mentioned in Hebrews 11, but I want to address some of them as they appear on the pages of scripture. I am skipping Enoch in Genesis 5, but remind you he was born a corpse as a descendant of Adam. Without faith it is impossible to please God. The word says Enoch had faith, not that the Lord gave Enoch faith other than simply revealing Himself to Enoch and developing the relationship. I'll just trust the Lord to speak to your heart about that.

Noah



**By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith. (Hebrews 11)**

**But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD. ◦ This is the genealogy of Noah. Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God.**

**And God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth." ◦ Make yourself an ark of gopherwood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and outside with pitch. (Genesis 6)**

Noah was born a corpse according to Romans 5. But the Bible first tells us before God even spoke to Noah that he was righteous, and blameless in his generation, and that he walked with God. He could not have done that without faith. And he could not have faith apart from at least being taught about God, or hearing from Him directly. The point is that the text does not indicate in any way that God caused Noah to hear and respond to His voice, while shutting out the rest of the world. God chose Noah no question about that. But Noah gets credit for his faith in Hebrews. Hebrews never says people of faith were caused to have faith. It appears that corpses can at least hear and comprehend God when He is revealed to them.

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Now it can be argued that God chooses to hide Himself from some. I will address that later in this book. The overwhelming and overriding theme of scripture is the pure revelation of God in Jesus. Jesus is the focus of scripture, because the fullness of the godhead dwells in Him bodily. He is now biological, spiritual, and absolutely pure, holy and undefiled. Jesus is the only person like that! There is no other! God's interaction with corpses throughout history has a purpose, to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ! Now that is going to happen! No person or thing will stop Him. He is coming and His winnowing fork is in His hand by the way.

Since we are speaking about the sovereignty of God allow me to remind you that God never reveals Himself by name as Sovereign God. I challenge you to point it out to me. We hear a lot of talk today about Sovereign God. Well God never called Himself that. Now we know He is sovereign. He is almighty God after all! Of course He is sovereign. After all, sovereign by definition means supreme authority. He is referred to as God Most High and God of Hosts which certainly speaks of His power, command and authority.

There is never a question of sovereignty, simply disagreement on how God *exercises* His supreme authority. I think over emphasizing something God has not is unwarranted. How does this over emphasis happen? Perhaps by putting on soteriological glasses before studying the word? Try setting those glasses down. Exegete the text using sound hermeneutical practices, credible study resources, and do the work yourself with prayer and meditation.

The only teacher we need is the Holy Spirit, who reveals the things of God to us. I am not saying some are set apart for teaching. I am saying every one needs to weight the spirits of those that are, and that includes me. We do not have to simply swallow the teachings of the church fathers. After all to their credit, they fought for their own personal convictions from their own study to challenge the traditional teachings of men. Our God is the God of the living, not the dead! *You* do the study, and walk humbly with Him and allow Him to be your teacher! It is very liberating! God never identifies Himself as " for I am the Lord *your* Sovereign". No, Check the I AM statements from God. When God calls Himself Lord of Hosts or God Most High it is typically in the context of building confidence in the hearer that God is capable of doing everything He says He will. When God says He will bring something to pass in the future, He will accentuate that statement with "says the Lord of Host" or "says God Most High".

But the scriptures emphasis on God's sovereignty is not given contextually with regard to passages that teach the doctrine of salvation, other than to inspire confidence that Jesus has the power to save to the uttermost those that put their trust in Him. Have you trusted Him? We are going to discuss John 6 later. But aside from a particular interpretation of that text I challenge you to read the verses of scripture regarding the doctrine of salvation and tell me if any of those are placing

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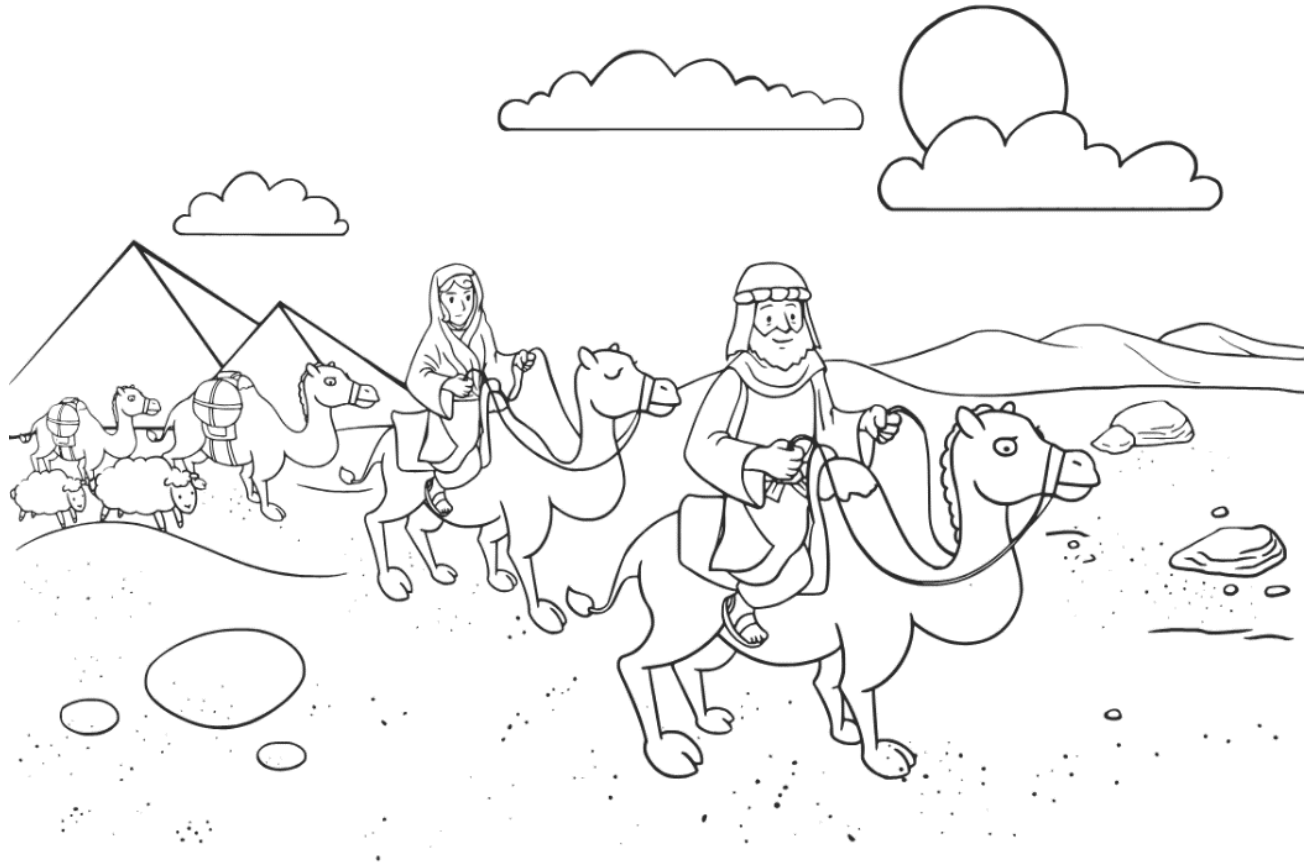
emphasis on the sovereignty of God, that the salvation of God is only given to those whom He pre-selected before ever even creating Adam.

What would be the point of starting the project and creating Adam in the first place? If the ultimate goal is to glorify God, how do you accomplish that? How is it that over and over again the scripture says "So that they may know that I AM the Lord"? So who may know? Apparently, no one. The reformers say that no one *can*.

Can you understand from a high-level view going back before Adam that the entire creation is basically futile and pointless in that case? Where is the glory if you are receiving worship from subjects that do not and cannot worship freely because they cannot even recognize the beauty and glory of God unless God enables them with His will not theirs?

But reformers would have you believe that God knew all this from the beginning and went ahead with the creation project knowing the cost to Himself, and knowing the only way to receive glory from those millions of worshipers is that you have to manipulate them into even recognizing you. It just appears to me to be futility if that is the case. Under this scenario it seems the reformers are portraying God as glorifying Himself, and worshiping Himself through others that He created knowing that they would be born dead, and He would have to enter them with His own Spirit so that He can receive honor and glory to Himself from Himself for Himself, at such a great cost. What is the point?

## Abraham to Joseph



Abram / Abraham

Certainly, we could exhaust ourselves with pages and pages regarding God's relationship with Abraham. We could talk about the covenant and the promises that God made and kept in spite of Abraham. Without question God chose Abram. If God doesn't speak to Abram, nothing happens. Is this Unconditional Election? Come on man! Let us be intellectually honest. Unconditional Election is a bit of a misleading term in and of itself that really means Sovereign Selection. Why was it named that way? Because the bible mentions the elect of God, and the election of grace. But does not really elaborate, except the elect become the elect through salvation.

God wanted to intervene in the affairs of men and reveal Himself openly to all. He chose Noah to begin that work, and now he is choosing Abram to continue it. He selected Abram there I said it! However, I think it is really dangerous to use that

to teach divine predeterminism down to the personal level of every soul relative to who is permitted to be saved and those who are denied that permit. That is a bridge too far. God chose Jacob to be the ancestor of the Lord. He had to choose 1 of them between Jacob and Esau. But that is not a license to teach divine predeterminism regarding every soul that has ever been born a corpse! We will talk more on that later as we talk about how God exercises His perfect love.

Selecting Abram for this purpose is a sovereign selection of God for a specific purpose. Many are called, but few are chosen. That passage is not intended to teach sovereign selection with regard to salvation. The chosen in my biblical view are chosen for ministry, (which every child of God is in a church organizational sense). God selected certain corpses to do a work for all of mankind to see, and to be able to see it so clearly you may just have to be stubborn not to accept the gift of Christ! God is in the revelation business!

I remind you that when Abram was born, Shem was still alive. Just as Cain and Abel were taught by their parents, I believe that the sons of Noah also taught their generations to fear God. And I think this is especially the case with the descendants of Shem. Therefore, there may have been many descendants of Shem that feared God. But Abram was chosen for this purpose. However, we should not assume that Abram was just totally oblivious regarding the knowledge of God prior to God speaking to him.

**By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.<sup>9</sup> By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise;<sup>10</sup> for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. (Hebrews 11)**

**Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. 2 I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."**

**4 So Abram departed as the LORD had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.<sup>5</sup> Then Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people whom they had acquired in Haran, and they departed to go to the land of Canaan. So they came to the land of Canaan. (Genesis 12)**

Can you imagine being Sarai? Abram comes home after being out in the field all day tending the flock probably alongside Lot. He comes in and says "Honey, God spoke to me today, and told me He was going to give me land, and make me a

father of nations! Now, we have got to pack up and leave for that land immediately!" You know that conversation happened. Abram just took God at His word. This is not a work of any kind. But it is rational thought leading to action based upon 1 person taking the other person at their word.

Abram knew who it was that was speaking to him, and believed enough to pack up and leave without any reservations. Paul addresses the root of faith in Romans 4, and James and Hebrews address the fruit of Abraham's faith. And God's work building Abraham's faith over time is nothing short of incredible! Without question God built Abraham's faith. Eventually Abraham came to the place where he could not do anything but trust God! It was God that did the work! Abram did nothing to warrant the favor of God. But you cannot deny that Abram was conscious enough to engage in the relationship. And you cannot provide anything from this text that indicates God spiritually manipulated Abram to obey His voice.

You can see the sovereignty of God at work all through this implementing His plan of self-revelation openly for all mankind to see. Abram is really blessed to be a corpse that was chosen for God to invest in him for the benefit of all mankind. And we can see in Genesis how faithful God was to Abraham, which is why by the end of his life he could trust God the way that he did. But this choosing of Abram was not to eternal salvation in my view. I think Abram was likely taught about God and had a healthy fear of Him before God ever spoke to him. He was not shocked that God spoke to him.

### Abimelech

**And Abraham journeyed from there to the South, and dwelt between Kadesh and Shur, and stayed in Gerar.2 Now Abraham said of Sarah his wife, "She is my sister." And Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah.**

**3 But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, "Indeed you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is a man's wife." 4 But Abimelech had not come near her; and he said, "Lord, will You slay a righteous nation also?5 Did he not say to me, "She is my sister'? And she, even she herself said, "He is my brother.' In the integrity of my heart and innocence of my hands I have done this." 6 And God said to him in a dream, "Yes, I know that you did this in the integrity of your heart. For I also withheld you from sinning against Me; therefore I did not let you touch her.7 Now therefore, restore the man's wife; for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you shall live. But if you do not restore her, know that you shall surely die, you and all who are yours."**

**8 So Abimelech rose early in the morning, called all his servants, and told all these things in their hearing; and the men were very much afraid.9 And Abimelech called Abraham and said to him, "What have you done to us? How have I offended you, that you have brought**

**on me and on my kingdom a great sin? You have done deeds to me that ought not to be done."** (Genesis 20)

Now Abraham is still struggling with sin here and it is out in the open. Regardless, God moves on Abraham's behalf despite how bad of an ambassador for God he appears to be here.

This corpse named Abimelech is having a back-and-forth exchange with almighty God! Did you notice that? Abimelech is not a person of the covenant at all. God actually commends him for his integrity, and is moving on behalf of Abimelech here. God could have just judged Abimelech. Why would God choose to speak to him? He is just a corpse! Doesn't God know what the reformers do, that corpses cannot comprehend, hear, or obey His voice? This corpse got up the next morning and told his entire staff to stand at attention, and told them what God said! And all those corpses were afraid! That is a pretty active corpse my friend!

### Rebekah

**Now Isaac pleaded with the LORD for his wife, because she was barren; and the LORD granted his plea, and Rebekah his wife conceived.<sup>22</sup> But the children struggled together within her; and she said, "If all is well, why am I like this?" So she went to inquire of the LORD. <sup>23</sup> And the LORD said to her: "Two nations are in your womb, Two peoples shall be separated from your body; One people shall be stronger than the other, And the older shall serve the younger."** (Genesis 25)

Did this corpse go to inquire of the Lord? Okay, let's assume that in the OT a person is declared righteous by faith just as we are in the NT. In this case, Rebekah at some point already exercised faith, and now she is no longer considered a corpse. Her inquiry likely took place at an altar where a blood sacrifice was offered, as was the example of Abraham, as was the example of Abel. However, you have to acknowledge she was born a corpse, and now she is inquiring of the Lord. I challenge you to show in the scripture where God enabled her to have faith other than simple revelation.

### Laban

I know that God also spoke to the born corpses Issac and Jacob, and we will touch on Jacob in a moment but there are too many to cover everyone. Feel free to read the entire bible and you cannot escape the *interaction* between God and those who were born corpses. But if Rebekah could inquire of the Lord by faith, what do you make of uncle Laban?

**And Laban was told on the third day that Jacob had fled.<sup>23</sup> Then he took his brethren with him and pursued him for seven days' journey, and he overtook him in the mountains of Gilead.<sup>24</sup> But God had come to Laban the Syrian in a dream by night, and said to him, "Be careful that you speak to Jacob neither good nor bad."**

## *What Can A Corpse Do*

**25 So Laban overtook Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the mountains, and Laban with his brethren pitched in the mountains of Gilead. 26 And Laban said to Jacob: "What have you done, that you have stolen away unknown to me, and carried away my daughters like captives taken with the sword? 27 Why did you flee away secretly, and steal away from me, and not tell me; for I might have sent you away with joy and songs, with timbrel and harp? 28 And you did not allow me to kiss my sons and my daughters. Now you have done foolishly in so doing. 29 It is in my power to do you harm, but the God of your father spoke to me last night, saying, "Be careful that you speak to Jacob neither good nor bad." (Genesis 32)**

Pretty hard to make the case that Laban could hear and respond to God because at some point in his life he exercised faith and trust in Him. There does appear to be an acknowledgement and healthy fear of Him. However, this corpse is asking Jacob "why have you stolen away?" We find out in this passage he conducts a search of the camp for his idols! Without question Laban is a stone-cold dead corpse spiritually. But he knew exactly who it was that spoke to him in his dream, because he told Jacob exactly what God said. He heard the voice of God, and responded to it. And he did not respond in what we would consider to be saving faith. He is searching for his idols!

God however is exercising his sovereignty and moving on behalf of Jacob to protect him by grace in order to implement His plan even through the life of depraved Jacob. And the work that God did in Jacob's life to build his faith over time in spite of his depravity is absolutely supernatural. To God be the glory! Make no mistake about it. I am not disillusioned regarding man's depravity. God Himself had to roll up His sleeve to deal with it! It is bad. My depravity is still bad! There is a reason we are commanded to take up our cross daily. Our calling is to commit ourselves to killing our own corpse that we lug around with us - every day! How are you coming with that? Keep up the fight! I am rather disappointed with myself if I am being honest.

Jacob Is Named Israel



**Then God appeared to Jacob again, when he came from Padan Aram, and blessed him.<sup>10</sup> And God said to him, "Your name is Jacob; your name shall not be called Jacob anymore, but Israel shall be your name." So He called his name Israel.<sup>11</sup> Also God said to him: "I am God Almighty. Be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall proceed from you, and kings shall come from your body.<sup>12</sup> The land which I gave Abraham and Isaac I give to you; and to your descendants after you I give this land."<sup>13</sup> Then God went up from him in the place where He talked with him. (Genesis 35)**

**"By faith Jacob, as he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff." (Hebrews 11)**

You just cannot study the life of Jacob without having a pretty clear view of what it means to be stiff necked. I mean when you look at this passage in Genesis 35, and compare that to Hebrews 11, you just come away with Jacob getting credit for what he said on his death bed, and that is about it. I mean look at how matter of fact God is when He appears to Jacob in Genesis 35. And then as if not to even give Jacob a chance to say a single word, God went up from him at that place.

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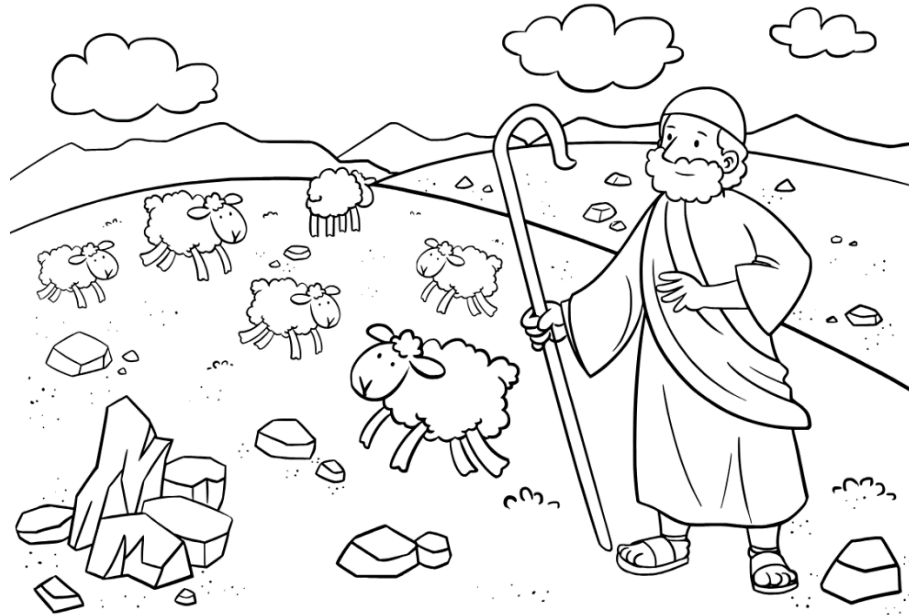
What does "Israel" mean? "Struggles With God"! That is what Jacob's life was. He just had a bent toward trusting his own cunning and cleverness rather than trusting the Lord. But God chose Jacob, and regardless of Jacob's failures God managed to do what He intended through Jacob's life in spite of Jacob. Honestly, sometimes I wonder if I am no better than old Jacob. I can say with the psalmist "my sin is always before me". But praise God He did not give up on Jacob, He just renamed him Israel. Do you struggle with God? I know I still do sometimes. Just terrible. Thank God we have a Savior!

### Joseph

I would write an entire book on Joseph, but I am sure there are good ones already out there. There are so many parallels to the life of Joseph and the Lord Jesus. God never spoke directly to Joseph in a relational way as we have seen in Genesis to this point. God rather chose to speak through Joseph by empowering him with the gift of interpreting dreams. Yet Joseph's trust in God was evident throughout his life. Although his father was incredibly stiff necked you might say, Joseph by contrast was fairly compliant. However, Joseph is not Jesus, and he was born a corpse. He did exercise faith but there is no scriptural evidence that he was spiritually manipulated by God to do so. It is also inescapable to see that God selected Joseph and used him for His divine purposes. I see here the coexistence of the sovereignty of God as well as the rational ability of the corpse to respond to the revelation of God no matter how the revelation was administered.

You can also see through the rest of Genesis the providential movement of God that worked in the hearts of Joseph's brothers also. God worked in their lives to build up their faith and bring them to repentance. You clearly see God moving within their circumstances to influence them toward Himself, but you cannot argue spiritual manipulation of individuals according to divine predeterminism. Again, that is simply a bridge too far, and we are not commanded in scripture to believe such things. What is a relationship? Doesn't there need to be mutual consent in any functional relationship?

## Exodus



Moses

Until now I've been emphasizing no manipulation. However, I may have to backpedal on that position just a little bit as we look at this exchange at the burning bush.

**Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the back of the desert, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.<sup>2</sup> And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed.<sup>3</sup> Then Moses said, "I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn." <sup>4</sup> So when the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." <sup>5</sup> Then He said, "Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground."<sup>6</sup> Moreover He said, "I am the God of your father--the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God. (Exodus 3)**

Verse 4 in this passage is a standout to me. Why did the Lord wait to see whether or not Moses would notice the burning bush? Also note here that God has to identify Himself to Moses as opposed to say uncle Laban who knew exactly who it was who spoke to him in his dream. Moses here appears to need to be told who's speaking

to him, and needs instruction regarding the gravity of having a meeting with the Almighty. Hundreds of years have passed since Genesis. Is it possible in this culture and time period to be very uncommon for people to receive communication from God? Or maybe it was just this bizarre burning bush. Nevertheless, God wants to do a work, and has selected Moses to be the instrument for the task. How does Moses handle the news?

**And the LORD said: "I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows.<sup>8</sup> So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites.<sup>9</sup> Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel has come to Me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them.<sup>10</sup> Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt."**

**11 But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?" 12 So He said, "I will certainly be with you. And this shall be a sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain." (Exodus 3)**

I think it is absolutely wonderful of God to be so elaborate here and give Moses the big picture of what God is planning to do. But in spite of that Moses offers his first objection for taking the job. God recognizes his insecurity and offers him reassurances.

**Then Moses said to God, "Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What is His name?' what shall I say to them?" 14 And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, "I AM has sent me to you."<sup>15</sup> Moreover God said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: "The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is My name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations.'**

**16 Go and gather the elders of Israel together, and say to them, "The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared to me, saying, "I have surely visited you and seen what is done to you in Egypt;<sup>17</sup> and I have said I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, to a land flowing with milk and honey."<sup>18</sup> Then they will heed your voice; and you shall come, you and the elders of Israel, to the king of Egypt; and you shall say to him, "The LORD God of the Hebrews has met with us; and now, please, let us go three days' journey into the wilderness, that we**

may sacrifice to the LORD our God.'<sup>19</sup> But I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not even by a mighty hand.<sup>20</sup> So I will stretch out My hand and strike Egypt with all My wonders which I will do in its midst; and after that he will let you go.<sup>21</sup> And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and it shall be, when you go, that you shall not go empty-handed.<sup>22</sup> But every woman shall ask of her neighbor, namely, of her who dwells near her house, articles of silver, articles of gold, and clothing; and you shall put them on your sons and on your daughters. So you shall plunder the Egyptians." (Exodus 3)

Again, I think God is being extraordinarily patient with Moses and being completely transparent with him on a grand scale. I'm not sure if this was overwhelming for Moses but you can still sense his reluctance through this passage and his insecurity regarding this assignment.

Then Moses answered and said, "But suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice; suppose they say, "The LORD has not appeared to you." <sup>2</sup> So the LORD said to him, "What is that in your hand?" He said, "A rod." <sup>3</sup> And He said, "Cast it on the ground." So he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from it.<sup>4</sup> Then the LORD said to Moses, "Reach out your hand and take it by the tail" (and he reached out his hand and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand),<sup>5</sup> "that they may believe that the LORD God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you." <sup>6</sup> Furthermore the LORD said to him, "Now put your hand in your bosom." And he put his hand in his bosom, and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous, like snow.<sup>7</sup> And He said, "Put your hand in your bosom again." So he put his hand in his bosom again, and drew it out of his bosom, and behold, it was restored like his other flesh.<sup>8</sup> "Then it will be, if they do not believe you, nor heed the message of the first sign, that they may believe the message of the latter sign.<sup>9</sup> And it shall be, if they do not believe even these two signs, or listen to your voice, that you shall take water from the river and pour it on the dry land. And the water which you take from the river will become blood on the dry land." (Exodus 4)

Forgive me if I'm missing something here but have you noticed that Moses has still not put his yes on the table? We talk a lot in church circles about putting our yes on the table for Jesus. Moses hasn't put his yes on the table yet and it would seem that he's offering some more objections based on his lack of comfort with this endeavor. But I am not feeling the trust of Moses toward God. The Lord God just told him they *would* listen to what he said. But Moses has a "what if" question for God.

Then Moses said to the LORD, "O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither before nor since You have spoken to Your servant; but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue." <sup>11</sup> So the LORD said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the LORD?<sup>12</sup> Now therefore, go, and I will be with your

**mouth and teach you what you shall say." 13 But he said, "O my Lord, please send by the hand of whomever else You may send." (Exodus 4)**

Without a doubt Moses is just respectfully resisting the Lord. The Lord gave an imperative command. "Now then go," to which Moses replies "could you just pick someone else for this please?"

We know Moses was taught about God and the covenant for 2 reasons. He murdered over it. And the Lord identified Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to Moses in this conversation with this corpse named Moses. We know ignorance is not Moses' problem. It seems Moses thinks God got some resumes mixed up. Moses has no confidence in his skill set, and appears to be more apprehensive about moving forward with God than staying right where he is without Him. He is reverent, but just doesn't "buy in" which is a lack of trust on his part. God rebukes him for it, reminding him who it was that created man's mouth.

But did Moses always feel so inadequate? Here is what the martyr Stephen from the book of Acts testified.

**And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds. 23 "Now when he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel.24 And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended and avenged him who was oppressed, and struck down the Egyptian.25 For he supposed that his brethren would have understood that God would deliver them by his hand, but they did not understand.26 And the next day he appeared to two of them as they were fighting, and tried to reconcile them, saying, "Men, you are brethren; why do you wrong one another?'27 But he who did his neighbor wrong pushed him away, saying, "Who made you a ruler and a judge over us?28 Do you want to kill me as you did the Egyptian yesterday?' 29 Then, at this saying, Moses fled and became a dweller in the land of Midian, where he had two sons.**

**30 And when forty years had passed, an Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire in a bush, in the wilderness of Mount Sinai. (Acts 7:22-30)**

**This Moses whom they rejected, saying, 'Who made you a ruler and a judge?' is the one God sent to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the Angel who appeared to him in the bush. (Acts 7:35)**



Oh okay, it seems there was a time in Moses' life that he thought he could be their deliverer. Perhaps when you have this great education you know, and this prestige and influence in the political administration. Moses had those aspirations when he was nearly 40, but now he is nearly 80 and no longer has confidence in his ability from this weak position. "Why should anyone listen to me? I am just a goat herder now." But I mean how does a corpse do that? God never spoke to Moses before. His knowledge must have come from his biological birth family. He obviously knew about the God of his fathers and the promises. But why would he aspire to be a deliverer of God's covenant people just as he is committing murder? He is just a corpse; how can he even consider or desire being a part of God's plan? But that was then, this is now and the first conversation with God is not going very well for either party it seems.

**So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses, and He said: "Is not Aaron the Levite your brother? I know that he can speak well. And look, he is also coming out to meet you. When he sees you, he will be glad in his heart.15 Now you shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth. And I will be with your mouth and with his mouth, and I will teach you what you shall do.16 So he shall be your spokesman to the people. And he himself shall be as a mouth for you, and you shall be to him as God.17 And you shall take this rod in your hand, with which you shall do the signs." (Exodus 4)**

Is it me? I am just not seeing this as a warm and fuzzy conversion story. Moses is 80, and tending flocks in the mountains, after becoming a refugee for murder. He is resigned to finishing his life out just as he has the past 40 years. Then out of nowhere God shows up and calls Moses by name. Moses responds to God, but is apprehensive about committing to God's clear plan. In the end God overruled

Moses' objections, getting angry in the process. This is not a great start to the relationship. And it leaves you with questions. Moses said no. God would not take no for an answer.

The sovereignty of God is clearly seen here quite vividly. He chose Moses before he was born, otherwise He wouldn't have bothered telling us the story of his birth or the details of his life. It is amazing to see Moses' faith grow over time. How? By hearing the word of God of course! The Bible is clear that faith comes by hearing the word of God. Moses ends up hearing and preaching quite a bit of that. He is an absolute giant of faith by the end of his life.

As you continue on in the book of Exodus, Numbers, Leviticus and Deuteronomy you see that God is executing a sovereign plan. But you also see God choosing certain people for shall I say elevated tasks. God separated the Levites for the service of the Tabernacle and he organized the tribes to camp around the Tabernacle and all the processes therein. There were scores of individuals that were in that nation Israel and we saw God lead all of them and we also saw that some had faith and others failed. But God only communicated with Moses as it were, face to face. By God's sovereignty he chose Moses for a very special purpose which included a very special relationship.

Furthermore, I still contend that there is no spiritual manipulation of Moses of any kind. There is clear dialogue and even respect between both parties in the conversation. God is certainly reasoning with Moses and he is certainly imperative with Moses but I do not think He is manipulating Moses from the inside of his soul. At least not in the way reformers seem to describe it. God is simply remaining faithful to His purposes and also to Moses. As Moses gets more exposure to God, his faith is an inevitable result. God's patience, long suffering and faithfulness leads a corpse to find Him trustworthy. Faith is born out of that, not undue influence. And let's face it friends, Irresistible Grace is just another sort of misleading term that really means Imputation of Grace, or the Imputation of Righteousness. I do not objectively see that here in this text or any other in scripture. I didn't see much of a yes from Moses either. But I do see some reluctant compliance, humility and healthy fear. Let's continue reading here.

**So Moses went and returned to Jethro his father-in-law, and said to him, "Please let me go and return to my brethren who are in Egypt, and see whether they are still alive." And Jethro said to Moses, "Go in peace." 19 Now the LORD said to Moses in Midian, "Go, return to Egypt; for all the men who sought your life are dead." 20 Then Moses took his wife and his sons and set them on a donkey, and he returned to the land of Egypt. And Moses took the rod of God in his hand. (Exodus 4)**

How much time has passed between verses 17 and 18? How long did Moses wait to even talk to his father-in-law about it? And then he does not tell his father-in-

law what his real reason for leaving is. He is a little disingenuous here with Jethro. But wait, what does God say to Moses? "You can go back to Egypt now, the people seeking your life are dead." Alas, do we now know the real reason Moses was so reluctant at the burning bush? Did he forget to tell God that he is a wanted man in Egypt, and he just cannot go strolling into Pharaoh's presence because he would be executed? God is now letting Moses know that He knows all about Moses, and that nothing is hidden from Him. After Moses hears the Lord tell him the coast is clear, then he loads up the donkey to make the trip.

**And it came to pass on the way, at the encampment, that the LORD met him and sought to kill him.<sup>25</sup> Then Zipporah took a sharp stone and cut off the foreskin of her son and cast it at Moses' feet, and said, "Surely you are a husband of blood to me!" <sup>26</sup> So He let him go. Then she said, "You are a husband of blood!"--because of the circumcision. <sup>27</sup> And the LORD said to Aaron, "Go into the wilderness to meet Moses." So he went and met him on the mountain of God, and kissed him.<sup>28</sup> So Moses told Aaron all the words of the LORD who had sent him, and all the signs which He had commanded him.<sup>29</sup> Then Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel.<sup>30</sup> And Aaron spoke all the words which the LORD had spoken to Moses. Then he did the signs in the sight of the people.<sup>31</sup> So the people believed; and when they heard that the LORD had visited the children of Israel and that He had looked on their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshiped.** (Exodus 4)

The Lord has been patient with Moses until now. Moses' rebellion is about to get him killed. The Lord chose Moses and will not take no for an answer, but He will not go through with it unless Moses abides by the covenant of circumcision. This apparently was a disagreement he had with his wife because she knew exactly what to do. I am trying to imagine this scene. It seems the Lord manifested Himself in a physical form and laid hands on Moses. Zipporah sees it, and in order to save Moses from physical death takes action. Because the word says "So He let him go."

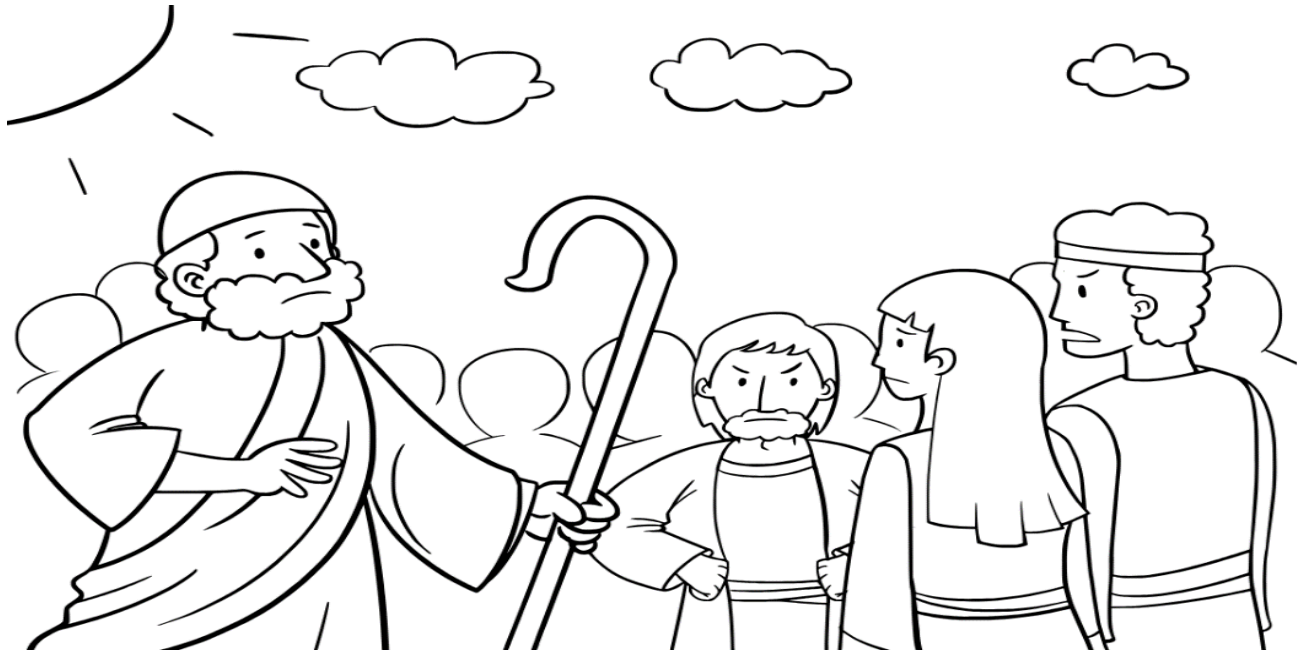
Please also note that Aaron does not need any special instructions or identification from God. And the corpse Aaron simply does what the Lord said. Moses' faith is growing, and he is now telling Aaron all that the Lord commanded.

It was as if Aaron and family never left, and maybe didn't. Aaron goes out to meet Moses, and then he and Moses come to town. I am sure Aaron and his family were instrumental in gathering the elders together. After all Moses has not been seen in 40 years.

Then Aaron spoke the words to the people that Moses had spoken to him, which God had spoken to Moses. Got it? Then Moses did the signs God showed him to do at the burning bush, and the people believed. God is using Moses to effectuate the faith of many. The result was worship, and I am sure there was a spirit of joy and hope even though as we shall see, times were hard in Egypt. I am sure they were worse than before Moses left.

Perhaps now Moses is beginning to understand what God told him, that he "heard their cry", now that he can see face to face their despair.

## Pharoah and the Children of Israel



**And they said to them, "Let the LORD look on you and judge, because you have made us abhorrent in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to kill us." 22 So Moses returned to the LORD and said, "Lord, why have You brought trouble on this people? Why is it You have sent me? 23 For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he has done evil to this people; neither have You delivered Your people at all." (Exodus 5)**

Before you start getting aggravated with the children of Israel, would you mind first walking a mile in their shoes here? These corpses are calling on the name of the Lord to judge Moses. Look what Moses says here. He blames God for the people's trouble and asks "why have you done this?" to God. I tell you God is very gracious to Moses, but He is executing His plan in spite of Moses and the children of Israel. And here you start to see Moses identify the children of Israel as "Your people". Question: In order to be called God's people, were all of these people predetermined individually by name, or by covenant? If by covenant, then is the covenant only available according to blood lines? Just think about it as we continue.

**Then the LORD said to Moses, "Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh. For with a strong hand he will let them go, and with a strong hand he will drive them out of his land."**

**2 And God spoke to Moses and said to him: "I am the LORD.3 I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name Lord I was not known to them. 4 I have also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, in which they were strangers.5 And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel whom the Egyptians keep in bondage, and I have remembered My covenant.6 Therefore say to the children of Israel: "I am the LORD; I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, I will rescue you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments.7 I will take you as My people, and I will be your God. Then you shall know that I am the LORD your God who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.8 And I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and I will give it to you as a heritage: I am the LORD."9 So Moses spoke thus to the children of Israel; but they did not heed Moses, because of anguish of spirit and cruel bondage. (Exodus 6)**

God is dismissing Moses' blame game, and simply remains focused on executing His judgements and fulfilling His promises. The very knowledge of the existence of God in the world at this point in human history is that He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The promises He made to them He will fulfill no matter what. And God makes it very clear that is how He is identified to all humanity up to now as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But now He says His people will know Him by I AM, a more personal level of devotion to a relationship offered by God here. Neither the people's or Moses' lack of confidence will stop Him. God declares here that He is going to do this. By a mighty outstretched arm, the Lord God Almighty is coming! Nothing nor no one can stop Him from doing what He pleases. This is happening, declares the Lord! The people however are looking at their circumstances and just not feeling it right now.

**And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,11 "Go in, tell Pharaoh king of Egypt to let the children of Israel go out of his land." 12 And Moses spoke before the LORD, saying, "The children of Israel have not heeded me. How then shall Pharaoh heed me, for I am of uncircumcised lips?" 13 Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, and gave them a command for the children of Israel and for Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt. (Exodus 6)**

Just in case you missed it, Moses is resisting the command of God again. This time the Lord just repeats Himself but copies Aaron the second time. Now listen to this and just consider God's sovereignty here. No one is on board here! Moses is not on board, Aaron is malleable, the children of Israel do not seem to heed God, Moses, or Aaron and certainly Pharaoh is not willing to allow the children of Israel to go free. Therefore God, being all on His own here simply says here is My commandment to you, the children of Israel, and Pharaoh and for that matter the whole world. God Almighty the great I AM is coming, and He will accomplish His

will according to His purpose. This is happening whether you believe it, agree with it, or cooperate in it!

**So the LORD said to Moses: "See, I have made you as God to Pharaoh, and Aaron your brother shall be your prophet.<sup>2</sup> You shall speak all that I command you. And Aaron your brother shall tell Pharaoh to send the children of Israel out of his land.<sup>3</sup> And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt.<sup>4</sup> But Pharaoh will not heed you, so that I may lay My hand on Egypt and bring My armies and My people, the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments.<sup>5</sup> And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch out My hand on Egypt and bring out the children of Israel from among them." <sup>6</sup> Then Moses and Aaron did so; just as the LORD commanded them, so they did.<sup>7</sup> And Moses was eighty years old and Aaron eighty-three years old when they spoke to Pharaoh. (Exodus 7)**

God is explaining something I think is important here if you think as I do that God uses typology although imperfectly (because of man's depravity) as examples of the ways of everlasting. Notice as God is setting up some role playing here. Moses is playing God, Aaron God's prophet, the children of Israel are God's people, so who is Pharaoh? You guessed it, satan. You can also argue that in this typology Egypt is the world.

