

# **SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY 4 CLASS NOTES**

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**Note: These notes are to be used in conjunction with the course.  
They should not be regarded or used as published materials.  
However, they may be quoted and used for study and presentation  
purposes, provided credit is given .**

# SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY 4

## CLASS NOTES

### BIBLICAL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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## SPIRITUAL GIFTS

### I. General Definition of Spiritual Gifts

#### A. Definitions offered by writers on this subject

1. Thomas R. Edgar, in his book *Miraculous Gifts: Are They For Today?* (Neptune, New Jersey Loizeaux Brothers, 1983) pp 13-14, writes:

It is clear that individuals themselves, such as apostles and prophets, are a gift given by Christ to the Church. However, we normally think of gifts as something given to the individual. From this point of view an apostle may be considered as one who has been given the gifts or abilities necessary for him to function as an apostle. Therefore, we will define a spiritual gift from the perspective of something given to an individual Christian. This "something" is an ability to minister to others. The following is the definition of a spiritual gift given to an individual. A spiritual gift is an ability supernaturally given to an individual by the Holy Spirit so that the recipient may utilize that ability to minister beyond his normal human capacity. Notice that this is an ability. It is given for service and it is supernatural.

2. J. Oswald Sanders, in *The Holy Spirit and His Gifts* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970), pp. 108-110, states:

The first concern of the ascended Lord appears to have been the equipment of His infant church for its inevitable conflict with the powers of darkness. "When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men." These gifts He bestowed through His spirit, and it is through His working that they function. Only supernatural gifts would suffice for warfare against a supernatural foe. Without such gifts, the Church would be little more than any other social institution. . . .

A clear distinction is to be observed between the Gift of the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit. The former was bestowed on the Church in answer to the prayer of Christ and in fulfillment of the promise of the Father. The latter are bestowed on individual believers as and when the Spirit in His sovereignty pleases. . . .

A similar discrimination should be made between the gifts and the fruit of the Spirit. Nine gifts are enumerated, while the fruit is depicted in nine qualities of character. Between the two there are several clear contrasts. . . .

Two words are used of these gifts which, taken together afford helpful insight into their true nature. They are pneumatika and charismata. In 1 Cor. 12:1 "gifts", is in italics, and the word signifies simply "something of or from the Spirit". The Corinthian church was plagued with carnalities and needed to return to the spiritualities, that which has its source in the Spirit.

In 1 Cor. 12:4 "charismata" signifies "gifts of grace". They are bestowed altogether apart from human merit or deserts. The two words taken together indicate that these gifts are extraordinary powers and enduements bestowed by the Spirit upon individual believers as equipment for Christian service and the

edification of the Church, and that they are given sovereignly and undeserved. They are distinct from the natural powers of man.

The gifts of the Spirit may be classified roughly as follows:

(a) Gifts which qualify their possessors for the ministry of the Word: Apostleship, prophecy, teaching, shepherding, evangelism, knowledge and wisdom, kinds of tongues, interpretation of tongues, discerning of spirits.

(b) Gifts which equip their possessors to render services of a practical nature: miracles, healing, administration, ruling, helps.

3. John F. Walvoord, in *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit* (Dallas, Texas: Dallas Theological Seminary, 1943), p. 182, defines spiritual gifts as "extraordinary powers given by God as tokens of His grace and the means by which the individual's place in the ministry of the body of Christ may be fulfilled."
4. R. H. Lesser, in *The Holy Spirit and the Charismatic Renewal* (Bangalore, India: Theological Publications in India, 1978), pp. 163-165, distinguishes between major gifts and minor gifts. In the category of "major gifts" he includes wisdom, knowledge, understanding, counsel, fortitude, fear of the Lord, and piety. Among the "minor gifts" he includes miracles, healing, prophecy, tongues, and discernment of spirits. In distinguishing the two categories, he writes the following:
  - 1) John of St. Thomas tells us that the major gifts are higher than the extraordinary minor gifts because they are "habits" and have a permanent nature, unlike prophecy, tongues, or even administrative charisms.
  - 2) The major gifts affect the totality of man's spirituality . . . . The minor gifts do not.
  - 3) Though the minor gifts are mentioned specifically as gifts in two of Paul's lists, . . . nevertheless the major gifts have considerable Scriptural authority. The wisdom literature in the Old Testament abounds in praise of wisdom, knowledge and understanding, as does Ps. 119 and the other wisdom Psalms; Ex. 15:2 and the whole book of Job stresses fortitude; and indeed in Paul's lists it is wisdom and knowledge that have preference over the minor gifts (1 Cor. 12,8-9).
  - 4) The minor, extraordinary gifts are essentially human, man-related; the major gifts are essentially divine, relating as they do to the mind and will of God. These major gifts dispose the whole man to obey the impulses of the Holy Spirit, as the moral virtues dispose the inclinations to obey reason.
  - 5) The minor gifts are temporary and sporadic; the major gifts are permanent and habitual. They become a part of one's psychological and spiritual make-up so that one acts in, through and according to them. One does not speak in tongues or prophesy always. But with the gift of wisdom, for example, one is wise. The gift of fortitude enables us to be brave. With the Holy Spirit's gift of counsel one is counsellor.
  - 6) The major gifts directly orientate and lead the soul to God; the minor gifts, except perhaps for the gift of tongues, do this indirectly. These latter may even prove a diversion from the main object of the spiritual life, as when the beneficiary, or others are more concerned or obsessed with the

- gift than with the Giver. The very nature of the major gifts precludes this.
- 7) The major gifts are found necessarily, though in different degrees, in all the Baptized; the minor gifts are only in some. These latter may be in sinners, since they are given for the edification of others, whereas the major gifts are meant specifically to prepare the soul to be easily moved by the Holy Spirit towards eternal life.
  - 8) The major gifts are what may be called operative habits. They reside in our faculties and give them a new power and insight, enabling them to act habitually more vigorously in cooperation with the Holy Spirit. The minor gifts are, on the other hand, extra-ordinary. They are, as it were, superimposed upon one's normal or ordinary spiritual life. While one is enjoying these gifts -- healing, prophecy, tongues etc., -- one is as it were, taken out of oneself, one does not feel or notice any fatigue. But after the euphoria passes, reaction sets in. Physical or mental exhaustion follows. Sometimes there is black spiritual depression. This usually happens if one allows oneself to concentrate more on the gift than on the Giver.
  - 9) The minor gifts are specifically aimed at our work, each one at some specific job; whereas the major gifts give us the strength and knowledge, the divine enablement, the spiritual equipment without which we could not properly exercise those minor gifts. They help us to use the minor gifts to relate to others, to build up the body of Christ. It is as though a minor gift is an expensive and rather elaborate mechanical apparatus while a major gift gives us the knowledge and strength to use it and the wisdom to use it properly.
5. Rene Pache, in *The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1954), p. 180, defines a spiritual gift as "a certain qualification given by the Spirit to each individual believer to enable him to serve within the framework of the body of Christ." Pache goes on to say:

Paul explains this for us by using the illustration of the body with all its different members (I Cor. 12). The body is one and yet it has a variety of members which are all indispensable, for each one of them serves in a capacity that is complementary to the functions of the remainder. Similarly in the case of believers: they form the Body of Christ with its members, each with its appointed task; from the Spirit each receives the particular gift relevant to his function (I Cor. 12:27, 11).

6. Frederick Dale Bruner, in *A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), p. 130, says:

When the believer is baptized in the Holy Spirit he qualifies for the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The believer may receive his particular gift of the Spirit either with his baptism in the Spirit or at some time afterwards -- Pentecostal opinion differs here slightly and insignificantly. In any case, the gift of the Spirit grants the gifts of the Spirit.

Pentecostals wish, however, to distinguish carefully between the two phenomena -- the gift and the gifts -- as the experiences, respectively, of Acts and Corinthians. For the gift occurs only



once, while the gifts should be experienced continually. But the gifts cannot occur at all -- or they cannot occur fully -- until one has the gift of the Holy Spirit, i.e., until one is baptized in the Holy Spirit with the initial glossolalic evidence. Only when the Holy Spirit permanently, personally, and fully enters the believer's life does the believer become eligible for the full equipment of the spiritual gifts. Finally, the gifts of the Spirit have their special purpose, as the gift of the Spirit has its general purpose, in "power for service", in providing "a spiritual capability far mightier than the finest natural abilities could ever supply." Baptized with the gift, and endowed with one or more of the gifts, the Christian is finally equal to his task in history.

7. Jan Veenhof, in *The Holy Spirit Renewing and Empowering Presence*, edited by George Vandervelde (Winfield, British Columbia: Wood Lake Books, inc., 1989), p. 75, states:

To conclude these introductory remarks, I would like to give a brief and provisional characterization of the charismata and of glossolalia which can serve as a point of departure for our subsequent analysis. Charismata are concrete and particular manifestations of the single *charis*, grace, that is given in Christ. They are gifts of the Spirit, who works in and through human beings by means of these gifts. Besides a common origin, they also have a common goal: the upbuilding of the body of Christ.

8. Charles W. Carter, in *The Person and Ministry of the Holy Spirit: A Wesleyan Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1974), pp. 270-271, writes:

The New Testament makes abundantly clear the distinction between God's gift of the Spirit to believers, and the gifts which the Spirit bestows upon believers. It is the latter with which we are concerned at this juncture. However, before examining these spirit-gifts, it is well that we take brief notice of an important distinction that must be made between such gifts as the Spirit may bestow upon a believer, and those natural or constitutional gifts that may characterize an individual, but which may be realized only when awakened and developed under the influence of the Spirit who has been given to him by God.

There is frequently much confusion at this point, and admittedly the distinction is not always easy to make. Certainly when considered in a very broad sense, both the talents or abilities constitutional to an individual, and the special endowments by the Spirit are the gifts of God, perhaps in the sense that life itself is a gift of God. But when considered more definitively there is a marked difference between the two. In consideration of what may be termed natural or constitutional gifts, the gift of the person of the Spirit may illumine, quicken, and nurture these potentialities in an individual to the development of greater usefulness, whereas without the presence of the Spirit in the life of an individual such potentialities may remain dormant throughout life and thus never serve any useful purpose. . . .

However, whether natural endowment, awakened by the gift of the Spirit, or special enduements of the Spirit, the Scripture makes frequent reference to what are designated the gifts of the Spirit.

9. Richard B. Gaffin, Jr., in *Perspectives on Pentecost* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), p. 44, states:

The gift (singular) of the Spirit is integral to the experience of salvation in Christ (repentance unto life, Acts 11:18). It is an actual foretaste of eschatological life, the anticipatory "firstfruits" of the future resurrection harvest (Rom. 8:23), the "down payment" in kind on the final inheritance (II Cor. 1:22; 5:5; Eph. 1:13f.). On the other hand, the gifts (plural) of the Spirit consist of particular operations pertaining to various ministries (I Cor. 12:4-6) and, as such, are provisional and subeschatological. This is one of Paul's points in I Corinthians 13:8ff., a passage touched on here only briefly because we will be returning to it below. Prophecy and tongues, among other gifts, have a provisional and partial character and so are temporary, destined to pass away (vv. 8f.), while those works of the Spirit like faith, hope and love endure (v. 13).

It is necessary, then, in considering the whole work of the one Spirit in the church, to recognize on the one hand those activities and outworkings that are eschatological and experienced by all, and on the other hand those subeschatological functions, none of which is given to all. It is essential to distinguish what is present eschatologically by universal donation from what is given subeschatologically by differential distribution.

10. J. I. Packer, in *Keep in Step with the Spirit* (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1984), pp. 82-83, writes:

What is a Spiritual Gift? But our thinking about gifts is shallow. We say, rightly, that they come from the Spirit. Paul calls them "manifestations of the Spirit" (see 1 Corinthians 12:4-11). However, we go on to think of them in terms either of what we call "giftedness" (that is, human ability to do things skillfully and well) or of supernatural novelty as such (power to speak in tongues, to heal, to receive messages straight from God to give to others, or whatever). We have not formed the habit of defining gifts in terms of Christ the head of the body, and his present work from heaven in our midst. In this we are unscriptural. At the start of 1 Corinthians Paul gives thanks ". . . because of the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus that in every way you were enriched in Him with all speech and all knowledge . . . so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift (charisma) . . ." (1:4, 7). Paul's wording makes it clear that spiritual gifts are given in Christ; they are enrichments received from Christ. First Corinthians 12 assumes the Christ-oriented perspective that 1:1-7 established. It is vital that we should see this, or we shall be confusing natural with spiritual gifts to the end of our days.

Nowhere does Paul or any other New Testament writer define a spiritual gift for us, but Paul's assertion that the use of gifts edifies ("builds up", 1 Corinthians 14:3-5, 12, 26, see also 17; Ephesians 4:12, 16) shows what his idea of a gift was. For Paul,

It is only through Christ, in Christ, by learning Christ and responding to Christ that anyone is ever edified. Our latter-day secular use of this word is far wider and looser than Paul's; for him, edification is precisely a matter of growing in the depth and fullness of one's understanding of Christ and all else in relation to him and in the quality of one's personal relationship with him, and it is not anything else. So spiritual gifts must be defined in terms of Christ, as actualized powers of expressing, celebrating, displaying and so communicating Christ in one way or another, either by word or by deed. They would not be edifying otherwise.

11. Charles Caldwell Ryrie, in *The Holy Spirit* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1965), p.83, says:

The Greek word for spiritual gift (charisma) is obviously related to grace, for *charis* means "grace"; thus a spiritual gift is due to grace. The usage of the word in the New Testament is quite wide, ranging from the gift of salvation (Rom. 6:23) to the gift of God's providential care (II Cor. 1:11, ASV). Usually it is used of the special gifts or abilities given to men by God, and with the exception of I Peter 4:10 the word is used in the New Testament only by Paul. When referring to a gift for service, it seems to include natural talent given at birth (as in Eph. 4 where the emphasis is on gifted men) as well as supernatural talent given at the time of salvation. Thus a spiritual gift may be defined as a God-given ability for service. its origin is from God; it is an ability, whether natural or supernatural; and it is given for the purpose of service.

In this context, we will employ the following as a working definition:

Spiritual gifts are those natural, spiritual, or supernatural abilities, capabilities, and inclinations that the Holy Spirit bestows on human beings to enable them to accomplish specific functions in the outworking of God's purposes.

## II. The Main Scripture Passages Relevant to the Subject

Romans 12:6-8 -- "And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let each exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness."

I Corinthians 12:1-31 -- Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware. You know that when you were pagans, you were led astray to the dumb idols, however you were led. Therefore I make known to you, that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, Jesus is accursed; and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord", except by the Holy Spirit. Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons. But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills. For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired. And if they were all one member, where would the body be? But now there are many members, but one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you;" or again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." On the contrary, it is much truer that the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary; and those members of the body, which we deem less honorable, on these we bestow more abundant honor, and our unseemly members come to have more abundant seemliness, whereas our seemly members have no need of it. But God has so composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that member which lacked, that there should be no division in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues. All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not workers of miracles, are they? All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they? But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And I show you a still more excellent way.

I Corinthians 13:1-3, 8-10 -- "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I deliver my

body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing. . . Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away."

I Corinthians 14:1-6 -- "Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy. For one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men, but to God; for no one understands, but in his spirit he speaks mysteries. But one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation. One who speaks in a tongue edifies himself; but one who prophesies edifies the church. Now I wish that you all spoke in tongues, but even more that you would prophesy; and greater is one who prophesies than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may receive edifying. But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking in tongues, what shall I profit you, unless I speak to you either by way of revelation or of knowledge or of prophecy or of teaching?"

I Corinthians 14:26-33 -- "What is the outcome then, brethren? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification. If any one speaks in a tongue, it should be by two or at the most three, and each in turn, and let one interpret; but if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in the church; and let him speak to himself and to God. And let two or three prophets speak, and let the others pass judgment. But if a revelation is made to another who is seated, let the first keep silent. For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all may be exhorted; and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets; for God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints."

Ephesians 4:11-12 -- "And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ."

I Peter 4:10-11 -- "As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. Whoever speaks, let him speak, as it were, the utterances of God; whoever serves, let him do so as by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

### III. Specific References to "Gifts" or "Gift" (in the NASB)

#### Gifts

Romans 12:6 -- "And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let each exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith;"

I Corinthians 12:4 -- "Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit."

I Corinthians 12:9 -- "to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit"

I Corinthians 12:28 -- "And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues."

I Corinthians 12:30 -- "All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they?"

I Corinthians 12:31 -- "But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And I show you a still more excellent way."

Ephesians 4:8 -- "Therefore it says, 'When He ascended on high, He led captive a host of captives, and He gave gifts to men.' "

Hebrews 2:4 -- "God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will"

#### Gift

Acts 2:38 -- "And Peter said to them, 'Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'"

Acts 10:45 -- "And all the circumcised believers who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out upon the Gentiles also."

Acts 11:17 -- "If God therefore gave to them the same gift as He gave to us also after believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?"

Romans 1:11 -- "For I long to see you in order that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established"

I Corinthians 1:7 -- "so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ"

I Corinthians 7:7 -- "Yet I wish that all men were even as I myself am. However, each man has his own gift from God, one in this manner, and another in that."

I Timothy 4:14 -- "Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed upon you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery."

II Timothy 1:6 -- "And for this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands."

I Peter 4:10 -- "As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."

#### IV. Specific References employing Key Greek Words in the New Testament

##### XARISMA

Romans 1:11 -- "For I long to see you in order that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established"

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I Corinthians 12:9 -- "to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit"

I Corinthians 12:28 -- "And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues."

I Corinthians 12:30 -- "All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they?"

I Corinthians 12:31 -- "But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And I show you a still more excellent way"

II Corinthians 1:11 -- "You also joining in helping us through your prayers, that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the favor bestowed upon us through the prayers of many."

I Timothy 4:14 -- "Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed upon you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery."

II Timothy 1:6 -- "And for this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands."

I Peter 1:10 -- "As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."

### PNEUMATIKOS

Romans 1:11 -- "For I long to see you in order that I may impart some spiritual (PNEUMATIKOS) gift (XARISMA) to you, that you may be established"

I Corinthians 12:1 -- "Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware."

I Corinthians 14:1 -- "Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy."

### DOMA

Ephesians 4:8 -- "Therefore it says, 'When He ascended on high, He led captive a host of captives, and He gave gifts to men.' "

(DOSIS, DOREA, DOREAN, DOREO, DOREMA, and DORON are not used in any biblical references to spiritual gifts.)

## V. Various Classifications of Gifts

The following list is by no means exhaustive, but is a representative selection of classifications of spiritual gifts, in no particular order.

- (1) gifts for service and gifts for sanctification
- (2) gifts of office and gifts of function
- (3) ordinary gifts and extraordinary gifts
- (4) major gifts and minor gifts
- (5) natural endowments and special enduements
- (6) eschatological gifts and subeschatological gifts
- (7) natural gifts and spiritual gifts
- (8) natural gifts and supernatural gifts
- (9) ordinary spiritual gifts and supernatural sign-gifts
- (10) natural, spiritual, and supernatural gifts
- (11) inspirational gifts (the power to say), gifts of power (the power to do, gifts of revelation (the power to know).
- (12) gifts for oral ministry, gifts for practical service, miraculous manifestations
- (13) leadership or edifying gifts, sign gifts, service gifts
- (14) supernatural gifts that are not signs, supernatural sign gifts



## VI. Lists of Spiritual Gifts

Thomas H. Edgar, in *Miraculous Gifts: Are They For Today* (pp.12-13) provides perhaps the most extensive listing of spiritual gifts in the literature. He writes:

As we have already concluded, a definitive list of gifts may be impossible; however, a tentative list is as follows.

Leaders, with the abilities given to fulfill their function, who are given to the Church as a whole:

Apostle  
Prophet  
Teacher

Evangelist  
Pastor

Abilities given to individuals:

Ministry  
Teaching  
Exhortation  
Giving  
Ruling  
Miracle-working  
Word of wisdom  
Showing mercy

Healing  
Speaking with tongues  
Interpretation of tongues  
Ability to prophesy  
Helps  
Word of knowledge  
Discerning of spirits

There is an overlapping of the abilities and the individuals who use them. A prophet must have the ability to prophesy. An apostle probably had all of the various abilities as part of his gift of apostleship. The gifts may be classified according to function in three general categories.

Leadership or edifying gifts. Basically these include the apostle, prophet, teacher, and evangelist. Pastor is more an office than a gift. Men who function in this office are expected to have a gift appropriate to it. The leadership gifts utilize one or more of the abilities which are appropriate. These abilities (spiritual gifts) include teaching, exhortation, ruling, governing, prophecy, word of wisdom, word of knowledge, and discerning of spirits.

Sign gifts. These gifts are abilities given to individuals irrespective of office. They are miracle-working, healing, tongues, and interpretation of tongues. An apostle was also gifted in these categories.

Service gifts. Ministry or service, giving, helps, and showing mercy are for serving.

J. Oswald Sanders, in *The Holy Spirit and His Gifts* (p. 110), gives the following listing:

(a) Gifts which qualify their possessors for the ministry of the Word:

Apostleship	Knowledge and wisdom
Prophecy	Kinds of tongues
Teaching	Interpretation of tongues
Shepherding	Discerning of spirits
Evangelism	

(b) Gifts which equip their possessors to render services of a practical nature:

Miracles	Ruling
Healing	Helps
Administration	

In his specific treatment of gifts, Sanders adds to the above the gifts of faith, exhortation, giving, and showing mercy.

Charles Caldwell Ryrie, in *The Holy Spirit* (pp. 85-91) lists the following gifts:

Apostleship	Teaching
Prophecy	Faith
Miracles	Exhortation
Healing	Discerning Spirits
Tongues (interpretation)	Showing mercy
Evangelism	Giving
Pastor	Administration
Ministering	

Combining the items in those three listings yields the following list (arranged alphabetically):

Administration	Word of Knowledge
Apostleship	Showing Mercy
Discerning of spirits	Ministering
Evangelism	Miracle-working
Exhortation	Pastoring (or shepherding)
Faith	Prophecy
Giving	Ruling
Healing	Speaking with tongues
Helps	Teaching
Interpretation of tongues	Word of Wisdom

## VII. Specific Definitions of Spiritual Gifts

### A. Administration

1 Corinthians 12:28 -- "And in the church God has appointed . . . those with gifts of administration."

Sanders (p. 121) states: "In any work of God, leadership and a certain amount of administration are necessary, and the Spirit imparts special gifts for this work. It is work that is unspectacular and demanding, and not always appreciated. Nevertheless it is necessary to the smooth functioning of the work of the Kingdom."

Edgar (p. 331) writes:

The word often translated government is the Greek word KUBERNESIS. It occurs in the New Testament only in 1 Corinthians 12:28. The word has the idea of administration, government, or management. It is from the same root as the word KUBERNETES, or steersman. The idea is closely connected with the previous gift of ruling, although there may conceivably be some emphasis on organizing and managing. The most probable solution is that these two gifts refer to the same thing but may emphasize various aspects. These two gifts are abilities while pastor describes an office. Apparently some people in the church have an extraordinary ability to rule and administer."

Ryrie (p. 91) simply says that "this is the ability to rule in the church."

### B. Apostleship

1 Corinthians 12:28 -- "And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles"

Ephesians 4:11 -- "It was he [Christ] who gave some to be apostles"

Ryrie (p. 85) states:

Apostleship can have both a general and a limited meaning. In a general sense the word means one who is sent, or a messenger. The Latin equivalent is the word missionary. In a general sense every Christian is a missionary or an apostle, because he has been sent into this world for a testimony. Epaphroditas is an illustration, for the word "apostle" is used to describe him ("but your messenger", Phil. 2:25). However, in the specialized sense of the gift of apostleship it refers to the Twelve (and perhaps a few others like Paul and Barnabas, Acts 14:14). They were the leaders who laid the foundation of the church and they were

accredited by special signs (Eph. 2:20). Since this was a gift that belonged to the earliest period of the history of the church when her foundation was being laid, the need for the gift has ceased and apparently the giving of it has too. "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." (Eph. 2:20)

Sanders (pp. 116-117) writes:

First in order of importance are apostles. This term is not confined to the Twelve, but it would seem that to be an apostle one must have seen Jesus, and have been a witness of the resurrection. He must also have been called by Christ or by the Holy Spirit, as was Barnabas. Apostles were endued with miraculous powers as credentials of their office. James, our Lord's brother, was an apostle, and so were Andronicus and Junia, Silvanus and others. These qualifications for apostleship meant that they were an order bound to die out. The Church is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets.

The apostle was, literally, "a delegate, a messenger, one sent forth with orders." (Thayer). According to J. C. Lambert, "The apostolate was not a limited circle of officials holding a well-defined position of authority in the Church, but a large class of man who discharged one -- and that the highest -- of the functions of the prophetic ministry."

The more generally accepted view, however, is that the word is used in the New Testament in a twofold sense. First in a restricted sense as the official name of Christ's twelve chosen disciples, who saw Him after the resurrection and laid the foundations of His Church. Second, in a broader, unofficial sense as designating accredited Christian messengers, commissioned by a church community, as was Barnabas.

The apostles did not serve a merely local church, but their authority ran throughout the whole Church.

Edgar (pp.63-64), following a study of the New Testament, concludes:

The Twelve, Paul and Barnabas were called apostles. The Twelve were called the apostles and seemed to enjoy a special place (see Revelation 21:14). Paul called himself an apostle and was recognized as an apostle by the church in Jerusalem (see Galatians 2). The apostleship of Barnabas is not as certain as that of the twelve and Paul, since he was not included in the recognition of apostleship granted to Paul in Galatians 2:7-9.

There are verses that may imply that James, Andronicus, and Junia were apostles. This is improbable regarding Andronicus and Junia and is subject to dispute regarding James. If James (the brother of the Lord) was an apostle, then this is additional evidence that an apostle could remain in and have authority in a local church.

The status of apostle is carefully guarded in the early Church. This is seen in the care taken by the church in Jerusalem before they recognized Paul's apostleship (see Galatians 2:1-10). . . . The term "apostle" may be applied with certainty to the Twelve and Paul only. Even Barnabas is questionable, and the others are even less certain.

The term "apostle" cannot be equated with "missionary". There were many nonapostolic missionaries in the early Church. . . .

The term "apostle" is used in the sense of "representative". As representatives of Christ, the apostles had great authority in the early Church. This authority was evident not only by authoritative statements and actions but also by the need for the apostles to lay hands on specific groups of unique converts such as those in Samaria.

Apostles performed miracles, signs, and wonders. This was evident in all who were definitely apostles. There is no information regarding the questionable individuals such as James, Andronicus, and Junia. It may be stated categorically that the apostles performed miracles with any thrust of the gospel into new territory. Paul states (2 Corinthians 12:12) that performance of miracles is proof of apostleship. To be recognized as an apostle one must, along with other qualifications, be able to perform miracles.

Apostles were witnesses of the resurrected Lord. Although some try to dispute this, 1 Corinthians 9:1-2 is clear. Acts 1:22-26 states clearly that the twelve apostles were witnesses of the resurrection. This aspect of apostleship is further implied by the fact that all who can definitely be considered as apostles did see the resurrected Lord. . . .

### C. Discerning of Spirits

1 Corinthians 12:8, 10 -- "To one there is given through the Spirit . . . , to another distinguishing between spirits"

Sanders (p. 120) states:

This is the ability to discriminate between different kinds of spirits, to distinguish the spurious from the true, the spirit of truth from the spirit of error. So long as there was no written New Testament, this gift was of special importance, for it enabled the possessor to distinguish between the psychic and the physical, the divine and the demonic, false teaching from the true.

The Spirit enables him to tell whether the professed gifts were really from Him and supernatural, or were merely strange though natural, or even diabolical. The exhortation of John to "test the spirits" had this in view, and is still very relevant today when there is so much that is false yet persuasive in the form of cults and heresies.

Ryrie (p. 90) says: "Discerning spirits is the ability to distinguish between true and false sources of supernatural revelation when it was being given in oral form. It was a very necessary gift before the Word was written, for there were those who claimed to bring revelation from God who were not true prophets."

D. Evangelism

Ephesians 4:11 -- "It was he [Christ] who gave some to . . . evangelists."

Edgar (pp. 320-322) states:

Acts 21:8 states that Philip was an evangelist but reveals nothing regarding the ministry of an evangelist.

Ephesians 4:11 states that the evangelist is a gift to the Church. It also shows that this is an edifying gift to be utilized in training believers.

2 Timothy 4:5 indicates nothing regarding the ministry of the evangelist. This verse does indicate that this type of ministry was necessary in order for Timothy to fulfill his ministry.

Although these passages yield nothing describing the gift of evangelist, Acts 21:8 states that Philip was an evangelist; therefore we may look at Philip's ministry in Acts 8 for some possible clues regarding the gift of evangelist. His ministry to the Samaritans is described as follows.

He preached Christ to them (KERUSSO) (verse 5).

On this occasion he performed signs (verse 6), cast out unclean spirits and healed many (verse 7), and performed miracles (verse 13). We do not have enough information to know whether he performed such miracles at any other time.

He preached concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ (verse 12).

He baptized the converts.

The converts did not receive the Spirit until the apostles came and laid hands on them.

Philip's ministry is also described in Acts 8:26-40, where he ministered to the Ethiopian eunuch. This ministry is described as follows.

An angel instructed Philip to go to a specific location (verse 26).

The Spirit told Philip to go to a specific man (verse 29).

Philip preached Jesus to the eunuch (verse 35).

Philip baptized the converted eunuch (verse 31). The Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away (verse 39).

Philip traveled to and preached in various cities (verse 40). It is obvious from the context that he preached Christ to them.

Certain consistent aspects of Philip's ministry may be noted. Philip had an itinerant (traveling) type of ministry. His ministry consisted of preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ to non-Christians. In addition, in the two cases where Philip's ministry is described in detail, he baptized the converts. It is safe to assume that the general description of his ministry in Acts 8:40 would also include baptizing converts. This type of ministry is comparable to the present-day general missionary and the present-day evangelist.

There are certain other aspects of Philip's ministry which did not occur in every instance. He performed miracles when ministering to the Samaritans, but he did not when ministering to the eunuch. An angel specifically sent Philip to the eunuch, but there is no mention that an angel sent him to the Samaritans. He was snatched away from the eunuch by the Holy Spirit immediately after baptism, but this did not occur after he baptized the Samaritans. Since these aspects did not all occur on each occasion of ministry, they may be regarded as not basic to the function of an evangelist.

The question naturally arises as to whether an evangelist should be able to perform miracles. Certain items should be noted when considering this.

There is no statement that an evangelist should be able to perform miracles, although there is a definite statement in 2 Corinthians 12:12 that an apostle should be able to do so. In other words, there is a definite teaching statement that an apostle can perform miracles but no teaching at all and only one instance described in which an evangelist performed miracles. . .

On the basis of this one example, admittedly unusual, of an evangelist's ministry we cannot conclude that an evangelist must perform miracles . . .

In conclusion, the evangelist is similar to the modern-day general missionary and modern-day evangelist. An evangelist takes the gospel to unbelievers and baptizes the converts. Many present-day evangelists speak only in church or church-sponsored meetings, and few baptize the converts. Although this may not be in conformity with the New Testament example of Philip, this does not stand as evidence against their gift, since they aim their ministry to reach the unbeliever. The general missionary more nearly approximates the ministry of Philip.

#### E. Exhortation

Romans 12:6, 8 -- "We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is . . . encouraging, let him encourage"

Edgar (p. 330) states: "We have little information regarding the gift of exhortation . . . . The word exhortation translates the Greek word PARAKALEO. The most probable meaning of this term, in this context, is to urge, exhort, or encourage. It is sometimes

used to an summons or call for help. Exhort is a good translation for this gift. This individual urges, exhorts, and encourages others. In this case he exhorts regarding the Christian life.

Ryrie (p. 90) says: "Exhorting involves encouraging, comforting, and admonishing people. Note that this is a separate and distinct gift from the gift of teaching. In other words, teaching may or may not involve exhortation, and contrariwise exhortation may or may not involve teaching."

John Williams, in *The Holy Spirit: Lord and Life-Giver* (Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1980), p. 111, states:

Obviously the gift of exhortation is akin to that of teaching and any distinction there is would appear to be one of emphasis only. The word PARAKLESIS has several possible translations, including summons, exhortation, encouragement, and consolation. Since in the context of Paul's list of gifts DIDASKALIA (teaching) and PARAKLESIS are associated, we are probably not wrong in translating it exhortation. As the teacher informs the mind and heart of his hearers, so the exhorter challenges their wills and consciences. He will do this best not by strident tones and angry threats but by gracious entreaties and understanding words. Let him always remember that He who gifted him for his task was described by Christ as "the Paraclete".