Now, let's talk about God hardening Pharaoh's heart because I know somebody is saying viola, God admits he is denying Pharaoh His grace. I disagree, I think Pharaoh was given many opportunities to repent. And I think it is incredibly irresponsible to extract double predestination for every soul individually from this 1 biblical example, especially since here Pharaoh role play in this account is that of satan according to typology. Judas is the New Testament example of this. And remember the Lord said "I have lost none, except the son of perdition" referring to Judas. These 2 men were also chosen for God's specific purpose regarding His plan of revealing Jesus to the whole world. But they are exceptions, not the rule.

Both of these men Pharaoh and Judas had ulterior motives regarding their relationship with God which was not a living relationship, but self-serving motivations. God did not manipulate them to do what they did, because what they did was sin. Yet they did exactly what God wanted them to on His time table. See, even these men present an issue that is simply unmistakable. They are corpses that have had interaction with God, comprehended everything God was saying to them, and provided *active and rational* responses to God. In the case of these 2 men their responses were judged by God Almighty and serve as an example to all that God will judge the wicked. There will be no escape for the wicked. There will be no escape for Satan either. And that is the role that Pharaoh finds himself in. He thinks he is god in Egypt. He is a classic example of letting power, wealth and glory go to your head. He sees the children of Israel as an asset and as living proof that

he is god over them. How do you think satan views humanity? Probably a lot like Pharaoh views himself toward the children of Israel at this time in history. Pharaoh was building an empire on the backs of the children of Israel, make no mistake about that.

How did God harden Pharaoh's heart? By simply being God! Pharaoh's heart was full of pride. God's message to all humanity is to humble yourself before Him, for He alone is God. The message Moses and Aaron are to give is "Let *My* people go." Pharaoh believes the children of Israel are *his* people, to do with as *he* pleases, and to serve *him*. So when these abominable sheep herders, Moses who is slow of speech and his brother Aaron come waltzing into *his* throne room to tell *him* that their God says "Let *My* people go." , here is what Pharaoh said to that message when he first heard it.

**Afterward Moses and Aaron went in and told Pharaoh, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: "Let My people go, that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness." 2 And Pharaoh said, "Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, nor will I let Israel go." (Exodus 5)**

See, Pharaoh thinks this is his decision as to what will become of the children of Israel. Pharaoh again has a god complex all the way. If you want to know who Satan is, look at this man in the book of Exodus. He is selfish, cruel, brutal and hateful no doubt about it.

**Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go in to Pharaoh and tell him, "Thus says the LORD God of the Hebrews: "Let My people go, that they may serve Me.2 For if you refuse to let them go, and still hold them,3 behold, the hand of the LORD will be on your cattle in the field, on the horses, on the donkeys, on the camels, on the oxen, and on the sheep--a very severe pestilence.4 And the LORD will make a difference between the livestock of Israel and the livestock of Egypt. So nothing shall die of all that belongs to the children of Israel."5 Then the LORD appointed a set time, saying, "Tomorrow the LORD will do this thing in the land." 6 So the LORD did this thing on the next day, and all the livestock of Egypt died; but of the livestock of the children of Israel, not one died.7 Then Pharaoh sent, and indeed, not even one of the livestock of the Israelites was dead. But the heart of Pharaoh became hard, and he did not let the people go. (Exodus 9:1-7)**

**Then the LORD said to Moses, "Rise early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh, and say to him, "Thus says the LORD God of the Hebrews: "Let My people go, that they may serve Me,14 for at this time I will send all My plagues to your very heart, and on your servants and on your people, that you may know that there is none like Me in all the earth.15 Now if I had stretched out My hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, then you would have been cut off from the earth.16 But indeed for this purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth.17 As yet you exalt yourself against My people in that you will not let them**

**go.18 Behold, tomorrow about this time I will cause very heavy hail to rain down, such as has not been in Egypt since its founding until now.19 Therefore send now and gather your livestock and all that you have in the field, for the hail shall come down on every man and every animal which is found in the field and is not brought home; and they shall die.'"" 20 He who feared the word of the LORD among the servants of Pharaoh made his servants and his livestock flee to the houses.21 But he who did not regard the word of the LORD left his servants and his livestock in the field. (Exodus 9 13-21)**

I want you to see something here. God is now distinguishing His judgments between Egyptians and Israelites. Now I am not sure what the communication systems were in that time period, but apparently when Moses spoke, word was getting out, and some Egyptians were taking notice, and action. I want you to know that all of the servants of Pharaoh are corpses for sure. But some of those corpses feared God and were blessed because of it. Remember the midwives also were blessed because they feared God back in Exodus 2. How did they do that? They are just corpses after all. God never spoke to them directly or made any covenants with them of any kind at this time in history. Yet these corpses responded to the revelation that they had.

**Now the LORD said to Moses, "Go in to Pharaoh; for I have hardened his heart and the hearts of his servants, that I may show these signs of Mine before him,2 and that you may tell in the hearing of your son and your son's son the mighty things I have done in Egypt, and My signs which I have done among them, that you may know that I am the LORD." 3 So Moses and Aaron came in to Pharaoh and said to him, "Thus says the LORD God of the Hebrews: "How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me? Let My people go, that they may serve Me. (Exodus 10)**

The hardening of Pharaoh's servants' hearts are likely the magicians who were able to copy a *portion* of the signs God performed, but not completely. This was likely very frustrating to them considering that Pharaoh I am sure was applying a lot of pressure to them, not to duplicate the signs, but to stop or reverse them. Their rods became snakes too, but they did not get them back because Moses' rod ate their snakes. They could make water blood, but not back to water again. They could conjure up frogs from the rivers, but could not get rid of them.

Anytime Pharaoh needed a plague stopped, he had to ask Moses. Now the servants have egg on their face before Pharaoh. But even they are not so hardened that they do not advise Pharaoh to let the people of Israel go, because they are powerless to help him. But Pharaoh stubbornly hangs on! See how God asks him "how long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me?" Pharaoh just will not humble himself, because he still thinks he is god.

**Then Pharaoh called to Moses and said, "Go, serve the LORD; only let your flocks and your herds be kept back. Let your little ones also go with you." 25 But Moses said, "You**

must also give us sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.<sup>26</sup> Our livestock also shall go with us; not a hoof shall be left behind. For we must take some of them to serve the LORD our God, and even we do not know with what we must serve the LORD until we arrive there."<sup>27</sup> But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let them go.<sup>28</sup> Then Pharaoh said to him, "Get away from me! Take heed to yourself and see my face no more! For in the day you see my face you shall die!"<sup>29</sup> So Moses said, "You have spoken well. I will never see your face again." (Exodus 10)

How was Pharaoh's heart hardened? He has an empire to build, and the children of Israel are his cheap labor force. Without them it is much more difficult for Pharaoh to pursue his ambitions. He wants to keep something back as escrow if you please to make sure the children of Israel return and get back to work. The women and children can stay behind; okay the women and children can go but not the livestock. But when he hears the words "not a hoof will be left behind", then he cannot go there because that means he must surrender all of his leverage against them. This message from God is disgusting in Pharaoh's sight. They are leaving me to serve God? I need them to serve *me!* That is how God hardened Pharaoh's heart, but simply being God. Pharaoh does not want to answer to God, he thinks *he* is god. And he is convinced that he is being tricked somehow by some mysterious magic, which is why he keeps the pressure on his magicians. Pharaoh is convinced that he can wait this whole thing out and everything will go back to the status quo. But God is coming.



Then the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides children.<sup>38</sup> A mixed multitude went up with them also, and flocks and herds--a great deal of livestock. (Exodus 12:37-38)

And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "This is the ordinance of the Passover: No foreigner shall eat it.<sup>44</sup> But every man's servant who is bought for money, when you have circumcised him, then he may eat it.<sup>45</sup> A sojourner and a hired servant shall not eat it.<sup>46</sup>

**In one house it shall be eaten; you shall not carry any of the flesh outside the house, nor shall you break one of its bones.<sup>47</sup> All the congregation of Israel shall keep it.<sup>48</sup> And when a stranger dwells with you and wants to keep the Passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as a native of the land. For no uncircumcised person shall eat it.<sup>49</sup> One law shall be for the native-born and for the stranger who dwells among you." <sup>50</sup> Thus all the children of Israel did; as the LORD commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did.<sup>51</sup> And it came to pass, on that very same day, that the LORD brought the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt according to their armies. (Exodus 12:43-50)**

Notice, after God gives detailed specifics on the Passover, which is very rich in typology He then gives this ordinance for who can and cannot keep the Passover. Now the Passover is the picture of Jesus the lamb of God, shedding His innocent blood to save the guilty from death. They were to select the lamb first, then slay and eat it on that specific day. By the time that day came, I am sure everyone in the house had feelings for the little lamb. They probably named it, and had to care for it separately from the rest of the flock. This little lamb was for salvation from the angel of death.

But here is what I want you to take note of. Versus 38, 48 and 49. When a stranger wants to keep the Passover, the rules are the same for him as for the children of Israel. Tell me, were these strangers predestined to keep the Passover with the children of Israel? Because the ways of everlasting do not change, they are eternal. Old Testament folks exercised faith in the same way New Testament people do. If they wanted forgiveness of sins and a living relationship with God, they had to bring a blood offering to the Lord. Ours is the Lord Jesus, theirs' actually was also by promise. The lambs, bulls and goats they used all point to the future when Messiah will come. Their faith was in that future and the sacrifices they brought to the Lord were symbols of what Jesus would do in the future, but we look to Jesus for what He has already done.

The mixed multitude that went up out of the land with the children of Israel were not in the family by birth. That is, they are not descendants of Jacob, and are therefore not the children of promise. However, please note that God makes provisions for these corpses based on their willingness to identify with Him, and the children of Israel. These corpses are apparently permitted to enter into a living relationship with God by their own choosing. They circumcised all males, and followed the same instructions as the native born. They packed up their things and went out. I have a notion they probably attended the public meetings held by Moses to instruct the children of Israel (if any).

I mean, if you lived in Egypt in that time period, if you wanted to know what was coming next, you would want to find out from someone in the know. If the meetings Moses held were only among the elders which is likely, the elders would then

distribute the instructions of Moses according to their families. However, if you were not in Israel by birth, but you knew someone who was, you could really get the scoop on what God is going to do next. In this case, I speculate that this mixed multitude likely celebrated this first Passover according to these ordinances given by God to Moses.

In your minds' eye, journey back and live a day in the life of a typical no name Egyptian. Moses comes to town, and before you know it the water turns to blood, frogs, gnats, flies which affected both Egyptian and Israelite equally. All of which are just gross, but also a health risk for all the living both man and beast, and also a complete insult to their faith in idols. And there are good writings regarding the judgments of God relative to the competing gods of Egypt. You can imagine there was this cultural element to what was happening there. Imagine yourself as a no name Egyptian, would you have approached an Israelite and asked "what do I need to do to be spared the wrath of your God?"



But you get up one morning and your livestock are dead, but the children of Israel had no death in any of their livestock, not even one. Then there is a boils and sores epidemic that only affects Egyptians, followed by hail fire. It was when the hail fire judgment came that some of the Egyptians who feared God brought in their servants and livestock inside and saved their lives in the process.

Then the plague of locusts, followed by 3 days of darkness. The only light that could be seen then was those inside the dwellings of the children of Israel. By this time the nation's sustenance is destroyed. So if you were an Egyptian in those days, it was probably not a bad idea to get to know some of the children of Israel to see if maybe you can identify with them and their God since the plagues now are only on the Egyptians. What if you lived close by to the children of Israel and were a no name Egyptian? In those 3 days of darkness, would you have walked toward the light to inquire of the people whose God is leveling massive judgments?

## *What Can A Corpse Do*

I think this is why you had a mixed multitude that went out from Egypt with the children of Israel. I spoke about typology and this is an Old Testament portrait of the church. Romans 1 tells us the gospel was for the Jew first, and also for the Greek. And what you have here in the Exodus is the children of Israel who are God's covenant people (aka the Jew), *and* the mixed multitude (aka the Greek). The similarities are clearly seen. The children of Israel were over 1 million people. Moses had to get the word out. Exodus is the Old Testament picture of salvation. Any soteriological position needs to be consistent with what we see here.

I am sorry but divine pre-determinism as it relates to the salvation of individual souls on a grand scale simply does not hold water to the word of God. God sets forth an ordinance even for the Passover that is for everyone including servants and strangers that want to identify with the Lord according to His terms!

**By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his bones.** (Hebrews 11)

**And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for he had placed the children of Israel under solemn oath, saying, "God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here with you."** (Exodus 13)

Now this is confirmation that the promises of God were always passed down from generation to generation from Noah on. For most no name folks that was all the revelation of God they had. Some feared the Lord and followed the pattern of building altars and making sacrifices to the Lord according to what Abraham, Noah, and even Abel had shown. I am pretty sure Job is an example of that as well. There are plenty of people in the bible that are mentioned but not by name. We see this in the genealogies in Genesis where the word simply says "and he had other sons and daughters". We do not even know their names but God does. I assure you, some of them feared God from the simple revelation they had, and they will certainly not lose their reward.

**For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, "They are bewildered by the land; the wilderness has closed them in.'4 Then I will harden Pharaoh's heart, so that he will pursue them; and I will gain honor over Pharaoh and over all his army, that the Egyptians may know that I am the LORD." And they did so. 5 Now it was told the king of Egypt that the people had fled, and the heart of Pharaoh and his servants was turned against the people; and they said, "Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us?"6 So he made ready his chariot and took his people with him.** (Exodus 14)

"So that the Egyptians may know that I am the Lord" reminds me of Philipians 2:9-11 which refers to every knee bowing at the name of Jesus. Again, Exodus is very rich in typology regarding the ways of everlasting. In the future when Jesus

comes, He will receive glory and final victory over Satan. And when He does, believe me the whole world will know that He is God! That is happening soon! Just like Pharaoh in this book of Exodus, God Almighty says He is coming! No one can stop His plan; it is just going to happen. Fear Him! It will serve you well.

I told you Pharaoh wanted more than anything for the children of Israel to serve him. Look at what he says. His son is barely in the tomb and Pharaoh is ready to take on God again. "What is wrong with us, have we lost our minds? Why did we let the children of Israel go from serving us?" And in the future Satan will deceive many to rise up against Jesus in a final battle. Sorry to tell you but it will end in a very similar fashion as what you see here to Pharaoh. But Pharaoh is able to muster his people to join him to their defeat.



**And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and when the morning appeared, the sea returned to its full depth, while the Egyptians were fleeing into it. So the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea.<sup>28</sup> Then the waters returned and covered the chariots, the horsemen, and all the army of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them. Not so much as one of them remained.<sup>29</sup> But the children of Israel had walked on dry land in the midst of the sea, and the waters were a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. <sup>30</sup> So the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore.<sup>31</sup> Thus Israel saw the great work which the LORD had**

**done in Egypt; so the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD and His servant Moses.** (Exodus 14)

Only an omnipotent God can perform wonders like this! There were 2 groups of people there that day. The children of Israel whom God promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to give them the land, and make them a great nation. And Pharaoh and his armies who were there to fight against God to prevent Him from keeping His covenant. And God demonstrated His mighty power to save to the uttermost those that trust Him. And destroying His enemies for the sake of His covenant, according to the riches of His grace, and His great love even for those disgusting, stiff necked, unworthy children of Israel.

Also to God be the glory, now the people fear the Lord, and believed on the Lord and His servant Moses. Now by this I mean that before, they were skeptical you cannot miss that. Not even they were sure that God could do this. You are going to have a hard time convincing me with the context that is here in God's word at any time that was Moses 100% bought in.

But this is the sovereign plan of God. To bring about a mighty salvation that only He can, so you can see how wonderful Jesus is! If God had not gone down and performed His judgments in Egypt, they would have never left there. No other person or nation could deliver the children of Israel from Pharaoh. Furthermore, no person or nation even cared about the children of Israel to even consider it. That is the way of everlasting. Only God can save, and only He is even willing to make the kind of sacrifice needed, and only He has the holiness and power to perform it.

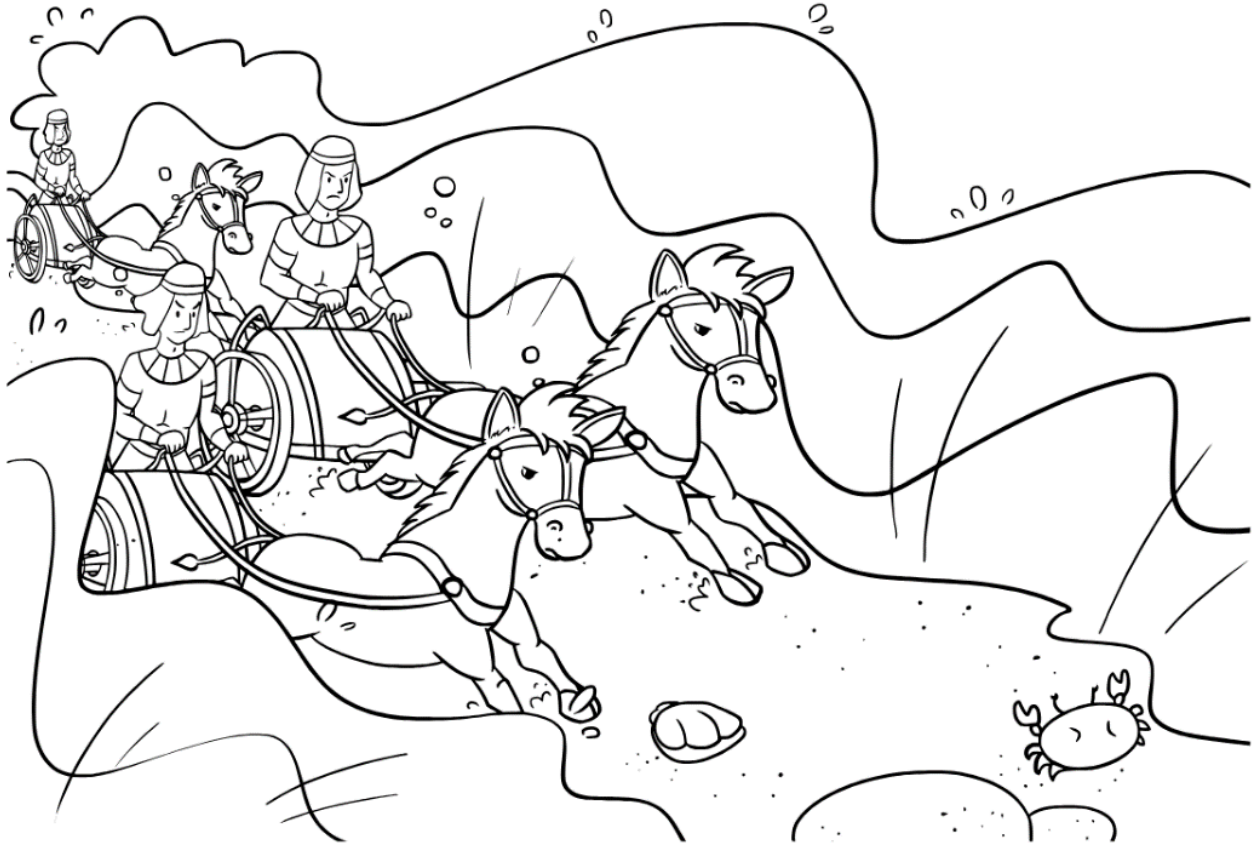
If God had not started a work in Noah, and continued His intervention into mankind through the corpses of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Moses, and chose to keep His promise despite the fact that all these men failed with regard to their responsibility in the covenant to keep it fully, then this great work of deliverance would have never taken place at all! Without question God Most High is absolutely sovereign and this event demonstrates that in a very vivid way.

But the people that crossed over, they had to make that walk. I am not saying they had much choice. I mean it is either cross over on dry land, or get captured as Pharaoh's slaves or worse be killed by him. I would never argue this is a work for salvation because that is silly. Salvation isn't salvation if you could do it yourself! But there is an obedience to the gospel. They may have not been 100%, but they had a mustard seed of faith. God can work with just a little, but He can do more with a lot! Just saying.

The good news for these corpses at this very moment is God has provided salvation by giving you this dry land to cross over, while the water is a wall on your left and on your right. Cross through safely to the other side. What can the corpse do? Accept the offer and get moving! Hurry now while God's offer is still on the

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table. And when the corpse is standing there at that place on the edge of that body of water, staring down this aisle that has been miraculously created for their escape to safety and freedom, they really have to get moving. I suppose at this point the corpse could just choose to surrender to Pharaoh and stay in servitude. Or the corpse can take a chance on trusting God. That moment of decision is just a window in time for these people.



But the moment the corpse trusts God, he starts moving based on that trust. That is all that is going on here. But it is not a work worthy of being justified before holy God, it is just an act of acceptance. But you cannot deny these corpses had to walk through on the dry land. They also had to circumcise all their males prior to even partaking of the Lord's Passover, which also is simply an act of acceptance or consent of the offer made by God to these corpses.

Jesus is the dry land (the way), the walls of water eternal death, the outstretched rod is also Christ, the outstretched arm of the Lord (the truth, that there is no path to the Father but by Him), and the cloud behind them is the Holy Spirit which comes in the name of Jesus, that seals us securely until we have safely made all the way to the other side (the life).

Now in my mind's eye, the 40 years in the wilderness can represent this walk across dry land. I mean like and overlay. They trusted a little, but I am sure along the way they may have had to drop some dead weight. By the time they reached the other side, they may have very well been carrying a lighter load. But God was faithful and the cloud protected them until every last one got all the way to

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safety. The scripture records it was only Egyptians who died that day, all of them! That includes Pharaoh!



So how does God build faith in people? He tells you what He is going to do, and then He does it. Then He repeats that process. Do you trust Him now? Well maybe you should revisit the scriptures and you will find that God can be trusted. Do you know anybody like that, that you can trust 100% of the time to keep their word and never let you down when it comes to keeping their commitments? Well God bats 100% every day. God is so faithful.

God is revealing all of this to you through the lives of these corpses. He intervenes, He makes bold promises, but He has an impeccable track record and has never failed to keep His promises. God is 100% good; you just know you can trust Him because of the body of work that He has performed all according to His plan and purpose which He makes known openly to the entire world!

God is not keeping secrets; God's plan is in motion to reveal His Christ and glorify Him! That's happening now, and will continue to happen. That is God's sovereign plan. To reveal and glorify Jesus Christ. That has always been His plan. Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Moses all acted in acceptance that God is who he says He is. I know I have criticized Moses some in this writing and that was not intended to be unloving. Moses never at any time thought he was a god like Pharaoh. He humbled himself immediately before God. He just struggled with cooperation by trust and faith until now. But his faith is about to grow by leaps and bounds, but unfortunately through strife, stress and heart ache as well.

**Then Moses and the children of Israel sang this song to the LORD, and spoke, saying: "I will sing to the LORD, For He has triumphed gloriously!"** (Genesis 15)

Do you remember the moment you were saved, and the days that followed? It was like you were walking on air. God has saved you and forgiven all your sins! His love for you is immense, fresh, warm, accepting and wonderful! In Revelation, the Lord Jesus commands the church of Ephesus to return to their first love. That is this place, that early period of the child of God's new life and living relationship with God. It is such a precious time in a believer's life, but also to God my beloved. Remember that God rejoices when you love and trust Him fully by faith, it brings such pleasure to Him. He receives your love with gladness! And it is a wonderful resting place for your soul each night as you go to bed.

But unfortunately, even after we are wonderfully and marvelously saved, we discover our depravity hasn't really gone anywhere. A little testing here and a little testing there and we find out that our faith is not as strong as it should be. It is a process but remember, God is faithful and if He weren't you would certainly be in serious trouble. But again, God has a perfect record when it comes to faithfulness. You can bank on that! You can build your life upon that!

Tell me, what else can you build a life on? Do you really have a choice? You need to trust Christ! What else can you do? Put your trust in man? Government? Yourself? You should know yourself well enough to know that you will eventually fail yourself, let alone please God.

Jesus will never fail! He always pleases the Father, and in Christ you have a High Priest continually making intercession for you without fail. Again, what choice do you really have? But God is not manipulating you. It's just you have this aisle of dry land with a wall on your right and on your left. It is called the gospel. Do you really have a choice to resist it? Not a good one anyway. You have satan there ready to pounce and kill you biologically if he were permitted to (destroying any future chance of salvation), a wall of death on your left and your right (which became the grave for God's enemies), and Christ the dry land before you with a yoke that is easy, and a burden that is light. So just come on and get moving with putting your faith in Christ! It is not a work for salvation, it is just giving acceptance to the gospel, which by the way has a call to respond built in.

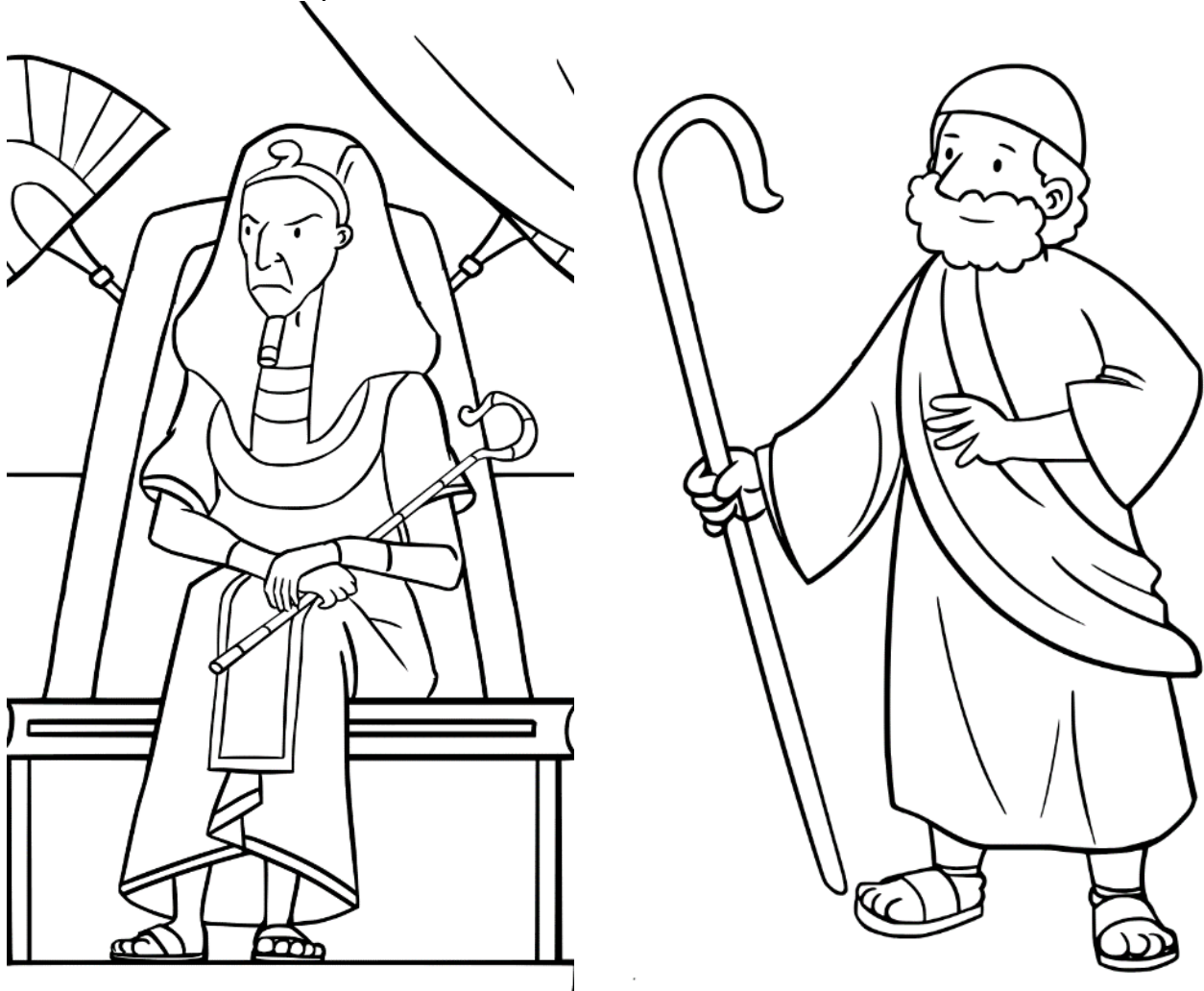
God has left you with no options but to respond to His gospel. If you are hearing the gospel you have to respond. There is no such thing as a non-response to the gospel. So what is yours? "Show me your faith by your works" says the scriptures. If your faith in Christ represents life in Him, then life is active is it not? Rock on with your faith! The day they observed the Lord's Passover they did it with a staff in hand, and their loins girded. They followed the process as outlined by God, and then marched out in haste.

One thing is certain if you were in the camp of Israel at that moment in time you were definitely at a crossroads in life. You could not just sit in a church pew for an hour, drive back to the house, and turn on the TV you know what I mean? You had

some business decisions to make right then, right there. Either walk through the Red Sea on dry land, or stay here and surrender to Pharaoh. The Bible does not record that any stayed behind. The only death was that of the Egyptians. If Jesus starts out with 100 sheep, He is going to make it all the way through with 100 sheep. No loss when Jesus is the Shepherd! Make sure you are always following your Shepherd.

### Moses and Pharaoh

Before we move on from Exodus, the question arises "Did God create or cause 1 man to do 1 thing, and 1 man for another thing simply to make a point that He is the Almighty?" "Does God manipulate every millisecond of every molecule in order to prove His sovereignty?" Does God predetermine the fate of every soul for all eternity before that soul is ever knitted into their mother's womb?" "Did God manipulate every aspect of Moses' life in order to manipulate his will? Does anyone even have a will? Is God's spirit simply controlling every person's thoughts, deeds and actions? Did God predestine Pharaoh to be evil?"



## *What Can A Corpse Do*

May I offer a middle ground? Is it possible that God simply gave each one of these corpses an opportunity to fulfill their hearts desire? If I did not have the testimony of Stephen in Acts 7 I might not be able to make this argument. But Stephen said that it was in Moses' mind to deliver them. Yet by the time the opportunity came he felt totally incapable of the task.

Pharaoh wanted to be god. God gave him the opportunity to prove himself worthy. Pharaoh fought hard and showed tremendous strength in some ways. He never surrendered despite huge losses to the country, himself and his own people's confidence in him. He was willing to fight to the death to have the people serve him. To receive glory among the people and the nations. To build a world empire. Pharaoh was more than ambitious however; he was ruthless and willing to sacrifice even his firstborn son to keep power. Even after the death of his firstborn, he lashed out to regain that power once again, and it was ultimately his end.

God did not make either of these men something they weren't. He just threw fuel on the fire of what they already were. Both were born corpses. But Moses had much more revelation which led to the mustard seed of faith that he had. But there was a Pharaoh before that knew Joseph, but this one does not. If God had trouble with anyone it was Moses, and yes that is due to his depravity. But Moses had empathy for God's covenant people, humility and fear of Him which was enough for God to work with to grow Moses' faith and trust to accomplish God's plan. If there was an aspiration of Moses to deliver the people, it certainly was not his plan to do it the way God did. He likely wanted to climb the ranks politically from the inside. God showed Moses it could have never been done that way. In order to break the bondage of sin, it takes supernatural work! Even with all the great plagues God administered Pharaoh would not relent. Pharaoh was certainly not going to relent even if Moses used the most effective human diplomacy and agency. To God be the glory, He did it all! No one is worthy of His love and grace but He is very gracious and merciful! However, He did not manipulate anyone against their will in my view.

Now you can persuade me that God caused all things to work together for good for Moses and the children of Israel according to his good plan and purpose with or without (mostly without) their faith or cooperation. No arguments here. But God did not do that in Pharaoh's life. He did not cause all things to work together for evil for Pharaoh and his followers. At the end of the day it seems apparent to me that God was just God, Pharaoh was just pharaoh, and Moses was just Moses. Even among the Egyptians we saw that people were influenced to fear God and as a result a mixed multitude joined the children of Israel, but only according to God's terms. God intervened in the affairs of men according to His timeline and will, which no one can stop or alter unless they can persuade Him to change His mind. Moses was effective in this regard eventually. Isn't it interesting that God can be persuaded by a fallen man? But He was.

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One man entertained the word of the Lord, and with more and more exposure to it his faith grew. The other man refused to even acknowledge the Lord or His word, and fought with every ounce of his being to deny the Lord His honor and glory. He refused to acknowledge God's sovereignty. This is a very similar dynamic to Cain and Abel, except in this case Pharaoh is more disadvantaged because his parents did not fear the Lord. Each of these men knew who they were dealing with. One chose to humble himself regardless of his lack of enthusiasm, and the other chose to deny the existence and power of the living and true God. That is evident here and God did not make them have the convictions that they did.

So somebody comes along and argues that God is the creator of souls, which of course He is. And then argue that God decided that one soul was going to Pharaoh's parents, while the other went to Moses' parents. Is that supposed to be a check mate or something? This type of thinking leads to complete and total divine pre-determinism and human fatalism thinking, and it is circular by the way. God is controlling everything because if He isn't controlling everything then He is not sovereign and He is not in charge of anything. God has to save some regardless of their will because there is no other way. Why? Because they are depraved and do not have a will that recognizes God. God must control, because man lost control. It all circles back around to total depravity, which just does not hold up under the microscope of scripture.

Perhaps God, who advises we count the cost before beginning an endeavor, established a rule for the creation and issuance of souls on a first come, first serve basis so that He could not be accused of bias. There is always a counter argument. The question remains whether or not God wants us focused on such matters, thoughts, questions, or explanations? We can always distract ourselves with questions, arguments, and counter arguments. How do we choose whether or not it is worthy of engagement in our hearts and minds?

But if God is in control of everything, then He is also in control of sin, and He is also the creator of evil. If God created Pharaoh intentionally to be evil causing tremendous evil and carnage in his lifetime, then what does that say of God? What does God mean when He says

**Now if I had stretched out My hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, then you would have been cut off from the earth.<sup>16</sup> But indeed for this purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth.<sup>17</sup> As yet you exalt yourself against My people in that you will not let them go.**  
(Genesis 9)

The thing Pharaoh is the guiltiest of is exalting himself against God's people. Now let me see what was it that Satan was guilty of before the events of the garden of Eden?

**"How you are fallen from heaven,O Lucifer, son of the morning!How you are cut down to the ground,You who weakened the nations! 13 For you have said in your heart: "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north; 14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.' 15 Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, To the lowest depths of the Pit.**

How was it that mankind fell back in Genesis 3? Satan exalted himself against God and against God's people. And he set out to undermine and usurp God in every way imaginable. God raised up a Pharaoh that "did not know Joseph". And it is this Pharaoh God is confronting through Moses is the direct first born descendent of that Pharaoh. Pharaoh was likely younger than Moses, but grew up as a contemporary to him yet heir to the throne. Again, the typology is striking and Pharaoh is more the exception than the rule. God does not arbitrarily harden some hearts against Him while granting irresistible grace to the selected. He desires a loving working relationship with all humanity on the basis they come to repentance and faith in Christ. Any Egyptian could have joined that mixed multitude so long as they received God's covenant on His terms, which was the circumcision of all males and following the ordinance of the Passover just the same as those born under the covenant promise of God.

Unfortunately, we do know that God permits evil to take place even to good people just from reading Job. But it was Satan that thought of and did evil! And God decided the boundaries Satan had, but allowed him access to Job and we have to deal with that. A faith that cannot be tested cannot be trusted. Did Job deserve happiness? Did God owe anything to Job? No. Job was a depraved sinner worthy of death. Man's sin brought the curse of death to all the living, not just mankind. God never intended for animals to die either, man was told to eat from the trees and plants. Job was only declared righteous by God because of his faith. God does not owe us anything in these sinful bodies we live in friends, not even to those of us that are called by His name. God intervenes and overrules in the affairs of men I believe on a self-limiting basis primarily to reveal and bring glory to Jesus to draw men to Himself, but not to micromanage the eternal choice whether to receive Jesus or not for every soul that has ever been conceived. All based on the premise of "what if there is no other way?". Are you kidding me? The bible teaches there is a way. That is what the gospel is all about!

But we all make choices that affect our own hearts. Both Pharaoh and Moses made choices under these circumstances. God did not make the choices for them, or control them within their souls so that would choose the way they did. God had

to be strong with Moses to get his cooperation, but I think it falls short of forced cooperation. The choices of these men were not forced, nor controlled by divine providence. However, the divine plan of God unfolded according to His will. Both can be true at the same time. It wasn't their depravity nor forced grace that caused them to choose to trust or ignore the word of God. I have not seen enough here to convince me of that. The bible does not teach it. In other words if we are to be conformed into His image, are we supposed to start controlling and manipulating the thoughts and choices of others around us if it is for God's glory? See, we do not have to believe a premise just because it can be reasoned into existence. That is how Eve got into trouble. Working from reason instead of trust. Questioning instead of believing. Embracing doubt in the integrity of God.

God calling Noah, Abram, and Moses can be considered forced grace, because God did not have to do that. But it is a forced grace for all mankind. The gospel is the message of God giving His all to save humanity from eternal damnation. Jesus being born in a manger is forced grace. But it is not an irresistible grace even though forced. Jesus, the beloved and only son of God died a sinner's death on the cross even though He knew no sin. He wasn't a man before the manger, but He chose to humble Himself for all eternity and will be a man forever, never being able to return to His former glory. My friend, every human to ever live will have to deal with that! So yes, just the offer of Jesus for the salvation of souls is forced grace. Because God simply did not have to do that at all! And Jesus rose from the dead! He rose *Himself* from the dead! Do you know anybody else that has done that? Jesus said

**"Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again.18 No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father." (John 10)**

The fact that we can talk about Jesus because of who He is, what He did, and the power He wielded with love and meekness is forced grace. The Lord Jesus did not have to come, He did it willingly, openly, enduring the cross despising the shame. And no one in this world and I mean no one will escape Him, because He is the ruler of all, the alpha and omega, the righteous judge of all things in heaven, in earth, and under the earth. Everyone will answer to Jesus. If you are alive and hearing the gospel of God, it is forced grace! Are you on board with God forcing His grace onto others? Well, you should be! But you are not forcing people to receive the Lord and have faith. It is up to the individual to respond to the revelation that they have been given. But any and all revelation of God is a forced grace. God did not have to save Noah at all, He could have just ended this entire project altogether and built a new universe in its place! The very fact that you and I are breathing is forced grace from God. He does not owe you another breath or another heartbeat. But that does not mean it is irresistible with regard to salvation.

## *What Can A Corpse Do*

I told my 3 wonderful children growing up "I can make you go to church, memorize bible verses and pray together as a family. But I cannot make you love Jesus! Only you can make that choice." But wait, the reformers say you cannot. But God says you can come, you can join the mixed multitude and start your journey of trusting God today. I wish I could force you to do it but I cannot. And I do not think God will force you to either, unless of course He simply decides to save you anyway because He wants to use you for His glory.

Do I think God will do that? Sure! Why not? He saves in various circumstances in Acts. Who is the victim here? Where is the sin if God decides to reveal Himself so clearly to someone that they couldn't deny His request? Look at Moses at the burning bush. But also look at the masses of the Egyptians that saw very clearly and comprehended, but still did not fear and trust the Lord.

I pray like a reformer for the lost! I prayed for my young children "Lord please save them whatever it takes!", and I think we should pray for the lost like that. I also think we should witness daily for the Lord because eternal destinations depend on it, and we should always ask for a response.

I know I should be better at daily living out my response. Even as believers we need to receive and respond to the gospel daily, not for salvation to come in, but for salvation to be worked out! Lived out! But even if God were to do that, He is not doing it on a mass scale because of some pre-arranged micro management of everything and person in creation master plan. He is implementing His master plan without the need for mass manipulation.