#### F. Faith

1 Corinthians 12:8-9 -- "To one there is given through the Spirit . . . , to another faith by the same Spirit"

1 Corinthians 13:2 -- "and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing."

Billy Graham, in *The Holy Spirit* (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1978), p. 150, states:

We must distinguish between the grace of faith and the gift of faith. The grace of faith means that we can believe God will do whatever He has promised to do in His Word. All Christians have the grace of faith. Therefore, if we do not have faith in what the Bible promises, we sin. But many things come into our lives concerning which there are no specific promises from the Word. Therefore, when we pray, we add, "if it be Thy will." But sometimes the Holy Spirit gives us the gift of faith to believe things about which the Bible is silent. If we do not have this special gift of faith, it is not sin.

Ryrie (p. 90) says: "Faith is the God-given ability to believe God's power to supply specific need. Every man has been



given a measure of faith (Rom. 12:3), but not everyone has been given the gift of faith. Everyone may believe God, but this cannot be the same as possessing the gift of faith -- otherwise there would be no significance to its being listed as a separate spiritual gift."

Sanders (p. 119) states:

Saving faith is not in view here, for though it is the gift of God, it is not a special gift of the Spirit. It is rather wonder-working faith, the faith that can remove mountains. The context supports this view. It is the special gift of faith bestowed in order to enable its possessor to carry out a special ministry. George Muller, for example, possessed this gift to a unique degree, but many less known people have possessed and exercised this gift -- the faith that turns vision into fact.

Michael Green, in *I Believe in the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), pp. 180-181, writes:

All commentators are agreed that Paul is not speaking of the saving faith by which a man believes in Christ. True, this is a gift of God, if only in the sense that without the God-given capacity to trust, faith in Christ would be impossible for any one of us. Clearly, Paul is not thinking of that here. He is referring to the special ability to trust God in the dark when all the odds are against you: the ability to hold on to God in prayer over many years for the conversion of some loved one: the sure perception of the will of God on a particular matter in the future which enables you to act as though it had already happened. Noah had this gift of faith, in believing God, against all the odds, that there would be a flood, and acting on that belief by building an ark, despite the laughter of his fellows. Abraham had this gift of faith, in believing that God was calling him out of Ur even though it was economic madness to leave his expensive home in that prosperous city and entrust himself to God and to the desert. Hudson Taylor had this gift of faith in founding and maintaining one of the world's biggest missionary societies on a complete absence of financial backing, a refusal to ask for funds, and an unshakeable conviction about the will of God.

#### G. Giving

Romans 12:6, 8 -- "We have different gifts according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is . . . contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously"

1 Corinthians 13:3 -- "If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing."

Williams (pp. 117-118) writes:

The words, "he that giveth, let him do it with liberality," suggest that while all Christians have the responsibility to give of their substance to the Lord's work, there are some individual members of the Body of Christ whose special charisma is giving. Apart from this refuting the misconception that Christians should not own wealth, it points up the fact that the ministry of those who "give" is quite as important as that of those who "go".

Liberality is a "grace gift". If those whose special gift and enabling it is to give generously, then the work of those whose gift it is to serve will be unhindered. Here again we observe the complementary roles of the gifts in action.

Another thing that is made abundantly plain in Paul's exhortation is that the disposition of a man's heart is just as important as the exercise of his gift. Giving must be done not grudgingly but with liberality" (APLOTETI, literally, with singleness of heart). In other words, "it's not only what you do, it's the way that you do it!" A truly Christian giver gives without thought of return or hoping for public recognition (cf. 2 Corinthians 9:6-7).

If the gift of generosity is employed, it will forward the work of the church in any generation. its exercise by Barnabas in the first generation of the Church stands in bold relief against the avarice and duplicity of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1 ff.).

Ryrie (p. 91) states: "The gift of giving concerns distributing one's own money to others. It is to be done with simplicity; i.e., with no thought of return or gain for self in any way."

Edgar (p. 330) says:

The term giving (METADIDOUS) is the only clue to this gift. It means to give, impart, or share. We can only guess at the specifics. It probably means to share and give to others. This might include so-called offerings to the church; however, no such offerings are described in the New Testament. Giving to the Lord is described in the New Testament only when it concerns offerings for the needs of the brethren.

There are many questions we might ask. For example, does the gift of giving (assuming it is a gift) imply the possession of the wherewithal to give? It is most likely that this gift refers to an ability to recognize needs and a desire to give beyond that normally expected. However, all Christians are to do this.

## H. Healing

1 Corinthians 12:8-9 -- "to one there is given through the Spirit . . . to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit"

1 Corinthians 12:28 -- "And in the church God has appointed those having gifts of healing"

Charles V. Carter, in *The Person and Ministry of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1974), (pp. 276-277), writes:

That there have been and are individuals especially endowed with the gifts of healing (note the gifts here is plural) is well known . . . . It would seem, however, that these gifts of healing may involve much more than direct divine intervention, important as that is. That there are Christian men and women whose natural aptitudes better qualify them for specific branches of medical science and service than their fellows is evident. And that God should call these individuals into various fields of medical service is both Scriptural and logical. Luke was such a physician. Few Christians have greater opportunity to serve God than those who minister to the sick. Christian doctors, nurses, counselors, and psychiatrists exercise their gifts by "the one Spirit" who endows ministers to preach or teachers to teach. And none of the gifts has any Christian meaning or value except as it is exercised in faith. There are no effective Christian gifts apart from faith. To some it is given to perform miraculously (v. 10) [1 Corinthians 12], while others serve in a less spectacular manner. There are Christian specialists in medicine who accomplish cures that are rightly regarded as miraculous.

Michael Green (pp. 174-177), states:

Jesus healed men; and he commissioned his disciples to do the same. It is interesting to recall that the word "save" means in the original "to heal" just as much as it does "to rescue". Undeniably, many of the needy people whom Jesus met in the days of his flesh were both spiritually put right with God and physically healed. Equally undeniably, there is less and less stress on healing as the ministry of Jesus runs its course. He deprecated men's quest for miracles and mighty works; and he was limited in performing them by lack of faith in the recipients. Moreover, on occasion he withdrew from promising healing situations, in order to concentrate on preaching (Mark 1:38; Luke 4:4). Both Peter and Paul exercise gifts of healing in Acts, and healing is given a place in the list of spiritual gifts in I Corinthians 12:9, 28, 30. It is, therefore, a real gift of God to be exercised in and for the body of Christ. But one does not get the impression that it played a major part in the spread of the gospel in early times. It is not mentioned in the lists of workers in the church in Ephesians 4:11, or in the fuller list in

Romans 12:6-8. In the Pastoral Epistles the tasks of Christian ministry are fully described, but there is no hint that healing is seen as one of them. James 5:14 certainly speaks of the healing power of God in answer to believing prayer and the anointing with oil (ceremonial or medical?) on the part of the Christian leadership. But quite clearly the healing is contingent, not universal. . . .

Healing, then, is a gift that God has given to some members of the body of Christ, to enable them to act as channels of his love and compassion to others. "Have all the gifts of healing?" asks the apostle. The answer, clearly is "No". But those who have this gift are to use it for the benefit of others. It seems to be one of the good gifts of the Spirit which is increasingly being realized today, and Christians who had no idea that they possessed it are finding that they are being used in this ministry of healing.

Williams (p. 123) states:

Gifts of Healings -- *Charismata Iamaton* (1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28, 30). The plural form, gifts of healings, used only here in the New Testament, may suggest that either a variety of ailments or a variety of gifts is in view. Although IAOMAI is used of spiritual healing (Hebrews 12:13; James 5:16; 1 Peter 2:24), unquestionably in this context Paul is talking about physical healings. evidently, although the regular method of healing was by means of medicine and a physician then as now, there were special cures that were attributable to neither. This suggested supernatural intervention, and that sometimes by the agency of a person who possessed "gifts of healings".

Sanders (p. 119), writes:

This gift is the supernatural intervention of God through a human instrument, to restore health to the body. It is acts of healing that are in view. Although the incidence of the gift of healing has waned, it would seem that it has never entirely disappeared from the Church. It is unfortunate that there have been great frauds and abuses perpetrated in the name of the gift.

From the Scripture it would appear that the gift was not effective in every case, but only according to God's sovereign will. Scripture holds out no blanket promise that every sickness will be healed. Paul, though he possessed the gift, was unable to heal Trophimus and had to leave him sick. Instead of healing Timothy, he advised medication for his frequent indisposition.

Edgar (p. 105), states:

The gift of healing means that a specific individual can heal other people directly . . . . The individual has the ability

to perform the miracle or healing. Instances where people are healed in answer to prayer are not instances of exercise of spiritual gifts but are God's working in answer to prayer. If believers gather and pray for a sick person and that person is healed miraculously, this is not evidence that the gift of healing exists today. This demonstrates that God answers prayer.

#### I. Helps

1 Corinthians 12:28 -- "And in the church God has appointed . . . those able to help others"

Sanders (pp. 120-121) defines as follows:

The gift of "helps" or "ministering" is in essence giving help and assistance to those in need. The verb is used by Paul in writing to the Ephesian believers: "I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak." It may have special reference to the work of deacons. There is wide scope for the exercise of this ministry amongst the poor, sick, aged, orphans and widows. There is more than mere general helpfulness in view. It is rather a special, Spirit-given ability to help in such cases. It is a gift that affords endless scope to those who desire to serve the Lord, yet possess no special gift of utterance.

Edgar (p. 331) states: "The gift of helps is, as other gifts discussed thus far, mentioned only once, with no description except the name helps (Greek ANTILEMPSIS). ANTILEMPSIS means help or assistance."

Williams (pp. 118-119) writes:

This is the special gift of the person who is willing to adopt a support role in any practical area of the Church's ministries. In an age of religious specialists, here is a "jack of all trades" who is glad to put his hand to any task, provided that he is helping people and serving Christ. . . The word is reminiscent of people like Simon of Cyrene, who helped Jesus carry His cross (Mark 15:21) or the family of Stephanas who "addicted" themselves to the ministry (DIAKONIA) (1 Corinthians 16:15). . . .

#### J. Interpretation of Tongues

1 Corinthians 12:8, 10 -- "To one there is given through the Spirit . . . , and to still another the interpretation of tongues"

1 Corinthians 14:26-28 -- "What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has . . . an interpretation. All of those must be done for the strengthening of the church. If anyone

speaks in a tongue, two -- or at the most three -- should speak, one at a time, and someone must interpret. If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church."

Green (pp. 166-167) states:

It is the ability to give the sense of what has been said in an unknown tongue, when this has been exercised in the congregation. Just as the Spirit leads one person to speak in a tongue he does not understand, so the same Spirit leads either him or someone else present to interpret what has been said or sung. It is not an exact translation. The interpreter does not normally understand the tongue that has been used any better than the rest of the congregation. But he feels the Spirit impelling him to speak, not a translation but an interpretation. This is very much an exercise in faith. When he gets up to speak he does not know more than the very first words of what he is going to say. He must trust the leading of the Lord the Spirit. Indeed, the whole subject of interpreting tongues is most obscure and open to abuse. It is not possible for others to have any objective criteria for checking that the interpretation is genuine, and it is not possible to ensure beforehand that the apostolic injunction will be obeyed, that nobody is to speak in tongues in church unless someone is present who can interpret. Of course, it may be that a particular person in the congregation regularly has the gift of interpretation and can be relied on; in other circumstances the gift is given to a particular person for a particular occasion.

Dennis and Rita Bennett, in *The Holy Spirit and You* (Plainfield, New Jersey: Logos International, 1971), p. 90, claim:

The interpretation of tongues is bringing the meaning of what has been said through the gift of tongues at a public meeting. A person feels moved to speak or sing in tongues, and either he or another is given by the Holy Spirit the meaning of what has been said. He or she cannot understand the tongue. It is not a translation but an interpretation, giving the general meaning of what s said. The gift of interpretation may come directly into the person's mind, *in toto*, or just a few beginning words may be given, and as the interpreter trusts the Lord and begins to speak, the rest of the message comes. In this way it resembles speaking in tongues -- "You speak, the Lord gives the words." Interpretation may also come in pictures or symbols, or by an inspired thought, or the interpreter may hear the speaking in tongues, or part of it, as though the person were speaking directly in English. Interpretation will have the same result as a prophetic utterance, that of: "edification, exhortation, or comfort" (1 Cor. 14:3-5). Remember, the gifts are not to guide your life by, but rather to confirm what God is already saying to you in your spirit and through the Scriptures.

Carter (p. 279) states:

The gift of the interpretation of tongues is not bestowed upon the same individuals as are the kinds of tongues. Anyone who has been dependent upon interpreters in foreign countries, as the writer has, well knows that efficient interpretation is a special gift that few possess. Education and facility in one's own language are not sufficient in themselves to constitute a good interpreter. Spiritual insight and inspiration often play a far more important role in efficient interpretation than simply a thorough knowledge of two languages. Hodge argues convincingly and conclusively for this interpretation of verse 10.

K. Word of Knowledge

1 Corinthians 12:8 -- "To one there is given through the Spirit . . . , to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit"

1 Corinthians 13:2 -- "If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge"

Dennis and Rita Bennett (p. 155) claim, that the "word of knowledge" is "the supernatural revelation of facts past, present, or future which were not learned through the efforts of the natural mind. It may be described as the Mind of Christ being manifested to the mind of the believer, and is given when needed in a flash of time (1 Cor. 2:16). This gift is used to protect the Christian, to show how to pray more effectively, or to show him how to help others."

Williams (p. 113) states:

Some believe Paul is talking about the gift of apprehension and application of scriptural truth in any age. Others understand him as referring to that unmediated, spiritual understanding and application of truth which was essential to the growth and development of the primitive Church in its precanonical era. This latter suggestion, which seems more in keeping with the larger context, sees Paul's reference here to gifted people in the early churches who spoke out on the basis of their special, spiritual grasp of the "mind of God". In other words this gift would be akin to prophecy and might well be associated with it, though evidently distinguishable from it.

Green (p. 184) writes:

Such is Christian knowledge. it centers on Jesus Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Colossians 2:3). And it is something which all the Corinthians were expected to have to grow in (1 Corinthians 1:5). But in all probability

Paul means something further by the inclusion of knowledge in this list of spiritual gifts. If we compare the passage here [I Corinthians 12] with I Corinthians 13:2 and 14:6 it becomes apparent that Paul is speaking of some revelatory word from God for the benefit of others. Jesus clearly had this gift when he knew that the woman of Samaria had already had five husbands. Peter had it, when he knew that the heart of Ananias and Sapphira was not right with God. This seem to be the gift of which the apostle is speaking. It is a God-given disclosure of knowledge that could not normally be available to the recipient. It is intended not for the gratification of the individual who receives it, but for the benefit of the congregation or some member of it. It is a particularly precious gift for the Christian counsellor, who needs to know the heart of the man to whom he is speaking.

L. Showing Mercy

Roman 12:6, 8 -- " We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is . . . showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully."

Williams (p.118) writes:

If the gift of generosity relates to the giving of our means, then showing mercy relates to the giving of ourselves. The man who possesses this particular gift recognizes another's need and ministers to it.

Again there is the suggestion here that although this virtue should be found in every Christian, there are some individuals who have a particular grace gift to devote themselves to the alleviation of the wretchedness and suffering of others. Perfunctory acts of charity are no substitute for mercy cheerfully shown to people who are in real need. This ministration evidences not only a compassionate heart but a high degree of spiritual maturity. Undoubtedly this gift would have been a great blessing in the early Church, in an age of slavery and social discrimination. It will still be invaluable in any community, social welfare notwithstanding. Mercy tends to cultivate mercy. As Jesus said: "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy" (Matthew 5:7).

Sanders (p. 121) says that "Showing mercy is a gift, and the term is variously rendered in modern versions, e.g., 'He who shows pity', 'If you are helping others in distress', 'He who does acts of mercy'. Each rendering sheds some light on its significance. To be effective, this gift must be exercised with kindness and cheerfulness, not as a matter of duty.



Edgar (p.331) states:

Once again, if showing mercy refers to a gift we have no real description of it. The word translated "showing mercy" is ELEON. It means to show mercy or to have pity. The person exercising this gift is merciful toward others or, as Arndt and Gingrich say in *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, page 249, it means to do acts of mercy. All Christians are to show or exercise mercy, but this must be on an unusual scale, since it appears to be a supernatural gift of the Holy Spirit.

#### M. Ministering

Romans 12:6-7 -- "We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift . . . , is serving, let him serve"

1 Peter 4:11 -- "If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ."

Edgar (pp. 329-330) writes:

The Greek word DIAKONIA occurs as the description of a spiritual gift only in Romans 12:7. There is no description or definition of this gift. The term DIAKONIA is a broad, general term, and is used in 1 Corinthians 12:5 to describe an entire category of spiritual gifts. First Corinthians 12:4-5 says: "And there are differences of gifts (CHARISMA) but the same Spirit, and there are differences of ministries (DIAKONIA) and the same Lord."

The word DIAKONIA means to minister, to serve, to aid, etc. The verb DIAKONEO has the same general connotations. It often had a religious aspect even before Christianity. Although it has the aspect of serving others. Paul described his ministry by this term on several occasions. The English words service or ministry probably express the meaning of DIAKONIA most accurately.

This term is differentiated from the idea of ruling, since the term for ruling is used explicitly in Romans 12:1. Therefore it is most probable that the gift of ministry refers to service rendered to others. We must not forget that Romans 12:6-8 describes gifts from the standpoint of function rather than supernatural ability. Therefore the gifts described in this passage may include supernatural abilities listed elsewhere.

Ryrie (p. 90) states:

Ministering (Rom. 12:7; 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:12)

Ministering means serving. The gift of ministering is the gift of helping or serving in the broadest sense of the word. In the Romans passage it is called the gift of ministering; in I Corinthians, the gift of helps; in Ephesians we are told that other gifts are given for the purpose of helping believers to be able to serve. This is a very basic gift which all Christians can have and use for the Lord's glory.

Williams (pp. 116-117) writes:

There is discussion as to whether here in Romans 12 this word refers to oral ministry or deacon service. Admittedly in some places "ministry" describes the general Christian work of witness and preaching (Cf., Romans 12:7; 2 Corinthians 4:1; 5:18; Ephesians 4:12; etc.). However, Paul seem here to distinguish ministry from the more obviously oral gifts of prophecy, teaching, and exhortation. He is apparently referring to the more mundane, yet nonetheless charismatic ministry of caring for the physical needs of congregations and people. The word DIAKONIA is used several times in the New Testament to describe mercy missions and almoner work (Acts 6:1; Romans 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 8:4; 9:12).

Interestingly enough Paul describes his own mission to Jerusalem in the following words: "But now, I say, I go unto Jerusalem, ministering (DIAKONON) unto the saints." (Romans 15:25 RV cf., verses 26-27)

In support of this interpretation of ministry in Romans 12:7 we note the following comment by Professor Murray: "There does not, therefore, appear to be any conclusive reason for rejecting the view that this reference is to the diaconate. If this is the gift contemplated, there is good reason why deacons should be exhorted to give themselves to this ministry. It is a ministry of mercy to the poor and infirm. Since this office is concerned with material and physical benefits, it is liable to to be underestimated and regarded as unspiritual. . . In the proper sense, the work of this office is intensely spiritual and the evils arising from underesteem have wrought havoc in the witness of the church."

#### N. Miracle-Working

1 Corinthians 12:7, 8, 10 -- "Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit . . . , to another miraculous powers"

Michael Green (pp. 177-180) states:

Miracles were common in the Old Testament, in the life of Jesus, and in the Acts of the Apostles. One thinks of prison doors opening to release a Peter or a Paul; of Elymas the sorcerer being struck with blindness, and so forth. If it is correct to read the plural DUNAMEON after ENERGEMATA in I Corinthians 12:10, then it only means that Paul reckoned the ability to work miracles as one of the gifts of the Spirit. However, the genitive singular (DUNAMEOS) is read by several of the best MSS: the meaning would then be not "the working of miracles" but "the effects of power" -- the outworking in Christian ministry of the divine power as

believers accept and use the gift of the Spirit. Whichever is the right reading of that disputed text, the emphasis is clearly on power. Some men in apostolic days, and since, have been given particular endowments of God's power within them, enabling them to do what they would otherwise never have been able to contemplate. One need only think of the effects of Christ's power in men like Martin Luther in the sixteenth century or Martin Luther King in the twentieth to take the point.

Dennis Bennett takes "the working of miracles" to mean the suspension of what are normally understood as the laws of nature. He not only maintains that Philip the evangelist was "physically and bodily picked up by the Holy Spirit and carried from Gaza to Azotus, a distance of 24 miles" (Acts 8:39), but tells us of a case when the well-known Pentecostal leader, David duPlessis had just the same experience . . .

I do not think that this sort of incident was in Paul's mind when he spoke of the gift of ENERGEMATA DUNAMEOS or DUNAMEON. I believe he may have been pointing to the singular effectiveness God gives to some Christians to impress man by their words and deeds. That is what Jesus was meaning in the passage in John 14. He tells the disciples that the demonstration available to them of the reality of a Father they cannot see, is the words (14:10) and the deeds (14:11) of Jesus. Similarly, he promises them that they will do greater works than this when he returns to his Father and sends them the Spirit. Their words and their deeds will be the evidence to men of all nations (not Israel only) of the reality of the Jesus who is preached to them, but whom they cannot see. It was this DUNAMIS, this powerful impact, which struck men about the teaching of Jesus and his behaviour. Hearing his teaching in the Nazareth synagogue, his fellow countrymen were amazed and asked, "Where does this man get his wisdom from, and his DUNAMEIS, his acts of power?"

I do not for one moment wish to minimise the supernatural power of which Paul is speaking. The word is certainly used in the Gospels to indicate the miraculous healings of Jesus and indeed the splendour of his Advent, as well as the impact of his words and deeds. I, for one, do not believe the Almighty is shackled by "laws of nature" (which are nothing more -- nor less -- than a massive series of observed uniformities). If levitation, for instance, to return to Bennett's interpretation of the Philip incident, can be practised in occultism and Eastern meditation, I see no reason why it should not be available to Christians through the Spirit. It is simply a question of exegesis. Does Paul mean that the Spirit enables some Christians to break what are normally taken to be physical laws? Or does it mean that the Spirit so takes control of the personalities of some Christians that their words and deeds have a particularly powerful impact for God?

If the singular, DUNAMEOS is the correct reading in I Corinthians 12:10, it is probable that we should accept the second of the above alternatives. This would accord well with Paul's claim that the Spirit empowers his words (I Thassalonians 1:5,

Romans 15:19, 1 Corinthians 2:4, 2 Corinthians 6:7) and shines powerfully through his life (Philippians 3:10, Colossians 1:11, Ephesians 1:19f, 2 Corinthians 12:9f). This is the true *imitatio christi* the impact made by Christ's Spirit when active in the believer's words and deeds.

If, however, the plural DUNAMEON is correct, this swings the balance back towards the interpretation, "working of miracles"; particularly in the light of the plural in 1 Corinthians 12:28, 29, and of the unambiguous miraculous meaning of the word in Romans 15:18 and 2 Corinthians 12:12 where it is joined with "signs and wonders".

O. Pastoring or Shepherding

Ephesians 4:11 -- "It was he [Christ] who gave some . . . to be pastors and teachers"

Edgar (p. 327) states:

The pastor is a leader given to build up the believers (Ephesians 4:11-12). It is erroneous to regard teaching as his main function. His main function is to rule or govern in such a way as to lead and protect the saints. However, teaching is one of the ways he carries this leadership responsibility. A man is not given a gift (in the sense of ability) of pastor, but he is given certain gifts, such as government and ruling, which enable him to function as a pastor. Notice that in the passages setting forth the qualifications for bishop or elder, there are no instructions to look for specific gifts. Some gifts are implied by the characteristics listed, but no gifts are mentioned. There are certain individuals who are pastors just as there are evangelists. The term pastor applies to the individual who performs a certain function. In this sense it refers to an office more than to an ability.

Ryrie (p. 89) writes:

The word "pastor" means to shepherd; therefore, the gift of pastor involves leading, providing and caring for, and protecting the portion of the flock of God committed to one's care. In Ephesians 4:11 the work of teaching is linked with that of pastoring, and in Acts 20:28 the duty of ruling the flock is added. The words "elder", "bishop", and "pastor" (translated "feed" in Acts 20:28) are all used of the same leaders of the Ephesians church (Cf. Acts 20:17 and 28).

P. Prophecy

Romans 12:6 -- "We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith."

1 Corinthians 12:8, 10 -- "To one there is given through the Spirit . . . , to another prophecy"

1 Corinthians 13:2 -- "If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge"

1 Corinthians 14:1 -- "Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy."

Dennis and Rita Bennett (p. 99) say:

The gift of prophecy is manifested when believers seek the mind of God, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and not from their own thoughts. It is supernatural speech in a known language. Prophecy is not a "private" gift, but is always brought to a group of believers although it may be for one or more individuals who are present. In this way it may be "judged", that is, evaluated by the Church.

Carter (pp. 277-271) states:

The "gift of prophecy" (v. 10), in the New Testament sense, is more often forthtelling or preaching than foretelling future events. That prophecy, in this sense, is the very special endowment of God to certain chosen individuals is too well known in Christian history to require emphasis. The line of gifted Christian prophets is long and illustrious from Peter and Paul through Luther, Wesley, Whitefield, Edwards, Moody, and on to Graham, to mention but a few. And the gift will go on to a long line of others. Prophecy is the greatest of the instrumental gifts, as it is the means by which Christ's saving grace is made known to man.

Michael Green (pp. 169-170) writes:

It is not easy to be clear precisely what early Christian prophecy was. It could vary from the predictions of a man like Agabus, the mysteries of the Book of Revelation (a remarkable example of early prophecy, see Revelation 1:3), to the indication of a Christian for a particular office (1 Timothy 4:14), testimony to Jesus (Revelation 19:10), and use in evangelism, edification, consolation, or teaching (1 Corinthians 14:3f, f24f, f29f). It was certainly very varied, but of two things we can be sure.

First, it was a direct word from God for the situation at hand, through the mouth of one of his people (and on occasion, this could apparently be any Christian, including those not reckoned to be "prophets" [Revelation 10:7, 11:10]). The other

thing about it is that it was clear speech, which did not need any interpretation. Herein lay its great advantage over tongues. Because of its intelligibility, it used the mind of the speaker (that mind which lies fallow while he is speaking in tongues, 1 Corinthians 14:14); it contributed to the edification of the whole Christian body assembled for worship; it struck to the heart of unbelievers present who were amazed at the directness and relevance of what was said; it showed that God was indeed present in the congregation (1 Corinthians 14:4, 24f). Therefore it was a gift to be sought and prized by Christians. Not all Christians have it (1 Corinthians 12:9), but all are encouraged to pray for it, because it is useful for other members of the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 14:1).

John Williams (pp. 105-106) writes:

The New Testament prophet, like his Old Testament counterpart, was essentially a medium for the direct communication of God's Word to men. Basically, prophecy is inspired speech. Endued with this remarkable gift, chosen individuals were able to declare divine truth to God's people. Although the predictive element was an essential part of the phenomenon of prophecy, it was probably of lesser importance than proclamation. To cite the well-worn dictum: "Prophecy is as much forth-telling as it is fore-telling." Properly employed, this important gift resulted in "edification, and comfort, and consolation" (1 Corinthians 14:3). In some cases the gift was temporary, resulting in the occasional ecstatic experience (Cf., 1 Samuel 10:10-13); in others, it appears to have been a permanent endowment which thereby constituted its recipient "a prophet" (cf., Acts 19:6; 21:9-11; 1 Corinthians 12:28).

J. Oswald Sanders (p. 117) states:

It appears that the New Testament prophet like the apostle, ministered to the Church at large, not to a local congregation. His function was more that of a proclaimer than a predictor, more a forth-teller than a fore-teller, although the latter element was not entirely absent, e.g. the prophecy of Agabus.

The essential mark of prophecy is that in it God's voice is heard, for it is inspired speech. The emphasis is not on prediction, but on setting forth what God has said. The prophet was moved to utter the deep things of God, and spoke "to edification, and exhortation and comfort". Since prophecy is God's message, it will always have deep significance, never be trifling or trite, and will always be in keeping with the written Word. It was the gift most to be coveted. Spirit empowered preaching would probably be the nearest present-day equivalent.

Ryrie (pp. 85-56) writes:

This word also is used in both a general and a limited sense. In a general sense it means to preach; thus, generally speaking, preaching is prophesying, and the preacher is a prophet in that he speaks the message from God. But the gift of prophecy included receiving a message directly from God through special revelation, being guided in declaring it to the people, and having it authenticated in some way by God Himself. The content of that message may have included telling the future (which is what we normally think of as prophesying), but it also included revelation from God concerning the present. . . .

The gift of prophecy may have been rather widely given in New Testament times, though the record mentions only a few prophets specifically. Prophets foretelling a famine came from Jerusalem to Antioch. One of these was named Agabus (Acts 11:27-28). Mention is made also of prophets in the church at Antioch (Acts 13:1), and Philip had four daughters who had the gift of prophecy (Acts 21:9). Prophets were also prominent in the Corinthian church (1 Cor. 14).

Edgar (pp. 83-84) states:

A Prophet although he may also minister otherwise, receives direct revelation from the Lord. His characteristic ministry may normally be described as foretelling or prediction. He is always a spokesman for God. He is similar to the Old Testament prophet. If one does not receive direct revelation and does not predict on occasion, he is not a prophet. The Old Testament states that a prophet must be able to predict. The only examples of a prophet's ministry in the New Testament are examples of prediction. No one can verify that he is a prophet apart from the ability to predict, although he may also receive other revelation. . . .

It is clear from the description of the prophet in the New Testament that no one can demonstrate that he is a prophet apart from an ability to predict the future. The predictions are not vague, general statements, but concern immediate circumstances which may be verified within reasonable time. He must also receive direct, immediate revelation. Any individual who claims to be a prophet merely due to an insight into Scripture is making an erroneous claim. Those who claim that anyone who encourages, exhorts, and consoles is a prophet are also making erroneous claims. Exhorting and encouraging are the results of the prophets' ministry, but they also are the results of the ministries of others who are not prophets. When a prophet prophesies, this results in edification and exhortation, but merely performing the function of exhorting and edifying is no evidence that a man is a prophet. The idea that a prophet is, or ever was, restricted to the local church only is unbiblical.

In the beginning church, individuals described as prophets were rare. Agabus and those with him, and some at Antioch, are called prophets. It is implied that prophets were in the assembly

in Corinth and by implication would be in other churches, but nothing is said of their activity elsewhere in the New Testament. Ephesians 2:20 and Ephesians 3:5 imply that neither apostles nor prophets were present in the Ephesian assembly.

Q. Ruling

Romans 12:6, 8 -- "We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is . . . leadership, let him govern diligently"

Williams (p. 115) writes:

Although Paul's reference here [Romans 12:8] is to a person rather than to a gift, his emphasis is plain. He is stressing the charismatic character of church government. In fact, the apostle uses this word when referring to the domestic qualifications of elders (1 Timothy 3:4-5) and deacons (1 Timothy 3:12) in his pastoral letter to Timothy. When writing of the respect and recognition that should be shown elders, in the churches, he advises: "Let the elders that rule [PROESTOTES] well be counted worthy of double honour, especially those who labour in the word and in teaching (1 Timothy 5:17 RV); "Know them that labour among you and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you: and esteem them exceeding highly in love for their work's sake" (1 Thessalonians 5:12).

Sanders (p. 121) says:

The term "governments" which occurs only here [1 Corinthians 12:28], is the word for the steersman of a ship, who guides it through rocks and shoals to harbour. The word "rulers", means "the one standing in front", or the leader. In any work of God, leadership and a certain amount of administration are necessary, and the Spirit imparts special gifts for this work. It is work that is unspectacular and demanding, and not always appreciated. Nevertheless it is necessary to the smooth functioning of the work of the Kingdom.

R. Speaking with Tongues

1 Corinthians 12:8, 10 -- "To one there is given through the Spirit . . . , to another speaking in different kinds of tongues"

1 Corinthians 13:1 -- "If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal."

1 Corinthians 14:18-26, 39-40 -- "I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. But in the church I would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand"



words in a tongue. Brothers, stop thinking like children. In regard to evil be infants, but in your thinking be adults. In the Law it is written: 'Through men of strange tongues and through the lips of foreigners I will speak to this people, but even then they will not listen to me,' says the Lord. Tongues, then, are a sign, not for believers but for unbelievers; prophecy, however, is for believers, not for unbelievers. So if the whole church comes together and everyone speaks in tongues, and some who do not understand or some unbelievers come in, will they not say that you are out of your mind? But if an unbeliever or someone who does not understand comes in while everybody is prophesying, he will be convinced by all that he is a sinner and will be judged by all, and the secrets of his heart will be laid bare. So he will fall down and worship God, exclaiming, 'God is really among you!' What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church . . . . Therefore, my brothers, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way."