## Joshua To Ruth

Joshua

**After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, it came to pass that the LORD spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, saying:<sup>2</sup> "Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them--the children of Israel.**

**Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying,<sup>11</sup> "Pass through the camp and command the people, saying, "Prepare provisions for yourselves, for within three days you will cross over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land which the LORD your God is giving you to possess."**

**So they answered Joshua, saying, "All that you command us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go.<sup>17</sup> Just as we heeded Moses in all things, so we will heed you. Only the LORD your God be with you, as He was with Moses. (Joshua 1)**

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Now we have a whole nation of corpses now. The wilderness march is coming to a close, and God has been faithful. God now speaks directly to Joshua, but indirectly to the masses. My argument is that has always been the case. God has chosen people to work more closely with, but also built in is the command to raise your child in the way that he should go, and love your neighbor as yourself. With these the fear of the Lord was known throughout all the land and we will see that. Joshua was born a corpse just like everyone else. God is working more closely with Joshua on the human plain at this point in history, and God is working more closely with the children of Israel than all the other nations on the earth. Why? So, the world may know that He is the Lord, that's why.

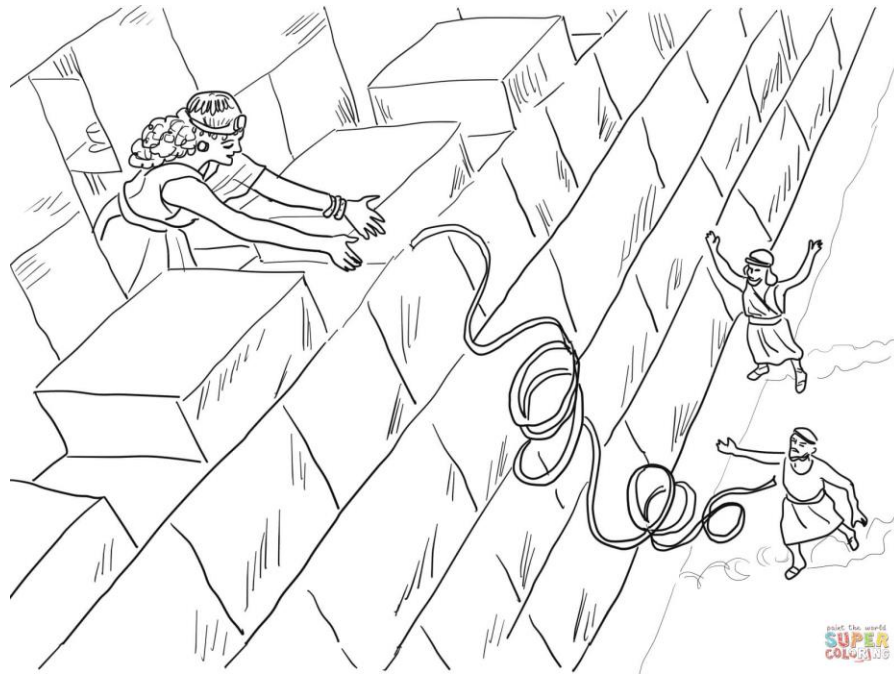
Now the Lord speaks to Joshua, who was Moses' faithful assistant for decades. And Joshua in turn commands the people, who have also come to respect Joshua, because he was one of the two that testified of his trust and confidence in the Lord, and is now one of only 2 from that generation that will enter the land, the other Caleb of course.

It seems this younger generation was determined not to be like their parents and doubt the Lord. They ask for accountability also and exhort Joshua, that the Lord be with him also, and they will heed him. Good job!

An atheist asked the question "What is the greatest proof for the existence of God?". To which the reply was "The Jew sir, the Jew." Even to this day God is revealing Himself through the children of Israel. This massive group of wanderers are about to inherit a land and become a nation. But was God's salvation intended only for predetermined covenant persons by bloodline? We know that is not the case. God wants the whole world to know Him, and humble themselves before Him. He does not desire to eternally condemn any human, but Jesus came that the world might be saved through Him.

## What Can A Corpse Do

Rahab



Now before they lay down, she came up to them on the roof,<sup>9</sup> and said to the men: "I know that the LORD has given you the land, that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you.<sup>10</sup> For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were on the other side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed.<sup>11</sup> And as soon as we heard these things, our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you, for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath.<sup>12</sup> Now therefore, I beg you, swear to me by the LORD, since I have shown you kindness, that you also will show kindness to my father's house, and give me a true token,<sup>13</sup> and spare my father, my mother, my brothers, my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death." (Joshua 2)

Case in point. Rahab was a harlot in a sinful city and culture. She was not taught to fear the Lord from her parents. She is a stone-cold corpse from birth. But her testimony here is that all the people have heard what God has done for them. This is the sovereign plan of God, that the people of the earth will know that He is the Lord, and humble themselves, fear and trust Him. This is the outcome God is after. Rahab is in survival mode. She does not want to die. So, she does what the mixed multitude did, tell God's people you are afraid and ask for mercy from them and their God. Makes perfect sense to me. I do not think she was manipulated. Anyone else from that city could have done the same thing.

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Now God had Joshua and the children of Israel to march around the city of Jericho for 7 days. Believe me if the people feared the Lord enough, they could have at least fled the city that week. Or they could have also surrendered themselves to the Israelites. There was 7 days of warning for them. Then on the seventh day:

**Now the city shall be doomed by the LORD to destruction, it and all who are in it. Only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all who are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent.**

**And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, ox and sheep and donkey, with the edge of the sword. 22 But Joshua had said to the two men who had spied out the country, "Go into the harlot's house, and from there bring out the woman and all that she has, as you swore to her." 23 And the young men who had been spies went in and brought out Rahab, her father, her mother, her brothers, and all that she had. So they brought out all her relatives and left them outside the camp of Israel. 24 But they burned the city and all that was in it with fire. Only the silver and gold, and the vessels of bronze and iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD. 25 And Joshua spared Rahab the harlot, her father's household, and all that she had. So she dwells in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho. 26 Then Joshua charged them at that time, saying, "Cursed be the man before the LORD who rises up and builds this city Jericho; he shall lay its foundation with his firstborn, and with his youngest he shall set up its gates." 27 So the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame spread throughout all the country. (Joshua 2)**

Rahab responded to the limited revelation of God that she had, and her entire household was saved. Furthermore, Rahab is in the lineage of Christ. She was just a corpse at birth. God never promised her anything. She just wanted to live under the authority of God than to die by his mighty hand. That is all this corpse did. It is certainly not a work for salvation, it was a response of humility before the Lord. That is all it was.

**By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days. 31 By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace. (Hebrews 11)**

Without faith it is impossible to please God. By faith the walls of Jericho fell down. Notice there are no names mentioned for the children of Israel, which indicates to me God wanted all of them to get credit for the faith they placed in Him. Rahab is mentioned here by name and notice that she did not perish "with those that did not believe". Anyone who was in Rahab's house that day was spared. Anyone else in the city could have chosen to fear the Lord as she and her household did. They marched around the city for 7 days; they were offered a chance to surrender. They were not sovereignly selected or not selected by God for any

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outcome individually. I see no reason to look at the text in that manner or from that perspective. But if you exercise your faith to embrace a doctrine, it can and will affect the way you view all of scripture. Take the glasses off, you just don't benefit from them.

But the fame of Joshua spread throughout the land. God is working closing with one, to effectuate faith in many all around. There is a God in Israel. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who is Israel. How many others learned from what Rahab did? Joshua went on to conquer a great deal of territory after this event.

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Ruth and Orpah



**And Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go, return each to her mother's house. The LORD deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me.<sup>9</sup> The LORD grant that you may find rest, each in the house of her husband." So she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept.<sup>10</sup> And they said to her, "Surely we will return with you to your people." <sup>11</sup> But Naomi said, "Turn back, my daughters; why will you go with me? Are there still sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands?<sup>12</sup> Turn back, my daughters, go--for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, if I should have a husband tonight and should also bear sons,<sup>13</sup> would you wait for them till they were grown? Would you restrain yourselves from having husbands? No, my daughters; for it grieves me very much for your sakes that the hand of the LORD has gone out against me!" <sup>14</sup> Then they lifted up their voices and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her. <sup>15</sup> And she said, "Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law." <sup>16</sup> But Ruth said: "Entreat me not to leave you, Or to turn back from following after you; For wherever you go, I will go; And wherever you lodge, I will lodge; Your people shall be my people, And your God, my God. <sup>17</sup> Where you die, I will die, And there will I be buried. The LORD do so to me, and more also, If anything but death parts you and me." <sup>18</sup> When she saw that she was determined to go with her, she stopped speaking to her. (Ruth 1)**

Naomi is now a widower in a foreign land. The family moved to Moab 10 years prior due to a famine in Israel. Naomi's sons married local women from Moab who were not raised up under the teachings of God. Then Naomi's husband and sons die and now she and her daughters-in-law find themselves as 3 grieving widows. From an economic standpoint that is a stressor. Naomi is going back home having heard the Lord had visited there, and she has relatives there.

Now even though these girls were not brought up in the same culture, they probably celebrated the feasts of the Lord and learned about God in that way through marriage. They probably all lived under the same roof or in the same subdivision if you please, which was not uncommon for working class people.

Naomi and these girls probably worked together to prepare meals according to the law of Moses for the feasts they kept throughout the year to remind them they were God's people. Naomi is now old, and her hope is to go back home and find a relative to take her in. To find a relative to take 3 widowers in? Well, that might be a tougher sell. Besides, these girls are young and can remarry. Why shouldn't they stay in their own country and marry among their own countrymen? After all, the children of Israel were instructed not to marry foreign wives, and it may be less likely to find a groom in Israel for these girls. And as Naomi has clearly stated, she has no husband and she is old. Even if she had a husband, would they wait till 2 boys are born and grown to marry? Orpah agrees and kisses her mother-in-law good-bye. But Ruth clings to Naomi.

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Both Ruth and Orpah had a similar level of revelation concerning knowledge of the Lord, but Ruth “bought in” and you can see that in her response. She tells Naomi not to refuse her, and she wants to be identified among the people of God. There is nothing in the text or context to suggest that Ruth was chosen and Orpah was not. Orpah could have insisted also and taken her chances. At the end of the day each of these corpses were faced with a tough choice. To move to another country and culture and live tough lives, but trust God. Or stay here where you have lived your entire life and have family roots. Ruth is actually taking a risk, but she is trusting God. It appears she simply chose to do that without any influence. There is certainly nothing in the context to suggest otherwise.

## Samuel



Samuel

**Now the boy Samuel ministered to the LORD before Eli. And the word of the LORD was rare in those days; there was no widespread revelation.<sup>2</sup> And it came to pass at that time, while Eli was lying down in his place, and when his eyes had begun to grow so dim that he could not see,<sup>3</sup> and before the lamp of God went out in the tabernacle of the Lord where**

**the ark of God was, and while Samuel was lying down, 4 that the LORD called Samuel. And he answered, "Here I am!"5 So he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." And he said, "I did not call; lie down again." And he went and lay down. 6 Then the LORD called yet again, "Samuel!" So Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." He answered, "I did not call, my son; lie down again."7 (Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, nor was the word of the LORD yet revealed to him.) 8 And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. So he arose and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you did call me." Then Eli perceived that the LORD had called the boy.9 Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down; and it shall be, if He calls you, that you must say, "Speak, LORD, for Your servant hears."" So Samuel went and lay down in his place. 10 Now the LORD came and stood and called as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel answered, "Speak, for Your servant hears." (1 Samuel 3:1-10)**

At this time Israelites have been living in a period of Judges. Basically, they lived in a theocracy. There was no government, and everyone did what was right in their own eyes. That of course was disastrously sinful leading to God allowing their enemies to subdue them. Then they would cry out to God for relief, and he would raise up a Judge to deliver them. All of those Judges were born corpses by the way. But here we are hundreds of years after Moses and Joshua. Eli is a descendant of Aaron and is the high priest at this time, and the tabernacle is apparently located in the city of Shiloh. There is still a testimony of the Lord in existence in the form of the tabernacle and priesthood, and God is self-limiting exposure of new revelation or intervention at this time in humanity except through the judges and priests.

Now Samuel was apparently taught about the Lord. After all he is serving in the Lord's tabernacle, and his mother Hanna and father Elkanah were God fearing and honoring people. But scripture tells us that Samuel did not yet know the Lord nor was the word of the Lord revealed to him. Now perhaps you are thinking that Samuel, despite being taught about the Lord, could not know the Lord for salvation unless the Lord provides a special revelation that cannot be resisted. But that theory does not really hold water here.

If you are considering the context here. Samuel simply was unaware that God used a normal audible voice to speak to humans. Samuel is hearing something through his ear gate, but he does not understand who it is that is speaking with him, because he is not expecting it. In the book of Genesis neither Abimelech or Laban were shocked that God spoke to them in a dream, but that was still in a dream. And what the scripture is telling us right up front was that there was not likely anyone alive at this time that God had spoken directly to because the word of the Lord was rare in those days. If you are lying in your bed at night and you hear a voice calling your name, would you immediately think it was God? No, you would be just like Samuel, you would get up and find out where that voice is coming

from! It even takes Eli 3 times before he realizes God is speaking with Samuel. After all, the word of the Lord was rare in those days.

Now all that being said, Samuel is a corpse born with a sinful nature at enmity with God. But just like God did with Noah, Abram, Moses and Joshua, God has chosen this corpse named Samuel to do something specific, and something God wants the world to see regarding Himself.

**So Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground.<sup>20</sup> And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel had been established as a prophet of the LORD.<sup>21</sup> Then the LORD appeared again in Shiloh. For the LORD revealed Himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the LORD.** (1 Samuel 3)

God now approaches Samuel as a child probably in his late teens, and speaks to him that one time. Now Samuel is a full-grown man, and the Lord has blessed him and been with him to establish him as a prophet, something not really emphasized since Moses. I suppose Joshua was also considered a prophet as well. But there is a distinction here between a judge and a prophet. There is also a distinction between a prophet and a priest. The prophet speaks to the people the word of the Lord. The priest intercedes for the people and brings the offerings and prayers of the people before the Lord. Certainly, the priest has a teaching role with regard to the law and ordinances of God. But the prophet speaks into the current and future events and tells the people what God is saying to them. The judge role was more of a deliverer role to deliver the people from the hands of their enemies by the leading of the Lord, but also to settle difficult disputes among the people. Samuel was established as a prophet of the Lord and a judge.

**And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life.<sup>16</sup> He went from year to year on a circuit to Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpah, and judged Israel in all those places.<sup>17</sup> But he always returned to Ramah, for his home was there. There he judged Israel, and there he built an altar to the LORD.** (1 Samuel 7)

**Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah,<sup>5</sup> and said to him, "Look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations." <sup>6</sup> But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to judge us." So Samuel prayed to the LORD.<sup>7</sup> And the LORD said to Samuel, "Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them.<sup>8</sup> According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt, even to this day--with which they have forsaken Me and served other gods--so they are doing to you also.** (1 Samuel 8)

The covenant people of God, His chosen people do not want a theocracy anymore. They do not want to have to cry out to God for deliverance from their

enemies, or to bless them with His gracious provision. No, they reject God from being their king. They want a man to be their king. Notice they did not ask for someone else to be anointed as prophet and judge. No, they want a king. Why is that? Because that is what the nations around them have, as well as their idols. This nation has come a long way from its founding. We are now far removed from the crossing of the Red Sea, the crossing of the Jordan, the walls of Jericho falling down. No, they do not want to identify anymore as the people which God brought up out of the land of Egypt. We are a modern nation now. The surrounding nations do not need to know us anymore as the people of God, but rather just like any other nation who has a king, government, and military.

**Then Samuel called the people together to the LORD at Mizpah,<sup>18</sup> and said to the children of Israel, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: "I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the hand of all kingdoms and from those who oppressed you.'<sup>19</sup> But you have today rejected your God, who Himself saved you from all your adversities and your tribulations; and you have said to Him, 'No, set a king over us!' Now therefore, present yourselves before the Lord by your tribes and by your clans." (1 Samuel 10)**

Saul became the first king of Israel. And I am going to cover him in more detail later. Samuel now is speaking to the children of Israel with a word from the Lord. This was the revelation they were given. They were all born corpses, and they are rejecting their God. For the sake of time, we are looking at cliff notes through the scriptures, but these citizens know who He is, who they are supposed to be, and they are actually being warned about the impact this choice will have on the already strained relationship they have with the Lord. They are exercising decision making completely without influence, and they are being told that they will be held responsible for their choices, and pay consequences. They hear and understand, and move forward anyway. Corpses can reject God consciously.

**"Now therefore, stand and see this great thing which the LORD will do before your eyes:<sup>17</sup> Is today not the wheat harvest? I will call to the LORD, and He will send thunder and rain, that you may perceive and see that your wickedness is great, which you have done in the sight of the LORD, in asking a king for yourselves." <sup>18</sup> So Samuel called to the LORD, and the LORD sent thunder and rain that day; and all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel. <sup>19</sup> And all the people said to Samuel, "Pray for your servants to the LORD your God, that we may not die; for we have added to all our sins the evil of asking a king for ourselves." <sup>20</sup> Then Samuel said to the people, "Do not fear. You have done all this wickedness; yet do not turn aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart.<sup>21</sup> And do not turn aside; for then you would go after empty things which cannot profit or deliver, for they are nothing.<sup>22</sup> For the LORD will not forsake His people, for His great name's sake, because it has pleased the LORD to make you His people.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to**

**pray for you; but I will teach you the good and the right way.<sup>24</sup> Only fear the LORD, and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you.<sup>25</sup> But if you still do wickedly, you shall be swept away, both you and your king." (1 Samuel 12)**

Even though the people were told what they were doing was incredibly offensive to God, they just were not feeling it. So, Samuel preached a fire and brimstone message and the Lord spoke through Samuel and through thunder and rain. All these wicked people who were born corpses? God takes pleasure in calling them His! How wonderful is that? You and I do not respond to rejection the way God does. I am extremely thankful God is God, and not a man! But notice what the message is. Even though you are very wicked, you are still God's people. Fear the Lord and serve Him with all your heart, for consider what great things He has done for you. But if you do wickedly, you will be swept away. Now these corpses are being given commands to follow with either a blessing or a judgment, completely depending on them being responsible for obedience. You cannot miss that. And you do not give corpses commands you know they cannot obey, because that would be disingenuous.

**And Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all the young men here?" Then he said, "There remains yet the youngest, and there he is, keeping the sheep." And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and bring him. For we will not sit down till he comes here." 12 So he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, with bright eyes, and good-looking. And the LORD said, "Arise, anoint him; for this is the one!"<sup>13</sup> Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel arose and went to Ramah.**

**14 But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and a distressing spirit from the LORD troubled him.<sup>15</sup> And Saul's servants said to him, "Surely, a distressing spirit from God is troubling you.<sup>16</sup> Let our master now command your servants, who are before you, to seek out a man who is a skillful player on the harp. And it shall be that he will play it with his hand when the distressing spirit from God is upon you, and you shall be well." 17 So Saul said to his servants, "Provide me now a man who can play well, and bring him to me." 18 Then one of the servants answered and said, "Look, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, who is skillful in playing, a mighty man of valor, a man of war, prudent in speech, and a handsome person; and the LORD is with him." 19 Therefore Saul sent messengers to Jesse, and said, "Send me your son David, who is with the sheep." (1 Samuel 16)**

You also cannot miss the sovereignty of God in action moving His agenda along. I must admit through here that God selects, and places His Spirit *upon* these anointed kings. And when He places His Spirit *upon* them, they appear to be spiritually manipulated. Until now I have not seen it. But when Saul prophesied naked that

was not from him at all and it sounds kind of creepy. Here the Spirit of the Lord is placed upon David, but was formerly upon Saul.

Look I am just a layman so don't mind me. But I am going to go out on a limb here and say that God took a risk on Saul, and placed His Spirit upon him. Then removed that Spirit from him and sent a distressing spirit in the Spirit's place, as His Spirit now is upon David. Okay, notice that His Spirit is capitalized and is singular. His Spirit was not upon Saul and David simultaneously. And the distressing spirit is not capitalized, but is sent by the Lord. You see a pattern develop here. The king is identified by an anointing with oil by God's prophet. In the case of Saul and David, God chose to also anoint them with His Spirit as well, but we do not see that after David. Yes, Solomon was anointed with oil and paraded through the city. God appeared to Solomon twice, and appeared before the people at the consecration of the temple. But we are not told in scripture that the Spirit of the Lord came upon Solomon or the other kings. I think there is some typology here because Jesus when He was baptized, the Spirit of the Lord descended upon Him. Of course, both Saul and David were born corpses, and both had their struggle with sin. Saul, much worse than Moses who only had 1 bad tantrum, ruined the typology God was setting forth, and God set him aside and restarted with David.

My point is I do not think you should be stereologically minded through this passage. Because this is not meant to be a picture of salvation, but of anointing. And ultimately Jesus is the Anointed of God.

**Now the word of the LORD came to Samuel, saying, "I greatly regret that I have set up Saul as king, for he has turned back from following Me, and has not performed My commandments." And it grieved Samuel, and he cried out to the LORD all night.** (1 Samuel 15)

"I greatly regret" is a very strong statement from almighty God. This is my exhibit A that God took a risk on Saul not knowing the outcome. But now seeing the outcome God has regrets. Saul is in a very important role that affects the lives of the entire nation, and Saul is simply sending all the wrong signs to the men under his charge and also before the people.

**So when Samuel rose early in the morning to meet Saul, it was told Samuel, saying, "Saul went to Carmel, and indeed, he set up a monument for himself; and he has gone on around, passed by, and gone down to Gilgal." 13 Then Samuel went to Saul, and Saul said to him, "Blessed are you of the LORD! I have performed the commandment of the LORD." 14 But Samuel said, "What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" 15 And Saul said, "They have brought them from the Amalekites; for the people spared the best of the sheep and the oxen, to sacrifice to the LORD your God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed."** (1 Samuel 15)

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Did you catch that? Saul went to Carmel and there erected a monument for himself! And now Samuel shows up and Saul is bragging about how he followed the commandment of the Lord. But he was told very specifically to completely and utterly destroy *everything and everyone* of the Amalekites, but Saul and his men saw things they liked and decided to keep them, *and* by the way, Saul spared Agag, king of the Amalekites.



**Then Samuel said to Saul, "Be quiet! And I will tell you what the LORD said to me last night." And he said to him, "Speak on." 17 So Samuel said, "When you were little in your own eyes, were you not head of the tribes of Israel? And did not the LORD anoint you king over Israel? 18 Now the LORD sent you on a mission, and said, "Go, and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are consumed.' 19 Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD? Why did you swoop down on the spoil, and do evil in the sight of the LORD?" 20 And Saul said to Samuel, "But I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and gone on the mission on which the LORD sent me, and brought back Agag king of Amalek; I have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. 21 But the people took of the plunder, sheep and oxen, the best of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice to the LORD your God in Gilgal." 22 So Samuel said: "Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams. 23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, And stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He also has rejected you from being king." (1 Samuel 15)**

Samuel says "Be quiet! And I will tell you what the Lord said to me last night." "What happened to humble Saul?" Alright now it is quite apparent here that Saul was of the impression that he would decide what "utterly destroy" means, because he is hot shot king now. There are men standing around waiting for orders after all. But Samuel makes it clear that Saul was to be obedient to the Lord and fear Him. And because he did not follow the voice of the Lord, the Lord rejected him from being king.

**And Samuel went no more to see Saul until the day of his death. Nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul, and the LORD regretted that He had made Saul king over Israel. (1 Samuel 15)**

There it is again that word regretted. I have not felt that depth of feeling from the Lord since Genesis 6. Is it possible that even God cannot fully understand the depth of depravity? Did God underestimate Saul's depravity? You know God has never been depraved. He does not comprehend it experientially. God does not know depravity in that way. He knows it is disgusting and awful. His great love for us moved Him to be gracious toward us in spite of our depravity. I know God views time differently than we do. But did God know what Saul was going to do with this authority that was entrusted to him? I do not think so. Otherwise, why would He say that He regrets His own selection? Again, I think God also took a risk on Adam. I know that God has foreknowledge, but I think sometimes He chooses to self-limit His foreknowledge in the moment for the sake of having a real relationship.

But in this case, He regrets taking that risk on Saul. Why? I think because Saul was such a poor example of the image God wanted him to portray. At this moment

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in time, the Promised Messiah would be the Anointed One of Israel who would be king forever, the Lord Jesus Christ. Saul just completely ruined this opportunity with his selfishness and pride leading to complete disobedience. Therefore, Saul gets disqualified and the Lord will make His covenant with David instead.

**"When you were little in your own eyes, were you not head of the tribes of Israel? And did not the LORD anoint you king over Israel?" (1 Samuel 15:17)**

Saul had a humble beginning, but the lure of power, glory, wealth, legacy and authority proved to be too much for Saul to resist. In the end Saul thought God was there to serve him. Saul thinks he is in charge, and he just needs to manage the religious aspect of the country before the people. But it is all about his kingdom. In this scene in 1 Samuel 15, as Samuel is attempting to distance himself from Saul and refuses to worship with Saul, Saul grabs Samuel's tunic and tears it. That was a gentle threat is what that was, and if you do not believe me look at this.

**Now the LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go; I am sending you to Jesse the Bethlehemite. For I have provided Myself a king among his sons." 2 And Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears it, he will kill me." But the LORD said, "Take a heifer with you, and say, "I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.'" (1 Samuel 16)**

As you can see Samuel got Saul's message quite literally. He now knows that Saul will kill him if he attempts to anoint someone else as king. God says "I have provided Myself a king". Saul was selected to provide a king the people wanted. David is selected to provide a king God wants to do a work through, and provide more typology through him, as depraved as David was.

## David and Solomon



David

**Then they told David, saying, "Look, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah, and they are robbing the threshing floors." 2 Therefore David inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall I go and attack these Philistines?" And the LORD said to David, "Go and attack the Philistines, and save Keilah." 3 But David's men said to him, "Look, we are afraid here in Judah. How much more then if we go to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines?" 4 Then David inquired of the LORD once again. And the LORD answered him and said, "Arise, go down to Keilah. For I will deliver the Philistines into your hand." 5 And David and his men went to Keilah and fought with the Philistines, struck them with a mighty blow, and took away their livestock. So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah. 6 Now it happened, when Abiathar the son of Ahimelech fled to David at Keilah, that he went down with an ephod in his hand. (1 Samuel 23)**

By this time David has already killed Goliath, and Saul has become very jealous of David and is hunting him like an animal. David is a renegade. But this is the first instance where David inquired of the Lord and the Lord answered him. Until now God placed His Spirit *upon* David, which I believe empowered him to be bold concerning Goliath. However this is the first time the Lord speaks to David verbally, and it is just a response to a prayer. I think it is safe to say that likely before he was anointed king, he feared the Lord as this was his testimony to Saul when Saul questioned him regarding the battle against Goliath. I am going to say that David is not a corpse at this time, he has exercised living faith and trust in the Lord. But David was born under Adam, so he was born a corpse. He responded to the revelation he had at an early age. Abiathar brought an ephod, which was something often held or worn by a priest in prayer to inquire of the Lord.

Did you notice David went back to the Lord after the men expressed anxiety? And the Lord graciously reassured David. The men had enough respect for David's relationship to God to move forward despite their fear. The matter went as the Lord said, and I am sure the faith of each man in God grew, as did the inhabitants of Keilah. God speaks to and works closely with one man, and the faith of many others is affected. This is a clear method of God by this point.

I make this point about God speaking to David because I believe it is relevant to develop a pattern that God is actually adjusting His method for human communication toward prophets at this time. His direct communication with David, though relevant, is not nearly on the same personal level as Moses. However, He is very intent on keeping a proper testimony of Himself in the earth and will utilize prophets primarily moving forward.

God's direct interaction with David throughout his life was primarily in this manner, God spoke to David as if he were a military general. David feared the Lord and wanted to honor Him with his life. But David did not have the relationship with

God that Moses or even Joshua did. God did speak to David through prophets also as we enter into a period of the kings and prophets.

We do not really know when David transitioned from not having faith, to having it. David had pretty basic everyday average person revelation of God by way of the teachings and traditions of his parents and culture. It seems from an early age David trusted God to help him be a good caregiver of the family sheep herd. He told Saul that God delivered the lion and the bear into his hand to rescue the sheep from their jaws. David believed early in his life. And yet he struggled so much with sin. I relate to that. I gave my heart to Jesus when I was only 9. I've struggled with plenty of sin since.

### Solomon

**And Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of his father David, except that he sacrificed and burned incense at the high places. 4 Now the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that was the great high place: Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar.**

**5 At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, "Ask! What shall I give you?" 6 And Solomon said: "You have shown great mercy to Your servant David my father, because he walked before You in truth, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with You; You have continued this great kindness for him, and You have given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day.7 Now, O LORD my God, You have made Your servant king instead of my father David, but I am a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in.8 And Your servant is in the midst of Your people whom You have chosen, a great people, too numerous to be numbered or counted.9 Therefore give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?" 10 The speech pleased the LORD, that Solomon had asked this thing.11 Then God said to him: "Because you have asked this thing, and have not asked long life for yourself, nor have asked riches for yourself, nor have asked the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern justice,12 behold, I have done according to your words; see, I have given you a wise and understanding heart, so that there has not been anyone like you before you, nor shall any like you arise after you.13 And I have also given you what you have not asked: both riches and honor, so that there shall not be anyone like you among the kings all your days.14 So if you walk in My ways, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days." 15 Then Solomon awoke; and indeed it had been a dream. And he came to Jerusalem and stood before the ark of the covenant of the LORD, offered up burnt offerings, offered peace offerings, and made a feast for all his servants. (1 Kings 3)**

Now we can see here that Solomon is off to a good start as king in place of his father David. We are told here that Solomon loved the Lord. We are not told when that took place. Until now the Lord had not spoken to Solomon, therefore it is assumed that he learned about God from his parents and culture. Solomon certainly saw plenty of sin in his father, but also David's love for God. However, God chooses to speak to Solomon in a dream. God appeared to Solomon a second time, and the scripture tells us that it was in the same manner. However, in 1 Kings 6 we read this.

**Then the word of the LORD came to Solomon, saying:12 "Concerning this temple which you are building, if you walk in My statutes, execute My judgments, keep all My commandments, and walk in them, then I will perform My word with you, which I spoke to your father David.13 And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake My people Israel." 14 So Solomon built the temple and finished it. (1 Kings 6)**

When God says "which I spoke to your father David" that was through the prophet Nathan. However, during the life and reign of Solomon, we do not see God send word to Solomon by a prophet. Nathan anoints him king and then just walks off the pages of scripture. I think the Bible records that Ahijah recorded some of the acts of Solomon, but he did not address Solomon on behalf of the Lord. The Lord spoke directly to Solomon on these 3 occasions. I think because Solomon is supposed to depict the millennial reign of Christ. But again, his depravity gets in the way. Even though Solomon started off well, we find that over time his love for foreign wives caused his heart to turn away from God. Solomon's depravity appears to get the better of him by the end of his life and he does not finish well. God rebukes Solomon as a result, speaking to him for the third and final time.

**So the LORD became angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned from the LORD God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice,10 and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he did not keep what the LORD had commanded.11 Therefore the LORD said to Solomon, "Because you have done this, and have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom away from you and give it to your servant.12 Nevertheless I will not do it in your days, for the sake of your father David; I will tear it out of the hand of your son.13 However I will not tear away the whole kingdom; I will give one tribe to your son for the sake of My servant David, and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen." (1 Kings 11)**

We can see the sovereignty of God and His mercies toward Solomon. Solomon, like Saul, did not remain faithful in following the Lord with a whole heart. But was led astray by the lusts of his heart. We also learn from Ecclesiastes that Solomon tested and tried just about everything under the sun regarding the flesh. But with the wisdom given him by God concluded that it was all vanity.

**And the LORD said to him: "I have heard your prayer and your supplication that you have made before Me; I have consecrated this house which you have built to put My name there forever, and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually.<sup>4</sup> Now if you walk before Me as your father David walked, in integrity of heart and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded you, and if you keep My statutes and My judgments,<sup>5</sup> then I will establish the throne of your kingdom over Israel forever, as I promised David your father, saying, "You shall not fail to have a man on the throne of Israel."<sup>6</sup> But if you or your sons at all turn from following Me, and do not keep My commandments and My statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods and worship them,<sup>7</sup> then I will cut off Israel from the land which I have given them; and this house which I have consecrated for My name I will cast out of My sight. Israel will be a proverb and a byword among all peoples.<sup>8</sup> And as for this house, which is exalted, everyone who passes by it will be astonished and will hiss, and say, "Why has the LORD done thus to this land and to this house?"<sup>9</sup> Then they will answer, "Because they forsook the LORD their God, who brought their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and have embraced other gods, and worshiped them and served them; therefore the LORD has brought all this calamity on them." (1 Kings 9)**

Now, God punishes Solomon and the nation Israel as a result. But He does not go so far as to cast the temple out of His sight as He warned at this time. Solomon's depravity will have a ripple effect into the future however that would eventually lead to Nebuchadnezzar coming and destroying the temple and carrying the people into captivity. So even though Solomon started well in his youth following the Lord, he ultimately did not finish well. God did not manipulate Solomon in his soul to love Him in his youth, nor to turn him away from God in his later years. Israel would have been spared a ton of negative consequences if God had just caused Solomon to remain faithful. But the Lord does not force anyone to love Him. Even those that are born into the covenant.

**So the king did not listen to the people; for the turn of events was from the LORD, that He might fulfill His word, which the LORD had spoken by Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat.**

**16 Now when all Israel saw that the king did not listen to them, the people answered the king, saying: "What share have we in David? We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse. To your tents, O Israel! Now, see to your own house, O David!" So Israel departed to their tents.<sup>17</sup> But Rehoboam reigned over the children of Israel who dwelt in the cities of Judah. <sup>18</sup> Then King Rehoboam sent Adoram, who was in charge of the revenue; but all Israel stoned him with stones, and he died. Therefore King Rehoboam mounted his chariot in haste to flee to Jerusalem.<sup>19</sup> So Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day. <sup>20</sup> Now it came to pass when all Israel heard that Jeroboam had come back, they sent for him and called him to the congregation, and made him king over all Israel. There was none who followed the house of David, but the tribe of Judah only. <sup>21</sup> And when Rehoboam came to Jerusalem, he assembled all the house of Judah with the tribe of**

**Benjamin, one hundred and eighty thousand chosen men who were warriors, to fight against the house of Israel, that he might restore the kingdom to Rehoboam the son of Solomon.<sup>22</sup> But the word of God came to Shemaiah the man of God, saying,<sup>23</sup> "Speak to Rehoboam the son of Solomon, king of Judah, to all the house of Judah and Benjamin, and to the rest of the people, saying,<sup>24</sup> "Thus says the LORD: "You shall not go up nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel. Let every man return to his house, for this thing is from Me."'" Therefore they obeyed the word of the LORD, and turned back, according to the word of the LORD. (1 Kings 12)**

God did intervene and turn the hearts of these people against Rehoboam in order to accomplish His will according to His divine judgment. This word was given to Shemaiah, who then spoke the word to the king and the people. Notice that all those that were born corpses in this passage obey the word of the Lord and return to their homes. The scripture does not say that the Lord poured out His spirit upon them. Not at all. God sent a man to tell the people His word. And the people in unison accept the word of the Lord from the man of God and simply take God at His word. God is definitely sovereign, no one will overrule Him.

Now during the period of the kings and prophets you will see that most of the kings were bad. In fact, during the divided kingdom the kings of Israel were all evil in the sight of the Lord. In the southern kingdom of Judah there were 8 good kings and 12 evil kings, and many of the good kings sinned later in life. See the charts over the next few pages. But the point is simply this, that God did not cause any of the kings to honor the Lord or to do evil in His sight. How does God impact the faith of humans during this time? He sent prophets who preached God's message to the kings and the people. Some feared God and repented, others preferred idolatry. But what God did was to send prophets to make sure He maintains a testimony of Himself in the earth.

As you can see from the charts below, this period of the kings lasted a little over 600 years. Then there was the 70 years of captivity, and then a little less than 100 years after the captivity is recorded Ezra and Nehemiah. The prophets span the entire period including the captivity and after. God spoke to the prophets, and the prophets spoke to the people to whom God sent them. God influenced mankind by maintaining a testimony of Himself, making promises in order to give the people hope, and even affecting geopolitical laws and policies to provide and protect His covenant people. God continues to overrule in the affairs of men to continue His plan on His timeline to bring His only begotten Son into the world in the fullness of time.

Every one of these kings was born a corpse. And only a few of them were tenderhearted toward the Lord and had a zeal for His word. I provided you this chart to assist in understanding this period, and God working through prophets primarily during this time. Remember this is based on a layman's study. I make no guarantees about the accuracy of dates. Some kings' reigns had overlap where a son and father were both considered kings. Such as when Amaziah was taken captive, and Uzziah got leprosy. In these cases, they were still called king because

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they were still alive, but their son reigned as acting king in an overlapping time period.

# Kings and Prophets

## Prophets

The prophets of God were tasked with bringing God's word to man. Many if not most of them suffered greatly as a result. And both in Israel, Judah, and in captivity they would speak to kings, as well as the common man. It was not uncommon for them to deliver messages on the Sabbaths at temple or high places in Israel and Judah. Old Testament prophets were considered intermediaries between God and people. But not in the same way priests do. Priests represent man before God, but the prophet represents God before man. The priest receives the confession and offerings of the people and presents them to God with intercession. But the prophet is sent to give out God's word for man to hear and receive.