Dennis and Rita Bennett (pp. 59-60, 84-97) state:

Speaking in tongues is prayer with or in the Spirit: it is our spirit speaking to God, inspired by the Holy Spirit. It takes place when a Christian believer speaks to God, but instead of speaking in a language that he knows with his intellect, he just speaks, in childlike faith, and trusts God to provide the form of the words. The regenerated human spirit, which is joined to the Holy Spirit, is praying directly to the Father, in Christ, without having to accept the limitations of the intellect.

There are two ways speaking in tongues may be manifested. The most common is as a devotional language for private edification, needing no interpretation (I Cor. 14:2). This has already been discussed in detail. What we will be talking about now is the public manifestation of tongues, which should be interpreted. We will term this the "gift of tongues". When a baptized-in-the-Holy-Spirit Christian is inspired to speak in tongues aloud in the presence of others, with interpretation of tongues usually following, this is the gift of tongues (I Cor. 14:27-28; 12:10). The gift of tongues is delivered or given to the listeners, and they are edified by the gift of interpretation which follows. . . .

There are two main ways the gift of tongues may be expressed in the gathered church:

1. Through the gift of tongues and interpretation God may be speaking to the unbeliever and/or to believers.

When tongues are a message from God, coming to the unbeliever either by his knowing the language (a translation), by the inspired interpretation through a believer, or in some rare

cases even without benefit of interpretation or translation, they are a sign to the unbeliever that God is real, alive, and concerned about him.

The gifts of tongues and interpretation may also be a message from God to bless and exhort faithful people. . . .

2. The gift of tongues may also be public prayer to God. . . .

More speaking in tongues would no doubt be recognized as known languages if there were someone present who knew the language and could translate. It is also possible that some speakings in tongues are languages of angels" (I Cor. 13:1). There are about three thousand languages and dialects in the world, so it is not surprising that few languages are recognized in any particular locality; indeed it is surprising that so many are. On the day of Pentecost there were about one hundred and twenty speaking in tongues, but only fourteen languages were recognized (Acts 1:15; 2:1, 4, 10-11), even though "devout Jews" were present from all over the then known world. This is about the percentage of known languages identified today. In praying with people for the blessing of Pentecost and being in numerous charismatic meetings in many parts of the world during the last ten years, we have known people to have spoken in tongues in Latin, Spanish, French, Hebrew, Old Basque, Japanese, Aramaic, Mandarin Chinese, German, Indonesian, Chinese Foochow dialect, N.T. Greek, English (by a non-English speaker), and Polish.

In summary, the gift of tongues and interpretation of tongues is first of all a sign to unbelievers (I Cor. 14:22), when manifested according to scriptural instructions. Secondly, these two gifts have the same benefit as prophecy and therefore are also for the edification of the Church (I Cor. 14:5, 26-27).

Carter (pp. 278-279) writes:

Here begins Paul's first and only reference to tongues in any of his writings (I Cor. 12:10-14:40). In Chapter 12 the subject is mentioned in three verses, namely, 10, 28, and 30. Here, as in I Corinthians 12:10, 28, Paul uses the Greek word GLOSSAI which properly means "languages", to express this gift. It signifies articulate speech for the purpose of communication, or the conveyance of ideas from the speaker to the listener. In I Corinthians 12:30 a less complimentary Greek word is used which may signify mere chatter or babble.

Thus "to another various kinds of tongues" means that the Spirit bestows upon some ("another") the miraculous ability to speak languages foreign to them for the same reason that He bestows the other gifts enumerated in this section: "But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good" or for the benefit of the entire church. None of these gifts, not even the gift of languages (tongues) is divinely intended for personal profit. -

The word unknown which appears in the KJV does not occur in the Greek text, nor in any of the better translations. The New Testament knows nothing of an unknown tongue. Thus the kinds of tongues refer to a special gift of languages divinely bestowed upon some individuals to facilitate the preaching and teaching of the gospel where it was linguistically necessary.

J. Oswald Sanders (pp. 124-126) writes:

It is important to discover whether the "other tongues" of Pentecost and the "unknown tongues" at Corinth are identical. Incidentally the word "unknown" does not occur in the Greek. . . .

While there may be some correspondences, there are strong contrasts between the tongue-speaking at Pentecost and that at Corinth. . . .

Since there is such a marked difference between these two manifestations of the gift of tongues, it would not be sound exegesis to build a system of doctrine on the identity of the two occurrences.

If the tongues of 1 Corinthians 14 are not identical with those of Acts 2, what were they? The "other tongues" of Pentecost were other than their native tongues. They spoke in languages they had not acquired, yet they were real languages which were understood by strangers from other lands who knew them. It was not jargon, but intelligible language. Without dogmatism, it would seem that the tongues of 1 Cor. 14 were ecstatic, vocal utterances, fervent and rapturous religious expressions, not necessarily intelligible to speaker or hearer except through the gift of interpretation. This interpretation of the relevant passages appears to be in harmony with the whole teaching of the chapter.

Ryrie (p. 88) states:

Tongues are the God given ability to speak in another language. In the recorded instances in the book of Acts the languages of tongues seemed clearly to be foreign languages. There is no doubt that this was true at Pentecost, for the people heard in their native tongues; and it seemed to be the same kind of foreign languages that were spoken in the house of Cornelius (for Peter says that this was the same thing that occurred at Pentecost, Acts 10:46; 11:15).

The addition of the word "unknown" in I Corinthians 14 has led many to suppose that the tongues displayed in the church at Corinth were an unknown, heavenly language. If the word is omitted, then one would normally think of the tongues in Corinthians as the same as those in Acts; i.e., foreign languages. This is the natural conclusion. Against this view stand I Corinthians 14:2 and 14, which seem to indicate that the Corinthian tongues were an unknown language. In any case, the gift of tongues was being abused by the Corinthians, and Paul was

required to lay down certain restrictions on its use. It was to be used only for edifying, only by two or three in a single meeting and then only if an interpreter were present, and never in preference to prophecy. The gift of interpretation is a corollary gift to the gift of tongues. The gift of tongues was given as a sign to unbelievers (I Cor. 14:22) and especially to unbelieving Jews (v. 21).

Edgar (pp. 121-122, 143) reports:

The New Testament uses the word GLOSSA in the normally accepted sense of the physical tongue, or human language. GLOSSA occurs fifty times. All of the passages using GLOSSA are clear and undisputed except those describing the gift of tongues. Of these passages, the one more seriously disputed is 1 Corinthians 14. No proof from the Greek language has been presented to demonstrate that GLOSSA was used to mean unintelligible ecstatic speech. A word must be interpreted according to its normal usage unless the context demands otherwise. This is a basic rule of interpretation. Those passages describing the gift of tongues cannot be interpreted as referring to other than known human languages unless it is impossible for this meaning to fit the passage and its context. Since many feel that language, in the sense of normal human languages, makes the best sense in these passages, certainly such an unsupported meaning for the word tongues as unintelligible ecstatic speech is not demanded by the passages. The disputed passages involved are Mark 16:17; Acts 2:4ff.; 10:46; 19:6; and 1 Corinthians 12-14.

The only sound exegetical procedure is to interpret GLOSSA, tongue, where it refers to the spiritual gift in 1 Corinthians as normal human language, since this is a valid use of the word, since it agrees with the only passage describing the gift, and since it cannot be proved that tongue is ever used of unintelligible ecstatic utterance. In order to set aside the view that languages are referred to in this passage, it must be definitely demonstrated that language does not fit in the passage. However, this is impossible. This not only cannot be demonstrated, but it can be demonstrated that language fits the passage very well.

Michael Green (pp. 161-163) writes:

This is the ability to speak in language that the speaker has not learnt, that he does not understand, and that is incomprehensible to the hearer. I say "language" with some hesitation, for whilst some charismatics claim that they speak in a definite human language, others do not, but regard the gift as a "Holy Spirit language" designed to enable them to worship God in greater depth and with greater release in their inner being -- rather like the love language of a happily married couple, which

may not mean anything, when the words are analysed; but which denote the intimacy and trust of the couple concerned. The latter view would chime in well with Paul's hints in I Corinthians 14:7-11. . . .

However, there are so many well-attested examples of "tongues" being understood by someone present who happens to belong to another language group and knows the tongue in question, that it is probably best to give the fullest possible breadth to Paul's phrase "different kinds of tongues" and to conclude that whereas some glossolalia may be speaking in a language unknown to the speaker but intelligible to somebody who knows the particular language employed, other "tongues" may not be a particular language at all but will rather be the effusion of the deepest longings of the heart released by the Spirit of God in prayer, praise or song.

Tongues, then, may be a language, or it may not, depending on circumstances and the particular gift of God to the individual. Incidentally, it is wrongly translated "tongues of ecstasy" in some of the modern translations of the Bible, notably the *New English Bible*. There is nothing necessarily compulsive or ecstatic about it. It is (as those who have the gift well know) under the control of the speaker--otherwise it would have been pointless for Paul to bid the tongues-speakers to control themselves in church if an interpreter is not present.

## 8. Teaching

Romans 12:6-7 -- "We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is . . . teaching, let him teach"

1 Corinthians 12:28 -- "And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers"

Ephesians 4:11 -- "It was he (Christ) who gave some to be . . . pastors and teachers"

Williams (pp. 109-110) states:

The gift of teaching in this context involves more than native talent. It envisages a divinely-given ability to understand, explain, and apply the truth of God. While academic training may help a man to sharpen his mind and discover useful study methods, only the Spirit of God can give him ability and wisdom to grasp and share the Living Word of God (1 Corinthians 2:12-15).

The task of the Christian teacher is not only to analyze and expound scriptural truth so that it becomes vital in the experience of Christians, but also to stimulate others to pass the truth on. The pastor-teacher is to be a kind of catalyst to spiritual development (Ephesians 4:11-12). He is part of that chain reaction envisaged in Paul's pastoral exhortation to

Timothy: "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Timothy 2:2). Here are no less than four generations of Christian teachers in view!

Ryrie (p. 90) writes:

Teaching is the God-given ability to explain the harmony and the detail of God's revelation. Apparently the gift is sometimes given alone (Rom. 12:7) and sometimes it is given along with the gift of pastor (Eph. 4:11). It is more obvious in the case of the gift of teaching that this is a gift that can be developed and must be trained. If we may assume that Peter had the gift, then it is clear that he had to do some studying of Paul's epistles before he could explain them to others (II Peter 3:16).

Sanders (p. 118) says:

This is one of the major gifts of the Spirit to the Church. The teacher's function was to interpret the Word of God to His flock. Teaching, in this sense, was the supernatural ability to explain and apply the truths received from God for the Church. The teacher did not originate his own message, but through study and the Spirit's illumination made divine truth clear to his people. His gift was distinct from that of the prophet who spoke as the direct mouthpiece of God.

Edgar (pp. 327-328) states:

The teacher is also an individual given to the Church in order to build up and train believers (Ephesians 4:11-12). There is little description of a teacher's ministry in the New Testament, but there are certain implications. The Biblical concept of teacher is very similar to the concept today, except possibly for methods and physical facilities.

The Greek term DIDASKALOS, teacher, concerned the fact that "systematic instruction is given." It means teacher or trainer.

It is clear from the Gospels that a teacher instructs regarding certain facts and how to use them. The Christian teacher (in the sense of Ephesians 4:11) instructs regarding Biblical truth and how to apply it in order to train and mature believers. A teacher often has a group of disciples or voluntary students who desire to learn from him. (Matthew 8:10; 9:11; 10:24-25; 2 Timothy 4:3). Although there appears to be a spiritual gift of teaching (individuals who are teachers), the human element of training and the voluntary nature of this ministry are more clearly stated than with other gifts. This is especially clear in Hebrews 5:12 and James 3:1. In Hebrews 5:12 the author is explaining that the Hebrews have been Christians for such a length

of time that they should be teachers rather than immature babes in Christ who lacked discernment:

"For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk and not of strong meat."

He definitely implies that the ability to teach depends upon spiritual maturity or knowledge regarding the faith, and that this takes some period of time to acquire. Of course, no matter how much ability someone may have as a teacher, he must have a certain amount of knowledge in order to teach. James 3:1 states, "Do not become many teachers, my brethren" indicating that there is a voluntary aspect to teaching. All teachers are not necessarily spiritually gifted to that end, and this passage is warning believers to be very careful about assuming such a responsibility.

A teacher, in the sense of Ephesians 4:11, is a Christian leader who instructs or trains believers in doctrine (knowledge of Biblical truth) and the spiritual life (how to apply the knowledge) in order to help bring believers to maturity and stability in Christ.

#### T. Word of Wisdom

1 Corinthians 12:8 -- "To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom"

Michael Green (pp. 187-188) writes:

This seem to be the nature of the wisdom to which Paul is inviting the Corinthians once they have renounced their claim to man-made wisdom and the arrogance to which it gives rise.

There seem to be little to justify the . . . claim that the wisdom to which Paul refers in his list of spiritual gifts is "the sudden and miraculous giving of wisdom to meet a particular situation, answer a particular question, or utilize a particular piece of knowledge, natural or supernatural" . . . In the first place, there is no suggestion in I Corinthians that this word of wisdom is supernatural and miraculous. Paul was not dogged by any division between natural and supernatural: he saw God as the author of both. All true wisdom comes from him. Second, there is little enough in the New Testament usage to suggest that the gift is sudden. The one verse that could properly be adduced to the contrary is Luke 21:15. Here Jesus promises to give his followers a "mouth and wisdom" when they have to bear testimony for him in unexpected circumstances. But rather than suppose that this is a sudden gift of wisdom, in contrast to the normal usage of the New Testament, it is surely more likely to mean that our Lord will give us when a crisis is upon us, the ability to enunciate the broadly based understanding of his salvation which has been growing in us for years. Certainly other references in Luke do not suggest that wisdom is a sudden gift. On the contrary, Jesus

and John the Baptist are both said to have grown in wisdom as they grew in years (Luke 2:40, 52). ye are therefore likely to be on the right track if we interpret the gift of wisdom as a settled disposition of mind, illuminated by the Lord the Spirit, which has a broad understanding of the purposes of God, the Scriptures, and supremely of Jesus himself and his cross.

Edgar (pp. 331-332) writes:

Two separate manifestations of the Spirit, which appear to be supernatural gifts, are described by these term. It is difficult to determine if these are spiritual gifts in the sense of rather permanent abilities to exercise words of wisdom or knowledge. The word for wisdom is SOPHOS, and the word for knowledge is GNOSIS. Since these two words occur in the same context, although they are similar in meaning, the difference is also to be considered. The meanings of the English term wisdom and knowledge approximate the meanings in this passage. Wisdom includes the idea of judgment, discernment, good sense, understanding, astuteness. Knowledge is cognizance, comprehension, information. The word of knowledge is apparently the expression of certain information. The word of wisdom is the expression of good judgment -- that is, the expression of the proper reaction to a given situation. These gifts enable the possessor to give sound advice to others.

Sanders (p. 119) says:

The word, or utterance of wisdom is the outcome of direct insight into spiritual truth, the knowledge of God and His ways which comes not so much from study as from communion. Clement of Alexandria defined wisdom as "the knowledge of things human and divine, and of their causes." The utterances of one possessing this endowment, are full of God's wisdom.

The utterance of knowledge is more practical, the application of the divine wisdom to daily life. Both gifts are not necessarily combined in the one person. Many erudite people lack wisdom.

John Williams (pp. 112-113) states:

It is certainly difficult to say precisely what is the distinction in Paul's mind between "utterance of knowledge" and "utterance of wisdom". This much is clear, however, from the context: he regards both as spiritual gifts, supernaturally endued. . . .

Some believe Paul is talking about the gift of apprehension and application of scriptural truth in any age. Others understand him as referring to that unmediated, spiritual understanding and



application of truth which was essential to the growth and development of the primitive Church in its precanonical era. This latter suggestion, which seems more in keeping with the larger context, sees Paul's reference here to gifted people in the early churches who spoke out on the basis of their special, spiritual grasp of the "mind of God". In other words this gift would be akin to prophecy and might well be associated with it, though evidently distinguishable from it.

Perhaps we shall be wise to recognize both possibilities. Obviously in the apostolic churches these twin gifts might well be the media through which the divine will was communicated to believers. However, the Church in every age is in need of gifted, wise believers who have a clear understanding of scriptural truths in actual, given situations. In both cases the wisdom must be shared or "uttered" to be of help and blessing. If a caveat is needed it would be that we must guard against the dangerous suggestion that any "utterance" wisdom or knowledge should be regarded as comparable to Scripture or that it is as valid as are the scriptures. Nothing compares with the inspired Word, "the faith. . . once for all delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3 RV).

#### VIII. Purpose of Spiritual Gifts

J. Oswald Sanders (pp. 110-111) writes:

They are not bestowed for the self-aggrandizement of the recipient, or as an evidence of a special endowment of the Spirit, but for the profit and edification of the Body of Christ. The possessor is only the instrument and not the receiver of the glory. "Each of us is just a pen in the hand of God," said Richard Baxter, and what honour is there in a pen?" The gift is for ministry to others, "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ".

The nature of the gifts indicates that they are for the most part gifts of service. Not one of them directly concerns character. They are God's equipment and enabling for effective service.

In the early days of the Church they served another purpose. They were necessary as the divine credentials of the apostles in their testimony to the resurrection of Christ. Who would believe the word of these "ignorant and unlearned men" with their fantastic story of a man who rose from the dead? They were not left unaccredited, however, for "God bore them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit."

This co-witness of God afforded clear evidence to the unbelieving Jews that the promised Holy Spirit had indeed been

given and was exercising His divine prerogatives. Once the creditability of the witness of the apostles had been established, and the canon of the New Testament had been completed, there was not the same necessity for the exercise of the miraculous gifts which gradually became less prominent.

Billy Graham (pp. 135-136) states:

Paul says that the purpose of these spiritual gifts is, "for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ" (Eph. 4:12). In other words, God has given each of us a task to do, and supernatural gifts to equip us for it. If we fail to perform this task we face censure at the "judgment seat of Christ." . . .

In 1 Corinthians 12:7, the apostle Paul says the gifts are given "for the common good" so we are not to use them selfishly. Instead, we are to use them to help each other. As Paul says in Philippians 2:3, 4, "Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others."

God has also designed the gifts to help "unite" the body of Christ. Just before listing the gifts in Ephesians 4:3-7, the apostle Paul urges us to be "diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all. But to each one of us grace [a special gift] was given according to the measure of Christ's gift." Notice how Paul emphasizes unity by repeating the word "one".

Thus the gifts of the Spirit should never divide the body of Christ; they should unify it.

Charles V. Carter (pp. 283-285) states:

The purpose of the spiritual gifts in relation to the maturity of the church is treated in a twofold manner by Paul (vv. 12-16). The gifts are declared first as intended for the perfecting of the saints unto the work of ministering, or service for Christ. In the second place, they are designed for the building up of the body of Christ. . . .

When the gifts of the ministry (v. 11) exist as ends in themselves they will defeat their own purpose and the purpose of Christ for them. When they exist for the perfecting of the saints that the church may become an equipped and active agency in the work of Christ they will serve their God-intended purpose.

The gifts of the Spirit extend beyond the professional ministry, such as preaching, praying, pastoral counseling, and teaching, important as these are. Paul indicates that every function of the church requires the gift of the Spirit for

successful operation. The craftsman who plans and constructs the church building, the church secretary, the church custodian, and the administrator all require the gift of the Spirit and are honored alike by God in their service. Barclay notes that we have erected a false spiritual aristocracy which must be abandoned in the light of the fact that "ministry simply means service." Thus any gift that we possess is a gift of the Spirit and should be placed on the altar of service to God.

Thomas R. Edgar (pp. 19-21) writes:

Why did God give gifts to man? Anyone who understands God's ways will know that God has a purpose for giving spiritual gifts to men. They are not given for recreation or to exalt the one who possesses them. Notice the following:

The gifts mentioned in Mark 16:17-20 are signs which accompany preaching of the gospel to the world.

Romans 12:6-8 discusses the gifts as ministries to be exercised.

First Corinthians 12-14 provides much information regarding the purpose for gifts.

Ephesians 4:11ff. states that certain men with their God-given gifts are to minister to the Church in order to build it to maturity.

First Peter 4:10 specifically states that as "each hath received a gift, minister it among yourselves [EIS HEAUTOUS] as good stewards." It is clear in the context that this is a specific plea to use the gift to minister to others. To be good stewards of the gift, it must be used to help others, as God intended when He gave it to each one.

The book of Acts and the entire New Testament describe spiritual gifts as being used to minister to others. There is no instance stated where gifts were used for personal benefit.

The nature of the gifts themselves indicates that they are given to enable the recipient to minister to others. For example, the gift of teacher is to teach others, and the gift of helps is to help others.

### A Summary

Spiritual gifts are given by God in order to enable the one who has the gift to minister to others. Some gifts are oriented toward ministry to unbelievers; other gifts are oriented toward ministry to believers. There is no indication in the Bible that God gave any gift for the personal benefit of the one who possesses the gift.

John Williams(pp. 94-96) says:

The stated and fundamental purpose of the gifts is for the spiritual edification of the Church, and only if this is carefully kept in view will Christians be preserved from extravagances. When the gifts are regarded as ends in themselves, or as rewards for spirituality, their tendency is divisive rather than cohesive. There are, in the main, two schools of thought concerning the charismata. One suggests that all these gifts were bestowed on the Church as a permanent endowment, and that their disappearance is due largely to a lack of faith and desire on the part of succeeding generations of Christians. This view, on the one hand, tends to play down the sovereign role of the Holy Spirit in the distribution and maintenance of the gifts; and on the other hand overstates the responsibility of Christians to achieve them.

The other school of thought distinguishes between the temporary, revelatory, sign gifts of apostolic times and the permanent gifts necessary for the continuing ministry of the Church through the ages. This view stresses that the miraculous gifts were particularly related to the apostolic period, prior to the completion of the New Testament canon, and had special evidential value for Israel in pointing to the Messiahship of Jesus. On this view, the Spirit's sovereign purpose, far from being frustrated by a noncooperative church, has been, and is being, fully achieved, and by the various means He prescribed. Professor Bromiley strikes a happy balance: "It is a safe conclusion, however, that though we may not command or claim the charismata, or any specific charisma, the Spirit's donation may still be looked for as and when He Himself decides."

Whatever our feelings about these matters, we shall be wise always to keep in mind the risen Lord's purpose in the distribution of gifts: "And He gave some to be apostles, and some, prophets . . . and some, pastors and teachers; for [pros] the perfecting of the saints, unto [eis] the work of the ministry unto [eis] the . . . building up of the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:11-12 RV). His intention evidently was that one thing leads to another! In other words gifts are means, not ends.

Given as means rather than ends, these gifts were to stimulate other members of the Body to become involved, so that they in turn will stimulate others. It envisages a sort of chain reaction so that in each succeeding generation the Lord's work is carried forward and His Church is built up. It's a bit like the domino effect in reverse. Paul writes: "[For] to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal [for the common good, RSV]." (1 Corinthians 12:7 RSV) He means that these gifts are not just for personal benefit, but for general blessing. All the members of the body are to be involved. For too long the majority have been sitting watching, waiting for the minority to get on with the job. The time has arrived when, as that delightful old children's hymn suggests, we each must use our gift: "You in your small corner, and I in mine."

IX. Distinction between Ordinary Spiritual Gifts and Miraculous Sign Gifts

A number of writers on this subject distinguish between spiritual gifts that are ordinary, general, and non-miraculous, and those that are extraordinary, special, miraculous, and supernatural. The latter category they refer to as "sign gifts".

Their point of departure scripturally appears to be the textually suspect ending of Mark, particularly 16:15-20, and I Corinthians 12:8-10, 28-30.

Mark 16:15-20 -- "He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well.' "

I Corinthians 12:8-10, 28-30 -- "To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues."

Michael Green (p. 195) writes:

The charismatic gifts are nothing other than the gifts of God's love. They begin with our redemption. They include the heightening of qualities already present or latent within us, such as gifts of administration, leadership, teaching, marriage, or celibacy. These natural qualities can be charismata if, and so long as, they are dedicated to the service of the Lord and the building up of his people in the strength that he gives. If they are used selfishly they can be disastrous. The same is true of the gifts which are beyond normal ken, such as prophecy, tongues, discernment of spirits, healing and exorcism. They too can be a blessing or a curse, depending on whether they are used for the common good or the gratification of the member who possesses them.

Thomas R. Edgar (p. 278) includes "miracle-working, "healing" and "tongues-speaking" as "sign gifts".

John Williams (p. 122) calls them "miraculous manifestations" and "miracle gifts"; and includes in this category healings (p. 123), workings of miracles (p. 126), discerning of spirits (p. 126), and tongues (pp. 207, 225).

Billy Graham (p. 157) says: "By 'sign gifts' I mean those gifts of the Holy Spirit which are often obvious outward indications or signs of the working of God. The sign gifts include healings, miracles, and tongues."

Dennis and Rita Bennett include in the "sign gifts" the gift of tongues (pp. 57, 85), the gifts of healing (pp. 112, 123), and the gift of miracles (p. 127).

The three spiritual gifts that show up on practically all lists are miracles, healing, and tongues. Some lists include prophecy, discernment of spirits, and exorcism.

X. The Contemporary Relevance of Spiritual Gifts

A. The Contemporary Relevance of the Spirit's Ministries in General

The ministries of the Holy Spirit are manifold and varied. They include creation, revelation, inspiration of Scripture, restraint of sin, power to cast out demons, the conception of Christ's human nature, conviction of sin, regeneration, baptism into union with Christ's Body, indwelling, sealing, distribution of spiritual gifts, filling, sanctification, production of Christian character, leading, assurance of the new birth, intercession in prayer, spiritual blessing and fruitfulness, and fullness.

Some of these varied ministries clearly continue today. Some clearly do not. And some are in dispute among evangelical Christians, particularly with regard to their present continuance or discontinuance.

All of the major ministries of the Holy Spirit related to the application of salvation -- regeneration, indwelling, filling, and fullness -- continue today. Some of His other ministries also continue today, including restraint of sin, conviction of sin, baptism into union with Christ's Body, sealing, distribution of spiritual gifts, sanctification, production of Christian character, leading, assurance of the new birth, intercession in prayer, and spiritual blessing and fruitfulness.

Some ministries of the Spirit -- creation in the *ex nihilo* and immediate senses, inspiration of Scripture, and the conception of Christ's human nature -- do not continue today. Of course, creation in the mediate sense -- God's creative activity employing previously-existing material and secondary causes -- continues today.

Among those ministries that are in dispute among evangelical Christians are continuing special revelation, especially in the form of the gift of prophecy (in the sense of revelatory prediction of future events), the gift of miracles, the gift of healing, the gift of speaking in tongues, the gift of interpretation of tongues, and the gift of power to cast out demons. Some Christians believe that these supernatural sign gifts have ceased; other Christians believe that they continue in the Church today. This is the main issue between charismatic and non-charismatic Christians.

B. The Contemporary Relevance of the Supernatural Sign Gifts

1. The gift of prophet/prophecy

Richard B. Gaffin, Jr., in *Perspectives on Pentecost* (pp. 58-72), states:

I want to make clear that our discussion here is controlled by the following assumptions: (1) what Paul says in Corinthians 12-14 applies to prophecy as a whole in all its aspects, as it functioned at Corinth; (2) granting relative

differences in the prominence of a particular aspect from place to place, as a whole prophecy at Corinth was not different but the same phenomenon, unified in its various aspects, present in other congregations mentioned elsewhere in Paul, and in Acts and Revelation. This means that, while the discussion of I Corinthians 12-14 is certainly the most extensive, we must give passages elsewhere their due in reconstructing the role of the Corinthians prophets (as typical of prophets in other congregations), rather than concluding, when these other passages clash with a picture derived exclusively from I Corinthians, that they present a different "kind" or diverging conception of prophecy.

To balance our discussion as a whole, we should recognize first of all that according to the New Testament all believers are prophets; the whole church is a congregation of prophets. . . .

Apparently without exception, however, the New Testament vocabulary for prophecy is not used in this sense. There, applied to the church, it refers to a gift or function having two basic characteristics: (1) it is a gift given only to some, not all, in the church; it is a gift present on the principle of differential distribution; (2) it is a revelatory gift; that is, it brings to the church the words of God in the primary and original sense. Prophecy is not, at least primarily or as one of its necessary marks, the interpretation of an already existing inspired text or oral tradition but is itself the inspired, nonderivative word of God. . . .

This basic profile of New Testament prophecy can be substantiated and various objections to it discussed by examining relevant passages more carefully.

1. In I Corinthians 12-14 prophecy is obviously a gift given only to some in the church (12:10, 28, 29, as well as other indications throughout the passage). That it is also the case in other situations follows from Romans 12:6 and Ephesians 4:11.  
Also, its revelatory character is apparent.
  - (a) True, Paul does associate prophecy with all intelligible speech (14:19; cf. the connection with teaching, v.6), but the element of revelation is plainly at its core.
  - (b) Another indication of the revelatory character of prophecy is found in the association of prophecy with knowing "all mysteries" (13:2). . . .
2. What Paul says in Ephesians 3:3-5 reinforces and focuses our conclusions from I Corinthians 12-14. My assumption here, . . . is that verse 5 (cf. 2:20) has in view the New Testament prophets as a group distinct from both the apostles and Old Testament prophets.
3. In Romans 12:6, Paul writes: "If [one's gift is] prophecy, [let him prophesy] according to the proportion of his faith." . . .  
The thought . . . would be that prophecy is to conform to the truth already revealed to the church. . . .



4. The Book of Acts, particularly the case of Agabus, is instructive concerning the origin and character of prophetic revelation.
  - a. In 21:10, 11, Agabus, identified as a prophet, comes down from Judea to Caesarea, takes Paul's belt, binds his own hands and feet with it and says, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'In this way the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and hand him over to the Gentiles.' "
  - In the plainest possible terms, here the words of Agabus in his identity as a prophet are the words of the Holy Spirit himself, a quote of what the Spirit says. Not only what the prophet receives but what he says and communicates to others is inspired revelation. . . .
  - b. A couple of other passages on the activity of prophets in Acts fill out and reinforce the picture already sketched. According to 13:1, 2, while the "prophets and teachers" at Antioch were serving the Lord and fasting, "the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them' " . . .
5. The Book of Revelation itself is a massive example of Christian prophecy. While the author (John) does not call himself a prophet, that is the plain implication. The whole is repeatedly and explicitly termed a prophecy, both at the beginning and the end . . .
6. In I Corinthians 12:10 Paul associates with prophecy the gift of discerning or distinguishing between spirits, apparently in parallel to the gift of interpretation connected with tongues.
7. Conclusion: This survey of prophecy in the New Testament has not been exhaustive, either in examining all the relevant passages or in discussing those passages examined. My intention has been to sketch a picture . . . That picture is as follows: New Testament prophecy is revelatory. The issue is not whether or to what extent prophetic revelations are "new" in the sense of disclosing content not previously revealed (any more than, say, a given passage in Luke is not fully revelatory because a parallel is found in [presumably earlier] Mark). Rather, the issue is the inspired, Spirit-worked origin of prophecy and its correlative authority. The words of the prophet are the words of God and are to be received and responded to as such.

In general, the prophets are associated with the apostles in disclosing to the church the "unsearchable riches" and "manifold wisdom" of the mystery revealed in Christ (Eph. 3:5, 8-10). . . . Prophetic revelation of the mystery involves both "forthtelling" (e.g., Acts 15:32; I Cor. 14:3) and "foretelling" (e.g., Acts 11:28; 21:10). This is no warrant for finding in these two broad functions a distinction between two essentially different kinds of prophecy, whereby the former ("forthtelling") lacks the fully inspired origin and authority of the Word of God. Leaving room for differences in the actual outworking and relative prominence of these two functions from place to place, the material in Acts and Paul provides a picture of a single, unified

prophetic activity present in the various church centers (Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth, Thessalonica, and elsewhere) mentioned in the New Testament, and that picture is one of marked continuity with both the apostles and the Old Testament prophets.

Our conclusion can be summarized in terms of the fundamental difference between preaching (teaching) and prophecy. Non-prophetic proclamation is based on a text; it receives its legitimation as (proper) interpretation of the inscripturated Word of God or, as the case may be at the time the New Testament was being written, authoritative, apostolic oral tradition. Prophetic proclamation, in contrast, is Spirit-worked speech of such a quality that its authority resides just in that inspired origin. A basic difference between prophecy and preaching is that the prophet has no text. The prophet reveals the Word of God, the preacher expounds that Word.