<b>Prophet Name</b>	<b>Name Meaning</b>	<b>Prophesied To</b>	<b>Date - BC est.</b>	<b>Home Territory</b>
<b>Samuel</b>	His name is God	Israel United	1060-1020	Ramah
<b>Gad</b>	Good Fortune	David	1020-1010?	Unknown
<b>Nathan</b>	Gift	David/Solomon	1005-970?	Unknown
<b>Ahijah</b>	My Brother is Yahweh	Israel	935-910?	Unknown
<b>Elijah</b>	My God is Yah	Israel	870-845	Tishbe
<b>Elisha</b>	My God is Salvation	Israel	845-800	Abel Meholah
<b>Jonah</b>	Dove	Nineveh	781	Jerusalem
<b>Amos</b>	One supported (by God)	Israel	765-754	Tekoa
<b>Isaiah</b>	Yahweh Saves	Judah	760-673	Jerusalem
<b>Hosea</b>	Salvation	Israel	758-725	Israel
<b>Micah</b>	Who is Like Yahweh	Judah	738-698	Gath Hopher
<b>Nahum</b>	Consolation	Nineveh	658-615	Moresheh-gath
<b>Jeremiah</b>	May Yahweh Throw	Judah	650-582	Anathoth
<b>Zephaniah</b>	Yahweh Shelters	Judah	640-626	Unknown

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<b>Prophet Name</b>	<b>Name Meaning</b>	<b>Prophesied To</b>	<b>Date - BC est.</b>	<b>Home Territory</b>
<b>Ezekiel</b>	God Will Strengthen	Exiles	620-570	Babylon
<b>Daniel</b>	God is Judge	Babylon	620-540	Babylon
<b>Habakkuk</b>	Yahweh Keeps Safe	Judah	608-598	Elkosh
<b>Obadiah</b>	Yahweh's Servant	Edom	590	Jerusalem
<b>Zechariah</b>	Yah Remembered	Judah	522-509	Unknown
<b>Haggai</b>	Festive	Judah	520	Unknown
<b>Joel</b>	Yah is God	Judah	800 or 500?	Jerusalem
<b>Malachi</b>	My Messenger (is coming)	Judah	465	Unknown

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**Kings and Prophets**

<b>King Name</b>	<b>Judgment</b>	<b>Kingdom</b>	<b>Date - BC Est.</b>	<b>Prophet</b>
<b>Saul</b>	Right to Sinful	United	1051-1011	<b>Samuel</b>
<b>David</b>	Right	United	1011-971	<b>Gad/Nathan</b>
<b>Solomon</b>	Right to Sinful	United	971-931	<b>Nathan/Ahijah?</b>
<b>Rehoboam</b>	Evil	Judah	931-913	<b>Ahijah/Shemaiah</b>
<b>Jeroboam</b>	Evil	Israel	931-910	<b>Ahijah</b>
<b>Abijah</b>	Evil	Judah	913-911	<b>Ahijah</b>
<b>Nadab</b>	Evil	Israel	910-909	<b>Ahijah</b>
<b>Asa</b>	Right	Judah	911-870	<b>None</b>
<b>Baasha</b>	Evil	Israel	909-886	<b>Jehu</b>
<b>Elah</b>	Evil	Israel	886-885	<b>None</b>
<b>Zimri</b>	Evil	Israel	885	<b>None</b>
<b>Omri</b>	Evil	Israel	885-874	<b>None</b>
<b>Ahab</b>	Evil	Israel	874-853	<b>Elijah</b>
<b>Jehoshaphat</b>	Right	Judah	873-848	<b>Jahaziel</b>
<b>Ahaziah</b>	Evil	Israel	853-852	<b>Elijah</b>
<b>Joram</b>	Evil	Israel	852-841	<b>Elijah/Elisha</b>

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<b>King Name</b>	<b>Judgment</b>	<b>Kingdom</b>	<b>Date - BC Est.</b>	<b>Prophet</b>
<b>Jehoram</b>	Evil	Judah	853-841	<b>None</b>
<b>Ahaziah</b>	Evil	Judah	841	<b>None</b>
<b>Queen Athaliah</b>	Evil	Judah	841-835	<b>None</b>
<b>Jehu</b>	Evil	Israel	841-814	<b>Elisha</b>
<b>Joash (Jehoash)</b>	Right	Judah	835-796	<b>None</b>
<b>Jehoahaz</b>	Evil	Israel	814-798	<b>Elisha</b>
<b>Jehoash</b>	Evil	Israel	798-782	<b>None</b>
<b>Amaziah</b>	Right to Sinful	Judah	796-767	<b>Man of God</b>
<b>Jeroboam II</b>	Evil	Israel	793-753	<b>Jonah/Amos</b>
<b>Uzziah (Azariah)</b>	Right to Sinful	Judah	792-740	<b>Isaiah</b>
<b>Zechariah</b>	Evil	Israel	753	<b>Hosea</b>
<b>Shallum</b>	Evil	Israel	752	<b>Hosea</b>
<b>Menahem</b>	Evil	Israel	752-742	<b>Hosea</b>
<b>Pekahiah</b>	Evil	Israel	742-740	<b>Hosea</b>
<b>Pekah</b>	Evil	Israel	752-732	<b>Hosea</b>
<b>Jotham</b>	Right	Judah	750-732	<b>Isaiah/Micah</b>

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<b>King Name</b>	<b>Judgment</b>	<b>Kingdom</b>	<b>Date - BC Est.</b>	<b>Prophet</b>
<b>Ahaz</b>	Evil	Judah	735-716	<b>Isaiah/Micah</b>
<b>Hoshea</b>	Evil	Israel	732-722	<b>Hosea</b>
<b>Hezekiah</b>	Right	Judah	716-687	<b>Isaiah/Micah</b>
<b>Manasseh</b>	Evil to Humble	Judah	697-643	<b>Isaiah/Nahum</b>
<b>Amon</b>	Evil	Judah	643-641	<b>Jeremiah/Nahum</b>
<b>Josiah</b>	Right	Judah	641-609	<b>Jer/Nah/Zeph</b>
<b>Jehoahaz</b>	Evil	Judah	609	<b>Jer/Hab</b>
<b>Jehoiakim</b>	Evil	Judah	609-598	<b>Jer/Hab</b>
<b>Jehoiachin</b>	Evil	Judah	598-597	<b>Jer/Dan/Ezek</b>
<b>Zedekiah</b>	Evil	Judah	597-586	<b>Jer/Dan/Ezek/Ob</b>

<b>Governor Name</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Date-BC Est.</b>	<b>Prophet</b>
<b>Sheshbazzar</b>	Jerusalem	536?	<b>Unknown</b>
<b>Zerubbabel</b>	Jerusalem	?	<b>Haggai/Zechariah</b>
<b>Ezra</b>	Jerusalem	457 -?	<b>Joel/Malachi</b>
<b>Nehemiah</b>	Jerusalem	444-432	<b>None</b>

## Elijah to Amos



### Elijah

**And Elijah came to all the people, and said, "How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him." But the people answered him not a word.<sup>22</sup> Then Elijah said to the people, "I alone am left a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men.<sup>23</sup> Therefore let them give us two bulls; and let them choose one bull for themselves, cut it in pieces, and lay it on the wood, but put no fire under it; and I will prepare the other bull, and lay it on the wood, but put no fire under it.<sup>24</sup> Then you call on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD; and the God who answers by fire, He is God." So all the people answered and said, "It is well spoken." <sup>25</sup> Now Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "Choose one bull for yourselves and prepare it first, for you are many; and call on the name of your god, but put no fire under it." <sup>26</sup> So they took the bull which was given them, and they prepared it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even till noon, saying, "O Baal, hear us!" But there was no voice; no one answered. Then they leaped about the altar which they had made. <sup>27</sup> And so it was, at noon, that Elijah mocked them and said, "Cry aloud, for he is a god; either he is meditating, or he is busy, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is sleeping and must be awakened."<sup>28</sup> So they cried aloud, and cut themselves, as was their custom, with knives and lances, until the blood gushed out on them.<sup>29</sup> And when midday was past, they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice. But there was no voice; no one answered, no one paid attention. <sup>30</sup> Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come near to me." So all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD**

that was broken down.<sup>31</sup> And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the Lord had come, saying, "Israel shall be your name." <sup>32</sup> Then with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD; and he made a trench around the altar large enough to hold two seahs of seed.<sup>33</sup> And he put the wood in order, cut the bull in pieces, and laid it on the wood, and said, "Fill four waterpots with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice and on the wood."<sup>34</sup> Then he said, "Do it a second time," and they did it a second time; and he said, "Do it a third time," and they did it a third time.<sup>35</sup> So the water ran all around the altar; and he also filled the trench with water. <sup>36</sup> And it came to pass, at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, "LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that You are God in Israel and I am Your servant, and that I have done all these things at Your word.<sup>37</sup> Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that You are the LORD God, and that You have turned their hearts back to You again." <sup>38</sup> Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench.<sup>39</sup> Now when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, "The LORD, He is God! The LORD, He is God!" <sup>40</sup> And Elijah said to them, "Seize the prophets of Baal! Do not let one of them escape!" So they seized them; and Elijah brought them down to the Brook Kishon and executed them there. (1 Kings 18)

What you are seeing here is God working through a prophet to bring His people to repentance. There is no individual manipulation of any person's soul. No in fact, the Lord asks through His prophet Elijah "How long will you falter between 2 opinions? If the Lord is God then follow Him, but if Baal, follow him." God is appealing to their own reasoning, not creating faith within them through spiritual overpowering. God is sending a message to them that requires a response. And when Elijah prays to God before the people, He calls upon Him as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel reminding them that God is identified as their God. The covenant God. And then he prays to the Lord and entreats Him to send fire "so that the people may know that You are the Lord". Then God sent fire from heaven, and the people repented. God in no way is turning hearts by His strength of spiritual force, but by His witness. The people repent, and seize the prophets of Baal.

### The Shunammite Woman

I cannot read or listen to this passage without tearing up. This Shunammite woman is a remarkable soul.

**Now it happened one day that Elisha went to Shunem, where there was a notable woman, and she persuaded him to eat some food. So it was, as often as he passed by, he would turn in there to eat some food.<sup>9</sup> And she said to her husband, "Look now, I know that this is a holy man of God, who passes by us regularly.<sup>10</sup> Please, let us make a small upper room on the wall; and let us put a bed for him there, and a table and a chair and a**

lampstand; so it will be, whenever he comes to us, he can turn in there." 11 And it happened one day that he came there, and he turned in to the upper room and lay down there.12 Then he said to Gehazi his servant, "Call this Shunammite woman." When he had called her, she stood before him.13 And he said to him, "Say now to her, "Look, you have been concerned for us with all this care. What can I do for you? Do you want me to speak on your behalf to the king or to the commander of the army?" She answered, "I dwell among my own people." 14 So he said, "What then is to be done for her?" And Gehazi answered, "Actually, she has no son, and her husband is old." 15 So he said, "Call her." When he had called her, she stood in the doorway.16 Then he said, "About this time next year you shall embrace a son." And she said, "No, my lord. Man of God, do not lie to your maidservant!" 17 But the woman conceived, and bore a son when the appointed time had come, of which Elisha had told her.

18 And the child grew. Now it happened one day that he went out to his father, to the reapers.19 And he said to his father, "My head, my head!" So he said to a servant, "Carry him to his mother."20 When he had taken him and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon, and then died.21 And she went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, shut the door upon him, and went out.22 Then she called to her husband, and said, "Please send me one of the young men and one of the donkeys, that I may run to the man of God and come back." 23 So he said, "Why are you going to him today? It is neither the New Moon nor the Sabbath." And she said, "It is well."24 Then she saddled a donkey, and said to her servant, "Drive, and go forward; do not slacken the pace for me unless I tell you."25 And so she departed, and went to the man of God at Mount Carmel. So it was, when the man of God saw her afar off, that he said to his servant Gehazi, "Look, the Shunammite woman!26 Please run now to meet her, and say to her, "Is it well with you? Is it well with your husband? Is it well with the child?" And she answered, "It is well."27 Now when she came to the man of God at the hill, she caught him by the feet, but Gehazi came near to push her away. But the man of God said, "Let her alone; for her soul is in deep distress, and the LORD has hidden it from me, and has not told me." 28 So she said, "Did I ask a son of my lord? Did I not say, "Do not deceive me'?" 29 Then he said to Gehazi, "Get yourself ready, and take my staff in your hand, and be on your way. If you meet anyone, do not greet him; and if anyone greets you, do not answer him; but lay my staff on the face of the child." 30 And the mother of the child said, "As the LORD lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you." So he arose and followed her.31 Now Gehazi went on ahead of them, and laid the staff on the face of the child; but there was neither voice nor hearing. Therefore he went back to meet him, and told him, saying, "The child has not awakened." 32 When Elisha came into the house, there was the child, lying dead on his bed.33 He went in therefore, shut the door behind the two of them, and prayed to the LORD.34 And he went up and lay on the child, and put his mouth on his mouth, his eyes on his eyes, and his hands on his hands; and he stretched himself out on the child, and the flesh of the child became warm.35 He returned and walked back and forth in the house, and again went up and stretched himself out on him; then the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened

**his eyes.<sup>36</sup> And he called Gehazi and said, "Call this Shunammite woman." So he called her. And when she came in to him, he said, "Pick up your son."<sup>37</sup> So she went in, fell at his feet, and bowed to the ground; then she picked up her son and went out.** (2 Kings 4)

This nameless corpse walks onto the pages of scripture as a "notable woman". And she invites Elisha to have meals at her home, and he eats there regularly. Then she tells her husband that Elisha is a holy man of God, and asks "can we please make a room for him to lodge in as he travels through?" Obviously, they were people of means as they were able to dedicate a space for him. Naturally, Elisha makes a habit of lodging there and notes her humble hospitality. Then, he asks if he can speak on her behalf in his diplomatic meetings with the king or generals, and she simply says "I dwell among my own people." Which to me indicates that she may not be an Israelite. But she might be a descendant of Caleb so I cannot be 100% sure about it based on my research.

Regardless, Elisha's servant Gehazi notes she has no child, and her husband is old. But he did not say that she was old, just the husband. It was typical back then to marry older men, it provided good security and provision. But without a child she may be a lone widower before long. Elisha tells her she is going to be a mother and she practically scoffs at the notion. But look at what she did when the child died. She rushed to go to Elisha, and told Gehazi along the way that all was well, because she did not want to talk to Gehazi, she wanted to talk only to Elisha. Then says "Did I ask for a son?" Man, that chokes me up every time.

I do not know what revelation this woman had prior to her first meeting with Elisha. But she reached out to him. There is very little we know about her background. This is in the northern kingdom which was filled with idolatry. All the kings of the north were amoral leaders. If not for the prophets of God there would not be a witness. This was a corpse that just wanted to be near the man of God.

And God granted Elisha's prayer on her behalf and returned the child's soul to his body. Notice, in this you can see that death is separation of the soul and the body. Elisha prayed that the child's soul be returned to his body. When God granted that prayer and sent the child's soul back into its body, there was a reunion of the soul and the body resulting in life. The evidence of that was the child sneezing 7 times and opening his eyes. Spiritual death is man's soul separated from a right relationship with God. Salvation is the reunion of man's soul with God's, resulting in life evidenced by man's acts of faith because of his regenerated soul and right relationship with God.

This nameless woman never made a statement of faith with her mouth. She made a statement of faith by her actions, and the few statements she made illustrated faith. The just shall live by faith. That is, the life being lived demonstrates faith. And this little passage of scripture just doesn't have to be here. Why is God giving us this account? So that they may know that there is a God in Israel, and at this moment in time Elisha is His prophet. How many others came to trust the Lord because of this woman's testimony? We may never know. But would she have known God had it not been for the traveling preacher?

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God is creating faith in mankind, but it is not in the form of simply overpowering someone's soul by sheer spiritual power. All God has to do is be God. When He comes near souls are drawn to Him. You're going to see that. God reveals Himself, and some choose to trust Him. That is what I am seeing consistently.

### Jonah

**Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying,<sup>2</sup> "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me."<sup>3</sup> But Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa, and found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid the fare, and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. (Jonah 1)**

Now Jonah for sure is one of those outlier books. But that does not make it irrelevant for our study. For sure in this book, Jonah is being manipulated against his will. I cannot argue against it. Jonah said no, and God said "we will see about that". Let's face it God's not respecting boundaries here. Jonah does not want to preach in Nineveh, please accept no for an answer. NOT! Jonah pretends he does not hear the Lord, then tries to run and hide. Nineveh was a very wicked city, and a nemesis against Israel. Jonah found the mission untenable. But he forgot Who was asking.

Now all of us know about the great fish and Jonah's prayer. This discussion is not focused on breaking all that down. The bottom line is Jonah will preach God's message in Nineveh. And may I say, we also should stop running from opportunities to share Jesus in a very wicked world. Jonah's message was not a gentle one at all.

**And Jonah began to enter the city on the first day's walk. Then he cried out and said, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!"**

**<sup>5</sup> So the people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them.<sup>6</sup> Then word came to the king of Nineveh; and he arose from his throne and laid aside his robe, covered himself with sackcloth and sat in ashes.<sup>7</sup> And he caused it to be proclaimed and published throughout Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; do not let them eat, or drink water.<sup>8</sup> But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily to God; yes, let every one turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands.<sup>9</sup> Who can tell if God will turn and relent, and turn away from His fierce anger, so that we may not perish? <sup>10</sup> Then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it. (Jonah 3)**

Wow, that is not a very nice message. 40 days and it's over, Nineveh is done, toast! Not a very theological message, no call for repentance. But the people repented anyway. "What do we have to lose?" they thought. Perhaps if we repent God will spare us. Now friends, the pattern is the same. God works through a man here and a man there in order to impact multitudes. And in some cases it is clear God does not care if you are willing or not. You will preach My message! If you are

going to be a follower of Christ, get ready for that. Jesus sent the disciples out. God was ready to destroy Nineveh but He wanted to double check and see if they should get more time. Turns out they should in His view, because they humbled themselves before Him. Nahum will come along later and spell out the destruction of Nineveh. It was not a matter of if, but of when. God will judge the nations, and the persons! God is going to get around to all of that!

But the main point here is that this is an entire city of people that were obviously wicked and worthy of judgment. They, as wicked as they were consciously recognized their sin, repented, and humbled themselves with sackcloth and ashes. An entire city of corpses receiving a very simplistic message from a known prophet of the God of Israel repents in sackcloth and ashes.

They responded to the revelation given without undue influence. Just a message, that's all.

**But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he became angry.<sup>2</sup> So he prayed to the LORD, and said, "Ah, LORD, was not this what I said when I was still in my country? Therefore I fled previously to Tarshish; for I know that You are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm.<sup>3</sup> Therefore now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live!"<sup>4</sup> Then the LORD said, "Is it right for you to be angry?"** (Jonah 4)

Why did Jonah run from God's command? Because he knew God was sending him to preach to wicked people so that He could have mercy on them. When God has mercy just as Jonah anticipated, Jonah says he would rather die and believe me he is upset with God right now. God says "Is it right for you to be angry?"

**But the LORD said, "You have had pity on the plant for which you have not labored, nor made it grow, which came up in a night and perished in a night.<sup>11</sup> And should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons who cannot discern between their right hand and their left--and much livestock?"** (Jonah 4)

God is stating the obvious regarding the Ninevites depravity. Now this city of 120,000 is a city full of corpses. I believe they are still corpses following these events. And God is going to judge the city eventually according to His word from Nahum. But God wanted to have mercy. He is looking for a reason to spare them, even to delay the inevitable. Jonah is not happy about it.

But you have to see a view of the Lord here that you do not see much in the rest of scripture. Friends, this city of 120,000 recognized a message from God that did not even mention His name. I am sure that Jonah wore clothes that identified him as a prophet of God. Regardless, with the very simple message they were able to know who it was that was threatening to destroy their city, and the reason why. Because their actions demonstrate that. I am not convinced this is a

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repentance leading to salvation, but it is repentance that delayed judgment. That is what a city full of corpses did.

### Amos

**Hear this word that the LORD has spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying: 2 "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; Therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities." 3 Can two walk together, unless they are agreed? 4 Will a lion roar in the forest, when he has no prey? Will a young lion cry out of his den, if he has caught nothing? 5 Will a bird fall into a snare on the earth, where there is no trap for it? Will a snare spring up from the earth, if it has caught nothing at all? 6 If a trumpet is blown in a city, will not the people be afraid? If there is calamity in a city, will not the LORD have done it? 7 Surely the Lord GOD does nothing, Unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets. 8 A lion has roared! Who will not fear? The Lord GOD has spoken! Who can but prophesy? (Amos 3)**

"You only have I known of all the families of the earth". That is a very important statement. On the one hand you see God did sovereignly choose Abraham, Isaac, and Israel to reveal Himself to them and through them in a very special way that the other nations of the earth did not. Is that Sovereign Selection? Yes it is! But it is categorical in the grand scheme of things, not individual. What was the intention, to save only the children of Israel? No, of course not. Remember there was a mixed multitude that went out with them. A multitude is a lot of people am I right? God chose to create a nation to provide a witness to the world that there is a God in Israel. So that the world may know that He is the Lord! Why? So they can humble themselves and receive His mercy.

Listen, God took no pleasure in destroying all life on the earth saving only Noah and his family. God promised Noah he would not destroy the earth again by flood. And God changed His tactics with mankind from that point on. God is interfering in the affairs of men in order to battle the depravity in man so that it will not reach that level of iniquity again. And you see God through the prophet's declaring judgments on cities and nations. And God will say things like "for their sin is not yet full" as if He is being patient and merciful just like He was with Nineveh in the days of Jonah. However, God has destroyed cities and countries over the centuries to contain sin to some extent, so that the iniquity of the world does not reach the level it was in the days of Noah before it is time. Now Jesus told us that days like that are coming in the future, right before His second advent.

"Can two walk together unless they are agreed?" Why does God make statements like this if He already knows that no one *can* even know who He is, let alone walk with Him in agreement? Look if you are a Christian, are you actually suffering from Stockholm Syndrome? I mean did the Lord save you against your will and capture you because there was no other way? Fathers, do NOT go out and kidnap a virgin to be the bride for your son! Not even if there are no good virgins out there that can truly understand just how wonderful your son is. Do not do that! It would be

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better that your son not have a bride, than to kidnap one and then you know, once they get to know your son they will of course fall in love with him. That is called Stockholm Syndrome. That is not what the church is today. The church is the bride of Christ, bought and redeemed by His precious blood. But we are not a kidnapped bride with Stockholm Syndrome. That is not the picture of what the church is today. When you take a bride for your son, you must always have consent. Can 2 walk together if they are not agreed?

When Abraham sent his servant to go and take a bride for his son Isaac, that is a beautiful portrait of the Holy Spirit going out into the world and taking a bride for the Lord Jesus. The imagery is absolutely striking. But do you know what the scripture says? I encourage you to go back to Genesis 24 and read the entire context.

**So they said, "We will call the young woman and ask her personally."58 Then they called Rebekah and said to her, "Will you go with this man?" And she said, "I will go."**

**Then Rebekah lifted her eyes, and when she saw Isaac she dismounted from her camel;65 for she had said to the servant, "Who is this man walking in the field to meet us?" The servant said, "It is my master." So she took a veil and covered herself. 66 And the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done.67 Then Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent; and he took Rebekah and she became his wife, and he loved her. So Isaac was comforted after his mother's death. (Genesis 24)**

They called the young woman and asked her personally. The servant did not take a bride for Abraham's son Isaac without her consent. That is important to see.

## Isaiah to Daniel



Isaiah

Wow Isaiah has so much rich content, and the purpose of this writing is to try to provide a big picture throughout the whole word while remaining brief and concise as we focus on testing this theory presented by reformed theologians.

**"Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk Without money and without price. 2 Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And let your soul delight itself in abundance. 3 Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live; And I will make an everlasting covenant with you-- The sure mercies of David. 4 Indeed I have given him as a witness to the people, A leader and commander for the people. 5 Surely you shall call a nation you do not know, And nations who do not know you shall run to you, Because of the LORD your God, And the Holy One of Israel; For He has glorified you."**

**6 Seek the LORD while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near. 7 Let the wicked forsake his way, And the unrighteous man his thoughts; Let him return to the LORD, And He will have mercy on him; And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon. 8 "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD. 9 "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55)**

The day is coming in the future when God's original intent for the nation Israel will be realized. It was man's depravity that the imagery and typology of the Old Testament is imperfect. But in the future Jesus will sit on the throne of David, and all the nations of the earth will go to Jerusalem to learn of God. The government shall rest on His shoulders! In the future, temptation will be completely removed, and then there will be abundance of mercies and pardons. Then the glory of Israel will be clearly seen because Jesus is now on the throne reigning in righteousness.

This is an invitation! Come! Come! Seek the Lord! Call upon Him while He is near! Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts, Let him return to the Lord and He will have mercy on him. My friends, how can you calculate sovereign selection through here? How can the wicked forsake his way? Doesn't God know he *can't*? How can the unrighteous man forsake his thoughts? Doesn't God know he is not *able* to do that because he is totally depraved? How can this message be given? It cannot be a message to those who already have faith, because if that were the case they should have already repented. This is an invitation to come, and to repent. That calls for An active response brother. And a response is not a work. It is just a response.

**Thus says the LORD: "Keep justice, and do righteousness, For My salvation is about to come, And My righteousness to be revealed. 2 Blessed is the man who does this, And the**

**son of man who lays hold on it; Who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, And keeps his hand from doing any evil."**

**Do not let the son of the foreigner Who has joined himself to the LORD Speak, saying, "The LORD has utterly separated me from His people"; Nor let the eunuch say, "Here I am, a dry tree." 4 For thus says the LORD: "To the eunuchs who keep My Sabbaths, And choose what pleases Me, And hold fast My covenant, 5 Even to them I will give in My house And within My walls a place and a name Better than that of sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name That shall not be cut off. 6 "Also the sons of the foreigner Who join themselves to the LORD, to serve Him, And to love the name of the LORD, to be His servants-- Everyone who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, And holds fast My covenant-- 7 Even them I will bring to My holy mountain, And make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices Will be accepted on My altar; For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations." 8 The Lord GOD, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, says, "Yet I will gather to him Others besides those who are gathered to him." (Isaiah 56)**

How can the Lord say this? "The son of a foreigner who has joined himself to the Lord" is a very interesting statement is it not? God's word says "joined himself to the Lord". How can this be possible? And "everyone who keeps from defiling My Sabbath, and holds fast My covenant" will also be brought to God's holy mountain. But who is it that the Lord will gather? Those that hold fast His covenant. What does that mean "hold fast"? It means faith! It means to live your life believing in that promise. And because God is sovereign and He is able to save to the uttermost, and He is able to accomplish this promise, you can trust Him. The emphasis on God's sovereignty in scripture is to provide you and I with the confidence we need to trust Him. In a way you could say He is forcing us to trust Him, but still, we know that not everyone does. We do not have to know why or how? God says He will save "those that hold fast My covenant." God does 100% of the saving, but man is responsible for believing. And this text makes no sense if God is the one who is doing the believing within the individual for the individual unto Himself. It just does not fly. I am sorry.

To me Isaiah 53 through 56 is the gospel according to Isaiah. In 53 Jesus is our Passover Lamb as all of the iniquity of the entire world was placed upon Him. And it was then that it pleased the Lord to bruise Him. If you want to know how much God hates sin, look at the cross under the spotlight of Isaiah 53! It was there that God's wrath was poured out for the sins of the world while that very heavy burden was placed on the Lord Jesus. By His stripes we are healed.

Then in chapter 54 God is letting the people know that His wrath was for a season, but now that Jesus has dealt with the sin and depravity issue, God can now promise a great salvation and reconciliation for the nation Israel. For the blood of bulls and goats could never wash away sin. But now that Jesus has redeemed us with His precious blood, there is the promise of great blessing and a call to worship and to break out into singing! For your Maker is your husband!

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In chapter 55 you have the invitation of God to everyone. Anyone who thirsts can come! Jesus is the water of life, he who comes to Him shall never thirst. There is the call to be reconciled to God and receive the great salvation provided with repentance, the result of which is great abundance and blessing from God. And the picture is given of the millennial reign of Christ when all the nations will come to know the Lord because He has glorified Israel with Christ who now sits on the throne ruling the entire earth from Jerusalem.

Then in 56 we see that God's salvation is not only for the Jew, but also for the Greek. And that it is based on faith being tested and proven. "Blessed is the man who lays hold on it." Now if you are a reformer and you have your soteriological glasses on, you are thinking in your mind "well yes but only the ones God chooses and enables will lay hold of it". This is why I encourage you to take those glasses off. The text here does not say that! Study this text with sound hermeneutical practices in its context, and in conjunction with the whole of God's word. But don't just assume something because you have been convinced of a soteriological theory, because at best that is all soteriology is, theoretical not theological. The text says "has joined himself to the Lord" and "chooses what pleases Me" and "holds fast my covenant". These are really strong statements with action verbs that simply defy the notion of Total Depravity as defined by reformers as being accurate. However, these statements fall short of being considered a work. They are the thoughts in men's hearts that God is talking about here, which leads to works. But works of faith, not works for faith but rather the result of faith, or the proof of faith. You can say you have faith your car will get you to the grocery store and back, but when you get into the car and drive it, well your faith is now realized and proven.

"Has joined himself to Me" - to identify with Him and His people, to call upon the name of the Lord.

"Chooses what pleases Me" - to agree with God about what is good and right, and out of reverence and humility before him, choose to have the mind set of pleasing the Lord.

"Holds fast My covenant" - that is in your heart, you hold onto the promises of God. Your hope rests in Him. You believe He is trustworthy, and that He is the Holy One who can save.

None of this can be called works of righteousness for salvation. However, when you have a heart and mind that loves God and wants to identify with Him, please Him, and hope in Him then that will produce a life inside you that illustrates that heart and mind. If your life is not illustrating that, then you need to get alone and spend more time with the Lord, and renew your mind with God's word and promises, praise Him, thank Him, confess and go again.

Have you ever been in a big store and heard someone using God's name as a curse word? I am trying to make a habit to praise Jesus out loud and tell Him I love Him, and pray out loud for the Lord to forgive the man that just said that for he is unaware. Everytime I do that, people around me get just a little revelation. I want to be intentional about having the heart and mindset not just in quiet time, but all the time. But I fail miserably all the time.

Jeremiah

**"And it shall be, when you show this people all these words, and they say to you, "Why has the LORD pronounced all this great disaster against us? Or what is our iniquity? Or what is our sin that we have committed against the LORD our God?' 11 then you shall say to them, "Because your fathers have forsaken Me," says the LORD; "they have walked after other gods and have served them and worshiped them, and have forsaken Me and not kept My law. 12 And you have done worse than your fathers, for behold, each one follows the dictates of his own evil heart, so that no one listens to Me. (Jeremiah 16)**

Wow what an indictment. Everyone is born a corpse even though they are born under God's covenant. God has chosen them and that is clear, He did not choose other nations. If you wanted to hear from a prophet of God, you would have to travel to Israel or Judah. But God wanted the whole world to know that there was a God in Israel. Therefore He created the nation, set up its law, customs, and holiday feasts all designed to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, and to promise salvation through Him.

But God is saying to them that they have forsaken Him, and more importantly they are following the dictates of their hearts so that no one listens to God. Question: Why is God upset that no one is listening to Him? Doesn't He know that one *can*? Look there is no one more patient than the Almighty God, but He is genuinely upset here. In fact at this time God chose the corpse Jeremiah to be His prophet at this time, and the Northern Kingdom has already been defeated, dissolved and carried into captivity about 75 years prior. God sends Jeremiah to preach to Judah that they too will be defeated and carried away if they do not repent. They did not.

But the point here is that God *wanted* them to listen to Him. How did He want them to do that? They can keep the Sabbaths, go to the temple, hear the reading of the word, and take a blood sacrifice and confess their personal sin (transferring the sin to the animal by faith), and turn their hearts back to God. Listen to the messages given by His prophet Jeremiah. God is pleading with them to please just listen to Him. It is not that they cannot, because if they could not then God would not be upset because He would not have that expectation. God is upset because they are failing to meet the expectations of corpses. He wants them to be a witness of Him and His testimonies, that is why He brought them out of the land of Egypt. But even though they are born under the covenant, they are still born spiritual corpses, but are exhorted to listen.

Ezekiel

**Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying: 17 "Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their own ways and deeds; to Me their way was like the uncleanness of a woman in her customary impurity. 18 Therefore I poured out My fury on them for the blood they had shed on the land, and for their idols with**

**which they had defiled it.19 So I scattered them among the nations, and they were dispersed throughout the countries; I judged them according to their ways and their deeds.20 When they came to the nations, wherever they went, they profaned My holy name--when they said of them, "These are the people of the LORD, and yet they have gone out of His land.'21 But I had concern for My holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations wherever they went. 22 "Therefore say to the house of Israel, "Thus says the Lord GOD: "I do not do this for your sake, O house of Israel, but for My holy name's sake, which you have profaned among the nations wherever you went.23 And I will sanctify My great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst; and the nations shall know that I am the LORD," says the Lord GOD, "when I am hallowed in you before their eyes.24 For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. (Ezekiel 36)**

The people of Judah are now in captivity because they would not repent, and God is spelling it out very plainly. As I have said God is sovereign, but He is consistent and He does not work in the shadows, but out in the open. His plan from Noah on, is to select a man, group or nation and do a work affecting the faith of others. He created a nation to create a living portrait of the kingdom of God. There is His temple, the altar, the ark of the covenant. God is in the business of revelation using a very small number of people as instruments to affect the masses to turn to Him, humble themselves before Him, trust Him and love Him. There is no scriptural evidence to support that God wanted the children of Israel not to repent. They were all born in a nation created by God for His testimonies. Their entire legal system was built upon it as well. But they were still born depraved, yet were expected to listen to Him and live by faith.

God promises them that He will regather them from among the nations, and bring them into their own land. I believe He is referring to the future millennial reign of Christ here however. Yes there was a revival under Ezra, but that does not measure up to what we read next. Regather here is not for the people currently in captivity. This regathering is a regathering of all Israel. This is the resurrection they believed in. When God would regather all of them from all of world history and they will all dwell in that land, and Jesus the son of David will be their king. They will be reconciled to Jesus in that day.

**Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols.26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.27 I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.28 Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God.29 I will deliver you from all your uncleannesses. I will call for the grain and multiply it, and bring no famine upon you.30 And I will multiply the fruit of your trees and the increase of your fields, so that you need never again bear the reproach of famine among the nations.31 Then you will remember**

**your evil ways and your deeds that were not good; and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities and your abominations.<sup>32</sup> Not for your sake do I do this," says the Lord GOD, "let it be known to you. Be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel!" <sup>33</sup> "Thus says the Lord GOD: "On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will also enable you to dwell in the cities, and the ruins shall be rebuilt.<sup>34</sup> The desolate land shall be tilled instead of lying desolate in the sight of all who pass by.<sup>35</sup> So they will say, "This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden; and the wasted, desolate, and ruined cities are now fortified and inhabited.'<sup>36</sup> Then the nations which are left all around you shall know that I, the LORD, have rebuilt the ruined places and planted what was desolate. I, the LORD, have spoken it, and I will do it." <sup>37</sup> "Thus says the Lord GOD: "I will also let the house of Israel inquire of Me to do this for them: I will increase their men like a flock.<sup>38</sup> Like a flock offered as holy sacrifices, like the flock at Jerusalem on its feast days, so shall the ruined cities be filled with flocks of men. Then they shall know that I am the LORD.""" (Ezekiel 36)**

Now a lot of people read this and they think that this is a prophecy of the church. Wrong my brethren, not so. Because this promise is that they will dwell in the land of their fathers, "I will call for grain and multiply it, and there will be no famine". So they will say "This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden". These are not statements that picture the church. This is a prophecy regarding the millennial reign of Christ when Jerusalem and Israel will blossom like a rose when Jesus Himself reigns from Jerusalem. That is coming friends. God is sovereign and He will bring it to pass. But this is not a passage of scripture that you use for the doctrine of salvation or soteriology. It is irresponsible to use this passage in that way.

What is our hope as Christians? Do we not still sin? Is it not our hope to spend eternity in the presence of Jesus? And on that day we will no longer sin, we will be clean, and we will obey more perfectly then because evil will be completely defeated and eradicated from even our very souls! And there will be no more temptation! How wonderful is our hope! Their hope was different. God always promised them a land, and they will all live there in harmony with Jesus on that day.

I covered this passage because I know some people think it supports reformed theology. It is important to point out that this passage is not about salvation as much as it is the future resurrection of Old Testament saints, and how God is going to completely eradicate all sin from their presence as He will ours in eternity. The ones God will resurrect will be those that not only were born under the covenant, but held fast to that covenant.

In other words, they lived by faith, which grew after they made the initial commitment to listen to God and respond with humility and faith leading to obedience. God calls these people the remnant, and He kept a remnant throughout all generations. Not with manipulation, but simply because His word will not return void, it will complete His work without individual manipulation on a mass scale.

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There will be those corpses even that were born by blood under the covenant that will not be raised to life with Jesus, because they did not live by faith. For the just shall live by faith, and without faith it is impossible to please God. The economy of the Old Testament is no different than the New Testament. God's people identify with Him by faith and live according to that faith.

We saw that in Rahab, Ruth and others that simply responded to the revelation they had with humility, identifying with God and His people, and holding fast to His covenant. These women were not born by blood under the covenant, but they lived by faith and they will be included in this resurrection described here.

God makes it clear that He is not doing this for their sake, but for His own sake! He tells them candidly that they are to be ashamed and confounded for their ways! Why should they be ashamed? Because they profaned His name among the nations wherever they went.

Why is God doing this for His sake? "Then they shall know that I am the Lord". That's why. He wants the whole world to see who He is. Even the ones that will be condemned for all eternity separated from God in outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth continually, they will see Jesus before they are condemned and they will confess that He is Lord. And they will be tormented for all eternity knowing the blessing they missed out on. How shall you neglect so great a salvation? The day is coming when salvation will no longer be offered. And God is going to bring it to pass because He is sovereign.

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Daniel

**Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, who sent His Angel and delivered His servants who trusted in Him, and they have frustrated the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they should not serve nor worship any god except their own God! 29 Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation, or language which speaks anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made an ash heap; because there is no other God who can deliver like this." (Daniel 3)**

This is what Nebuchadnezzar said after the incident of the fiery furnace. He saw the Angel of the Lord in the midst of the furnace and now declares "There is no other God that can deliver like this".

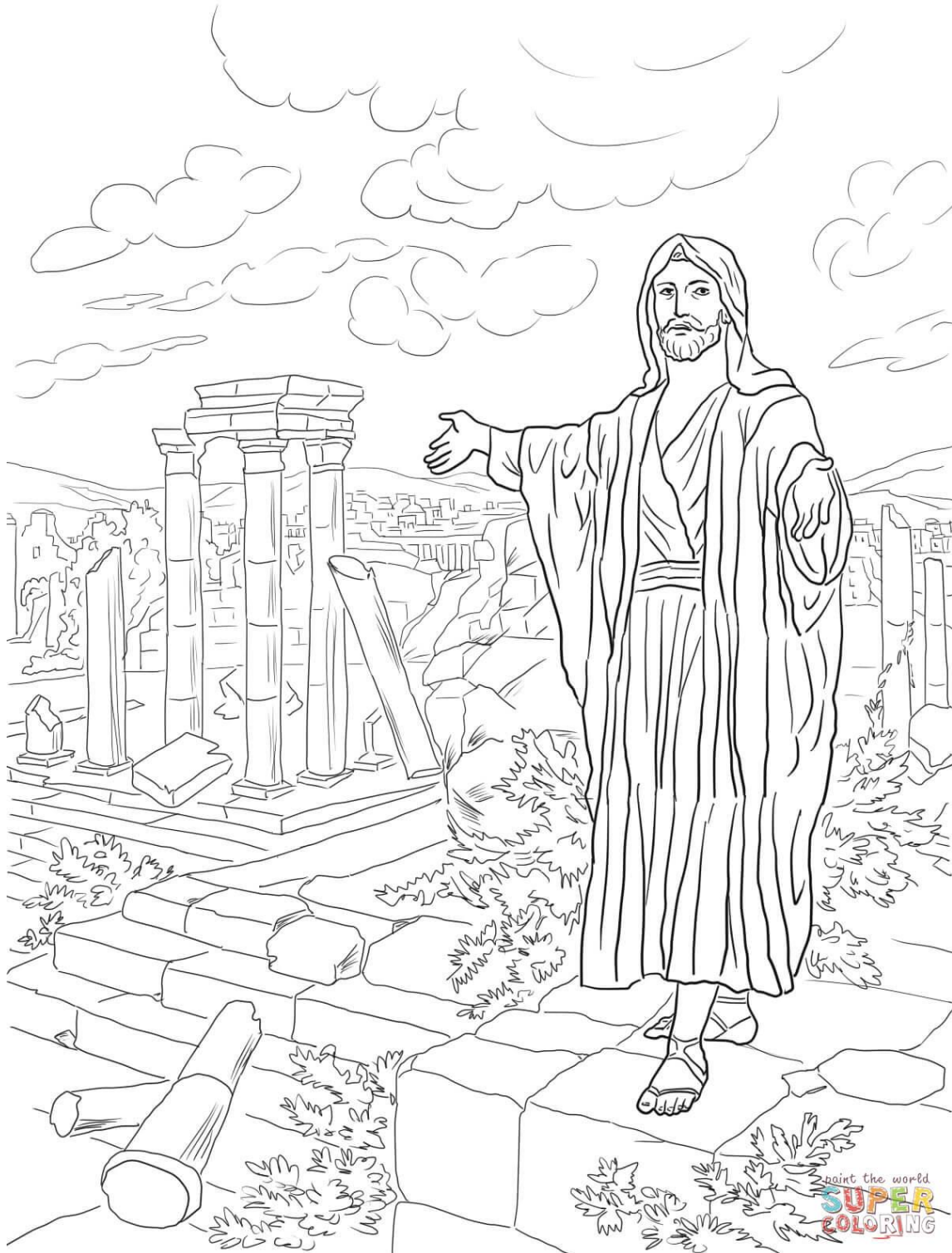
**And at the end of the time I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me; and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever: For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom is from generation to generation. 35 All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; He does according to His will in the army of heaven And among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand Or say to Him, "What have You done?" 36 At the same time my reason returned to me, and for the glory of my kingdom, my honor and splendor returned to me. My counselors and nobles resorted to me, I was restored to my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added to me. 37 Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all of whose works are truth, and His ways justice. And those who walk in pride He is able to put down. (Daniel 4)**

I do not know if Nebuchadnezzar will be on the right side of eternity or not. That is not for me to decide. What I do know is that this man was definitely depraved and born a corpse. But he was able to recognize God when he saw Him do wonders, and gave Him glory for who He is, and was humbled by God. Now you can certainly argue that God intervened in his life and that is certainly true. But there is nothing God is doing in Nebuchadnezzar's life during this time for the sake of His people or His sovereign plan for mankind. God is investing solely in Nebuchadnezzar here to humble him for 7 seasons (probably years) until his hair grew and looked like eagle's feathers, and his nails like bird's claws. After his sanity is returned to him, he makes this confession about the Most High. Did God force him to believe? Maybe! Is it saving faith? Do not know. Did he get circumcised and start keeping sabbaths and Passover? There is no record of that. The point is God did not do it with spiritual manipulation, but through trials and confrontations. This is one of those occasions where the sovereignty of God is being emphasized, and yet at the same time God seems to be working in Nebuchadnezzar's life. This is the last account we have in scripture regarding him. And secular history does not even show a record of this 7-year madness period. Regardless, you have the statements he made in chapter 2,

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3 and now here. He was a corpse but he recognized who God was, and rationally responded to God with this confession.

## Haggai to Malachi



## Haggai

**"Thus speaks the LORD of hosts, saying: "This people says, "The time has not come, the time that the LORD's house should be built." 3 Then the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, saying, 4 "Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, and this temple to lie in ruins?" 5 Now therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts: "Consider your ways! 6 "You have sown much, and bring in little; You eat, but do not have enough; You drink, but you are not filled with drink; You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm; And he who earns wages, Earns wages to put into a bag with holes." 7 Thus says the LORD of hosts: "Consider your ways! 8 Go up to the mountains and bring wood and build the temple, that I may take pleasure in it and be glorified," says the LORD. 9 "You looked for much, but indeed it came to little; and when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why?" says the LORD of hosts. "Because of My house that is in ruins, while every one of you runs to his own house. (Haggai 1)**

A remnant of the children of Israel has now returned from Babylonian captivity. And Zerubbabel is governor, and Joshua high priest, but there is no temple because Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed Solomon's temple. But the temple represents a testimony of the Lord of hosts. This Lord of hosts communicates God's ability to bring things to pass, because the hosts in and under heaven obey His voice!

Twice the Lord says through both Haggai and Joshua, "Consider your ways!". Not His ways, your ways! These corpses are being confronted by the Lord. This is a very common occurrence when He sends messengers to inform the people of His commands. And He makes the argument that their ways are not working. Why? Because God is not cooperating that is why! He says you make money, and I just blow it away. You are spinning your wheels and it is amounting to nothing is what God is telling them. Now, He says, go up and build the temple.

God is commanding these corpses to have faith, and honor the Lord first and order your life around Him, not yourselves, your homes, your retirement, your whatever. God says "order your life around Me". Build the temple, keep the sabbath, worship with offerings and love your God and your neighbor and all these things will be added unto you. Here we are this is the remnant, and they need to be reminded that they are quickly going back to putting themselves first. I tell you this depravity, it is a stubborn problem throughout the history of mankind.

These people were returning from captivity, and their primary concern was building nice homes for themselves to live in, while the house of the Lord remains in ruins and there is no organized effort to do anything about it! No one seems to care. What does God do? He sends Haggai to remind them whose they are. And what it means to be a citizen of Israel, God's people. God still wants their participation and cooperation so that His testimony remains in the earth, and that the nations would be drawn to Him.

Ezra / Nehemiah

**Now the temple was finished on the third day of the month of Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of King Darius.16 Then the children of Israel, the priests and the Levites and the rest of the descendants of the captivity, celebrated the dedication of this house of God with joy.17 And they offered sacrifices at the dedication of this house of God, one hundred bulls, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs, and as a sin offering for all Israel twelve male goats, according to the number of the tribes of Israel.18 They assigned the priests to their divisions and the Levites to their divisions, over the service of God in Jerusalem, as it is written in the Book of Moses. 19 And the descendants of the captivity kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the first month.20 For the priests and the Levites had purified themselves; all of them were ritually clean. And they slaughtered the Passover lambs for all the descendants of the captivity, for their brethren the priests, and for themselves.21 Then the children of Israel who had returned from the captivity ate together with all who had separated themselves from the filth of the nations of the land in order to seek the LORD God of Israel.22 And they kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days with joy; for the LORD made them joyful, and turned the heart of the king of Assyria toward them, to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel. (Ezra 6)**

Ezra is the last priest of the Old Testament in the line of Aaron. The temple gets finished, Levites assembled, sacrifices are made and the hearts of the people are glad. For the first time in 70 years, the feast of the Passover and unleavened bread are celebrated with joy, for the Lord made them joyful. This is a big deal.

At first when the people returned, it was all about themselves. God sends Haggai, Ezra, Joshua, Zerubbabel, and Nehemiah during these times and moves through them to inspire faith and their heritage in others. A heritage of loving God and trusting and worshipping Him, for He is our sabbath. Our rest, our defender, and our protector.

**And Nehemiah, who was the governor, Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, "This day is holy to the Lord your God; do not mourn nor weep." For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the Law. (Nehemiah 8)**

**For thus says the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, With him who has a contrite and humble spirit, To revive the spirit of the humble, And to revive the heart of the contrite ones. 16 For I will not contend forever, Nor will I always be angry; For the spirit would fail before Me, And the souls which I have made. (Isaiah 57:15-16)**

How is God building faith into these corpses? By the giving and hearing of His word. The ways of everlasting never change. God is bringing revival at this time in order to re-establish the pattern of Christ in Jerusalem prior to His first

advent. God's word was heard, and the people's hearts and spirits were contrite before the Lord. God says He dwells in a high and lofty place, but also with the contrite of heart and the lowly of spirit, in order to revive the spirit of the humble, and the heart of the contrite. That word contrite means "broken". God can bring revival when He is working with people whose hearts are broken over their sin when they hear God's word spoken to them. But there is no peace for the wicked, says my God.

**Now at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem they sought out the Levites in all their places, to bring them to Jerusalem to celebrate the dedication with gladness, both with thanksgivings and singing, with cymbals and stringed instruments and harps.<sup>28</sup> And the sons of the singers gathered together from the countryside around Jerusalem, from the villages of the Netophathites,<sup>29</sup> from the house of Gilgal, and from the fields of Geba and Azmaveth; for the singers had built themselves villages all around Jerusalem.<sup>30</sup> Then the priests and Levites purified themselves, and purified the people, the gates, and the wall. <sup>31</sup> So I brought the leaders of Judah up on the wall, and appointed two large thanksgiving choirs. (Nehemiah 12)**

They sought all the Levites. Why? Because they wanted to worship that's why! And listen when you have not 1 but 2 large thanksgiving choirs along with a band and who hoo, this celebration is on!

**Also that day they offered great sacrifices, and rejoiced, for God had made them rejoice with great joy; the women and the children also rejoiced, so that the joy of Jerusalem was heard afar off. (Nehemiah 12)**

Now the faith of these people has come a long way. They went from being focused on self, to focused on God. Did God make them do it? Well, He made sure His word was given out. And I certainly believe the Spirit of God stirred their hearts toward unity and repentance. But I do not think He repented for them by overpowering them spiritually. The progression is natural in a growing relationship. God gives His word, the people respond in humility with contrite hearts, and God heals them and strengthens their faith through His own faithfulness in their lives. Their response is worship and thankfulness. How wonderful it is to go from being a castaway in a foreign land, to being brought back to the land God promised to you and your fathers, and to be re-established as a people.

The completion of the temple illustrated they put God first. The rebuilding of the walls illustrated their willingness to separate themselves from a wicked world unto the Lord their God. Separating themselves from the foreigners many of them were married to. Sanctify the Lord in your hearts, and present yourselves as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service of worship. And do not be conformed into the image of this world, but be rather transformed by the renewing of your mind. That is what happened when God moved through a handful of people over this time period. He moved through all the no

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name people too! But their faith and participation were effectuated by what God was doing through a few.

### Malachi

**The burden of the word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi. 2 "I have loved you," says the LORD. "Yet you say, "In what way have You loved us?' Was not Esau Jacob's brother?" Says the LORD. "Yet Jacob I have loved; 3 But Esau I have hated, And laid waste his mountains and his heritage For the jackals of the wilderness."** (Malachi 1)

There is this exchange going on between God and the children of Israel in the messages of Malachi in which Malachi answers questions from the people:

God	People	Answer
I have loved you.	How have You loved us?	Choosing you for My name
Priests despised My name.	How did they despise Your name?	Contemptible offerings; partiality in the law.
Will not receive your worship.	For what reason?	Do not honor the covenant of marriage.
You have wearied the Lord with your words.	In what way have we wearied Him?	Calling evil good in the sight of the Lord.
Return to Me.	In what way shall we return?	Bring tithes and offerings.
Your words harsh against Me.	What have we spoken against you?	It is useless to serve God.

I take the position that Malachi's ministry began in the second envoy of Nehemiah and continued beyond that, and that Malachi is the last word from a prophet of God until John the Baptist would appear on the scene some 400 years later.

**"Behold, I send My messenger, And he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, Will suddenly come to His temple, Even the Messenger of the covenant, In whom you delight. Behold, He is coming," Says the LORD of hosts.** (Malachi 3)

So the Old Testament ends with a promise that Jesus the Messiah is coming. The Holy One of Israel that has been promised since the time of old. Going all the way back to Genesis 3.

**And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel."** (Genesis 3)

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There are many other characters in the Old Testament that could be covered, especially many of the kings. But it is important to bear in mind that Romans 5 makes it clear that all that are born in Adam are born spiritually dead.

**Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned--13 (For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law.14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. (Romans 5)**

This passage makes it clear that all people born in the Old Testament were born dead in trespasses and sin. But somebody says "yes but reformed theology is about salvation, which is a New Testament doctrine". Well let's talk about that, because Jesus said He came to fulfill the law, not do away with it. Whatever doctrines we hold fast to, they have to meet the Old Testament test, particularly the first 5 books of Moses. If your doctrine will not fly there, you should abandon it. I am not kidding. The books of Moses are like a kindergarten picture book pointing you to the Messiah.

Since in part we are discussing God's sovereignty, and have noticed a pattern that He wants there to be a continual witness for Himself especially among His chosen people. And in this case yes He chose Israel, but He also made provisions for anyone that wanted to "join themselves" to Him and His people, and there are several that did that.

## Habakkuk

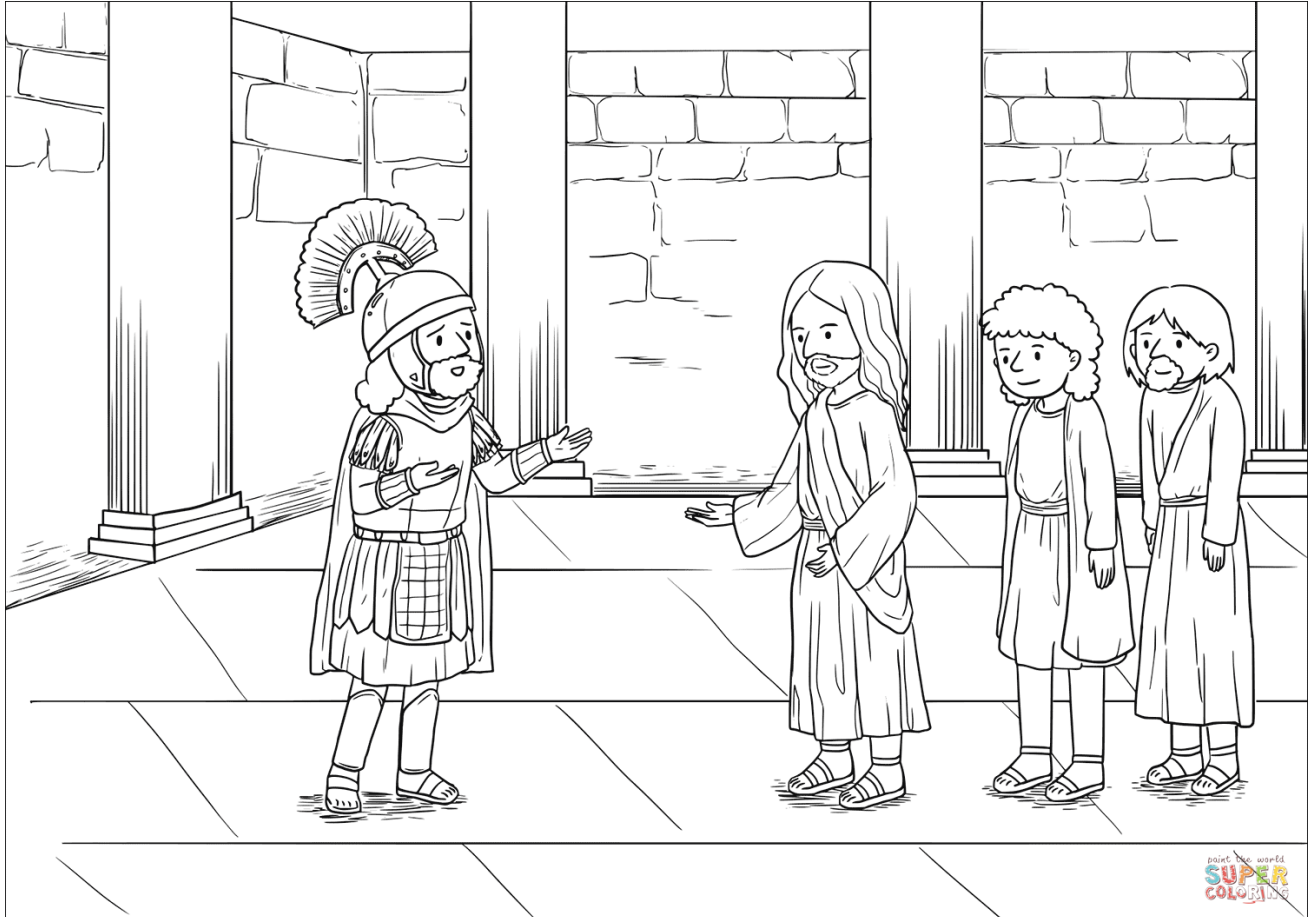
**Behold the proud, His soul is not upright in him; But the just shall live by his faith.**  
(Habakkuk 2)

In the New Testament this verse is quoted 3 times, but only the second half of it. Notice the contrast in this verse between the proud and the just. The just are those that are right. That is what the word just means. We get our word justice from it which means to make right, or judge right. When God justifies the sinner, He declares him right with Him. The "just" "shall live" "by *his* faith". I think we have seen here in the Old Testament thus far that at least for most, having faith was a decision. Making a decision is not a work of righteousness worthy of anything, it is just making a choice and acting upon it.

The soul of the proud is "not upright" in him. The juxtaposition is between *not upright* and *just* alongside the juxtaposition of *proud* and *lives by his faith*. I think seeing this verse in its entirety provides depth to New Testament teachings. The proud have faith in themselves, which leads them to be *not upright* before the Lord. Those who *live by faith* in Him are *just* (right) in His sight.

## Matthew and Mark

### Matthew



Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him,6 saying, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented." 7 And Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him." 8 The centurion answered and said, "Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed.9 For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, "Go,' and he goes; and to another, "Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, "Do this,' and he does it." 10 When Jesus heard it, He marveled, and said to those who followed, "Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!11 And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.12 But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."13 Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you." And his servant was healed that same hour. (Matthew 8)

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Do you know what makes me marvel? Jesus marveling! We like to say things like "has it ever occurred to you, that nothing has occurred to God?" But here we see Jesus marvel at this centurion's faith. Why is Jesus marveling at this? How was this Roman centurion able to recognize Jesus for who He was? I thought he was totally depraved. What happened? And if it was the Father that gave the centurion his faith, then why would Jesus marvel at that? In fact, this would be an excellent teaching opportunity for Jesus to teach TULIP. But instead, our Lord marveled. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is still not a thing at this time, that will not happen until after the Lord is resurrected and on the day of Pentecost.

Instead of teaching TULIP, Jesus instead uses the opportunity to say that many from all over will come and sit with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, but the sons of the kingdom will be cast into outer darkness, where there will be tremendous torment. Do you see the contrast here? And who are the sons of the kingdom Jesus is referring to? Could it be those that rejected Him? He came into His own, but His own received Him not? In fact we find that the religious leaders for the most part could not stand Jesus, and portrayed Him as just a false messiah and teacher. They tried constantly to trick Him into slipping up with His words, but failed to do so, which caused many of them to hate Him all the more. I guess you could say He was hardening their hearts. How? Just by being I AM. That is how. Nothing unrighteous or manipulative about that.

**So He got into a boat, crossed over, and came to His own city.<sup>2</sup> Then behold, they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you." <sup>3</sup> And at once some of the scribes said within themselves, "This Man blasphemes!" <sup>4</sup> But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts?<sup>5</sup> For which is easier, to say, "Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, "Arise and walk'?<sup>6</sup> But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"--then He said to the paralytic, "Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house."<sup>7</sup> And he arose and departed to his house. <sup>8</sup> Now when the multitudes saw it, they marveled and glorified God, who had given such power to men. (Matthew 9)**

Did God's word just say that Jesus saw their faith? How is that possible, since all these people that are in this multitude that are there were born corpses, including these men that brought their loved one to Jesus? Now Jesus is just being Himself here, He is not looking for a debate but He gets one. He asks these men "Why do you think evil in your hearts?" Apparently, corpses can think evil, but are not forced to. Otherwise, why would Jesus ask the question? At this time, He simply tells His detractors that He is I AM, so He can do or say whatever He wants!

What was the response to this event? Some went away angry I am sure, but the multitudes marveled. There is that word again. What were they marveling at? The power that Jesus had was incredible. And they are marveling that a man could have these powers given him by God. God was always considered to be so far away even

though there were prophecies concerning the coming Messiah. You can sort of understand it is not common for a mere man to have these kinds of powers.

But He is I AM. And all of scripture is designed by God to reveal that to all of humanity. It is just that the revelation of Him causes responses, some to judgment and others to life. But there does not appear to be spiritual manipulation behind the scenes. Everything appears to be perfectly understandable without that. Jesus had multitudes following Him because He was performing wonders. Wonders God had also prophesied that He would perform even in the Old Testament. Jesus is drawing people to Himself, but it is not by irresistible grace. He attracts people to Himself because of who He is, but He also drives people from Himself just by being who He is. He does not have to preselect and spiritually manipulate souls for this to happen. It actually seems to happen rather organically to me.

**While He spoke these things to them, behold, a ruler came and worshiped Him, saying, "My daughter has just died, but come and lay Your hand on her and she will live."19 So Jesus arose and followed him, and so did His disciples. 20 And suddenly, a woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years came from behind and touched the hem of His garment.21 For she said to herself, "If only I may touch His garment, I shall be made well."22 But Jesus turned around, and when He saw her He said, "Be of good cheer, daughter; your faith has made you well." And the woman was made well from that hour.**  
(Matthew 9)

Okay, how is this ruler able to come and worship Him? But even more importantly where did this woman get her faith? Yes, it is clearly evident here that people who were sick would be naturally attracted to Jesus after hearing about all the people that have already been healed by Him. Yes, this woman is desperate, no arguments here. But listen to what Jesus says to her. Be of good cheer daughter, *your* faith has made you well.

Just like this woman, there are people in the world today that are desperate for a deeper meaning and contentment in their life. They are corpses, but God has graciously given them a soul to inhabit their biological body. They may not be seeking God, but when He is revealed to them, they will have to respond. Everyone responds to God my friend. They may have tried all sorts of things from yoga to drugs prescribed by their doctors. But are they hearing about how Jesus has brought spiritual life, love, joy, grace and immense contentment in their lives? No, because Christians are not telling the world effectively. Do you make people want Jesus? The healed multitudes that day were out praising God publicly telling everyone what Jesus had done for them. That is why this woman wants to touch the hem of Jesus' garment. She had hope because others had found it.

Again, this is the same pattern as we saw in the Old Testament. This time Jesus is the selected One that will effectuate faith in others by the impact of His ministry. He is going to select 12 apostles as well, and they will all end up having a tremendous impact effectuating faith in others during the early stages of the Lord's

church through their witnessing and teaching. Most of them are martyred as well for their faith.

**When Jesus departed from there, two blind men followed Him, crying out and saying, "Son of David, have mercy on us!" 28 And when He had come into the house, the blind men came to Him. And Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to Him, "Yes, Lord." 29 Then He touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith let it be to you." 30 And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them, saying, "See that no one knows it." 31 But when they had departed, they spread the news about Him in all that country.** (Matthew 9)

Why is Jesus asking these 2 corpses if they believe in Him? That is really what He is asking them. Doesn't He understand there is no way they *can*? But then He touched their eyes, and in my mind's eye I can see Jesus holding His hands over their eyes as if to play a game of peek-a-boo with one hand over 1 man's eyes, and the other over the other man's eyes. And then, before He lifts His hands off their eyes He says "According to *your* faith, let it be done to you." I cannot even begin to tell you how large that one sentence from our Lord is. I firmly believe that if either one of these men had doubted, he would not have been healed! Fortunately for both of them, they had enough of their *own* faith.

And my point is made about how these men spread the word all around in their sphere of influence about Jesus even in disobedience to Him. That is why the woman wanted to touch the hem of the Lord to be healed.

These men had faith, and they exercised it. They cried out to Jesus for help. That is not an act of righteousness worthy of anything. The healing came only from the Lord; it could not have come from anyone else. And when their faith was tested by the Lord, it was found to be genuine. This is a beautiful picture here. It is not a perfect picture as these men were blind, not dead.

**Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. 36 But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. 37 Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. 38 Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."** (Matthew 9)

Whose harvest is it? Why does Jesus use this agricultural analogy? Because His word and revelation to mankind is effectual. His word is like sunshine on the earth causing everything to grow, both the tares and the wheat. But Jesus is looking out over the multitudes here as a farmer would look out over his field and says "the harvest is truly plentiful, but the laborers are few". In chapter 10 immediately following this saying, Jesus commissions the 12 to go out into His harvest. And I remind you that chapter breaks are not in the original manuscript. This was likely done the same day.

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**Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these parables, that He departed from there.<sup>54</sup> When He had come to His own country, He taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished and said, "Where did this Man get this wisdom and these mighty works?<sup>55</sup> Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas? <sup>56</sup> And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this Man get all these things?"<sup>57</sup> So they were offended at Him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house."<sup>58</sup> Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief. (Matthew 13)**

Now He could not do many mighty works there, because of *their unbelief*. *Whose unbelief, their unbelief*. They own their unbelief. It is impossible to please God without faith. But it is also impossible for God to work in your corpse of a life without *your* faith. It is *your* lack of faith that keeps God from developing faith in you. I do not see how you can read the gospels and not see that. Faith matters, and it can only be developed by hearing and receiving God's word. Everyone has free will whether to learn from the Father from His word or not, because His word is given out indiscriminately. His word is now in many language translations and is the most distributed text in all of human history. Why is that? So that they will be without excuse, and so that learning will increase in the last days according to the sovereign will of God.

*What Can A Corpse Do*

Mark



paint the world  
**SUPER**  
**COLORING**

**But when He was alone, those around Him with the twelve asked Him about the parable.11 And He said to them, "To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, all things come in parables,12 so that 'Seeing they may see and not perceive,And hearing they may hear and not understand;Lest they should turn,And their sins be forgiven them.' "** (Mark 4)

Jesus does not want people to misunderstand, but rather that understanding is impossible without faith. His word is given out to test or expose the existence of faith. It is given in such a way that it accomplishes that x-ray in the heart of every human.

**And He said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables?14 The sower sows the word.15 And these are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts.16 These likewise are the ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with gladness;17 and they have no root in themselves, and so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they stumble.18 Now these are the ones sown among thorns; they are the ones who hear the word,19 and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.20 But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept it, and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred."** (Mark 4)

1. Sower sows the word.
2. Satan steals the word.
3. Satan kills the fervor with persecution and humiliation
4. Satan destroys faith with pleasures, tribulation, worldly riches, the word is choked out.
5. Good soil hears the word, accepts it, endures and bears fruit. Fruit bearing seed.

The Sower is anyone that sows the word for Jesus. Sharing the gospel today? If yes, then you are a Sower. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ. So, what does Satan do? Satan is the one that seeks to steal, kill, and destroy. Not our Lord. God is in the business of saving, not the business of stealing, killing, destroying or tempting one to evil. Satan does all that along with his demon followers, combined with our own wicked hearts. But God is not limiting His word at all. God is sowing His word indiscriminately!

What you see in the road soil, rocky soil, the thorny soil, and the good soil represent different responses to God's word. Those with saving faith are those that bear fruit, and fruit that remains.

How then will you understand all of the parables? Jesus asks. The answer is you must have faith to understand.

**Then He said to them, "Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given.<sup>25</sup> For whoever has, to him more will be given; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him." <sup>26</sup> And He said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground,<sup>27</sup> and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how.<sup>28</sup> For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head.<sup>29</sup> But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come." (Mark 4)**

Do you take heed what you hear? Jesus says this is vitally important. Who do you choose to trust for the truth? What are you allowing into your ear gate regularly? If you trust the wrong source, that source will steal every bit of truth away from you. The one taking away is not the Lord, but the evil one. This is why Jesus taught us to pray "lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." Now James tells us we sin because of the lusts of our own hearts and are led away. That is true. But Satan is the father of lies and he manages to propagate his lies on a massive scale. There is competition for God's word. You must choose to trust God alone for absolute truth, especially with regard to the eternal care of your soul. Because you cannot provide an eternal resting place for your soul, you have to decide who you are going to trust in that regard. God is offering forgiveness and love to save you from the penalty of your depravity. Satan is using your depravity against you with mass lies. Satan is the manipulator, not God my beloved. Choose whom you will trust.

Every corpse will do that according to this passage. Some will immediately dismiss the word, some will try faith for a short time but dies early in the season, when someone shames them or persecutes them, they immediately abandon faith and trust, concluding God's word doesn't work and the root doesn't take. They are trying faith for their own reasons, but in the end they are ashamed of Jesus. Another makes it longer, but cannot withstand the pressure of stress, the lure of money and possessions eventually provide enough competition that they become the things being lived for rather than the Lord, and the word is tuned out and cannot complete its work of bearing fruit. The root failed to reach the depth of soil needed to generate abundant life. The only kind of life Jesus gives is abundant life! Finally, there are those that receive it deep into their hearts, and bear abundant fruit, making it all worth the effort. Out of them flows rivers of living water! That is rivers of the water of God's gospel!

**On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them, "Let us cross over to the other side."<sup>36</sup> Now when they had left the multitude, they took Him along in the boat as He was. And other little boats were also with Him.<sup>37</sup> And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling.<sup>38</sup> But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?" <sup>39</sup> Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace, be still!" And the wind ceased and there was a great calm.<sup>40</sup> But He said to them, "Why are you so**

**fearful? How is it that you have no faith?" 41 And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, "Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!" (Mark 4)**

How is it that you have no faith? Why is Jesus asking this question? Doesn't He understand the depths of total depravity? Now all of Jesus' apostles were born corpses, and apparently their faith is not very deep at this time. Do you know what I think Jesus is saying to them? "Why did you wake Me? Why didn't *you* rebuke the wind and calm the storm?" Jesus will say in another passage that if you have faith, you can move mountains! I believe before the fall Adam had what we would consider to be supernatural powers over nature on the earth. But Adam lost that when he lost his relationship to God, because God is the power source.

I do not know how you can read and study Mark 4 and not conclude that Jesus wants everyone to be saved and receive God's word and respond in faith and trust. It appears to be an expectation from God that corpses respond to Him; therefore, they must be granted enough grace from Him to do that freely and are actually expected to do so. "If not them, the rocks would cry out!" our Lord said. I cannot think of anything more dead than rocks.

God is in the revelation business with His word. In other words, God walked into the room when Jesus came. Deal with it! Imagine you are sitting in your recliner, watching the television with the lights down. And suddenly, someone famous turns on the lights and walks into the room! You have to respond to it. You cannot wish Jesus away or pretend He did not come. His life, death, burial, and resurrection are all recorded by secular historians, not the bible only. You cannot make the Exodus go away either, it is recorded in ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics. Jesus is Him! He is coming, and I believe He is coming soon! No one can stop Him, and no one can escape Him. He holds all things together by the might of His power. Whether you believe it or not, He is I AM. And He will judge the entire earth and reign from Jerusalem for 1000 years before He dissolves this creation and starts a new one for us to dwell with Him forever! Hallelujah!

**From there He arose and went to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And He entered a house and wanted no one to know it, but He could not be hidden. 25 For a woman whose young daughter had an unclean spirit heard about Him, and she came and fell at His feet. 26 The woman was a Greek, a Syro-Phoenician by birth, and she kept asking Him to cast the demon out of her daughter. 27 But Jesus said to her, "Let the children be filled first, for it is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs." 28 And she answered and said to Him, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs under the table eat from the children's crumbs." 29 Then He said to her, "For this saying go your way; the demon has gone out of your daughter." 30 And when she had come to her house, she found the demon gone out, and her daughter lying on the bed. (Mark 7)**

Matthew tells us a little more about Jesus' last response to this Greek woman.

**Then Jesus answered and said to her, "O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire." And her daughter was healed from that very hour. (Matthew 15:28)**

This is a tremendous exchange and reveals that corpses can have faith even when not being expected to. I think Jesus marveled again but we are not told that. She had to persuade Jesus into helping her. He refused her and called her a dog! Her response was with humility and desperation saying to the Lord "even the dogs eat the crumbs from their master's table. That pricked the heart of our Lord, and He was moved by that! Her faith is what made her daughter whole. You can have faith; anyone can have faith! Anyone can go to Jesus in faith, no one is being kept away from Him. This passage suggests Jesus wanted some alone time, but that He could not be hidden. Is Jesus hidden in Christian witnessing today? He shouldn't be!

**Then they brought little children to Him, that He might touch them; but the disciples rebuked those who brought them.14 But when Jesus saw it, He was greatly displeased and said to them, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God.15 Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it."16 And He took them up in His arms, laid His hands on them, and blessed them. (Mark 10)**

What is different about a little child's faith compared to an adult? The child has not yet learned to think critically. What was it that Satan convinced Eve to do? He influenced her to think critically. To doubt, to question, to ponder whether or not God is trustworthy. Already an adult? Jesus says do not doubt or question when it comes to Him. An instruction to corpses throughout the world!

**Now as He was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" 18 So Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God.19 You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not bear false witness,' 'Do not defraud,' 'Honor your father and your mother.' " 20 And he answered and said to Him, "Teacher, all these things I have kept from my youth." 21 Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me." 22 But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. (Mark 10)**

Jesus realized the young man does not believe He is the Messiah, and that he just sees Jesus as a good teacher. He is a corpse who is drawn to Jesus by Jesus and the work that the Father is doing through Him to effectuate faith in many. The young man and Jesus have a back and forth. This corpse desires eternal life. He wants what Jesus is preaching about. We talked earlier about corpses having a range of depravity. This young man loves the law and has lived to keep the law

from his youth. He can realize the goodness of Jesus. His soil, that is his heart however is still among the thorns and thistles. But his heart can change with more exposure to the word. The word just needs to get a little deeper. However, this man walked away from the word with sadness. He made a choice; the Lord did not make it for him.

**Then they came again to Jerusalem. And as He was walking in the temple, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders came to Him.<sup>28</sup> And they said to Him, "By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority to do these things?" <sup>29</sup> But Jesus answered and said to them, "I also will ask you one question; then answer Me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things:<sup>30</sup> The baptism of John--was it from heaven or from men? Answer Me." <sup>31</sup> And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "If we say, "From heaven,' He will say, "Why then did you not believe him?'<sup>32</sup> But if we say, "From men"--they feared the people, for all counted John to have been a prophet indeed.<sup>33</sup> So they answered and said to Jesus, "We do not know." And Jesus answered and said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things." (Mark 11)**

This is yet another exchange between God the Son and a group of corpses. Notice they too realized the work the Father is doing through Him. But rather than believe and glorify God, they would rather think critically. Their soil is likely along the rocky soil. Regarding the man who was born blind this crowd said "Glorify God, but we know Jesus is a sinner!" Obviously, they are willing to recognize the works Jesus did as from God, but they just could not believe that Jesus was who He clearly claimed to be to anyone who was as familiar with the Old Testament as these men are at the time of this discussion. They know the scripture prophecies that the Messiah would come. But they were focused on Him becoming King of Israel and sitting on the throne of David. To deliver Israel from the oppression of Rome and be that kind of geopolitical power. Not this Man who walks around homeless and dirty, not even washing His hands as they do ceremonially before eating. These corpses also made a choice in their hearts concerning Him.

Notice that Jesus tests them. My beloved, Jesus is going to test your faith as well, to test the soil of your heart. Hold fast to Him, go deeper into Him, there is safety in Christ. Hide yourself deep in Him. Never ever doubt Him no matter how difficult life becomes or how confused you get. Keep the faith! These corpses went away just the same way they came even though they spoke directly to God, they did not receive Him as God so it had no effect.

## Luke, John and Acts



**My faith in Jesus Christ grows when I know who He is.**  
"And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ,  
the Son of the living God" (John 6:69).

Luke

**While He was still speaking, someone came from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying to him, "Your daughter is dead. Do not trouble the Teacher." 50 But when Jesus heard it, He answered him, saying, "Do not be afraid; only believe, and she will be made well." 51 When He came into the house, He permitted no one to go in except Peter, James, and John, and the father and mother of the girl. 52 Now all wept and mourned for her; but He said, "Do not weep; she is not dead, but sleeping." 53 And they ridiculed Him, knowing that she was dead. 54 But He put them all outside, took her by the hand and called, saying, "Little girl, arise." 55 Then her spirit returned, and she arose immediately. And He commanded that she be given something to eat. (Luke 8)**

Jesus said "she is not dead, but sleeping". If Jesus said it then it is true. But they ridiculed Him because they *knew* she was dead. What is dead to us isn't always dead to God. God is life, nothing seems dead to Him. Jesus ordered her soul to return and her soul returned. Do you know anybody that can do that? He is in complete control, you will never hear me argue otherwise. He is sovereign over souls and spirits no question about it. And He is sovereign over the living and the dead. But that does not mean He manipulates them to the extent of eternal damnation of souls in hell. In my view if God were to sovereignly decide who would be saved and who would be lost, He would save everyone.

God is dealing with man's depravity. It is not a little thing even to God. It is a very big deal. He destroyed the entire earth except for Noah and family. That is a big deal even to God. This is why He promised not to do that again. Why? Not because He was unrighteous in what He had done, but because He was burdened and mourned over the loss. He loved them! He created their souls. He regretted He made man, but He was also torn over having to judge man. So He decided to engage a little more, and increase His grace to mankind by interacting with them in His history. He judged regionally from then on according to His divine judgments when "their sins became full". But the reason God is not going to save everyone is because God chose to self-limit a little, in order to give man a free will with boundaries. I know that people do not like the idea of God self-limiting, they feel that makes Him appear not in control. But in order to have a relationship between 2 parties, both must give consent at a bare minimum. God will not violate the meaning of relationship. God is love. He is relationship.

The picture however from reformers is you know a man lying in a coffin during a visitation service at the funeral home. The casket is open and everyone can see the man is dead. Just like these folks in this passage about this little girl. But we have already covered a lot of corpses in the bible already, and they aren't just as stone-cold dead as the image of a man lying in a box at the funeral home. These corpses can talk, reason, murder, steal, lie, cheat and worship false gods. But we have also seen some of them respond to God in humility and faith. The souls of men you pass by every day, they can trust, and they can be drawn to Christ. He said "I will make you fishers of men." Sow the seed in their hearts! It will grow if nurtured. And you

## *What Can A Corpse Do*

can play a part in nurturing also. Perhaps through your loving them with God's love and your faith and prayer will "move mountains" of rocks out of their heart, perhaps thorns and thistles too. Jesus said "teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you". Make people turn you away from sharing Jesus with them! Share, teach, live by faith. From faith, to faith. That is the program of God now.

**And it happened, as He was alone praying, that His disciples joined Him, and He asked them, saying, "Who do the crowds say that I am?" 19 So they answered and said, "John the Baptist, but some say Elijah; and others say that one of the old prophets has risen again." 20 He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered and said, "The Christ of God." 21 And He strictly warned and commanded them to tell this to no one, 22 saying, "The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day." 23 Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. 24 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. 25 For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost? 26 For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels. (Luke 9)**

Let me rephrase what Jesus asked them. "Whom do the crowd of corpses say that I am?" And there were a variety of answers. But the disciples who were chosen for special revelation, for a very special and specific purpose which is to effectuate faith to many, have a different answer.

But apparently corpses can definitely form an opinion about Jesus! That is unmistakable and inescapable. However, Peter knew! Why? Because he was 1 of the 3 that was in the room with that little girl that was raised. Peter had more exposure to God's word so that it penetrated deeper, and of course he had stronger faith in the truth. Jesus developed Peter's faith no doubt, but that is God's plan for everyone. He wants everyone to have His word hidden in their hearts. He wants all people to see Jesus as precious! He wants everyone to glorify His Christ! It is the forces of evil, and mankind's depravity that are barriers to God's word reaching deep enough into men's hearts as we were shown in the parable of the Sower. Apparently, it is about the level of penetration God's word can get into a man's depraved heart. The depravity is so bad the seed must take root very deep in the man's heart. This is why we pray for the lost and love them, so that their hearts may be softened so they can receive the word deep into their hearts resulting in abundant life!

## What Can A Corpse Do

“If *anyone desires* to come after Me”:

1. Deny himself
2. Take up his cross daily
3. Follow Me!

Now look, I am a real estate guru, and I negotiate and write contracts, appraisal reports, and market analytical reports so I know a little about that. These are terms of a negotiation between 2 parties. And this is not a teaching from the Lord to the church. The church is not here yet. We are actually still under the Old Testament economy, but Jesus is teaching about the New Testament economy.

This crowd is a crowd of corpses Jesus is speaking to. And He says if anyone *desires* to follow Me. How can anyone desire to do that? Doesn't Jesus know they *can't* desire Him unless the Father forces them to? No, the Father pre-equipped every soul that came from Him, self-limited a little for the sake of a real relationship, and gave limited free will (out of the abundance of His grace) to the soul He created to make a choice. It is built into being created in His image.

And here is the consideration Jesus requires. Deny yourself. You are not God, He is. This is a confession: He is righteous and you are not. Take up your cross daily. Your confession admission is that you are worthy of death! Every day I am worthy of death! Because even as a believer I sin daily! Do not seek only to your own needs, but place the needs of others ahead of your own. Love God first in all things, and your neighbor as yourself. This is the mind of Christ. Do not be lovers of yourselves, but love the Lord and others instead. This is the epitome of repentance. Follow Me! Abide in Him and you will bear fruit, and fruit that remains. This means to do what He does, doesn't it?

Now somebody says “are you saying someone has to DO something in order to be saved?”. Well Jesus is saying this not me, and it is a level of commitment and devotion He is articulating. The soil of your heart must have the depth and devotion to the seed that was planted. Let me remind you of the Old Testament example we have already gone through from the book of Exodus. No matter whether you were an Israelite or an Egyptian that wanted to join themselves to God and His people, you had to DO things.

- All males must be circumcised
- Passover lamb must be selected according to instructions
- Passover lamb must be killed according to instructions
- Blood from lamb must be put onto the door posts.
- You must stay in the house all night.
- You must eat the lamb according to instructions
- You must leave none of it till morning or burn what remains
- You must cross over the red sea.

These are not works of the law. The law had not yet been given. These are not works of righteousness worthy of salvation. No one earned deliverance. Not one of the people that left in that Exodus was confused about who was doing the saving, who had authority, or by whose power they were delivered. But they did have to DO things to demonstrate their faith and trust in God, that they accepted what He said as true. That is what those corpses had to do. Yet somehow, we smart and

intelligent New Testament believers, we intimidate other believers into thinking that they are heretics if they present a call to action when sharing the gospel as if they are presenting a false gospel. These are the words of Christ, and they are not an invitation to believers to firm up their commitment of following him. Not the cost of discipleship for a believer, but for the non-believer to consider before making the choice. In this case, His audience are Jews, but I think it is intended for anyone just like the Lord's provisions in the Old Testament were for everyone.