On the question of cessation, Gaffin (pp. 95-102) states:

Consequently, a major conclusion in our study from Ephesians 2:20 is that the New Testament prophets, along with the apostles, are the foundation of the church. They have a foundational, that is, temporary, noncontinuing function in the church's history, and so by God's design pass out of its life, along with the apostles. The following observations bear on this conclusion and efforts to resist it:

1. As a general guideline for interpretation, the decisive, controlling significance of Ephesians 2:20 (in its context) needs to be appreciated . . . . Ephesians 2:20 makes a generalization that covers all the other New Testament statements on prophecy. [Note: Ephesians 2:19-20 states: "Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone."]

2. A frequent objection to our conclusion that prophecy, along with the apostles, has been withdrawn from the church takes the form of a counterposition. This is the view that prophets as bearers of foundational revelation have indeed been taken from the church, but that in addition to and more or less parallel with this foundational function of prophecy, which has ceased, there are other functions, in view, for instance, in I Corinthians 14, which are intended to continue and are in fact present in the church today.

One response to this viewpoint must be to reemphasize what was just said about Ephesians 2:20 and its exegetical "weight"; it makes a generalization about prophecy that covers all its functions and says that they have ceased. Further, granting the fully revelatory character of prophecy . . . such a view inevitably involves a dualistic understanding of revelation. In one form or other, it distinguishes between canonical revelation for the whole church and private revelations for individual believers or groups of believers, between a collective,

inscripturated revelation of what is "necessary for salvation" and revelations that "go beyond" the Bible and bear on individual life situations, needs, and concerns.

Such an understanding of revelation is in irreconcilable conflict with what the Bible itself shows to be the covenantal, redemptive-historical character of all revelation. God does not reveal himself along two tracks, one public and one private. As long as revelation is viewed in the first place as God's Word to me as an individual and as given primarily to provide me with specific, explicit directives and answers to the particular concerns and perplexities of my individual life situation, it is fundamentally misunderstood and a sense of the inadequacy of the Bible alone as a guide for life is almost inevitable.

According to the overall witness of Scripture, at least two characteristics are basic to all revelation and control the giving of it. Very briefly, (a) revelation is covenantal. God reveals himself as the God of the covenant. He reveals himself, not to a mass of undifferentiated individuals, but to his covenant people, in order to build them up and make their number complete as one people. His revelation is always to and in the interests of the whole covenant people, although the exact bearing of any revelation may vary from individual to individual, depending on their differing life situations. (b) Revelation is redemptive-historical. Apart from the brief period before the fall, God reveals himself as the Redeemer of his covenant people and the Savior of the world. Revelation is given as a component part of God's work in history to accomplish, once for all, the salvation of his covenant people. Revelation is an integral element in the ongoing covenant history which has reached its initial consummation in the sufferings, death, and exaltation of Christ. It documents this history, particularly Christ as the fulfillment of the promises, and interprets it by drawing out the implications for the life and obedience of the redeemed covenant people. Since the history of redemption has been definitively accomplished and since after Pentecost its ongoing movement is delayed until Christ's return for the application of redemption and the ingathering of the nations to share in the salvation of the covenant, the basis and rationale for new revelations is lacking and revelation has therefore ceased. . . .

3. Closely related to the point just discussed is the relationship between prophecy and the New Testament canon. It will not do to reject this question as irrelevant, a "red herring" which confuses the issue. The foundational, apostolic era of the church is as such (foundational) an "open canon" period, that is, a period in which material for the (eventually consolidated) new covenant canon is in the process of formation. Prophecy is one of the principal revelatory word-gifts operative in this period. It is a foundational word-gift in two distinct respects: (a) in producing what is eventually recognized to be canonical (e.g., the Book of Revelation); but also, and primarily, (b) in meeting contemporary needs in the church that are bound up with and peculiar to the foundational, that is, incomplete canon situation.

. . . It is . . . important to appreciate that the church in its foundational period of the apostles and prophets did not possess a sufficient Scripture. This was especially so with reference to the momentous implications of the salvation just revealed in Christ for the church's practice and lifestyle . . . . At the time, say, Paul wrote I Corinthians his readers did not have access, for example, to all four Gospels with the rich, synoptically interacting perspectives they provide on Jesus' ministry and Christian discipleship, nor to the instructive outlook on the church's history in Acts, nor to Romans with its masterful statement of the gospel, nor to the prison epistles, or Hebrews, or Revelation. . . .

At any rate, for prophecy, correctly conceived of, to continue on into subsequent generations of the church, beyond its foundational period, would necessarily create tensions with the closed, finished character of the canon. In fact, such a continuation would exclude a completed canon in the strict sense. At the most, there would be room for a unit, complete in the sense of having its own relative integrity, but constantly supplemented by new, additional revelations, a notion, we have tried to show, that conflicts with the covenantal nature of all revelation, taught in Scripture.

Dennis and Rita Bennett, in *The Holy Spirit and You* (pp. 103-110) write:

At Ephesus, when Paul laid hands on the twelve men and they received their "Pentecost", they "spoke with tongues and prophesied" (Acts 19:6). The Scripture tells us that ever since the day of Pentecost and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, any yielded child of God may be moved by the Spirit to prophesy. Paul at Corinth, after urging them all to seek to prophesy, even refers to all those used this way as prophets: Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other (Greek -- others) judge. If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. For you may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets (I Cor. 14:29-32). . . .

We have been talking about the gift of prophecy for all members of the Body, but now we need to talk about those who have a ministry in prophecy. Just as the Apostolic Age has not ended, and the ministry of the apostle is still going on today, so there are still those with the ministry of the prophet today. Because the Old Testament prophets often spoke out against social and political abuses, and against priestcraft and the hierarchy of that day -- the "establishment"! -- an erroneous idea has sprung up that every protester and militant campaigner for social justice is a "prophet", and that "prophecy" mainly consists in denouncing human evil. As we have seen however, it isn't what a man says in the natural realm that makes him a prophet; it is the fact that he is moved by the Spirit of God to speak the words God gives him.

The real prophet will not find it necessary to announce to others that he is a prophet; he will be known by his ministry. . . . A prophet of God will naturally minister in the gift of prophecy often, and it will very likely be conjoined to the gift of knowledge -- it is often hard to distinguish between the two -- declaring God's will and God's mind.

A true prophet of God will be a mature Christian, as his ministry is listed as one of the offices to be used to bring the Church to maturity (Eph. 4:8, 11-16). . . .

The ministry of the prophet must be even more carefully judged than that of the brethren in general who prophesy in the meeting. A man may be strongly used in the prophetic office, and yet may be completely wrong from time to time. His words must never be accepted because of his ministry, but tested by the Word and the Spirit; this does not mean at all that he is a false prophet, but that he is still not perfected and therefore liable to error. "We prophesy in part" (I Cor. 13:9 KJV).

The enemy has counterfeits of all the true gifts, and there are plenty of false prophets in the world. . . .

Prophecy isn't fortune-telling! Prophecy isn't looking into a crystal ball, or reading cards or supposedly predicting the future by any other method. As we have already said in detail in a previous chapter, God strictly forbids any attempt to pry into the future -- He has always forbidden it. If men attempt to do this, they will be fed information from the enemy for his own purposes, and if they persist, it will be to their destruction. As we have seen, it is true that the Scripture shows that through the utterances of His prophets God sometimes tells what is going to happen; however, this has nothing whatsoever to do with fortune-telling; God has simply shared His intentions with His faithful children. The true prophet was not trying to get information about the present or the future, but he was having fellowship with the Lord, when God chose to share the knowledge. True prophecy is forthtelling not foretelling.

Prophecy is not "inspired preaching." Preaching, which means "proclaiming the Gospel", should indeed be inspired by the Holy Spirit, but in preaching, the intellect, training, skill, background, and education are involved and inspired by the Holy Spirit. The sermon may be written down ahead of time, or given on the spot, but it comes from the inspired intellect. Prophecy, on the other hand, means that the person is bringing the words the Lord gives directly; it is from the spirit, not the intellect. A person can bring prophetic words that he does not even understand himself. In the course of an inspired sermon, the preacher may also prophesy, or manifest the gifts of wisdom and knowledge, but they are to be distinguished from preaching.

Prophecy is not witnessing. . . .

Paul, in his first letter to the Thessalonians, says: "Don't despise prophesying. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." (I Thess. 5:20-21) Just because there is misuse of God's gifts, and the enemy has counterfeits, doesn't mean we should reject what God has for us . . . .

Jesus is Prophet, Priest, and King. We today, through Him, can also have these ministries as prophets, priests, and kings (Rev. 1:6). A prophet speaks the words of God to the people; a priest speaks to God on behalf of the people, in praise and prayer; and a king rules, taking authority by his words over the works of the enemy. In all three ministries the voice is extremely important, and gives us further insight into why the voice must be yielded at Pentecost. If we desire to bring the gifts of utterance, let us keep our lips from speaking evil, for God says of those who do: "you shall be as my mouth" (Jer. 15:19 RSV).

Expect to prophesy. Ask Jesus to edify His Body on earth through you. As you have fellowship with the Lord and with your brothers and sisters in the Lord, you may find thoughts and words of inspiration coming into your mind that you have not heard, and did not compose. If they are according to Scripture, then share them with the Church. As with interpretation, you may just receive a few words, and as you start to speak, more may come. You may see a picture in your "mind's eye", and as you start to talk about that picture, the words will come. As with tongues and interpretation, the Spirit may bring you the words in a variety of ways. Some also have seen the words as if written down, and just read them verbatim.

The gifts are manifested through God's ability, not ours. He will give the faith that is needed, if He has given you some words to speak (Rom 12:6). Don't be afraid to bring a prophecy, nor feel sensitive about the fact that the Church must evaluate it. Don't quench the Spirit. The prophet Amos asks: "The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy?" (Amos 3:8 KJV). Forget your pride, and testify to Jesus!

How shall we evaluate these two positions, one of which emphasizes cessation of the gift, and the other of which emphasizes continuance?

In I Corinthians 12-14 there appears to be two senses of prophesying:

(a) prophecy in the sense of revelatory utterances originating directly from God (including occasional predictions) for the purpose of providing supernatural evidence of the truth-claims made by the disciples of Christ, so that nonbelievers would receive and trust in Christ and His redemptive work, and believers would be convinced that God had extended His saving grace to all mankind (12:10, 28, 30; 13:1,8; 14:2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 13, 14, 18, 19, 22, 23, 26, 27, 39);

(b) prophecy in the sense of non-revelatory setting forth of various aspects of Christian doctrine or practice by means of the spiritual gift of enablement to understand and explain previously-revealed truth in an edifying manner, for the purpose of building up, encouraging, and comforting believers in their faith and life (12:10; 13:2, 8, 9; 14:1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 22, 24, 31, 39).

Richard B. Gaffin, Jr. understands prophecy in the sense of a revelatory gift which brings to the church the words of God in the primary

and original sense -- the inspired, nonderivative word of God, in which the future is sometimes predicted (although this is not the main focus of prophecy).

Dennis and Rita Bennett understand prophecy in the sense of a revelatory gift which brings to the church the words that the Lord gives directly to the believer or to the prophet -- utterances in which God sometimes tells what is going to happen (although this is not the main focus of the gift of prophecy).

Yet Gaffin holds that the gift of prophecy has ceased, and the Bennetts hold that the gift continues to the present day.

Could a partial resolution of this impasse (reflected also in many other writers on the subject) be found in the distinction made above between prophecy as revelatory utterances originating directly from God (including occasional predictions) and prophecy as non-revelatory setting forth of various aspects of Christian doctrine and practice? Could we say that prophecy in the former sense has ceased, and that prophecy in the latter sense continues today?

The author of these class notes proposes the following line of argumentation.

If prophecy as a supernatural sign gift (or simply as a supernatural gift) is understood as new revelation concerning things to come (i.e., predictive prophecy, rather than as prophetic forthtelling of divine truth previously revealed), then one of three alternatives appears to apply to each alleged instance of such prophecy:

(1) If a predictive prophecy is uttered which is in agreement with general or specific scriptural principles or truths governing belief and practice, it should be rejected as a genuine new revelation, since it is already enunciated in Scripture.

(2) If a predictive prophecy is uttered which is contrary to general or specific scriptural principles or truths governing belief and practice, it should be rejected as genuine new revelation, since it is in conflict with that which is enunciated in Scripture.

(3) If a predictive prophecy is uttered which is neither in agreement with or contrary to general or specific scriptural principles or truths governing belief and practice, two scriptural tests should be applied to it.

(a) Before a predictive prophecy can be accepted as genuine new revelation, it must either await its fulfillment or be verified by some other supernatural evidence that attests its divine origin.

Deuteronomy 18:20-22 -- "But a prophet who presumes to speak in my name anything I have not commanded him to say, or a prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, must be put to death. You may say to yourselves, 'How can we know when a message has not been spoken by the Lord?' If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the Lord does not take place or come true, that is a message the Lord has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously. Do not be afraid of him."

I Kings 13:1-5 -- "By the word of the Lord a man of God came from Judah to Bethel, as Jeroboam was standing by the altar to make an offering. He cried out against the altar by the word of the Lord: 'O altar, altar! this is what the Lord says: "A son named Josiah will be born to the house of David. On you he will sacrifice the priests of the high places who now make offerings here, and human bones will be burned on you." ' That same day the man of God gave a sign: 'This is the sign the Lord has declared: The altar will be split apart and the ashes on it will be poured out.' When King Jeroboam heard what the man of God cried out against the altar at Bethel, he stretched out his hand from the altar and said, 'Seize him!' But the hand he stretched out toward the man shriveled up, so that he could not pull it back. Also, the altar was split apart and its ashes poured out according to the sign given by the man of God by the word of the Lord."

(b) Before a predictive prophecy can be accepted as genuine new revelation, the potential tendency of the influence of the alleged prophet's teachings must be evaluated, in terms of either drawing people away from God or toward God and His will as revealed in the general or specific scriptural principles or truths governing belief and practice.

Deuteronomy 13:1-5 -- "If a prophet, or one who foretells by dreams, appears among you and announces to you a miraculous sign or wonder, and if the sign or wonder of which he has spoken takes place, and he says, 'Let us follow other gods' (gods you have not known) 'and let us worship them,' you must not listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer. The Lord your God is testing you to find out whether you love him with all your heart and with all your soul. It is the Lord your God you must follow, and him you must revere. Keep his commands and obey him; serve him and hold fast to him. That prophet or dreamer must be put to death, because he preached rebellion against the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt and redeemed you from the land of slavery; he has tried to turn you from the way the Lord your God commanded you to follow. You must purge the evil from among you."

Therefore, if a person today claims to utter predictive prophecy, and that prediction is either in agreement with or contrary to Scripture, it should be rejected as new revelation



from God. If the utterance is neither in agreement with or contrary to scripture, it should be evaluated by the prescribed scriptural tests, which include verification by fulfillment and appraisal of the tendency of the enunciator to either draw people away from or toward God and His revealed will. Since these tests require the perspective of time, no such predictive prophecy should be accepted immediately upon enunciation, or prior to its attestation as coming from God.

But suppose a person claims to be giving prophecy, not in the sense of supernatural disclosure of new truth concerning future realities (i.e., predictive truth), but in the sense of supernatural disclosure of new truth concerning present realities (i.e. non-predictive truth)? How shall such a claim be evaluated and tested?

(Lest the very concept of evaluation and testing be viewed as rationalistic, skeptical, unspiritual, and fleshly, John's exhortation in I John 4:1 should be recalled: "Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.")

At least part of the answer to this question must lie in our concept of the sufficiency of Scripture. Is Scripture sufficient to make human beings wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus? Is Scripture sufficient to equip the child of God for faith and life? Does it contain everything needful and profitable for "teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness" so that the believer may be complete, "thoroughly equipped for every good work." (II Tim. 3:16-17)?

Or do believers need some additional word from God, something more directly applicable to their immediate and peculiar circumstances, needs, desires, and problems? Do they need something further, something fresh, something new, something that promises to satisfy their craving for present relevance and novelty?

Believers are urged to read and study the written Word of God because the entrance of that Word brings light. That Word is called a lamp to their feet and a light to their path. Believers pray that the Spirit will open their eyes and illumine their minds in order that they may behold wondrous things out of His law. And some believers who have studied the written Word of God for many years, and have found that it is an inexhaustible treasure of heavenly wisdom and knowledge, still pray that more light will break forth from that Word. But is it enough? Or do they really need something further?