Moses almost lost his life over not having his son circumcised. That should tell you that God is serious about keeping the pattern He has provided for you. By the way, believers' baptism is a pattern that represents death, burial, and resurrection. I am not saying you have to be baptized in order to be saved. I am saying that if you are saved, do not tell me you do not have to be baptized because the Lord commands it. The Ethiopian Eunuch couldn't wait. At the conversion of Cornelius water baptism took place after Spirit baptism, but it happened immediately. If you want your testimony as a Christian to be credible, you should be baptized if it is humanly possible to do so, and you should do it publicly if you can. After all, why don't you want to? When John the Baptist, and Jesus' disciples baptized people, they did it in the river or sea and it was very public. When Jesus Himself was baptized, it was very public. Do not be ashamed of Him, or He will be ashamed of you. If you are a believer that has not yet been baptized as a believer, you should tell everyone you know whether friends, co-workers, you name it they need to hear from you that you are being baptized as a believer in Christ this Sunday or whenever it is, because you *want* them to see it! Post it on all social media and invite the world to come. That is how fired up you are about following Christ!

Let's be clear none of these acts being discussed here can be done apart from faith. They are given for you to demonstrate that you have faith! Yes! God wants a demonstration. How can you read the bible and not conclude that? Look, we sometimes use the illustration of someone standing behind another, and asking the person in front to fall backwards, and we will catch them and keep them from falling. It is a test of trust. That is all this is. You cannot be caught if you are not willing to fall backward. Faith and trust are action words. Without actions neither can be considered credible.

At this point there are some people that are upset with me and in their mind, they are calling me names. That is not very nice. I am simply a believer that studies scriptures with an independent, impartial and objective mindset. I am just following the word as honestly and objectively as I can to whatever conclusion it indicates. Because I want my faith and my testimony to be pleasing to Him especially as it relates to sharing the gospel.

**Then it happened, as He was coming near Jericho, that a certain blind man sat by the road begging.<sup>36</sup> And hearing a multitude passing by, he asked what it meant.<sup>37</sup> So they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by.<sup>38</sup> And he cried out, saying, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" <sup>39</sup> Then those who went before warned him that he should be quiet; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" <sup>40</sup> So Jesus stood**

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still and commanded him to be brought to Him. And when he had come near, He asked him,<sup>41</sup> saying, "What do you want Me to do for you?" He said, "Lord, that I may receive my sight."<sup>42</sup> Then Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has made you well."<sup>43</sup> And immediately he received his sight, and followed Him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God. (Luke 18)

This blind corpse is sitting on the side of the road. He hears that Jesus is coming by and he starts shouting for Him. The crowd and maybe even Jesus' own followers attempted to hush the blind man, but he just started shouting louder. And he cried "Son of David, have mercy on me." The man calls Jesus Son of David, it is a remarkable statement that demonstrates to me this man believes Jesus is the Messiah. After he answers Jesus with his supplication, Jesus says to him "Receive your sight; your faith has made you well." That is a powerful statement to a corpse. All the other corpses in the crowd saw it and started giving praise to God. When God is revealed, the revelation effectuates either faith or unbelief. Jesus was able to do many wonders and signs with corpses that had faith, but we have also seen that without faith He could not do many works because of their unbelief.

### John



Jesus answered them and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because

**you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled.27 Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him."** (John 6)

Now if you skipped ahead to this portion of the book, shame on you go back and read from the beginning! I say this jokingly.

Ok you know what? It is important that the context be considered. Jesus questions the motivations of this crowd of corpses following Him. He says your demonstration of faith is not credible. He also goes on to tell them they just want to be fed. The problem is they want to be fed food that does not have eternal value. They want to follow God for their own reasons. Their soil is one of the first 3 categories from the parable of the Sower. But also notice that Jesus exhorts them to *labor* for the food which endures to everlasting life. Apparently, corpses can *labor*. In fact, Jesus is encouraging them to do so.

God the Father has set His seal on Him! Jesus is the only One that is elected of God. If you desire eternal life, be found hidden in Him!

**Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?" 29 Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent." 30 Therefore they said to Him, "What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do?31 Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.' " 32 Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven.33 For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." 34 Then they said to Him, "Lord, give us this bread always." 35 And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. (John 6)**

The word *bread* here is used 6 times, and if you count manna that would be 7. We are still talking about that which gives sustenance and sustains life. In the wilderness they were worried about starving and they complained. God gave them manna to sustain them out of His grace and love for them. What is the work of God? That you believe in Him whom He has sent. Finally, Jesus is actually setting up His main point here. He is the bread of life! He is what you should labor to eat if you want eternal life.

**But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe.37 All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.38 For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.39 This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day.40 And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day." 41 The Jews then complained about Him, because He said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven." (John 6)**

Jesus is trying to stay on topic here that their motivations for being there are not based on humility before God and faith in Christ. They could care less about the coming Messiah. They just want to be filled for the day. They are content living their lives without a real relationship to God. They want God to meet their expectations. They *can't* come to Him. It is important to consider the audience and context of this conversation. The parties and their mindsets matter. Jesus is saying "you see Me, but you do not believe". They said "well prove it then, and maybe we will believe". My friend you cannot come to God on your terms. You come to God on His terms! Now they are upset that He spoke of Himself as bread, when they want something to eat from Him.

**And they said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that He says, "I have come down from heaven?" 43 Jesus therefore answered and said to them, "Do not murmur among yourselves.44 No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.45 It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me. 46 Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God; He has seen the Father.47 Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life. 48 I am the bread of life.49 Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead.50 This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die.51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world." 52 The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, "How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?" (John 6)**

Ok, so what is it that they do not believe? They do not believe He is the Anointed One from God even though He is standing right in front of them, and this comes on the heels likely of one of His great mass feedings. They are there for more of that action, but they could care less about loving Him and believing in Him. But they had the Scriptures, they should have recognized Him. Will you recognize Him when He returns?

The word bread here is used another 5 times. Tell me again what you DO with bread? What did the Israelites have to DO with the manna? They had special instructions on how to collect it, and to never leave any until morning. Why? Because God wants you dependent on Him daily for more bread. Every day, collect and eat. Live on that today, and come back tomorrow. Now, feed on Jesus the same way they had to feed on manna! Go and do that. They had the Scriptures from the Father.

"Do not murmur among yourselves" that "I have come down from heaven". Now please do not miss this. Jesus came down from heaven! This goes right over their heads. Is that because they were not taught by the Father? Yes! Were they not taught by the Father because the Father was unwilling to teach them? No! It is because of the hardness of their hearts that the teaching of the Father cannot

penetrate deeply enough. Jesus is indicting them from the very beginning, do not miss that!

**No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.<sup>45</sup> It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me. <sup>46</sup> Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God; He has seen the Father.<sup>47</sup> Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life. (John 6)**

Here it is, that word *can*. Ah yes, we are finally here. Is it time for me to eat crow? Well let's talk about it. I totally agree that the word *can* here speaks to ability, no problem with the word study here. I also concede that the word draw is a word describing power. I was listening to a prominent reform preacher explaining this passage. And he ridiculed another viewpoint that the word *draw* meant to woo. He went on to give an illustration that went something like this and I am paraphrasing. "If you were standing at the top of a well that was quite deep, would you simply cry out to the water to please come up?" Here is my response to my brother in the Lord. "That all depends on Who it is at the top of that deep well! Because if it is the Lord, crying out for the water will work just fine! There is plenty of power from His voice!".

Therefore, *everyone* who has *heard and learned* from the Father comes to Me. Ok, so who can learn from the Father? Is it just the ones whom He pre-selected? Come on man, the bible does not teach that. And we will get to Romans 8. Again. God does not have to select people individually on a massive scale. He does on occasion choose a single person for a special mission, but His intent and pattern to this point are very clear and this passage is not contradicting the rest of God's word so just relax.

The people who can learn from the Father are those that have the right soil. That fertile soil that accepts and receives. "Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God; He has seen the Father." Okay now, Jesus is telling you very plainly here that God is simply in the revelation business. The revelation of Christ, the revelation that is in Christ.

Yet these people see Him yet do not believe. Why? Because their hearts were hard. Because perhaps they allowed their depravity to fester throughout their lives rather than be humbled by it before a holy God! This is why it is important to teach our young ones early in life to trust and fear the Lord. These people know *about* the Lord and were probably taught from a young age. But with the knowledge that they have wanted God to serve them on their terms and meet their expectations, and He is not there to give corpses what they want. That is all God is to them, a provider for their flesh.

Jesus is trying to tell them in the midst of others that biological life is nothing! Labor to receive eternal life! To do that, you need to feed on Me! Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ. But apparently corpses can have selfish expectations of God. They know Who He is, they just want Him to serve

them, rather than humble themselves and serve Him. Jesus is saying instead of arguing with me, you should be believing and learning from Me as you see these others doing. He is plainly telling them they are the ones that do not believe, because they will not receive.

The only people that will come to Christ are those that are taught from the Father, though they have never seen (or really known) Him at any time. Don't worry I get that completely. God has been revealing Himself in the Old Testament with prophecies concerning Jesus. Jesus is standing right here before them. Some did not believe because of the hardness of their own hearts. Some did believe because they humbled themselves and took ownership of their sin and Jesus gave them love and hope. This is learning from the Father, being convicted of your sin and recognizing the loving holiness of God when you see it and be humbled by that. Corpses both in the old and new testaments responded to God in 1 of 2 ways. There are only 2 groups of people in the world, believers and nonbelievers. Those who are in Christ, and those who are not. Those who trust and learn from God, and those that refuse and walk according to what is right in their own eyes.

"Most assuredly I say unto you, he who believes in Me has eternal life." Who has eternal life? Those who believe in Him! You can believe! You need help to believe. You need to learn from the Father. You need to deny yourself, your way of thinking until now. You need to unlearn from the world and learn from the Father. But you can hear. The question is are you willing to listen? Are you willing to learn through trust? Are you willing to respond with obedience of faith? The Father is not keeping you from any of that. Satan may be, and your depravity certainly may be. Will you confess you are depraved? There is a start. Start listening to Him today, and learn to trust.

**I am the bread of life.49 Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead.50 This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die.51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world." 52 The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, "How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?" 53 Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you.54 Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.55 For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. 56 He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.57 As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me.58 This is the bread which came down from heaven--not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever." 59 These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum. (John 6)**

Alright, the word bread here is used another 7 times. I think I count a total of 18, but you may want to get out your exhaustive concordance to double check me

on that. But my point is that "bread of life" is the emphasis here. And Jesus is driving the point home now. He is using their hunger to try to teach them that although there is food for the body, the important food is the food for your soul! Wheat bread might be a staple for biological life, but the food that gives life to your soul is spiritual bread, and that is only found in Jesus!

"These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum." Here is the context. And at the synagogue there were plenty of religious leaders. I am sure this conversation is likely taking place between the Lord and some Pharisees and scribes. They are now confused. An old wise man told me once "if you can't agree with them, confuse them". Well, that is what Jesus did. He spoke in parables to the masses, explained everything plainly and privately to the 12. And He is just witnessing hard to the Pharisees here. But their problem is not that they are not selected by the Father. But that their hearts have become hard to the Father. God does not have to, nor has He chosen to be a mass manipulator or puppet master. This is not a puppet show. God gives us life! Real life! We are not puppets! And we receive eternal life from Christ, not free will. Corpses already have a slice of free will given them by the Creator for the sake of a real relationship.

**Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this, said, "This is a hard saying; who can understand it?" 61 When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples complained about this, He said to them, "Does this offend you?62 What then if you should see the Son of Man ascend where He was before?63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.64 But there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him. (John 6)**

"For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him." Okay this is not about foreknowledge in the sense that He is talking about every soul that ever lives. I am not saying God does not know that, of course He does. I am just saying that is not what is being taught here. He is saying that there is 1 of the 12 that doesn't believe. The 1 that did not believe in this group is Judas of course. Jesus is now with His disciples where He breaks things down into more simpler terms. What does this mean? It means that the verses we read before are hard to understand even with faith! We certainly should not be building dogmatic theological systems on that! And to make new church members go through a new member TULIP class is just way over the top in my view.

Alright, what is the simpler meaning? Now that Jesus is with the 12 and possible other disciples, He makes the entire passage understandable. The words He speaks are spirit, and they are life. They are about spiritual life! God's word speaks to the spirit. Anyone's spirit can listen and learn if they are willing to receive.

**And He said, "Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father." 66 From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more.67 Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go**

away?" **68 But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.69 Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."** **70 Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?"71 He spoke of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, for it was he who would betray Him, being one of the twelve.** (John 6)

Now Jesus repeats that no one *can* come to Him unless the Father grants it. Now this word is different from the word draw. And again, I admit the strength of both of these words. Draw, meaning "to drag". And Granted, meaning "to give or bestow upon". In real estate, the seller provides a deed to the buyer at closing. The seller is referred to in the deed as the Grantor. When he provides that deed, he is granting ownership. The buyer receives the deed. The point is where there is a grantor, there is a receiver, and in real estate the buyer is referred to as the Grantee. But I will argue with a plethora of scripture to back it up that God wants to teach everyone about Christ. The only ones that do not learn from the Father are those that have hearts that are too hard. Their hearts are 1 of the 3 other soil types. The Father has already shown that He bases his grants on the hearts of the receivers.

Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. I know Jacob was a rascal, but at least he *wanted* the birth right! Esau married foreign women; he wasn't interested in the promises of God. God chose Jacob before birth that is clear, but I think based on foreknowledge. God doesn't force the hard of heart to follow Him *unless* He has a special purpose for that person, which is to use them to effectuate faith in many other people organically. I think the apostle Paul may be 1 of those.

Stay with me. I am going to explain further how this passage has been misunderstood. But the main point here is that Jesus alone is the Bread of Life, and the redemptive Blood of the Lamb that cleanses. This is what you need to learn from the Father. But let us move forward now in the gospel of John.

**Now it was the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem, and it was winter.23 And Jesus walked in the temple, in Solomon's porch.24 Then the Jews surrounded Him and said to Him, "How long do You keep us in doubt? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly."** **25 Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me.26 But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you. 27 My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.28 And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.** (John 10)

Without faith it is impossible to please God. These corpses are coming to Him again. They are blaming Him for keeping them in doubt. He says it is not my fault. I have given you all that you need to believe in Me. But you refuse. Jesus disagrees with them. He does not say that they could not be His sheep because they do not have permission.

Is it because they do not have the word of the Father? Quite the contrary. The reason their hearts are hard against Him is that they are the religious leaders. He

## *What Can A Corpse Do*

is operating in their wheelhouse. They are supposed to be the influencers regarding the oracles of God. They are righteous in their own eyes. Now they have seen enough. I mean these corpses would not ask these questions from a place of ignorance. Again, this is their specialty, knowing the scriptures. They see the fulfillment of prophecy before their eyes, they see the works that He is doing, but it doesn't quite fit the mold they have made for themselves concerning the coming Messiah.

My sheep hear My voice, and they follow Me. What does the shepherd do? He calls. What do His sheep do? They hear, then follow. How does the shepherd call? With the gospel, which requires a response.

**If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me;38 but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him."** (John 10)

Jesus, who is God, is still reasoning with these corpses. And He is pleading with them to hear His voice. "Look at the works" He says. Test them to see if they are from God or not. Then He tells them plainly I am doing these things *so that you* (the corpses I am currently speaking to) may *know* and *believe*. Jesus is telling them they *can believe*. Jesus is very clear here, neither He or the Father are responsible for their unbelief. No one is without excuse. They are being taught by the Father, but they are not receiving what they are given, and cannot receive more until they do. But they are being given a lot of revelation, and their unbelief is totally on them before God. Perhaps revelation is being taken away from them because they are choosing to trust in the wrong source for truth, which is anything except Jesus.

Acts



**Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest<sup>2</sup> and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. <sup>3</sup> As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven.<sup>4</sup> Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" <sup>5</sup> And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" Then the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads." <sup>6</sup> So he, trembling and astonished, said, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" Then the Lord said to him, "Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." <sup>7</sup> And the men who journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice but seeing no one.<sup>8</sup> Then Saul arose from the ground, and when his eyes were opened he saw no one. But they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus.<sup>9</sup> And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank. (Acts 9)**

I am telling you this man Saul is a fire breathing corpse with hair on fire! You know I have always thought Saul was blinded by the light and he may have been. We are not really told that. We are told there was a light that shone around him from heaven. Of course, his reaction is falling to the ground, so I can imagine the light was quite bright. We are told the men with Saul heard a voice, but saw no one. Did they see the light? Not told. Did they understand the voice? Not told that either but they were speechless over it. Saul did not know he was blind till he opened his eyes. I think the light was bright so he fell down and closed his eyes. The Lord speaks to him. Now this is an intervention if ever I saw one.

This could be selection. But it is irresponsible in my view to use this to teach Unconditional Election regarding every soul. No. This is a special selection. This is

real sovereign selection to me. Saul has no choice here but to do what he is told. But unlike the hard hearts of the scribes and Pharisees Saul does not argue or debate so you have to give him that. But I assume Saul knew the tenets of the gospel and saw it as a cult of false religion and was on the warpath to stop it, thinking he was serving God. There is that dynamic as well. He thought he was serving the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and by his own testimony he was very much Jewish at the highest level.

This is the burning bush of the New Testament to me. And I will admit that Saul's response was more cooperative than Moses, and also admit that Moses wasn't the fire breather that Saul was up to this point. Truth be told Saul is just getting admonished here. Saul is not being given the big picture here as Moses was. So, he has little to object to. Jesus is protecting His church here. And He may be forcing salvation here there I said it. But I am fully certain that if this is the case, then this is the exception, not the rule. But He may not be forcing it either. Saul still has a choice whether or not to obey the voice of the Lord when He tells him to arise and go to the city. He was going to that city anyway.

Does Saul get saved here? Some think so because he calls Jesus Lord and asks what he should do next. But let me ask you something, has the sin issue been dealt with thoroughly here? Yes, a relationship has begun, but I am not convinced salvation has taken place just yet.

**Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and to him the Lord said in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am, Lord." 11 So the Lord said to him, "Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying.12 And in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him, so that he might receive his sight." 13 Then Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem.14 And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name." 15 But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel.16 For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake." 17 And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." 18 Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized.**

(Acts 9)

"Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear my Name among the Gentiles, kings and the children of Israel." Special selection, special purpose which is to effectuate faith in many others. Same pattern.

Now you can make the case that Saul was saved on the road because Ananias calls him brother, but I would not read too much into that. Ananias is saying that by faith because the Lord has revealed to him His plan for Saul, which Saul does not even know yet. Ananias explains he has been sent there to lay hands on him so

that he may receive sight, *and* the filling of the Holy Spirit. Scales fall from Saul's eyes, and he gets up and is immediately baptized. This looks more like salvation to me. If Saul was immediately baptized, why shouldn't you be?

We may have to call in the church bureau of investigation (CBI?) to conduct an investigation as to when Saul was saved. You know what, let's just say he was saved from before the foundation of the world. Works for me. The conversion of Saul is a feather in the hat for reformers, but his conversion was anything but common. And there is still room in the text for Saul to exercise faith you have to admit that. I will be objective if you will.

**Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, "It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles.<sup>47</sup> For so the Lord has commanded us: 'I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, That you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.' "** **48 Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed. 49 And the word of the Lord was being spread throughout all the region.** (Acts 13)

Now I told you I was objective so I cannot overlook this. The word says "And as many as were *appointed* for eternal life believed." That is pretty strong support for sovereign selection to me. However, look at the context and where we are in human history. There are many events in the book of Acts that certainly do not take place today. I have to concede this may be sovereign selection here. But I still believe in this case that it is God selecting a few to kick start this ministry to the Gentiles. Something new is happening. God is sovereign and He will bring His will to pass. My view is that He intends to use these appointments to effectuate faith in many others. But I am objective enough to say that this 1 verse fits reformed theology like a glove. There is no other verse in scripture quite like this one in Acts 13:48, which gets passed by much of the time.

I think the if there is one thing we see in Acts, is that there were many different accounts of a person's salvation. There was not a one size fits all, except for they put their faith and trust in Jesus.

Some believed and were baptized and saved. Some believed and were baptized, but did not receive the Holy Spirit until the apostles' laid hands on them. Some believed in Jesus, but had not been baptized into His name and did not receive the Holy Spirit until they did. And then some believed, the Holy Spirit baptized, they spoke in tongues, and then they were water baptized. And Saul was blinded on the road to Damascus. Salvation is all over the map in the book of Acts.

The Acts of the Holy Spirit are like the wind! There were a variety of accounts given in Acts. I would not go about building an all-encompassing soteriological theory from the book of Acts.

## Romans 1-8

Ah we have come to the book where all doctrines get tested! I love it!

**For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."** (Romans 1)

Do you believe this? Do you believe God? God says "the gospel is the power of God unto salvation." Do you believe that? Yes I asked 3 times! Remember when we were in the book of John discussing the strength of the words *draw* and *grant*? And the reformer made the illustration that to draw water from a well you would need to lower the bucket with the rope, and then crank the handle to bring the weight of that bucket of water up to the surface. Of course, today we use electric pumps, don't we?

But God. Here is my "But God" statement. God says the gospel *is* that *power*! You either believe that or you do not. If you believe that, then how can you believe in *irresistible* grace? Now to be fair reformers teach *irresistible* grace as God revealing Christ in such a way that He is irresistible. Okay, I disagree because the bible does not say that. The bible says the gospel is what reveals Christ. "For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith."

Now grace is not even mentioned in these verses so no, Irresistible Grace is not equivalent to the Gospel. And it is not a description of the Holy Spirit working behind the scenes to bring irresistible power to overwhelm the hearer and compel them to believe. Scripture tells us what the Holy Spirit does and never does it mention that it causes or enables an unbeliever to believe. The Holy Spirit makes the revelation real in the heart, so that they are without excuse. And Irresistible Grace is not synonymous for the Holy Spirit either. The Spirit testifies in the hearer's heart that they are receiving truth, which is why Jesus refers to it as the Spirit of Truth.

It is the responsibility of believers to share the gospel, not grace! "From faith to faith", you share your faith, live your faith and share the gospel by faith, and others come to faith. That my friend is the program of God. Is the mandate. It is the mission. It is the only mission! The gospel IS the power of God. God's grace is NOT the power, it is the vehicle that brought Jesus into the world. He came full of grace and truth. But the gospel is that which reveals Christ, and the power is in the gospel and in Christ who is revealed in the gospel.

By grace Jesus came, but grace can never replace the gospel of God. Grace cannot present the gospel. It comes by grace, but the power is not in the grace, the power is in the revelation which comes from the gospel, and only the gospel. Full stop.

I cannot force you to believe this. But this is what God's word says not once, but twice. Only the gospel can bring the revelation of Jesus to unbelievers. And God says that is His power at work, period. The Lord says lo I will be with you always when you are sharing My gospel! How sweet is that?

**For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,**

**19 because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them.20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,21 because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.** (Romans 1)

“So that they are without excuse, because although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in *their thoughts*, and *their foolish hearts* were darkened.” How could they know God, but refuse to glorify Him? Look. You cannot use Romans 3:10-15 to contradict what is here in Romans 1. That would be an erroneous hermeneutical practice. They may have not sought God, but now that Jesus has come everyone is without excuse! The Light of the world came! We are told right here in Romans 1 that they *knew* God, but *did not* glorify Him as God. That again is setting expectations for corpses.

No question that their depravity kept them from God. My objective observation is there is a range of soils, and there appears to be a range of depravity or hardness of heart from person to person. We universally fall short of the standard of Jesus, and all need Jesus as Savior. But some are very depraved and they are hard to reach, road soil. Some are ecstatic to hear and receive, but they fall away quickly; rocky soil. Some receive, get baptized and stay in church for years, even decades. But there is no fruit in their lives, they are not leading souls to the Lord, and they are everlastingly bothered about every little thing including their retirement account. They have thorns and thistles. And the wind blows where it pleases, so it is with those born of the Spirit. But they are the ones with fertile soil, and you will see the fruit they bear in seasons of life.

**Professing to be wise, they became fools,23 and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man--and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. 24 Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves,25 who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.** (Romans 1)

Now God makes it very clear here, He is not to blame for them not having faith. Who changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image like unto corruptible man? News flash, that would be corpses. They were able to recognize God, and reject Him.

**For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature.27 Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of**

**the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due. 28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting;29 being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, 30 backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,31 undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; 32 who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them. (Romans 1)**

“And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a depraved mind” This is not divine pre-determinism taking place here. Shall not the judge of all the earth do right? Yes, God gives people over to a depraved mind. But not until they have the knowledge of Him, and make the choice to reject Him themselves. “They are without excuse”. They were not pre-determined for eternal condemnation, there is no way you can extract that from this text. How can they even have God in their knowledge according to reformers? That is not even possible to them, I guess they simply read it with “special theological glasses” on, which tells them what the text “really means”.

Friends, God is indicting these corpses because “they did not *like* to *retain* God in their knowledge. These words are strong also, just as strong as the words in John 6. There is no contradiction from my understanding however.

**For circumcision is indeed profitable if you keep the law; but if you are a breaker of the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.26 Therefore, if an uncircumcised man keeps the righteous requirements of the law, will not his uncircumcision be counted as circumcision?27 And will not the physically uncircumcised, if he fulfills the law, judge you who, even with your written code and circumcision, are a transgressor of the law?28 For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh;29 but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God. (Romans 2)**

It is important for you to have this if you are going to understand Romans 3:10-15. We are still addressing corpses here. And Paul is saying that just because you were born a Jew and have your males circumcised does not make you right with God. The circumcision God wants to see is that which is inward. That which is “of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.” We are talking about corpses, but Paul makes it clear that you can only please God by faith from your heart.

**What advantage then has the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision?2 Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God.3 For what if some did not believe? Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect?4 Certainly**

**not! Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar. As it is written: "That You may be justified in Your words, And may overcome when You are judged." 5 But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unjust who inflicts wrath? (I speak as a man.)6 Certainly not! For then how will God judge the world? 7 For if the truth of God has increased through my lie to His glory, why am I also still judged as a sinner?8 And why not say, "Let us do evil that good may come"?--as we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say. Their condemnation is just. 9 What then? Are we better than they? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin. (Romans 3)**

Chapter breaks are not in the original manuscripts, and I would not have placed 1 here because we are still in the same context here. Paul is continuing his point here that the law reveals sin and cannot save. The law revealed the righteousness of God, but did not have the power to save in that it was weak through the flesh. Israel had the oracles of God. Who has them now? Believers!

"For what if some did not believe" speaking of Israelites in the Old Testament. "Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect?" Whose unbelief? *Their* unbelief. Whose faithfulness? God's faithfulness. Verse 4 quotes Psalm 51, but it looks like he is just lifting out a portion of it and the translation here to me does not communicate well. Let's look at it.

**Have mercy upon me, O God, According to Your lovingkindness; According to the multitude of Your tender mercies, Blot out my transgressions. 2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin. 3 For I acknowledge my transgressions, And my sin is always before me. 4 Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done this evil in Your sight--That You may be found just when You speak, And blameless when You judge. 5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me. 6 Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, And in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom. (Psalm 51)**

The part that Paul is lifting out is "That You may be found just when You speak, *and* blameless when you Judge." Now God is going to be completely blameless when He judges. Can he be that if he pre-determined by name those whom He would condemn? Those whom He said that He loved? Not so. We have already read in Romans 1 that no one is without excuse for not liking to retain the knowledge of God in their minds, which could have led to a change of heart. The corpses are without excuse. God had nothing to do with them not humbling themselves before Him. They will be judged for what *they* did or did not do, because God gave them opportunity. God is simply judging, and He is judging from a position of blamelessness.

Paul goes on to argue here that our sin does not increase God's glory, but He is certainly just to judge the world. There is no profit in your living in sin thinking somehow you are highlighting the glory of God. That is not what God wants. He wants you to glorify Him through obedience of faith to His gospel.

**What then? Are we better than they? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin. 10 As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one; 11 There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. 12 They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one." 13 "Their throat is an open tomb; With their tongues they have practiced deceit"; "The poison of asps is under their lips"; 14 "Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness." 15 "Their feet are swift to shed blood; 16 Destruction and misery are in their ways; 17 And the way of peace they have not known." 18 "There is no fear of God before their eyes."**

**19 Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. 20 Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. (Romans 3)**

The real point Paul is trying to make here is that just because you have the law and the oracles of God does not make you better than a Gentile. You are just as bad as they are. Everyone needs a Savior. Let's go ahead and look at the Old Testament being quoted here in this passage. The bible is of no private interpretation.

**The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, They have done abominable works, There is none who does good. 2 The LORD looks down from heaven upon the children of men, To see if there are any who understand, who seek God. 3 They have all turned aside, They have together become corrupt; There is none who does good, No, not one. (Psalm 14)**

**The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, and have done abominable iniquity; There is none who does good. 2 God looks down from heaven upon the children of men, To see if there are any who understand, who seek God. 3 Every one of them has turned aside; They have together become corrupt; There is none who does good, No, not one. 4 Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge, Who eat up my people as they eat bread, And do not call upon God? (Psalm 53)**

Notice here in Psalm 14 and 53 that those being described here are the fools who *say in their heart* "There is no God". What Paul is doing here is describing the Gentiles in the eyes of the Jews as that has been the dichotomy leading up to this point. "Are we any better than they are?" and now this Psalm is describing what Old Testament saints called unbelievers. But Paul is saying here that Jews are also corrupt with sin despite having the promises of God from old.

May I say something here? Christians are still sinners. We are simply beggars telling other beggars where to find living bread. Yes, we love the Lord and as a result we sin less than we might otherwise. But let's face it, we are not getting it done. We are not producing the righteousness of God in our lives, or allowing Him

to live it through us as well as we should. We fail all the time. Don't put a fish on your car, you drive terrible! Stop it. Talk to people instead.

Also, we need to stop training believers that they have to have this 3-component testimony. Brethren I got saved when I was 9. Trust me I have gotten into way more serious sin problems since being saved than before being saved. I told a reformer one day "I think my view of depravity is worse than yours!" And it shocked him and he said "How so?" To which I replied "It transcends salvation." He said "What do you mean?" I mean we are not doing it! Even with the Holy Spirit dwelling inside us we cannot produce the righteousness of Christ. At least I have not met a Christian yet that I thought was producing it perfectly, and I have met some really godly men.

But I think it is time for Christians to just be honest about themselves. When I share the gospel, I always give the disclosure that I am still a sinner that needs Jesus every day. I want the focus to be on Him, not me, and not "benefits". After all, I do not want to lead people to think that God is there to serve them. That was the problem Jesus was having in John 6. I do not portray this idea that I was once really bad, then I met Jesus, and now I am all better. I am not. I still sin, it is a problem that seems to be persistent.

The difference is that believers are in the fight, they agree with the Lord about their condition, and confess their sin and are forgiven again and again and again. With God you have an everlasting supply of new chances. But we have to get away from this boilerplate testimony training. We end up asking young people to write these, and then it is like they never consider their testimony again. The Bible encourages us to keep check of ourselves to ensure we are still in the faith. We should not have a teaching practice for young people that might encourage them not to continue to take personal inventory regularly. We need to focus only on Jesus, and on just sharing the gospel. Our testimony sometimes takes away from the power of the gospel. You do not need to convince someone they need to be like you, nor should you assume that your life experience parallels theirs. Just start with Jesus and stay there!

I think sharing testimony is good, especially in a small group setting because it is edifying to believers. I just do not think it is a good cold witnessing tool for unbelievers. They just need the gospel, that is the power of God brethren. And as believer's our hope is to stay the course and be His testimony every day with our love and faithful sharing of the gospel in thought, word, deed and prayer.

**For there is not a just man on earth who does good And does not sin.** (Ecclesiastes 7:20)

**All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.** (Isaiah 53:6)

To recap, Paul ends chapter 2 talking about circumcision. Then opens this chapter with "what advantage is that"? And the answer is that "unto them were committed the oracles of God". They *should* have known better because they had deeper

revelation. The problem is, the revelation they had was the law, and the only thing the law did was hold up a mirror to souls showing that they are desperately wicked. The Lord had all kinds of trouble with the Israelites, especially the Northern kingdom. But in the Old Testament the promise of the coming Messiah was there. And now this letter to the Romans is being written about 25 years after Christ's resurrection and Messiah has come! And Paul is letting everybody know it does not matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile, you need Jesus as your Savior because you are a disgusting sinner worthy of death!

But as we have seen even though dead, corpses can reason, talk, think rationally and make choices. We have seen too many already that did just that, without manipulation of any kind found in the text. And despite how much trouble Israel gave the Lord, He was still able to carry out His sovereign will in spite of them, reveal Himself to the nations, and from them the Messiah came. His sovereignty is intact, and He did not have to manipulate the masses, nor did He.

According to Isaiah, Jesus bore the iniquity of us *all*! Isaiah was preaching to a Jewish audience, but God's message through Isaiah is for the whole world, and always was. "Come, *everyone* that is thirsty." Thirsty? Making anyone else thirsty with your salt and light? Offering anyone else some Jesus to drink? Offering anyone else some Jesus to eat? Don't be rude! Share!

**But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,<sup>22</sup> even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference;<sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,<sup>24</sup> being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,<sup>25</sup> whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed,<sup>26</sup> to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. (Romans 3)**

How is the righteousness of God apart from the law revealed? In Jesus! The Light of the world came! He walked into the room and turned on the bright lights! The gospel! The gospel reveals the righteousness of God, which draws unbelievers to have faith. The gospel is also shared by faith in Jesus. To *all* and on *all who believe*, for there is no *difference*. Paul often will use contrast to teach. The main thing he is saying in Romans 3 is that there is no longer any difference between the Jew and the Greek. Go back and read chapter 1. Paul starts this letter off stating that he has been consecrated to the gospel, he is indebted to *everyone* to share it, he is not ashamed of it, that is to the Jew first, and also the Greek. He is driving that point home here in chapter 3. That is teaching through emphasis. Paul uses both contrast and emphasis to teach through this letter.

For *all* have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Everyone needs Jesus. Are you breathing? You need Jesus! That is why Paul was indebted to everyone.

## *What Can A Corpse Do*

Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ, whom God set forth as a propitiation.

What is propitiation? This is that all encompassing word that describes Jesus' work of redemption. Jesus fully and completely satisfied all the requirements of God's wrath, holiness, purity, sincerity, and selfless love. He is the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. Jesus is all of the offerings found in Leviticus. The Old Testament picture was that if you wanted to be right with God, you selected a lamb without blemish in the prime of life. You were to bring the innocent lamb to that priest at the tabernacle (a portrait of Jesus), and you were to lay your hands on the little lamb's head and confess your sins. As you confessed your sin, that sin was then transferred over to the innocent lamb.

Then, you slit the neck of the little lamb capturing its blood. The lamb falling to the ground quivering and convulsing as its life blood is drained from him. The lamb is then prepared and placed on the altar. There it is burned with fire until it is consumed. The fire represented God's judgment on that sinner who brought that little lamb. The lamb was his substitute. The picture of the wrath of God against the sinner being satisfied as the innocent took his place. The guilty could never take his place. A sinner cannot be a substitute for another sinner, he has his own sins to die for. Only the innocent can shed his blood for the guilty. The scripture tells us that the blood of bulls and goats could never truly atone for sin. They were just pictures of the Messiah that would come. Those little lambs in the Old Testament were spiritual credit cards. When Jesus went to the cross, he paid the balance in full!

Jesus completely satisfies God, because He is God! That is at the heart of the meaning of propitiation. His life in human flesh was very pleasing to God. His death satisfied the wrath of God for all sin and for all eternity! The precious pure Son of God, the only born Son of God into humanity fulfilled the law, the prophets, and completely revealed the righteousness of God in human flesh. He was completely without blemish as a man. His blood is completely pure. And the blood He spilled as He died in agony after being beaten to pulp first, has the purity God requires in order to punish our sin on the cross.

If you want to know how much God loves you, look at the cross. If you want to know how much God hates sin, look at the cross. It was there that Jesus became a propitiation for man, satisfying all the requirements of a just and holy God who must judge sin in righteousness. The price is the same for everyone, death! Death is the enemy of God, for God is life. Jesus conquered death, hell and the grave with His work of redemption. That is the depth of meaning this word propitiation has to me and I am not doing it justice. Jesus is the perfect Lamb of God for sinners. He is the only Lamb of God, there is no other than can satisfy God as Jesus did, and does! Jesus brings a reconciliation between God and man that no one else can, and by His propitiation made a way for man to be truly right with God, and enjoy the fellowship Adam once had. It is beautiful!

"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." Eph 1:7

**Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith.<sup>28</sup> Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.<sup>29</sup> Or is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also,<sup>30</sup> since there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith.<sup>31</sup> Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law. (Romans 3)**

**For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,<sup>9</sup> not of works, lest anyone should boast.<sup>10</sup> For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2)**

It is important to lay these 2 passages by the side of each other so that you do not misinterpret the gift of God in Paul's letter to the Ephesians, chapter 2. Just so we are clear, Faith is not the gift. Eternal Life through Jesus Christ our Lord is the gift of God, see Romans 6:23. Man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law, so that no man can boast.

And again, you cannot help but see that Paul is still driving home this point that old Jewish law does not profit you anymore. And it does not matter if you are Jew or a Gentile, the propitiation of God is available to everyone, and I mean everyone. The law of faith is superior, because the propitiation and the object of our faith is perfect. Now you need only put your faith in Jesus, and you no longer need to bother going and selecting a lamb from the flock according to the old law. That has been fulfilled now in Christ.

**Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. (Daniel 9:27)**

This is why I personally believe we are living in the middle of the 70th week, not between 69 and 70. Jesus put an end to sacrifice and offering with His perfect work of redemption. This book is not about eschatology, I have already suggested a good book for you on that. This is just to give you a little clip of prophecy in order for you to understand that Jesus fulfilled the law and the prophets with His complete work.

**Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. <sup>27</sup> Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God. <sup>28</sup> And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.**

**<sup>29</sup> For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.<sup>30</sup> Moreover whom He**

**predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.** (Romans 8)

Context matters. The Spirit helps us in our weaknesses. The Spirit intercedes for us. He who searches the hearts knows that they need intercession which they themselves are not even aware of. It is also important to note that the word Predestined in any form is only used 4 times in scripture. And 2 of them are here, the other 2 are in Ephesians written also by Paul. The word Faith is used 247 times in scripture, any form of the word Believe is used 322 times, and any form of the word Trust 190 times. You are going to build an all-encompassing theological system on 4 uses of a word compared to 759 times? You go ahead and do that, and I will build mine on the 759.

For whom He foreknew. Now God foreknows, but that does not make Him a soul and spirit manipulator. Just because He knew you would accept Christ doesn't mean He forced you to. And notice that He called. What did He call with? The gospel friends! And those He called He also justified. Okay, did He foreknow or predestine? Yes! However, the foreknowledge is individual and personal but foreknowledge is not sovereign selection, but a sovereign plan for the believer. The predestine part, that is regarding your sanctification, adoption, and inheritance. He foreknew first, then predestined them to go through the process of sanctification which is a ministry of the Holy Spirit.

This entire chapter is about the Spirit. Do not lose sight of that. God foreknew Jeremiah also. I think God's election is based on foreknowledge, and by definition means that He did not premeditate the persons. He simply foreknew their relationship before they even existed.

God does not exist inside of time; He created time for us to live in. But He is outside the box, and He can see a thousand years from now to us, as if it happened a thousand years ago. God's omnipresence is a continual existence that is current and even spontaneous in the moment, while also existing in eternity past and eternity present in the same form. He knew you first, He is already at the day of your death, and He still remains at the day you were born. He is not just everywhere all at once, he is eternally spontaneous continually in the time that He created for us. Wrap your head around that a couple of times.

He knew you would choose His Son; He did not make you do it. Predestination here is regarding the work of the Holy Spirit for sanctification in the life of the believer, not for salvation itself. God predestined you to be shaped by the Holy Spirit into the image of His son over time. It is happening. If it is not happening, you need to be saved.

1. Foreknowledge first
2. Calling second
3. Predestination third.

It is sequential. And this pattern fits both passages of scripture.

**Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,<sup>4</sup> just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,<sup>5</sup> having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,<sup>6</sup> to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved. <sup>7</sup> In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace<sup>8</sup> which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence,<sup>9</sup> having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself,<sup>10</sup> that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth--in Him. <sup>11</sup> In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will,<sup>12</sup> that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. <sup>13</sup> In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,<sup>14</sup> who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory. (Ephesians 1)**

Now here are the other 2 uses of this word Predestination. 10 times in this passage you see either the words Us or We. However, starting in verse 13 the word You comes into the text. Predestination here is regarding the church as a whole, not individuals being marked out for divine pre-determinism, which really promotes the idea of divine fatalism. And we were predestined to adoption. We were not His kids, but in Christ we became His kids. That is what was predestined, that we would be called sons in Christ. We were predestined to have an inheritance in Christ. Jesus Christ is the elect. If you are in Christ, you are the elect, if not then you are not. But you can be, just repent and believe. The gospel is still there for everyone.

Notice here in verse 13 that Paul says "In Him *you* also *trusted* after *you* heard the word of truth, the *gospel* of *your* salvation; in whom also, having *believed*, *you* were sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of *your* inheritance" Did you notice Paul did not leave that out. I do not think Paul wants you to be confused here at all. God's sovereignty is about the plan, it is not about manipulation. You still have to hear the gospel of your salvation, trust and believe. Only then will you be sealed by the Holy Spirit. The other thing I notice here is that again the Holy Spirit is mentioned in the same context as predestination in both of these passages. I think the 2 of them go together, and it is regarding the work in or on behalf of the believer and not about choosing who will be believers and who will not. Again, you are not being forced to believe that. And without question, this passage makes it clear that corpses can hear, trust and believe. I think in that order.

Somebody asks "You do not trust God to choose correctly?" Listen to yourself. It is this type of thinking that makes unbelievers think God killed grandma. Or that

their loved one just died and went to hell because God predetermined it? Let's reason together, you are not forced to believe that and you certainly are not forced to teach or promote that notion. You can rightly divide and teach the ways of everlasting without having to be hard boiled with your soteriology which is not theology. Don't add or subtract when you eat the flesh of Jesus, and drink His blood. Just take it like it is and digest it. Sweet in the mouth but bitter in the tummy.

## Romans 9-11

**I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit,<sup>2</sup> that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart.<sup>3</sup> For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh, <sup>4</sup> who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises;<sup>5</sup> of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen.**

**<sup>6</sup>But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they are not all Israel who are of Israel,<sup>7</sup> nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, "In Isaac your seed shall be called." <sup>8</sup> That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed.<sup>9</sup> For this is the word of promise: "At this time I will come and Sarah shall have a son." <sup>10</sup> And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one man, even by our father Isaac<sup>11</sup> (for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls),<sup>12</sup> it was said to her, "The older shall serve the younger." <sup>13</sup> As it is written, "Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated." (Romans 9)**

Now I need you to look at the first 4 verses because Paul is changing the subject here. It is as if Paul took a break from writing for a day or 2, and then resumed writing and his mind is now on something else. Paul is broken-hearted over Israel. I can imagine Paul going out for the day and witnessing, possibly to some Jews he ran into along the way, and coming home and just has this brokenness in his spirit concerning Israel. Out of frustration Paul turned from witnessing to the Jews to the Gentiles. But he still wants them to accept Christ and be saved. Paul does not want them to go on with false assurance that they can just keep standing on the promises of the Old Testament.

But the key point here is that Israel was selected as the people from whom Christ came. This is her Seed mentioned in Genesis 3 and it is a big deal. The Seed that is at enmity with Satan and will bruise his head. "That is, those that are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed." Again, this is very important that you fully understand these

verses if you are going to understand what is written next. Paul is talking about God's sovereign selection regarding the Seed. This is not about individuals being hand-picked for salvation in Christ, and others being hand-picked for condemnation. But rather, God had to choose sinful people as the ancestors of Christ that was to come. He had to choose someone in order to bring Christ into the world in the fullness of time.

**The burden of the word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi. 2 "I have loved you," says the LORD. "Yet you say, "In what way have You loved us?' Was not Esau Jacob's brother?" Says the LORD. "Yet Jacob I have loved; 3 But Esau I have hated, And laid waste his mountains and his heritage For the jackals of the wilderness." 4 Even though Edom has said, "We have been impoverished, But we will return and build the desolate places," Thus says the LORD of hosts: "They may build, but I will throw down; They shall be called the Territory of Wickedness, And the people against whom the LORD will have indignation forever. 5 Your eyes shall see, And you shall say, "The LORD is magnified beyond the border of Israel.' (Malachi 1:1-4)**

Therefore, my interpretation of scripture from a big picture standpoint is still intact. I have made the point all through this book. Without question God chose Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Jacob wrestled with the angel of the Lord all night, and that night the angel of the Lord changed his name from Jacob to Israel. Jacob's sons became the 12 tribes of Israel. Israel is their covenant name.

The name Israel means "struggles with God". That is important because God chose that name to give to Jacob. Now Jacob's name means "to supplant, circumvent, assail, or overreach"; but it can also mean "to follow, to be behind"; and it can also mean "may God protect". Now we know that Jacob was a supplanter because he conned Esau out of his birthright for a serving of food, and agreed with his mother and carried out the deception of his father Isaac to steal Esau's blessing of inheritance. Basically Jacob, who was the second born (to follow, to be behind) even though they were twins, supplanted and stole Esau's birthright as the firstborn, which included the blessing of his father for his inheritance.

And God foreknew all that and still chose Jacob? Can that be right? Well, He did, but He is going to bring the Only Begotten into the world from his lions. And so, God chose Jacob, and protected him (may God protect) in order to bring about His plan for the world.

As you can see here from Malachi in context, that God laid waste to Edom, which is the nation from Esau. God instead chose to put His name with the nation Israel, and to bring the Messiah through them, and reveal Himself to the world through them.

It is a picture of choosing a people for your name that did not deserve it because they were just as evil as the nations, and condemning the other nations because they are heathen and have no faith at all. And I concede that the remnant of Israel that did have faith, would not have had it unless God revealed Himself to them at a deeper level than the other nations. But doing that at a national level with the intent

of drawing in the nations (there is that word draw) which is the typology of Solomon as flawed of a corpse as he was. God still got the picture through.

Again, God's sovereignty is much more about simply lifting up Jesus for all to see than it is about picking and choosing individuals even before they are ever born. Born into death at enmity against God, cast into outer death simply by selection and somewhere in between He loved them? What is their eternal value, and who is responsible for the loss of that value? How could it be them? They could not hear or respond anyway; it is not their fault. You cannot lay it on Adam either. Adam may be responsible for them being born a corpse, but he is not responsible for them remaining a corpse. Go back and read about Abel. Nor is that what Romans 1 and 2 say. Go back and read that. No one is without excuse. Turn that over a few times.

And there is always that small mixed multitude that chooses to identify with God and His people. And our mandate today is to get out God's gospel. The program is very much the same. Lift up Jesus so that all men will be drawn to Him. Do you believe the gospel is the power of God unto salvation or not?

**What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not! 15 For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion." 16 So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy. 17 For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth." 18 Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens. 19 You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?" 20 But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, "Why have you made me like this?" 21 Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor? 22 What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, 23 and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory, 24 even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? (Romans 9)**

Here comes the reformed theologian now, and wants to tell you that Paul anticipated this question because divine double predestination of every soul just does not seem fair.

You think? I get this question a lot from those that embrace the reformed view "Does it have to be fair?", to which I reply "shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" How many of you thought Lot was all that? But God got him out of there for Abrahams's sake, I think. But may I say to you? No one is forcing you to believe what the reformers teach, which taints the way you now look at all of Scripture. God is not forcing you to believe that with this passage at all.

Quite the contrary. The question Paul is anticipating is that since God foreknew Jacob and Esau, and knowing the despicable conman Jacob was, was it right to

choose Jacob to be the one from whom the Seed would come, even before either of them were born? I mean on the surface it looks like Esau might have been a better man than Jacob in many respects. Isaac thought so. That is the anticipated question. We are not explaining the latter part of Chapter 8 in Chapter 9 people. The subject has changed as has the context. The question now is "Are Jews any better than Greeks because of the special revelation they have had?" In the past that was the thinking. Jesus has now come and the gospel is for everyone. Not only that, but you can no longer depend on the Old Testament ways to stay right with God. You need to respond to the gospel also even if you are a Jew, just as the Greeks do.

Is there unrighteousness with God to choose to reveal Himself through the seed of Jacob rather than the seed of Esau? Is God wrong for placing His name with Israel and not the other nations? Would it have mattered? If God had chosen Esau and put His name with the nation Edom, would that have been wrong? Did Jacob deserve to be chosen for this? For that matter did Noah or Abraham deserve to be chosen for the special purpose God used them for? No. No one deserves to be used by God to bring glory to Himself.

Again, go back and read verses 4 and 5. The special sovereign selection of Jacob had nothing to do with Jacob, but God revealing Himself through the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises. What promises? The promise that Messiah would come, and be called the Holy One of Israel. He is not called the Holy One of Edom or any other nation. He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel. That is how He chose to be identified to all people on the earth. Was either man worthy between Jacob and Esau? Of course not!

**As He says also in Hosea: "I will call them My people, who were not My people, And her beloved, who was not beloved." 26 "And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, 'You are not My people,' There they shall be called sons of the living God." 27 Isaiah also cries out concerning Israel: "Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, The remnant will be saved. 28 For He will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness, Because the Lord will make a short work upon the earth." 29 And as Isaiah said before: "Unless the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, We would have become like Sodom, And we would have been made like Gomorrah. (Romans 9)**

Did you catch that last sentence? Unless the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a *seed*! God's sovereign selection of Jacob is not about double predestination, it was about bringing the Savior into the world in the fullness of time. God is doing a work on the earth, a short work this scripture says. His sovereignty is intact, and He has not spiritually manipulated the masses. Scripture just does not say that. It does not say it here, it does not say it anywhere. God is sovereign, but His sovereign plan is not to *cause* people to be saved according to His sovereign choice, but rather to *effectuate* faith by the revealing of His Messiah. This is done through the power of the gospel, which is an invitation to the whole world to choose Jesus as their

individual choice according to the limited free will given them because they are made in the image of God!

God, for the sake of love and a real relationship, gave up a small slice of His sovereignty to human souls only to the degree that mankind could make an individual sovereign choice whether or not to love God back. He gave it to Adam, but it runs with the soul. In real estate we use the term "runs with the land" regarding easements and property rights. But when God created the human soul and personally breathed life into his nostrils, He gave Adam a slice of sovereignty. Adam lost the right relationship with God, but that little slice of sovereignty given runs with human souls and is perpetual. That is my view.

Instead of teaching that unless God uses irresistible grace according to His sovereign selection of individual souls because "there is no other way"; We should rather understand and be teaching the truth that unless the world were given a Savior, no one could be saved! That my friend is the truth that is here! You cannot *have* salvation without a Savior. God's sovereign plan started back in Genesis 3. He would bring her Seed into the world. He used the nation Israel to do that. Did they deserve that privilege? Absolutely not. But God would not allow that to stop Him with His sovereign plan to bring and reveal Christ to the whole world! What did the host of angels sing the night Jesus was born? It was big news! God got it done in spite of Jacob. The Seed came in the fullness of time according to His sovereign plan!

**For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.** (John 3:17)

Now there is a powerful memory verse for you. John 3:16 is far more powerful when paired with John 3:17. I think the verse break is in an unfortunate spot.

**Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. 2 For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. 5 For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, "The man who does those things shall live by them." 6 But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' " (that is, to bring Christ down from above) 7 or, " 'Who will descend into the abyss?' " (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). 8 But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith which we preach): 9 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.11 For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame." (Romans 10)**

## What Can A Corpse Do

I am telling you; Paul is just torn up over his brethren according to the flesh, that is Israel. Paul's heart is heavy, he feels a heavy burden for their salvation. Beloved, you can count on God's heart being that way too. After all, Paul incites the Holy Spirit as he started this section off. God has a very heavy heart regarding Israel. You can set your calendar to that. God still loves them, and He still wants them to be saved in Christ. I believe chapters 9 through 11 were probably written on the same day. He just could not stop thinking and praying for them, and conveying his thoughts to us about it, while teaching us also the ways of eternity.

Paul now reverts to a common practice of contrasting the works of the law juxtaposed with the law of faith. When he says here that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, he is really saying that Jesus is the measuring stick. God is pleased with Him, and everyone that believes in Him is seen by God as measuring up to God's standard. But to those that seek to establish their own righteousness, they will have their day in court, but they will be found lacking and their life will not measure up to that of Jesus Christ. He is either your substitute, or your standard. There is no place in between. The world will be judged by the measuring stick that is Jesus. Either your life is as good as His, or you need Him as your Savior.

"But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way". May I say this is one of the most powerful statements made by Paul. When you speak to people throughout your day, do you speak with the righteousness of faith? But I digress.

**"For this commandment which I command you today is not too mysterious for you, nor is it far off.12 It is not in heaven, that you should say, "Who will ascend into heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?"13 Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, "Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?"14 But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it.**  
(Deuteronomy 30:11-14)

This is the direct quote Paul is referencing. It is always good to read it in context because Paul is pointing you there. Paul left out "that you may do it". However, he parenthetically places Christ into this Old Testament passage. And Paul says that it is in your mouth and in your heart because he preached it to you! He may have left off "that you may do it" because of what he writes next. He is going to instruct you to do it just as Moses did back in the day. Paul is like that too. He sort of feels like the New Testament Moses sometimes.

"That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart, one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame." This is what God says is an appropriate response to His gospel! You as a corpse must:

1. Confess with your mouth (as if you were laying your hand on your Passover Lamb)

## What Can A Corpse Do

- a. You are a sinner worthy of death
    - i. Transfer those sins. Confess them to Him, only Him. Confess your sins to Jesus so He can wash your sins away and fill your heart with forgiveness, love and great joy!
  - b. And that you believe the following in your heart; your mouth needs to speak it.
2. Believe in *your* heart and speak with your mouth
    - a. That Jesus is God. That He is your substitute, who died for you on the cross. He is your Passover Lamb allowing the judgment of God to pass over you.
  3. Believe God raised Him from the dead
    - a. Jesus said He raised Himself from the dead and I believe that with all my heart.
    - b. I believe Jesus was separated from the Father from the cross to resurrection, just as we are separated from God as sinners. Jesus took our sin upon Himself, even upon His holy and pure body, which temporarily separated God the Son from God the Father for the only time in all eternity. Jesus expressed the agony of that separation on the cross.
    - c. Jesus said no one takes it from Me. I lay it down of Myself, so that I may take it up again. I received this authority from My Father. Father gave the green light; Jesus did the rest. God the Son raised Himself from the dead. That is my view. He conquered death! Jesus did it! Jesus is HIM! Therefore, the Father will glorify Him forever and ever Amen! That is happening! And I am thrilled to praise Him!

Do this and be saved! This is not a work of righteousness. It is a confession of faith. Now go and *live by faith!* That is when the predestination part kicks in, the moment you give your life to Christ, The Holy Spirit enters you bringing you to life and you are an adopted child with an inheritance that is in Christ. The ministry of the Holy Spirit in your new life begins, to consecrate you to Jesus and the gospel and to conform you into the image of Jesus by teaching you from scripture the precepts of everlasting. Line upon line, precept upon precept conforming you into the image of Christ.

You are still going to sin, but you feel terrible about it. The beauty is that you can receive forgiveness over and over by faithfully confessing that sin, for He is faithful and just to forgive you again and again, and cleanse you before the Father with His precious blood, and continues daily to intercede for you before the Father, and the Holy Spirit as we saw in Romans 8 intercedes between your new life and the Lord.

It takes a trinity to save my friend. That is how bad your depravity is. You are worthy of death daily. You do know that right? Take up your cross daily, commit yourself to doing His will. That is the command, to live by faith in the Son of God who loves you, and gave Himself for you. That you may produce fruit for Him, and fruit that remains.

The same was true for Old Testament saints. They sinned all the time too. They had to take another spiritual credit card to the tabernacle and confess those sins. When we confess our sins regularly to Christ, we are not using a credit card but a debit card. Jesus paid it all, all to Him I owe. Sin had left a crimson stain, He washed it white as snow. His blood is so precious it will just keep on cleansing you from all sin before the Father, keeping your relationship to God intact from now to all eternity. And He is with you as you commit to not doing your own will, but the will of Him who sends you! Somebody shout Hallelujah!

**For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him.13 For "whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." 14 How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?15 And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!" 16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our report?" 17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. 18 But I say, have they not heard? Yes indeed:"Their sound has gone out to all the earth,And their words to the ends of the world." 19 But I say, did Israel not know? First Moses says: "I will provoke you to jealousy by those who are not a nation,I will move you to anger by a foolish nation." 20 But Isaiah is very bold and says: "I was found by those who did not seek Me;I was made manifest to those who did not ask for Me." 21 21 But to Israel he says: "All day long I have stretched out My handsTo a disobedient and contrary people." (Romans 10)**

Do not ever allow anyone to say to you that preaching is foolishness! I do not care if they are joking or not. It is irreverent! This is spiritual life and death! There is nothing foolish about preaching that which is the power of God unto salvation to *everyone who believes!* Paul did not think it was foolish I can tell you that! He dedicated his new life to it!

Now look, I just do not know how you cannot see this and not understand it. Israel heard. That is the charge against them. The corpse has heard. "But they have not all obeyed the gospel." Yes, the gospel has a call to obedience, and corpses are expected to respond to that call with obedience. "Did Israel not know?" The corpse knew! God now turns and is sending Paul with the gospel to the Gentiles and I am reminded of the parable of the banquet. The corpse got an invitation to the banquet, and the corpse sent a reply to the banquet invite along the lines of "Sorry I can't make it." The corpse will miss the banquet because he refused the invitation that is all there is to it.

God is heavily burdened for the salvation of the Jews. He wants them to trust Christ. They have the word, but they will not receive it and allow it to penetrate deep into their hearts. God is not responsible that they are going to miss the banquet. They have an open invitation only now we Gentiles do also. That is what

Paul is teaching here. He is exalting the gospel of Jesus Christ! He is not exalting the sovereign selection of God regarding salvation.

Paul is exalting Christ in chapter 9 as the Seed. He is the Savior that came in the fullness of time. Then Paul exalts His gospel in chapter 10. All this while maintaining the underlying theme that his and God's hearts are burdened for the lost souls of Israel. Sovereign selection is just not a proper conclusion for the masses when this text is studied in the entire context, which includes this entire letter.

But in particular you cannot separate sections out of chapter 9 and not even discuss chapter 10. The bible is of no private interpretation. It interprets itself with the aid of the Holy Spirit and cannot be properly understood without the Holy Spirit and faith. The only sovereign selection the bible teaches regarding Jacob and Esau is that He chose 1 of them to be the ancestor of Jesus. That is all. It is all about Jesus and His work. It is not really about Jacob or Esau, or you and I. It is about God bringing a Savior into the world.

God did not create Adam or satan faulty. God took a risk for a real relationship! Don't you *ever* lose sight of that! God loves you! And He wants you to love Him too! It doesn't get any better than that. He created mankind for a loving transparent relationship. And how does that measure up to Him pre-determining masses to doom if He wants a loving relationship with them?

You've got problems. And the reason why is because you are focused on a few verses here and a few words there while ignoring a plethora of entire chapters and numerous words that contradict the conclusion even within this very same letter of Romans. God says no one is without excuse! God says their demise is not my doing! The Lord gave them the same invitation as everyone else. The ground is level at the foot of the cross! At the cross there are no lines, no waiting. You can come. Just come. The veil has been torn in two and everyone can come freely now. That is not a picture of God keeping people out. "Go out into the streets and fill My house for this banquet I have prepared." That is the picture today.

**I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.<sup>2</sup> God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel, saying,<sup>3</sup> "Lord, they have killed Your prophets and torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life"? <sup>4</sup> But what does the divine response say to him? "I have reserved for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal." <sup>5</sup> Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace. (Romans 11)**

So here is the point. Paul is not cast away, and he was foreknown not to be cast away. In other words, the thought never entered into God's heart to cast away Israel at any time. He is still preserving a remnant in Christ now and Paul is living proof of that. And not Paul only, but the twelve, the 3,000 the day of Pentecost and every other Jew that has chosen to follow Christ no matter the cost.

The 7,000 that God kept for Himself is also given as an illustration that under the Old Testament economy God worked in this way, and in the New Testament economy God is still working in that same way. And any Jew today can come to Christ my beloved, just as any stranger in the Old Testament could choose to join himself to the Lord and His people. But to do that he had to demonstrate his faith. Were these 7,000 men spiritually manipulated in order to be the remnant? No more than any other Jew has been manipulated into receiving Christ in order to be in the church. Anyone can come.

These 7,000 men were foreknown to have faith, but they were not predestined to have it. It still happened organically. They were born physically, heard God's word through the law, the prophets, the service of God through the sacrifices and feared the God of Israel. This was likely effectuated by the very ministry of Elijah. Elijah just could not see that, and that is part of his humility as well. God told Elijah that he is wrong. And Paul is telling us if we think God is through with the nation Israel, we are wrong about that. It is not God's will that any should perish. And He is not finished with the Children of Israel.

Is the bible teaching Unconditional Election and Irresistible Grace here? My friend, if this is the best you have, you need to give it up. Just because the words "according to the election of grace" are in the bible does not mean you are forced into planting the words Unconditional and Irresistible into the text. God did not put those 2 words in the text.

Now what is the election of grace? God my friend is indeed the One who elects. He elected Jesus. There is only One elected. But what is the meaning then of the election of grace?

**And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work. 7 What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were blinded. Just as it is written: "God has given them a spirit of stupor, Eyes that they should not see And ears that they should not hear, To this very day." 9 And David says: "Let their table become a snare and a trap, A stumbling block and a recompense to them. 10 Let their eyes be darkened, so that they do not see, And bow down their back always." (Romans 11)**

Okay now Paul beats this argument to death in most if not all of his writings. Grace and Works cannot be combined and still remain true to themselves.

**For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. (Romans 10:3)**

I am circling you back to the previous chapter (which is within this section of the letter, in context) so that we may better understand what this election of grace is. Paul said they are in the spot they are *because* they through ignorance are trying to establish their own righteousness. How? Through their birth rights and the works of the Mosaic law. Paul is unpacking that now. They did not submit to the

righteousness of God. What is that? That is the righteousness that is revealed in the gospel of Christ as in Romans 1:16-17. But what happened was this; First they rejected the gospel, then they were blinded. Immediately following 1:16-17 we read this.

**because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.<sup>22</sup> Professing to be wise, they became fools,<sup>23</sup> and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man--and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. <sup>24</sup> Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves,<sup>25</sup> who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.**  
(Romans 1:21-25)

Paul has already told us why they were given over by God. It was first the adverse response and rejection of God! God is not the one that determined their fate. He blinded them *after* they rejected Him. He came into His own, but His own received Him not. Shall not the judge of all the earth do right? If He blinds them, He is righteous and blameless when He does. They had their invitation; they had their revelation. Israel above all the people of the earth had it. But they chose to worship the Baal's instead.

Now they have chosen to reject Christ as well. He is certainly holy and righteous to judge unbelievers with a spirit of stupor. He is only giving them what they are asking for. But there is a remnant in Christ also, and I love my Messianic Jew brothers in the Lord! But those that reject Him, it does not matter if you are Jew or Greek, the day will come when the revelation you have been given will be taken away from you.

**I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles.<sup>12</sup> Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness! <sup>13</sup> For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry,<sup>14</sup> if by any means I may provoke to jealousy those who are my flesh and save some of them.<sup>15</sup> For if their being cast away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? <sup>16</sup> For if the firstfruit is holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root is holy, so are the branches.<sup>17</sup> And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree,<sup>18</sup> do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you. <sup>19</sup> You will say then, "Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in."<sup>20</sup> Well said.** (Romans 11)

Now this is the teaching regarding the sovereignty of Almighty God. God foreknew all of this. God has been dealing with rejection a long time. God still has

a sovereign plan and it is running on schedule. God foreknew they would go into captivity and He still sent Jeremiah. God foreknew that many if not most of the Jews in the early days of the church would reject Christ.

The multitudes followed Him when He could feed them and heal their sick. And believe me Jesus was entertaining as well. He would heal you, sit you down and feed you food, then entertain you with parables and stories to preach the Kingdom of God is at hand. I tell you a night out with Jesus was wonderful.

But after His death on the cross, the first test of the soils came. Now at this time of Paul's writing Jesus has ascended about 25 years give or take. And Paul and the other apostles have worn themselves out witnessing to the lost sheep of Israel. Finally, Paul was led by the Lord to turn his focus to the Gentiles.

God's big picture plan is still humming along. The unbelieving branches of the house of Israel are broken off, so that we Gentiles could be grafted in.

**Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear.<sup>21</sup> For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either.<sup>22</sup> Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off.<sup>23</sup> And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again.<sup>24</sup> For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who are natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? <sup>25</sup> For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. (Romans 11)**

Were they broken off because God predestined them to be broken off through the spiritual manipulation of individual persons? No! Did God predestine those that were found guilty of unbelief despite the revelation they had to be broken off? Yes! And is Jesus the sovereign razor's edge of God dividing the world today? You better believe He is. What will you do with Jesus? You cannot escape Him. He is coming again.

It was because of *their unbelief* that they were broken off. And it is by *your faith* that you are grafted in. The just shall live by faith. That is an eternal precept to build a theology on. You cannot have either unbelief or faith without first receiving revelation. God is in the revelation business and commands you to join Him in that effort! Incidentally, this passage read alongside John 15 is incredible.

**And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; <sup>27</sup> For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins." <sup>28</sup> Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers.<sup>29</sup> For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.<sup>30</sup> For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience,<sup>31</sup> even so these also have now been**

**disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy.<sup>32</sup> For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all.** (Romans 11)

God's sovereign plan also has a future. Because God is faithful. For now, they are committed to disobedience so that He can have a chance to save them in the future. I believe this is prophetic regarding the Day of Lord. The millennial reign of Christ. And I believe that in that day anyone that is born of the seed of Jacob *can* be resurrected if God wills it. Satan will be thrown into the abyss.

And they will, regardless of their disobedience to Him in the past or present, in the future will be given a second chance in the Millennial Kingdom, to be taught and I believe they will understand. Why? For the sake of their fathers. Because God keeps His promises no matter what. They are committed to disobedience for now, so that you may be saved. But also, that you may provoke them to jealousy. I could be wrong regarding individuals.

But there will at least be the remnant that will live in that kingdom, but anything is possible with God. He is a God of many second chances. Because even at the end of that Millennial Kingdom there will be a final testing of the soils as satan will be released from the abyss for a short time, and he will deceive many to fall away from Christ.

Therefore, it would not surprise me if every person that was ever born of the seed of Jacob is resurrected and retaught from the Father. Every soul that went through the Holocaust could be there. Because they were persecuted in the name of a Holy God. Just because He identified with them, they were persecuted. Only this time they will have the witness of us, of whom God has also shown mercy.

God created cause and effect. The things He did in Israel were to be examples unto us. But in the future the things He has done through us will then be used as examples back unto them. How can that happen unless God resurrects them?

By the way, we are no better than them either. We sit in judgment of them in Sunday School thinking, "how could they have been that stupid?". But that is us! Look, all we have to do is get out the gospel, and we will not even put as much effort into that, as we do watching videos to entertain ourselves. Trust me the future will look back at us and say "Wow, what a disappointment they were, and they had the Holy Spirit dwelling within them."

Yes, I understand that our witness now should move them to salvation and I recognize he says "if they do not continue in unbelief they can be grafted back in". But current salvation is not the thought Paul is communicating here. He says they remain beloved for the sake of the fathers. The elect was their father, in this case Jacob. Chapter 9. The gifts and callings of God are irrevocable. They were elect according to Jacob, and we who believe are elect according to Jesus.

They were under the covenant of law, and we are under the covenant of faith. These are 2 groups of elect according to 2 covenants and 2 fathers; Jacob and Jesus. But the 2 covenants are some day going to be brought together. That is my view, "that He might have mercy on all" I think may refer to the elect of Jacob, from which came the Mosaic law, promises and the service of God. And of course,

the Spirit eternally seals every one that is elect in Christ according to the law of faith in response to a whosoever will gospel.

And on that day their ears will hear, eyes will see, heart will receive and understand, and they will turn and be saved. The Lord Jesus will rule from Jerusalem. And when He comes Jerusalem will blossom like a rose. God can graft them back in again. He can do that! He will do that! That is being said here. What never changes is the root. However, John 15 makes it clear that the branches that are broken off are designated to be burned. However, this passage tells us that they can be grafted back in if they repent of their unbelief. Their soil may have had thorns and thistles so that they did not continue in faith, but their soil may get washed downhill to fertile land, and we should pray to that end.

Make no mistake about it. Paul closes this section with a very important statement. God *desires* to have mercy on *all*. His sovereign plan has that mission as part of God's eternal plan for this thing called time that He created, and exists eternally in it completely spontaneous at every moment. God is mind blowing amazing. Here is what Jesus said concerning this.

**"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were not willing! 35 See! Your house is left to you desolate; and assuredly, I say to you, you shall not see Me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!' " (Luke 13)**

They were not willing you see, that is why they were broken off. Not because of divine selection, but because of rejection of the divine revelation they had. But the day is coming when they will be reconciled to Him.

**Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! 34 "For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has become His counselor?" 35 "Or who has first given to Him And it shall be repaid to him?" 36 For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen. (Romans 11)**

Paul got over his broken heart with worship! This is too amazing. I have felt his heavy heart for Israel for 3 chapters straight. But God worked in Paul to pen his way through this and then guided his pen into sheer joy and gladness of soul. God says "Paul just rest easy. I have a plan for all of this, and I have not forgotten My people or My promises! I am going to bless all the nations of the earth according to the promise I made to Abraham. I am making it happen, and I will continue to make it happen. I AM the LORD." (My paraphrase)

And who are we to question Him? Who are we to counsel Him? Who are we that He owes us anything? He does not owe us the answer to our questions! And who are we to even attempt to question Him? His ways are higher than our ways, and

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His thoughts higher than our thoughts. His ways are past finding out! He is way bigger than the TULIP box!

The bible does not teach Unconditional Election according to God's sovereign choice on a personal per person basis by the power of Irresistible Grace. The bible does not teach that in John 6. It does not teach that in Romans 9-11. It does not teach that anywhere in the bible. And if someone has to come and explain to you that Irresistible Grace is just a term they use that is synonymous with the gospel. Or it is what the Spirit uses to add power to the gospel. That is nonsense! Why? Because the bible just does not teach that, anywhere. It is just a theory. No one, especially God, is forcing you to believe it. If you believe that you are simply following the teachings of men rather than God. You have the conversion of Saul, who became Paul and it is remarkable. There is Acts 13:48. But you cannot stand on John 6 or Romans 9-11 and convince me you have expounded the entire passage and letter and rightly divided it in the context of all of scripture. Come on now.

## The Gospel is the Power of God



The gospel is the power of God unto salvation. That is what the bible teaches as the power that brings life from death. Scripture interprets itself with the Holy Spirit as guide. Scripture does not contradict itself, because if it did then God contradicts Himself. There is only One Christ, and there is only one gospel of Christ. That gospel is the power of God unto salvation my beloved. Nothing more, nothing less, nothing else!

There is power in the seed, which is freely sewn all over the place generously and indiscriminately, even all over the road. But that seed is the power, it is the gospel of God. But by prayer and supplication; Can hardened soil from the road be moved to the fertile from faith to faith? I have to believe that! Because with God all things are possible.

If your faith is in Him, He has commissioned you to love others to Him. As His disciple you are sewing always as He commanded. Always sewing, and sometimes the Lord allows you to see someone born. Just like Elijah and even Abraham, we do not always get to see the effects of our witnessing. We are just commanded to do it by faith. One prays, another shares boldly, then another invests love, and another ministers to their pain; who knows what can happen?

But I know this; Jesus can do more when people are exercising faith in Him, and He was limited when they did not! Human faith mattered! Now combine faith with the gospel and you get Romans 1:16-17. Which is Paul's thesis for the entire letter. And if you are practicing that by faith, then Jesus promised He would be with you. The Holy Spirit working through you to introduce others to Jesus, and working in them to convict them of sin and of the love demonstrated by God in this way, that while they were sinners, Christ died for them, and was raised for their

justification. The Spirit makes the truth real to the sinner, but does not bring life until confession is made from the heart, through the mouth. That is Romans 10, which also says "how can they hear without a preacher?". If you are living by faith in Him, well then, I guess you are doing that regularly, right?

Jesus said He could make the rocks cry out. The poor rocks were not given that chance. Jerusalem was. Now you are!

**"Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.<sup>22</sup> But I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you.<sup>23</sup> And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. <sup>24</sup> But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you."** (Matthew 11)

Jesus is clearly saying that other corpses would have responded when they would not. And they will be condemned for it. Jesus spent time in these places, and they should have exercised faith. They will be judged for their response or lack thereof.

**At that time Jesus answered and said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes.<sup>26</sup> Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight.<sup>27</sup> All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.<sup>28</sup> Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.<sup>29</sup> Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.<sup>30</sup> For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."** (Matthew 11)

Some strong language here for sure, but it is more of a both things coming together of the Father's will for revelation, the Son's will for revelation and they are One; Then the call which has a command "Come to Me; Take My Yoke; Learn from Me" *and you* will find rest for *your* souls." The revelation of Christ is God's love for those who labor and are heavy laden. Come to Him. You can come! Jesus has been revealed in this book to you. You can come to Him. Go directly to Him, and trust Him to direct your steps after that. Just cry out to Him, and keep crying out just like the blind man. It is not any harder than that. He will direct you what to do next. Trust Me when the Spirit brings life to you and seals you in Jesus, you will have thoughts you never thought you would ever have. But stay in the word, keep praying, keep trusting Him. You will end up where you are supposed to be.

This was the message Jesus preached over and over. Come to Me and find rest for your souls. If He were not there, and the power of the Spirit were not there, there would be no one to come to for the rest of human souls. Where else is there to go to find rest for your soul? I am not talking about contentment, I mean a peace between you and God. I have met plenty of people content without God. But do

you have peace with Him? Do you care? If you don't? Well, you are just road soil that all there is to it, but I will pray for you!

**Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, 15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel." (Mark 1)**

**Now it came to pass, afterward, that He went through every city and village, preaching and bringing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God. And the twelve were with Him (Luke 8)**

**But He said to them, "Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth." 39 And He was preaching in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and casting out demons. (Mark 1)**

**From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matthew 4)**

**Now about the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and taught.15 And the Jews marveled, saying, "How does this Man know letters, having never studied?" 16 Jesus answered them and said, "My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me. (John 7)**

Jesus taught and preached everywhere He went. It is in all 4 gospels. No matter what sect or people group you fit into at the time, whether of the Essenes, the Zealots, the Pharisees, the Sadducees or just a secular citizen there because of Roman influence, you heard about and may have even listened to Jesus teach and preach in person because He traveled a circuit. He said "for this reason I have come." The gospel must be very important to God! Certainly not foolishness. And the doctrine that I teach is not mine, but His who sent me. That should be the statement of every believer in Christ. Teach all things He commanded us, making disciples.

**For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.41 The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here.For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.41 The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here. (Matthew 10)**

Jesus gives Nineveh credit for humbling themselves which brought mercy to them for another 40 years. Jonah was the reluctant preacher; Jesus is the willing preacher full of grace and truth. Believe me Jonah was full of bitterness. Jesus

preached with compassion, signs and wonders! God says Nineveh will judge the generation of His time in ministry because of their rejection of the revelation that they had been given from Jesus. That is why the Father also turns them over to their own minds.

Someone says "you just do not understand that but for the grace of God all of us would be equally depraved". The bible does not say that. It just doesn't. It says we all fall short, it does not say that some of us do not fall farther than others, just that all need a Savior regardless.

There is a range of depravity in the human race. Some of us are worse than others because we cause more harm than others. And even if you are really bad, you can repent. Manasseh repented after a very evil and wicked life, and God shewed mercy because of it. You can come! Come! Open your heart to Jesus! Enter into His Kingdom, His immigration policy is that you believe on Him and receive Him by faith. Own your wickedness, confess the righteousness of Jesus, repent and receive Him. This is not hard.

**There were present at that season some who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.<sup>2</sup> And Jesus answered and said to them, "Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered such things?<sup>3</sup> I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish.<sup>4</sup> Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse sinners than all other men who dwelt in Jerusalem?<sup>5</sup> I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish."** (Luke 13)

It does not matter how good you are, or how bad you are. If you are breathing you are a sinner that needs a Savior. And unless you repent, you will perish. Jesus is telling corpses they can repent, and He even exhorts them to do so.

**For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it.<sup>36</sup> For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?<sup>37</sup> Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?<sup>38</sup> For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."** (Mark 8)

We covered this before with a different emphasis. But Jesus is preaching the gospel here and asks the question "What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?" Who lost the soul? The corpse lost his own soul. God did not predetermine that soul to be lost. Jesus says if your soul gets lost, you lost your own soul.

And the corpse is being told that he can die to his corpse to receive life. Apparently, corpses have lives (or deaths) they need to lose, so that their souls can be saved. That is hardly the stiff lying in a box down at the morgue. He starts this off with "Whoever *desires* to come after Me", this is not a message to believers,

but corpses. In Matthew 16 we have this same account and Jesus follows up with "Who will start a project without first counting the costs to make sure he can complete it?" He is telling corpses the depth of soil they need to have in order to receive the seed. He is telling the corpses they will have to surrender everything to Him. Lose your life for My sake is the message to corpses. What life does a corpse have? Whatever it is the corpse needs to deny it, forsake it and lose it, no?

**For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect. 18 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.** (1 Corinthians 1)

**For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.22 For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom;23 but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.** (1 Corinthians 1)

**For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.27 But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty;28 and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are,29 that no flesh should glory in His presence.30 But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God--and righteousness and sanctification and redemption--31 31 that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the Lord."** (1 Corinthians 1)

For the sake of time I clipped these segments out to show the emphasis that is here. You cannot read this and conclude that God views the gospel as foolishness. It is "those who are perishing" who declare it foolishness, not the Lord. It is irreverent to even joke around about the foolishness of preaching. There is nothing foolish about it. The bible says.

**The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, And he who wins souls is wise.** (Proverbs 11:30)

There is nothing foolish about sharing the gospel. Paul is saying here that he preached a simple gospel. He did not use fancy terms and college level vocabulary. The gospel is for the common man. The poor, the contrite of heart, the downtrodden, the under privileged. But those that consider themselves to be wise in their own mind, they are the ones that call the gospel foolish. We should not join them!

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Notice he says "Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God." The reason why the gospel is the power of God is because it reveals Christ to the unbeliever. It is an introduction to Christ. What did He say to the disciples?

**Do you not yet understand, or remember the five loaves of the five thousand and how many baskets you took up?10 Nor the seven loaves of the four thousand and how many large baskets you took up?11 How is it you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread? (Matthew 16)**

Christ was the power and wisdom of God and is the bread of God. He can handle the power and supply of living bread. When you share the gospel, you are trusting in the power of Christ to save. Your sharing the gospel by faith is incredibly wise, and it is wielding the power of God for salvation. This privilege is given to you! If it is Jesus standing at the top of that well calling, He will draw all men to Himself.

**And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself."33 This He said, signifying by what death He would die. (John 12)**

It is Jesus that does the drawing, and it is done today through the sharing of the gospel from faith, to faith. Christ is the power and wisdom of God to salvation.

**Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place.15 For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing.16 To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things?17 17 For we are not, as so many, peddling the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ. (2 Corinthians 2)**

When you share the gospel, it divides the world. But the world is divided according to their response, and not according to divine pre-determinism. The same gospel that brings life to the believer, also brings death to the rejector. Their lost soul is on them, and the judge of all the earth shall do right.

**Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation,19 that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. 20 Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (2 Corinthians 5)**

The gospel is the ministry of reconciliation. Reconciliation of what? Reconciliation between corpses and God. Now scripture is telling us that when we share the gospel

God is pleading through us, with corpses to implore them on Christ's behalf, that they be encouraged to be reconciled to God.

**But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man.<sup>12</sup> For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.** (Galatians 1)

When Jesus confronted Paul on the road to Damascus, He was simply delivering the gospel personally. Paul was still saved by receiving the gospel. But he received it directly from Jesus.

**But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace,<sup>16</sup> to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood,<sup>17</sup> nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.** (Galatians 1)

Now did God predestine Paul? It may sound like it especially if you are wearing your soteriology glasses, but let's break this down. God foreknew that Paul would receive, and according to foreknowledge separated him out. But Paul was called like everyone else, and he made a choice to follow Christ. Now he got a stronger dose of gospel since he got it directly from the Lord. But he still had to exercise and demonstrate faith; otherwise, how could he teach "justification by faith"? The phrase "to reveal His Son in me" is not referring to his receiving the gospel or salvation by divine predestination, rather is referring to his ministry of sharing it. The Son was revealed in him "that I might preach Him among the Gentiles".

In Galatians, Paul is defending the gospel he preached to them, and in his defense is telling them that he learned the gospel from Jesus only.

**But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel** (Philippians 1)

Paul told the Philippians in his initial greeting that he was thankful for their participation in the gospel from the first day until now. Now here in verse 12 he is talking about being in prison, but he says everything is working together for good for the sake of the gospel. I tell you Paul dedicated his entire new life to sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ. He is not bothered that it may be preached with the wrong intention or motivation, as long as it keeps going out. That is how important the gospel is.

**For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell,<sup>20</sup> and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross. <sup>21</sup> And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled<sup>22</sup> in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight-**

**-23 if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister. 24 I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church,25 of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God,26 the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints.27 To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. 28 Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.29 To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.**  
(Colossians 1)

Wow. I could type for pages on this text. Pleased the Father that all the fullness of the godhead dwell in Him. You get full and complete redemption in Christ. And you can see a little splash of that sovereign plan that ties back to Romans 9-11, with the mystery being revealed to the Gentiles, who are now being grafted in, as others were broken off, who can also be grafted back in through the gospel. You remember.

The gospel is presented here in one of the most vivid ways. Paul is unpacking propitiation. He made peace and reconciled you through the blood of His cross, in the body of His flesh in death, but the risen Lord presents you holy, and blameless and so on. And there's the command as if to say to *you* "Arise, get up and walk" he is compelling you with words like continue in *faith*, grounded, and steadfast. And do not be moved away from the hope of the gospel, which was preached to you, of which I became a minister of. Him we preach, warning every man in all wisdom. And though I labor, it is Christ that works mightily in me that *every* man be presented perfect in Christ. That is a powerful truth from Paul. Why preach? In order that Christ may be revealed in the spirit of another! There is a spiritual revelation that takes place. The mystery is revealed, nothing is being hidden. Except by modern day Christians, they are hiding it for some reason. Keeping it to themselves.

Did you notice the word every? That is the goal, not the reality. But you need to see that is the goal, that *every* man be presented perfect in Christ, not Limited Atonement according to Unconditional Election according to Total Depravity. The bible never uses the words Limited and Atonement together, ever. And he says "The gospel that *you* heard, which was preached to *every* creature under heaven, of which Paul became a minister. What he means by that is that it is his new life's work. The old life wanted to bind Christians and throw them in jail. That was Saul. Paul dedicated his life to the gospel of Jesus Christ, to effectuate faith in many others from faith to faith.

The work of Jesus Christ on the cross is not limited, His precious blood is capable of saving every soul. The souls that are not saved are getting exactly what they want. They do not want Jesus, and they scoff at Him. They scoff at the notion that

He will judge them. But His Atonement, His Propitiation is unlimited my beloved. His power to save is unlimited! The souls of men only limit themselves and are each doing what is right in their own eyes, but the end thereof are the ways of death. But they are doing what they want to. They are not willing to lose their lives for His sake.

Of course, my emphasis here in this section is the preaching of the gospel, which Christ does through Paul, and wants to do through you also. When you preach, Jesus is preaching through you. He is the source of power, not you! It is His gospel, not yours! Keep on keeping on. You are a vessel. Are you a willing vessel? Are you a clogged vessel? Are you a cooperative vessel? Jesus said rivers of living water, that is how He described it. That is what it is supposed to look like. I think I am falling way short. I must confess I need to repent. I know I am not the vessel I should be. He is the source; we are His vessels by grace.

**knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God.<sup>5</sup> For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.**

**6 And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit,<sup>7</sup> so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe.<sup>8</sup> For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything.** (1 Thessalonians 1)

Again, the word Unconditional is not here. Their election by God was to be in Christ by faith. The power was in Christ, His gospel, His people sharing by faith, and His Holy Spirit guiding hearts, but not manipulating them.

And these wonderful souls in Thessalonica were the real deal! Their faith was spreading like crazy! Even though they received it in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit. Do you have joy in the Holy Spirit while under affliction? That is actually a pretty good test of a person's faith. But these guys are doing so good! And through their affliction they were powerful witnesses for the love of Jesus. Paul is almost proud.

**For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.** (1 Thessalonians 2)

Now Paul is telling you how things work. You received the word as truth from God, not men, and welcomed the word that brought truth, the Spirit brings conviction leading to faith without forcing it, resulting in life. This is *how* you are taught from the Father. It isn't manipulation I can tell you that. Because manipulation of others is not an eternal precept of God. In fact, quite the contrary

we are told to “put the needs of others ahead of your own” and we are told that this is the “mind of Christ”.

You do not make a covenant with stiffs. You make covenants with persons who can reason rationally and can give informed consent, even from a position of spiritual death. Satan is spiritually dead no? But he showed up to meetings in the book of Job. And he was put on a leash by the way, albeit a long one. The spiritual side of things works on a different dynamic apparently, which is difficult to grasp, but it is evident. The flesh is actually a barrier, just a container we live in for now. But every corpse has a soul, and a life (or corpse if you please) they must be willing to lose, deny, or forsake if they *desire* to follow the Lord. That is an eternal precept of God my friend.

This is the power of the gospel given by faith with the filling and leading of the Spirit. The Spirit and the word work effectively as you believe. Both are true. How many times did Jesus say “may it be done to you according to your faith”? A couple at least. Without faith it is impossible to please God, be saved, or grow in Christ. And *your* faith is *your* business! I am preaching to myself! It is like a muscle, you have to exercise it to make it stronger, or it might just get weaker.

I confess I am not exercising enough as I read God’s word here. It is a sword that cuts both ways. I think I may be out of shape. It is one thing for me to study God’s word as wonderful and fulfilling as it is. And articulating the truths of God’s word is thrilling. But I need to get engaged in the winning of souls in a more person to person way. I have found that for me, repentance needs to be more of a turning to, than a turning from. If I turn to the right things and put that into practice, I will naturally turn from the wrong things. And since there are only 24 hours a day, man if I can just give a little more each day to the right things, I will not have time for sin. But then reality sets in, and the struggle. What was the meaning of Israel again? To struggle with God? I am no better than them.

**We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other,<sup>4</sup> so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure,**

**5 which is manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer;<sup>6</sup> since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you,<sup>7</sup> and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels,<sup>8</sup> in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>9</sup> These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,<sup>10</sup> when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed. (2 Thessalonians 1)**

I tell you what you just can't help but love this church in Thessalonica. Maybe some churches go through difficult times and persecution and folks turn on each other and the church is hurt dramatically because of it. But that's not the case here for this church they have a wonderful testimony before the apostle Paul.

Shall not the judge of all the earth do right? He shall! And Paul says here that in the righteous judgment of God that they will be declared worthy while those who don't know God as well as those who disobey His gospel, they are the ones that will be condemned and their condemnation will be completely just. You can also see from this passage that the righteous judgment of God is based upon an individual's response to Him whether or not they put faith in Christ or choose to continue in unbelief. There is no other way to understand this passage other than the church will be blessed because of their faith in Christ, while those who are to be judged and condemned are those that continue in unbelief and refuse to obey the gospel. Apparently, the gospel has a call to obedience and if that call is not regarded then the judgment of God remains upon them. Everyone is without excuse. Corpses are expected to obey the call of the gospel.

**For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,<sup>4</sup> who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.<sup>5</sup> For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus,<sup>6</sup> who gave Himself a ransom for all** (1 Timothy 2)

Paul tells Timothy here that our God and Savior *desires* all men to be saved and come to repentance and knowledge of the truth. I think maybe that's why he gave the church the great commission don't you think? Again, I firmly believe that if Sovereign Selection were true on a mass level, God would save everyone. But instead, it is God's sovereign plan that his gospel be the power of God unto salvation and that those that would be saved would be those who love His Son just as He loves His Son. We are reconciled to a holy and just God because we agree with Him about how wonderful Jesus is!

**Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God,<sup>9</sup> who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began,<sup>10</sup> but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,<sup>11</sup> to which I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.** (2 Timothy 1)

Paul is reminding Timothy of Romans 1:16-17 that he should never be ashamed of the gospel. And he refers to the gospel here as a holy calling. And Paul goes on to say that this gospel regarding Jesus' work of redemption was God's sovereign plan before the world began. Jesus came and revealed God to us. Jesus defeated death for all, and rose from the dead making eternal life available to all. Jesus did

it in a human body! The lights are on bright! The gospel is not hidden! Jesus' gospel divides the world, not Sovereign Selection. It is a whosoever will gospel, and alternatively it is a whosoever will not gospel as well. You can come to Jesus. Just answer the holy call. You can share Jesus; you can answer that holy call as well.

**For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.<sup>4</sup> But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared,<sup>5</sup> not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,<sup>6</sup> whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior,<sup>7</sup> that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life..** (Titus 3)

For we ourselves were once totally depraved. Is that what your Bible says? Mine neither. Paul says here that a person's life outside of Christ is one that is foolish, disobedient, deceived and serving various lusts. In order to possess these traits, you have to be a little more aware than a stiff in a box down at the mortuary. Paul makes use of the word Appeared here which is revelation. The gospel *reveals* God and all His goodness. That's the power of God unto salvation. That is how corpses learn from the Father.

**Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.<sup>14</sup> But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.<sup>15</sup> Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. <sup>16</sup> Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.<sup>17</sup> Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.<sup>18</sup> Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.** (James 1)

God did not create Adam or Satan with a sinful nature. God has never had an evil thought in His mind. And God has never predetermined the demise of anyone personally. For no one can exist except He creates them, and He loves everything He creates. Souls come from God almighty, nowhere else.

James makes it perfectly clear that God had a sovereign plan for humans that they would be a type of first fruits of His creatures. God has good plans for us, still does. James also says here that God doesn't have any bad intentions. Quite the contrary James exclaims that every good and perfect gift comes from God, not evil. James also makes it perfectly clear here that you and I as saved sinners are responsible for our own sin, as are lost sinners. The difference is we have a Savior to cleanse us. But He is available to all by the word of truth!

And the truth is all will eventually face Him in one status of relationship or the other. You will either face Him as part of His first fruits, or you will face Him as your

measure, and your righteous and blameless judge. The love of God draws, and the truth of the gospel grants the sinner a choice.

**Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious,<sup>5</sup> you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.<sup>6</sup> Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "Behold, I lay in Zion A chief cornerstone, elect, precious, And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame." <sup>7</sup> Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, "The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone," <sup>8</sup> and "A stone of stumbling And a rock of offense."**

**They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.** (1 Peter 2)

Rejected by men, but chosen by God and precious. Jesus is the elected of God, no one else was Sovereignly Selected as He was! Therefore, to those who believe, He is also precious, but to the disobedient He is a stumbling block. Jesus is the great divider. But the response of corpses will determine their fate, which has already been appointed to them.

They were not designated to be disobedient, they were designated for judgment *because* of their unbelief and disobedience to the holy call of God. It is irresponsible here to use the word Appointed here to mean God chose them for disobedience. They were either appointed the word which they rejected, but more likely Peter means they are appointed for judgment. Which could indicate that Acts 13:48 could simply mean that eternal life was Appointed "to those who believed". I cannot read Greek. God did not appoint souls for disobedience. There are plenty of volunteers.

**Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous.<sup>8</sup> He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.<sup>9</sup> Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God. <sup>10</sup> In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother.** (1John 3)

In other words, you will know the tree by the type of fruit that it bears. The struggle within the child of God is against the flesh. And without question the flesh is depraved and is absolutely dead to God. But that soul that's in the flesh can reason rationally, receive information, hold convictions and according to scripture can deny the flesh and accept Christ as Savior. And the Bible never mentions anywhere that some corpses are given a special ability to hear and receive information while others are not given that special ability.

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And even though the gospel is a beautiful revelation of God and is very special. It is not a special revelation for some, while others are blinded by the Lord Himself. Scripture does not teach that! Stop it. God is not trying to hide the Son, but exalt Him! If the Son of Man is lifted up, He will *draw all* men to Himself. Those words are red in my Bible. He is lifted up, not hidden.

**But I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe.<sup>6</sup> And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day;** (Jude)

Shall not the judge of all the earth do right? The seed is sown without prejudice. It is thrown all over the road, it is thrown all over the wayside by the road, it is thrown into the thorns and thistles, and it is thrown out in the field. God tests the soils with the sunshine of His word, the rain of His grace, and the conviction of the Holy Spirit.

God didn't cause 10 of the 12 to have unbelief, while Joshua and Caleb only spoke with confident faith in the Lord. See Numbers 13-14. Those that failed to trust the Lord that day were judged and died before Israel entered the glorious land. God tested them and God's going to test you to see what sort of faith you have. I taught my children that every little choice you make in life is training you for the next one. If you train well on the small choices, you will be prepared when the big test comes. It's easy when mixed with love for Jesus!

The Lord also did not cause some of the angels to fall either. As you can see from the text those angels themselves did not keep their proper domain. What God has predestined is that the just shall live by faith and enter into His rest, and the unjust shall be condemned. He did not predetermine the who, only the plan for each group.

He did predetermine Jesus to be the Anointed One (The Elected One). And he predestined that those who would be with Him in glory for all eternity would be those who love Jesus, as He loves Jesus. And He has also predestined all those who reject Christ to be condemned. He did not predestine the individuals one way or the other; he simply gave them an eternal soul, which is built in with the ability to think rationally, communicate, and choose just like some of the angels did, and just like Cain did.

**And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up,<sup>15</sup> that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. <sup>16</sup> For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.<sup>17</sup> For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. <sup>18</sup> "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.<sup>19</sup> And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather**

**than light, because their deeds were evil.20 For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.21 But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."** (John 3)

Jesus references Moses and the serpent on a staff here so let's take a look at that real quick from the book of Numbers.

**Then they journeyed from Mount Hor by the Way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the soul of the people became very discouraged on the way.5 And the people spoke against God and against Moses: "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread."6 So the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died. 7 Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD that He take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. 8 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live."9 So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived. (Numbers 21)**

The people said they loathed "this bread". That bread was a portrait of Jesus from John 6. The fiery serpents were sent justly as the judgment of God against their sin. However, whenever someone was bitten by one of the snakes, if they looked at the bronze serpent on the staff they would be delivered from the punishment of their sins.

Even so must the Son of Man be lifted up so that whoever believes in Him would have eternal life! These are red letters brethren. Notice also that the Son of Man did not come into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. This verse just shouldn't be here if Divine predeterminism is true. Although Jesus is the great divider, that does not mean it was God's intention for Him to be and that is important for you to see. If God had it his way everyone would be saved! But that's not going to happen. Why?

**"He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.19 And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.20 For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.21 But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."** (John 3)

He who doesn't believe is already under condemnation. He is born a corpse. However, he *remains* a corpse by his own choosing so that everyone is

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without excuse. Jesus makes it very clear through here saying twice the word Whoever, four times the word World, 5 times Believe(s), and Should Not Perish and Not Condemned 3 times as well as 3 uses of Eternal Life or Saved. Jesus is making it abundantly clear that his gospel is for anyone, anywhere, anytime.

But why doesn't everyone get saved? Because Jesus says the condemnation came when light came into the world and men loved darkness rather than light. Apparently, corpses can choose to love darkness rather than light. But this passage also makes it abundantly clear that whoever believes in Jesus has eternal life. And that life is in His Son. His Son is the elected one. If you're in Him, you're the elect. But if you love darkness rather than light, you wouldn't be happy in heaven anyway. Unfortunately, you are going to be tormented in hell. But the judge of all the earth judges righteously and is blameless when He does.

Jesus just walked into the world and turned the lights on! All that love wickedness run for cover but those that know their Shepherd perked up. Again, our God is in the Revelation business! In Jesus God has revealed Himself to man, but also in Jesus God has exposed man in his depravity.

But you can come to Jesus and accept him as your Shepherd. Anyone can come. You don't have to run.

If you're a reformer and you're reading this I'm just going to go ahead and ask you to repent. At the very least I'm going to ask you to remove the glasses that you wear when you read scripture and don't read something into the word that is not there.

And before anyone jumps to conclusions that I'm a hardcore Arminian, I just want everyone to know that I am an equal opportunity critic. And if the Lord wills it I intend to write a book titled "Can You Lose Your Salvation?". Of course you can't lose your salvation! Because it was never yours to begin with! It's not your work, it's His work! It's not your gospel, it's His gospel! It is not yours to give and it is not yours to set aside. And you are not producing perfect obedience to Him even though saved. How much of your life are you really losing for Him each day? Are you as dedicated as He was to the kingdom of God? If you could lose salvation, you would lose it daily. You better praise God you are not the sole responsible party for your being delivered clean and holy before Him! There is going to be a burn off of all the wood, hay and stubble you have in your life.

You did not find Him, He found you. You cannot hold onto Him, but thank God He is holding onto you! If you received Him, you're sealed. Go out and live by faith in Him with confidence! But again, this is a topic for another book if the Lord wills it.

Look I have not taken a verse here and a verse there to prove any point. My goal is to know God, and to be objective and unbiased when I approach His word. I certainly have not taken you through every page of the Bible but have refrained from giving scripture out of context. The scope of this study was to simply follow the thread of God's sovereignty as well as the objective look at man's depravity as it relates to the Reformed definition. Certainly, I intentionally touched on many

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books in the Bible in order to demonstrate that my view has wide support in Scripture.

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Jesus gave the Great commission and in it He charged us with "teaching them to observe all things I have commanded you". How much time did Jesus spend teaching TULIP? Then maybe you shouldn't be either! In fact, Soteriology in my view is a waste of time and effort. Just share the gospel by faith and don't overthink it!

Are you too afraid to share the gospel? You may want to pray about that. Because it indicates you are possibly concerned more with the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches. Do you think any of the apostles would care if they lost their job for sharing the gospel? Do you think they would have worried about being embarrassed for sharing the gospel in public like the shopping mall. Have you ever been asked to leave a store because you were "proselytizing"? The apostles risked being stoned to share the gospel of Jesus. And some were. And most of them as well as Stephen were killed for their faith. How about you? When pressure comes do you stand, or fold? Ask yourself this. If you do not share the gospel, how do you expect to be part of God's harvest? Can you bear fruit if you are not sharing the gospel? Yes the fruit of the Spirit is love. Are you loving people to Jesus? That is the mandate and we are not getting it done! There is nothing foolish about preaching and sharing the gospel! Do not allow anyone to tell you that!

Loving God with all your heart means wanting to share that love with others, so they can have the same hope that lies within you!

# A Layman's Simple Theology

## God is Love

The Bible tells us that God is love.

**Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.<sup>8</sup> He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.<sup>9</sup> In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.<sup>10</sup> In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.<sup>11</sup> Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. <sup>12</sup> No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us.<sup>13</sup> By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. (1 John 4)**

God is love. Yes, I know He is Omnipotent, Omniscient, and Omnipresent and there is no one else that shares those attributes. But I want to know who God the person is. And my journey leads me to believe that God is love, and that is His primary attribute. From love flows grace, and by grace Jesus came, but out of love. And John exhorts that our main objective in life is to live and love as God does. In fact I can sum up man's depravity by simply stating that man cannot love as God loves. Man has perverted love in almost every imaginable way.

Every sin man commits whether saved or lost is rooted in his failure to love. Either you did not love the Lord your God, or you did not love your neighbor as yourself. Every sin can be tied to these 2 simple principles, which Jesus named as the foundation and fulfillment of the law and the prophets! Typically, when we sin, we become lovers of self, pleasure, entertainment etc. That is a perversion of love. And that is at the root of all sin. Man's depravity is simply that he is unable to love as God loves, which corrupts his very mind and spirit.

But God's love never fails. He loves very faithfully. I know sometimes it does not seem like He does, but He loves you perfectly. There is no one that loves you as much as God does. I have no clue why He puts up with me each day, but He does. God wants you to feel His love. He wants you to know His love. Do you trust Him to love you faithfully? Who else can you trust to do that?

**Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.**

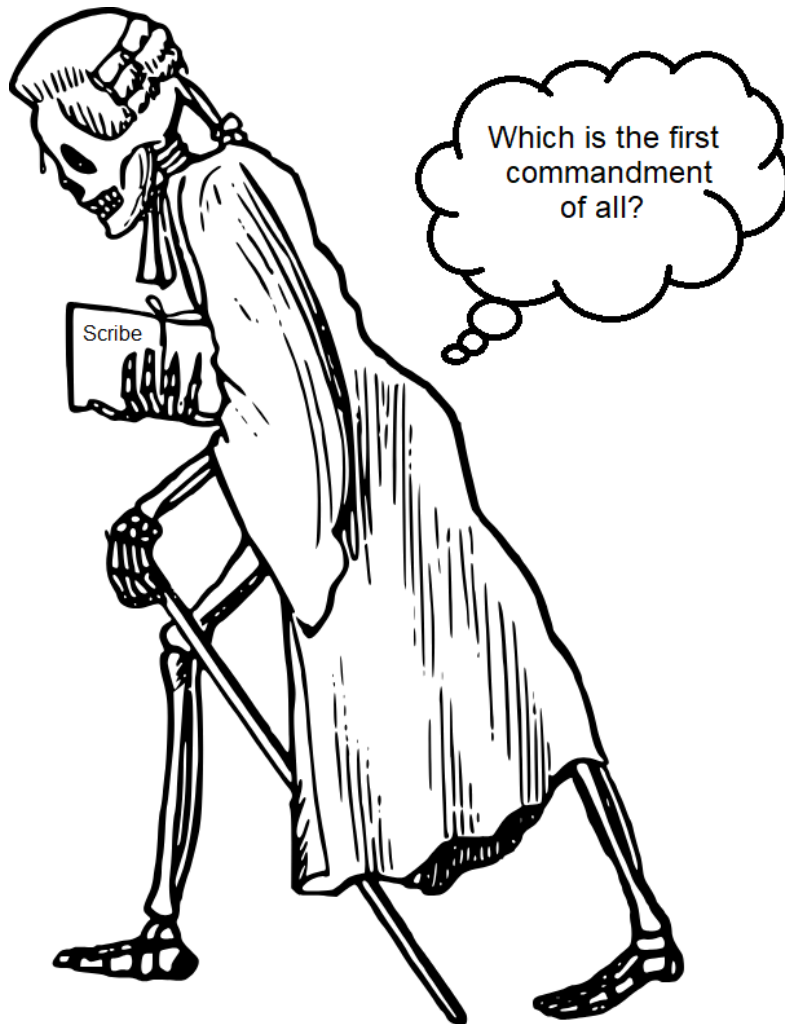
**For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.<sup>7</sup> For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die.<sup>8</sup> But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.<sup>9</sup> Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.<sup>10</sup> For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.<sup>11</sup> And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation. (Romans 5)**

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There is no feeling like the receiving of love from being saved. Love is the magnet God uses with the gospel and the Holy Spirit to draw all men to Himself. We love Him because He first loved us.

We do not come to God for Irresistible Grace, which the Bible simply does not teach. Irresistible Grace is a theological construct that became necessary once the theologian went "all in" on Total Depravity. The same is true for Unconditional Election and Limited Atonement. The Bible does not teach any of these. Also, it is not Perseverance Of The Saints, it is the Perseverance of Christ. It is not your ability to hold on to Him, it is His ability to hold on to you. You are hidden in Him, He perseveres.

No my beloved we come to God for His unfailing love, which is perfect in every way. You will never know pure love until you give your heart to Jesus. The Holy Spirit will baptize you and fill your heart with God's love!



**Then one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, perceiving that He had answered them well, asked Him, "Which is the first commandment**

of all?" 29 Jesus answered him, "The first of all the commandments is: "Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one.<sup>30</sup> And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment. 31 And the second, like it, is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." 32 So the scribe said to Him, "Well said, Teacher. You have spoken the truth, for there is one God, and there is no other but He.<sup>33</sup> And to love Him with all the heart, with all the understanding, with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." 34 Now when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, He said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." But after that no one dared question Him. (Mark 12)

Every time we sin, we fail to love. We either fail to love God with all our heart, or we fail to love our neighbor as ourselves. Therefore, man's depravity can be summed up in his inability to love the way God loves. Because every sin man commits, or the sins of omission are always due to faulty love. And Jesus said the problem was that light came into the world, but that men *loved* darkness rather than light.

I am only going to give you the bullet points on 1 Corinthians 13.

Love is

- Patient
- Kind
- Rejoices with the truth
- Bears all things
- Believes all things
- Hopes all things
- Endures all things
- Love never fails

Love is not / does not:

- Jealous
- Brag
- Arrogant
- Act unbecoming
- Seek it's own
- Provoked
- Take into account wrong suffered
- Rejoice in unrighteousness

The love is list describes how God loves, while the love is not list describes depraved mankind.

**For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.<sup>14</sup> For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." 15 But if you bite and devour one**

**another, beware lest you be consumed by one another! 16 I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. 19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies,21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.24 And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another. (Galatians 5)**

This passage brings me back to thinking repentance is more about turning to, than turning from. Paul cites the 2nd commandment to love your neighbor as yourself. Then the exhortation and emphasis is on "walk in the Spirit", "be led by the Spirit" for the fruit of the Spirit is love!

Love is the fingerprint of the Spirit. If we just labor for love in all things, it will manifest in joy, patience and all the rest. Notice the text uses fruit as singular. I like the way one person puts it: 1 fruit, 9 flavors.

**"As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.10 If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. 11 "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.12 This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.13 Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.14 You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. (John 15)**

Love 7 times, plus 1 loved. Father loves Jesus more than we will ever understand. God loves us and sent Jesus. Jesus came because He loves Father, and He loves us. We love Him *because* He first loved us.

The 2 great commandments upon which the whole law and the prophets rest, are commands to love. The fruit of the Spirit is love. Our relationship with God is centered and revolves around love. God is perfect love.

You do not come to Jesus for irresistible grace, you come to Jesus for irresistible love! It is His love that draws us to Him. Love revealed in the gospel.

## God is Life

**In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.<sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God.<sup>3</sup> All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.<sup>4</sup> In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.** (John 1)

Plainly speaking without God there is nothing. No universe, no galaxy, no solar system. There is no one that predates God! In Him was life, and *that* life was the light of men. When Jesus came, God walked into the room and turned on the bright lights. We now know what life is supposed to look like because of Him. We also know there's only 1 Jesus, and the rest of us are corpses unless we are found in Him.

**For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will.<sup>22</sup> For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son,<sup>23</sup> that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him. <sup>24</sup> "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.<sup>25</sup> Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live.** (John 5)

He gives eternal life. That's because He is the source of life. Those who hear His word and believe pass from death to life, and have (present tense), eternal life. Who are the dead here? Everyone standing in front of Him for starters. But all of humanity from then on because Jesus did the works of the Father openly. His words and works went out without sparing. He gave His all in life, death, and glorious resurrection.

**Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." <sup>24</sup> Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." <sup>25</sup> Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.<sup>26</sup> And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?" <sup>27</sup> She said to Him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."** (John 11)

I know Jesus raised others, but this 1 was different. It's a different sign. Lazarus has been dead for 4 days. He's already placed in burial linens and encased in a tomb. This is the largest I Am statement from the Lord. I am *the* resurrection and *the* life. Now I firmly believe Lazarus was a believer otherwise this sign isn't right. Jesus foreknew, Jesus called, Jesus rose him. Lazarus answered the call and got up and followed the voice of the Lord. It's beautiful.

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But the other powerful truth is that Jesus can save to the uttermost those who put their faith in Him. And He *will* raise them up to eternal life. Even though their biological body may die, their soul will not see it.

**He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son.11 And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.12 He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God. (1 John 5)**

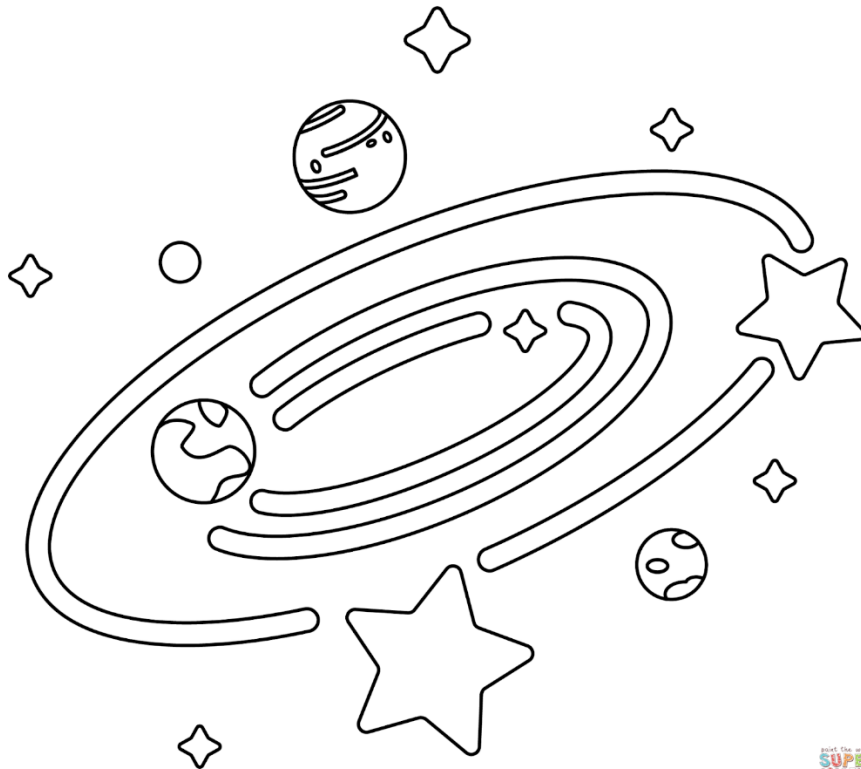
The beloved apostle John was as committed to teaching love and life and life as Paul was to teaching the gospel. He wrote the gospel of John that you might believe. And he wrote this first epistle that you might continue to believe. Because those who believe have (present tense) eternal life. And that life is in Jesus. Jesus is life. God is life, and without Him there is no life.

## *What Can A Corpse Do*

Jesus is:

- The Life that was the Light of men
- The Way, The Truth and The Life
- The Resurrection and the Life
- The Bread of Life
- The Water of Life
- The Words of Life
- The Works of Life
- The Spirit of Life
- The Giver of Life
- The Redeemer of Life
- The Creator of Life
- Everlasting Life

God is Spirit



**In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.** (Genesis 1)

It is important that all Theology find its roots in the books of Moses. And we see the triune God in marvelous majesty right here in the opening chapter of His word. Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all present here as the One true and living God. And His opening statement is that He is Creator, and His Spirit hovered over the face of the deep. When there was nothing else, there was God my beloved.

The word Spirit is used all through the Bible. Our souls are spiritual, it is primary regarding our being made in His likeness. And I believe our limited free will even from a *position* of death before God, is also one of the ways we are created in His image. That is also what makes God completely holy and just to judge sin.

**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 being.** (Genesis 2)

The Bible only mentions this with regard to man. God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. That breath from God was spirit in my view. God breathed spirit into man. And that spirit is his soul.

**So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you."22 And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. (John 20)**

**All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3)**

KJV translates Inspired here in 2 Timothy as God Breathed. When God breathed, it represents His Spirit. His Spirit moved through the human writers in Scripture. When the resurrected Christ breathed on them, He said "receive the Holy Spirit".

The Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary says that the original Hebrew and Greek translated as spirit can also be translated as wind.

**Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." 4 Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" 5 Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. (John 3)**

Jesus Himself uses the word wind to describe the Spirit. It is not something you see physically, rather it is something you see the effects of. When the Spirit fell upon King Saul he prophesied. When the Spirit entered Cornelius and family, they spoke in tongues. You can see the effects, but the Spirit is like the wind. Our spirit is like that too. When we die biologically our spirit leaves our body, but no one can see it that is still limited by biology. Gehazi the assistant of Elisha was amazed at the heavenly host which he could not see, until Elisha asked the Lord to open his eyes so that he could see the spiritual. God sees the spiritual, we cannot.

**So he answered and said to me: "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: "Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' Says the LORD of hosts. 7 "Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain! And he shall bring forth the capstone With shouts of "Grace, grace to it!"" 8 Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying: 9 "The hands of Zerubbabel Have laid the foundation of this temple; His hands shall also finish it.Then you will know That the Lord of hosts has sent Me to you. (Zechariah 4)**

The pressure, stress, and frankly resistance that Zerubbabel faced to rebuild the temple after returning from captivity caused anxiety over whether they would be able to complete the work. But God says it will not be done by the strength of man's body or will, but by His Spirit, He will make it happen. "I can do all things through

Christ who strengthens me.". He strengthens us through the Holy Spirit who comes in Jesus' name.

**"These things I have spoken to you while being present with you.26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.27 Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. (John 14)**

The Spirit of God is indeed beyond description, and it is more difficult because it is "like the wind". But the Helper is the only One we should be trusting to teach us the deep things of God, not other men. Certainly not from me either by the way. Follow the Lord only, and learn from Him only. The veil was ripped in two for a reason. We can go boldly to the throne of grace ourselves. And He is able to teach us Himself. Do you believe this?

But you have to put in the work. Prayer. devotion, proper study habits, good study tools but most importantly you must bring your faith to Him. Do not expect to be led by Him apart from your faith. And as weak as our faith is, He can strengthen and develop it if we remain devoted. Reading books from theologians is like eating regurgitated Jesus. *You* eat His flesh and drink His blood by faith as *you* spend time alone with Him, and as *you* live by faith in Him. Even though we cannot see the Spirit we can experience the moving of the Spirit in and around us. I even feel it physically and emotionally when spending time alone with Him and when I am worshiping Him with all my heart. I'm sure there are some of you reading this who know what I mean. It is not sensationalism, it just happens sometimes organically and unexpectedly, but it happens in my life. I do not know why this should shock you. Have you never been in a loving relationship? Well relationship doesn't get any better when it's with a perfect Person! I pray regularly however, asking the Lord to grant me awareness of His Spirit moving in and around me, and allow me to join Him in His work.

**Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father.22 You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews.23 But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.24 God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." 25 The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When He comes, He will tell us all things." 26 Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He." (John 4)**

We cannot worship except in spirit. This is what makes our relationship with God more special than the rest of creation because he made us in His likeness. He made us spiritual because He is Spirit. That is our primary likeness to Him. Of course, I also believe that God (for the sake of real relationship) gave unto man a small slice

## *What Can A Corpse Do*

of sovereignty which is described in Genesis as dominion. God even told Adam to subdue the earth. Now you can argue theologically and spiritually that when Adam sinned mankind lost dominion and therefore lost his slice of sovereignty given him by God. But this is an inaccurate conclusion because even fallen mankind still has dominion in the earth. And if you speak to any political leaders today, they will tell you that they have sovereignty. And the Bible tells us that God is still actively raising up and taking down kingdoms and nations according to His will. So, delegating some sovereignty is not atypical for God to do.

Quite the contrary, the primary thing that man lost when he sinned was a right relationship with a perfect Person! This is described rightly as death, which literally means separation. Yes, Adam lost many other things including his integrity, innocence and so on which brought death into the world. Biological death is meant to be a picture of the gravity of the depths of separation man has positionally before Holy God. When you lose a loved one it hurts, and it feels so permanent. The soul that continues in unbelief will be permanently separated from God in tormenting agonizing eternal experiential death. It's ugly, and it is the enemy of God. But death could not hold Him! Put your faith in Him today!

God is perfect in these 3. Someone says "You are over simplifying.". Am I? Brethren this is just high-level thinking. My encouragement to you is to not be distracted from your calling with complex philosophy. All the names of God, the 3 O's, and all the other wonderful and worthy words and terms Scripture uses to describe God flow from these 3. The triune God is consistently, concurrently, and eternally Love, Life, and Spirit. Father, Son and Holy Spirit are One in these 3. They are all fully and completely these 3 continually. This is who God is, not what God is, or what God looks like. God is a perfect Person! He is perfect Love, Life, and Spirit eternally.

## Conclusion

How does Systematic Theology fail? Systematically. He is not a machine or a system, and He does not want us thinking of Him systematically, but rather personally. Both Reformers and Aminians miss the mark with their soteriology theories. You should never join a church that makes you take a soteriology class for new members. A good church is focused on soul winning and ministry. The ways of everlasting do not change. If someone tries to teach you something that breaks an eternal precept, you should not regard it. Manipulation of others no matter the reason is not an eternal precept of God. God does not do that, and He does not teach us to do that.

There is nothing wrong with developing a system of Bible study, which includes literary study. But you do not need to read books on the side explaining the Scripture to you if you are a child of God. Jesus made it abundantly clear that you can go directly to Him now. Paul learned directly from Him. He said we are to seek first the kingdom of God and its righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. He said when you share the gospel that He is with you! I do not think you can get any closer to Jesus than when you are sharing Him with others. In fact, I am convinced that your entire walk with the Lord will take on new shape if you make that the focus of your life as Paul did.

The gospel is the power of God unto salvation. Do you believe this? If you do, then may I encourage you to share it by faith! If you are not sharing it, then how are you living by faith in the Son of God, who loves you and gave Himself for you?

Look I have not taken a verse here and a verse there to prove any point. My goal is to know God, and to be objective and unbiased when I approach His word. I certainly have not taken you through every page of the Bible but have refrained from giving scripture out of context. The scope of this study was to simply follow the thread of God's sovereignty as well as the objective look at man's depravity as it relates to the Reformed definition. Certainly, I intentionally touched on many books in the Bible in order to demonstrate that my view has wide support in Scripture.

Jesus gave the Great commission and in it He charged us with "teaching them to observe all things I have commanded you". How much time did Jesus spend teaching TULIP? Then maybe you shouldn't be either! In fact, Soteriology in my view is a waste of time and effort. Just share the gospel by faith and don't overthink it!

## Resources

I get absolutely nothing for these recommendations:

The 4 book Zodiates set. This contains KJV bible with in line Strong's numbers, as well as lexicons for both the old and new testaments. A very nice tool for word study.

The Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary: Articles, Charts and Timelines, Color photos, book introductions. I looked up the prophets in this dictionary to source the meaning of each Prophet's name for the chart in this book. This is an outstanding bible resource.

Rose Publishing Books: They have a multi-book set that has really good illustrated materials that can be reproduced for teaching. And their work allows you to learn a lot in a short amount of time because of the way the information is arrayed and organized in an illustrative way.

The Prophetic Harmony of the Lamp of God: By Jerome Gerbasi on eschatology.

Living By the Book: Howard G Hendricks is my favorite book to learn sound Hermeneutics and fundamentals of proper Bible study methods and techniques.

The Bible Reader's Companion: By Lawrence O Richards. Excellent book for quick big picture overview of the books, key points on a chapter-by-chapter basis, including outlines, main point, and key notes.

The lovely coloring page images were mostly found on supercoloring.com and thanks to the artists that took the time to draw them.

The bible text used in this book was copied and pasted from studylight.org with cross reference hyperlinks removed. The version is New King James.

# WHAT CAN A CORPSE DO?

A seminary professor asks his students "What can a corpse do?". To which a student in the back of the class responded "stink". And they all had a few laughs. Well, lets talk about that with Scripture shall we?

Vincent E Nutt Sr. - Layman



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