Since claims to individual, private revelations tend to be subjective, experience-oriented, and susceptible to ambiguity of

interpretation; and since they contain indefinite, ambiguous statements or predictions virtually impossible to verify; the question must be asked: should such "prophecies" be invested with belief or acted upon by anyone (including the alleged prophets)? The above considerations would lead us to answer this question in the negative!

## 2. The gift of miracles/healing

### a. A review of the meaning of this gift

Dennis and Rita Bennett (pp. 124-125, 112) write:

Miracles are events that seem to override or contradict the so-called laws of nature. There aren't any "laws of nature", actually. The concept of physical "laws" has been discarded by the modern physicist, who defines natural events in terms of probability." For example, the old Newtonian physics said:

"There is a law that, neglecting air resistance, all objects fall with an acceleration of thirty-two feet per second, per second." Modern science would state it: "It is probable that all falling objects will accelerate at the rate of thirty-two feet per second, per second. This seems to be the way it happens!" And this comes very close to what the Christian says: "The so-called laws of nature codified by human science are simply God's usual way of doing things." He keeps things regular for our convenience. How awkward it would be to live in a universe where nothing happened twice the same way! It would be an Alice-in-Wonderland world, indeed, and very confusing! God, however, for His believing people, will change His accustomed ways of doing things, to meet their needs, and thus, too, show them that He is sovereign, and has all power. The great miracles of the Old and New Testaments were done to meet the needs of people, and to show them that God is real, and in full control of the situation!

It is not always easy to draw a sharp line between the gift of miracles and the gifts of healing. It would seem that "healing" should include those acts of power that involve the curing of a condition in the living human body (or animal body, for healing also can take place in animals by prayer). Other events would come under the heading of miracles.

The gifts of healing are for the supernatural curing of injuries, handicaps, and diseases without the aid of natural means or human skills. They are manifestations of the Holy Spirit working through compassionate human channels to the person in need.

Thomas R. Edgar (pp 86, 105) states:

Although miracles and healing are listed as two separate gifts in the New Testament, they seem to overlap. Not only does an incident of healing comprise a miracle, but most of the incidents

described involve performance both of miracles in general and of healing. In fact, incidents of outright miracles exclusive of healing are rare, since most of the miracles are either healing the sick, casting out demons, or, in a few instances, raising the dead. Due to this fact, miracles and healing will be handled together. The principles and conclusions are the same for both gifts.

The gift of working miracles means that a specific individual can directly perform miracles. The gift of healing means that a specific individual can heal other people directly. The same applies to casting out demons if it is considered a gift. The individual has the ability to perform the miracle or healing instances where people are healed in answer to prayer are not instances of exercise of spiritual gifts but are God's working in answer to prayer. If believers gather and pray for a sick person and that person is healed miraculously, this is not evidence that the gift of healing exists today. This demonstrates that God answers prayer.

- b. The question of continuance or non-continuance of this gift

Dennis and Rita Bennett (pp. 127-131) write:

What did Jesus mean when He said that those who believe in Him would do "greater things"? Some think it means that there will be many more miracles due to the greater number of people who are filled with the Holy Spirit today. Others think it could also mean new miracles will be done in addition to, and even greater than, those recorded in the Bible. One thing is sure, that if Jesus meant that believers would do new miracles, they would be according to the pattern already set by the Lord, and would be according to the Scripture. There are plenty of weird events taking place these days, as men and women experiment with the occult and the psychic, that is to say with the powers of Satan, and the Christian must not be deceived by them. The Scripture tells us that the followers of the enemy will do "great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." (Matt. 24:21 KJV; Mark 13:22)

However, miracles are happening today according to the pattern of the Scriptures. In the book, *Nine O'clock in the Morning* we cited several cases in which God strikingly altered the weather in response to believing prayer. There are present-day examples of persons being transported physically in the Spirit as Philip the Evangelist was in Acts 8:39-40. David duPlessis, perhaps the best-known witness in the charismatic renewal, tells of such a miracle in his earlier ministry. He and some other men were gathered in the garden outside a friend's home, praying for another man who was lying in bed, seriously ill, about a mile away.

"As we prayed," says David, "the Lord said to me: 'You are needed at that man's bedside right away!' I snatched up my hat

and rushed 'round the house and out the front gate, but as I took one step out of the gate, my next step fell on the front steps of the house a mile away, where our sick friend was! It startled me greatly of course. I know that I was carried that mile instantly, because some fifteen minutes later the rest of the men I had been praying with came puffing down the road. They asked me: 'How did you get here so fast?' "

David needed to get there immediately so God simply provided his transportation!

In the last few years, what is perhaps the most powerful revival of New Testament Christianity the world has ever seen is taking place in Indonesia. Well-documented reports have been coming from there of miraculous events of the same nature and magnitude as in the Bible. Thousands have been miraculously fed on provisions for a few hundred, water has been turned to wine for the purpose of Holy Communion, groups of Christians have walked on water in order to cross rivers to proclaim the good news of Christ, to say nothing of thousands healed, and many even raised from the dead. One might dismiss these reports as fanciful, except they are confirmed by reliable witnesses, and often by Christians who did not previously believe that such New Testament miracles could or would take place today. Perhaps the strongest indirect evidence of the truth of these signs, is that over two and one-half million Moslems have accepted Christ, as well as thousands of Communists. The Moslem press recently admitted to the conversion of two million Mohammedans to the Christian faith! One of the big reasons undoubtedly is that they are seeing the power of God manifested, not only in the miracle of changed lives, but in the literal miracles of the Bible. Why should such amazing events be taking place? It is because people in Indonesia have never been told that certain parts of the Bible are "not for today"; therefore they are putting it into practice in simple faith! It works! God is alive!

God takes real chances when He shares His supernatural works with His people. He would no doubt work more miracles among His people but knows that unless we are spiritually prepared it may be harmful to us. We heard the true story of an evangelist who had been mightily used of God, until one evening the power and glory of God lifted this person several feet off the ground, in full view of the congregation! The experience was so impressive, that from that night on, that particular servant of God could talk only of how some day Christians would be carried from place to place in the Spirit all over the world to proclaim the Gospel! It became that evangelist's one theme, to the serious hindrance of preaching the Gospel, and a good ministry was rendered almost useless.

It is worthwhile to stop and analyze this particular example. What was the purpose of this miracle? We might say at once: "Oh, it was to prove to the onlookers that what the evangelist was saying was true!" No, that won't quite do; because, you see, Satan can also lift people off the ground in the phenomenon called "levitation". Among those who dabble in the occult today, some are experimenting with this very thing, trying to learn how to

float off the ground, or how to lift heavy objects by the aid of "spiritual" powers. So-called table tipping, a familiar party-game variety of spiritism, is a form of levitation. The fact that someone is lifted off the ground in no way proves him to be of God, any more than the fact that he might heal the sick would prove him to be of God. . . .

Many times God's miracles are done in such a supernaturally natural way that you may miss them if you are not on the alert! Look with expectancy for God's miracles to be manifested in you and through your life. Pray that God's power will be manifested also through the rest of the body of Christ. Expect a miracle, and keep your eyes on Jesus.

On pages 119-123, the Bennetts state:

We know from the Scripture that God wants His people to be whole in spirit, soul, and body. As wonderful as physical healing is, we still know that our life on this planet, as we know it, is but a drop in the ocean of eternity. The most important healing is, of course, the healing of soul and spirit, for this has eternal value. Many times, however, when the inner man is touched by God in salvation, there is a chain reaction in which God's wholeness touches the soul and body and with health. . . .

Wherever the Holy spirit moves, there will be healing. God is not glorified in the sickness of His people, as is sometimes erroneously taught, but in their healing. When Paul tells us that he "glories in his infirmities" (which does not necessarily mean physical weakness or sickness) he means that his weakness is an occasion to show God's strength. Men are led to Jesus through seeing His healing today just as they were in New Testament days. Physical healing of the unbeliever should bring him to Jesus as his Savior. Because through the years, and still today, so many Christian churches have failed to proclaim the truth that Jesus still heals today, false cults have sprung up around an unbiblical kind of healing that does not glorify Jesus. Someone has called these groups the "unpaid bills of the Church"!

On the other hand, many churches of all denominations who are moving in the charismatic dimension are seeing more and more healing. Blind eyes are opened; cataracts dissolved (yes, and even empty eye sockets filled!); deaf ears are made to hear; tumors disappear; broken bones are instantly mended; damaged hearts restored; multiple sclerosis, tuberculosis, cancer, paralysis, arthritis, and all the ills the flesh is heir to can be and are being healed by the touch of the Master's Hand. Some of these healings have been instantaneous, some progressive, some partial. In situations where we have desired to see healing, and we have not seen it, the fault is not with God, but with man. We are quick to say: "God didn't do it. I guess He isn't ready to heal me." Yet the Word of God says that He is, and right now.

People say: "I'd believe in healing if I saw a case where the doctor took an x-ray, prayer was said, then a second x-ray was taken and healing proved!" There are many such cases on record,

where the healing is completely proven by medical evidence, with all the x-rays, tests, etc., on file. Alas, those who say they demand such evidence never seem to go and look at it! Jesus said: "If they believe not Moses and the Prophets (who certainly bore witness to God's healing), neither will they believe, though one rose from the dead." (Luke 16 :31)

The best way to learn about healing is to begin to pray for the sick. Ask God to use you in this way, then step out in faith. Some know when they are to pray for the sick by an inner witness; others may feel a warmth in their hands; still others may have overwhelming compassion. We should not depend only on these outward signs, however, but if they confirm that inner knowing in your spirit, you have double witness to claim God's healing, especially if circumstances make it possible for you to pray for the needy one. When healing takes place, be sure to give God the glory, and lead the healed one to Jesus if he or she hasn't already met Him. As you continue to look to our Lord Jesus and stay in loving fellowship with Him, the signs will follow.

Charles C. Ryrie (pp. 87-88) asks: "In what light is one to regard the question of healing today?" He answers as follows:

1. As has been stated, God can and does heal apart from the exercise of the gift of healing. He does answer prayer, and He answers it in regard to physical problems; but such answers to prayer are not the exercise of the gift of healing.
2. It is obviously not the will of God to heal everybody. For example, it was not God's will to heal Paul of his thorn in the flesh (II Cor. 12:8-9).
3. Miracles and healing must not be equated with supernaturalism in general. It is a favorite pressure approach of faith healers to say that if you believe in the supernatural power of God, then you must also believe in His power to heal in the case at hand. This is simply not true, for it is a non-sequitur. God does not have to use His supernatural power to prove that He possesses it. Furthermore, any gift given once has been given to the whole church.
4. To disregard human means in the matter of healing and simply pray for a miraculous cure is like praying for a harvest and then sitting in a rocking chair without planting or cultivating. God more often than not uses human means in the accomplishing of His purposes. This is true in matters of health too.
5. Those who claim that the gift of healing is exercised today have to admit that the gift is limited in its effectiveness, for they do not claim to heal decayed teeth or suddenly mend broken bones.
6. Reports of miraculous healings (within the limitations already stated) may be true (but this is not necessarily related to the gift), may be false, may be the cure of something that was psychosomatic.

Naturally all of these six considerations do not apply to every case, but they are germane to the whole question of healing today.

Thomas R. Edgar (pp. 103-107) writes:

To sum up, there is no explicit statement in the New Testament that gifts of healings and miracles were performed by members of the local church. If someone insists that the Corinthian church actually performed all of the spiritual gifts mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12, then there is still no proof that any other church performed such ministries. In other words, there is no evidence that miracle-working and healing were common in the first-century church. They were not common but were mainly performed by apostles.

The Epistles definitely state that miracles (including healing) were for the confirmation of the gospel message as it was proclaimed in new areas. Romans 15:19 is especially clear. Another very strong passage is Hebrew 2:3-4, which apparently restricts the miracles to eyewitnesses of the Lord and implies that the miracles were past as far as the Hebrews were concerned. Such a conclusion coincides with the evidence of the book of Acts. Very few cases of miracles or healing were private. The case of Eutychus, which was unusual, is the only case of a miracle connected with a meeting. The miracles in Acts were performed for and before the multitudes, did not depend on the recipient's faith, never failed, and were performed almost *en masse*. This fits perfectly with the opinion that the miracles (sign gifts) were to confirm the gospel to unbelievers. They were not primarily for the benefit of the faithful. They were not evidence of someone's faith. They were not practiced in a religious meeting. There is little similarity with the modern-day healing campaigns or with modern claims to healing. The claims of modern-day proponents of healing and miracles do not agree with the practice of the early Church, nor with the purpose, nor with the results.

There are other indications that such gifts were not exercised for the benefit of the local church. James 5:14-15 implies either that these gifts had ceased or that they were not for the church, since it is assumed that the believer has no "healer" to appeal to for healing. Paul writes to Timothy regarding Timothy's physical condition (1 Timothy 5:23) and yet does not tell Timothy to look for a healer. It is impossible to reconcile James 5:14-15 with the claims of present-day healers. In contrast to the lack of exhortation to use or to expect miracles, the Epistles abound in exhortations to holiness, and to minister, teach, pray, etc. For example, Timothy was not instructed to perform miracles but to read, preach, and exhort in sound doctrine. Miraculous sign gifts are not even mentioned in Romans 12:6-8, Ephesians 4:11, and 1 Peter 4:10-11, where gifts are discussed and where local church members are exhorted to use their gifts.

In the book of Acts only Paul, Peter, the apostles, Stephen, Philip, and possibly Barnabas perform miracles or healing. All of these men were closely identified with Jerusalem at the beginning of the Church. This agrees with the Epistles, particularly the statement in Hebrews 2:3-4 that the Lord confirmed by miracles the testimony of those who heard and saw the Lord. The evidence of Acts refers mainly to actual historical incidents where miracles were performed, and the Epistles give evidence more in the realm of teaching. However, the facts are consistent in both cases.

There is no evidence that anyone today is performing miracles or healings as the New Testament describes them. Very few people claim to perform the miracle directly, and those who profess to do so often fail. The Holy Spirit never fails. None of the claims are of the magnitude or quality of those in the New Testament. Few people have alleged to perform such miracles in public, and that on bystanders. The early incidents concerned multitudes of healings without any failures. Today there are mostly failures. One failure is sufficient ground for doubting that the gift is from the Holy Spirit. There is not enough correspondence between the Biblical descriptions and today's so-called miracles and healings to allow any credence to the allegation that they are the spiritual gifts of the New Testament.

Not only do today's claims fail to live up to the New Testament, but this has been true throughout church history. It is abundantly clear that no one in the history of the Church since apostolic times has performed miracles and healing as described in the early part of the book of Acts. The ability was restricted even at the beginning. The purported instances in church history are few and not validated. The proposed cases are so rare that the incidents are regarded as phenomenal. The rarity of claims is in itself evidence that God is not giving this gift to the church at large. How else can we explain the scarcity of claims and total lack of real evidence for such gifts since the first century?

There is no evidence from any source to demonstrate that sign gifts from the Holy Spirit, such as working of miracles and gifts of healings, are present today. The Biblical evidence indicates that the sign gifts were given to confirm the gospel message of eyewitnesses of the Lord to a world where the gospel was unknown. James 5:14-15 shows that the early Church was instructed to react to sickness in much the same way as the noncharismatic Bible-believing churches do today. The implication is that healers and miracle-workers were not available. Miraculous answers to prayer by God are not proof that individuals have the gift of miracles or healing. In addition, since miraculous experiences may not be from God (Matthew 7:22-23), all experiences must be verified by Scripture. Certainly, until adequate Biblical support for today's claims is presented, there is no reason to give any credence to the present claims to exercise these gifts.

If we are to follow the example of the first-century church, as so many propose today, then we should refer to the church



rather than to the apostles and eyewitnesses of the Lord. The early churches seem to have been much like the average Bible-believing church today. They had problems much as we do today, including adultery, theft, lack of love, factions, etc. Some were weak doctrinally. The Corinthian church was saturated with problems. There is no basis for the belief that healers and other miracle-workers were in the local churches in the New Testament. There is no evidence, as is so often naively assumed, that the New Testament churches were "turning the world upside down." This is said regarding the Apostle Paul. Only a few churches were commended for outreach, and this mainly by report rather than by conscious "evangelistic outreach". This is not to criticize those churches, but it is to keep us from following a church which exists only in someone's imagination. Revelation 2 and 3 give us a realistic evaluation of the first-century church. Of the seven churches in this passage, only two are "spiritual", and they are not characterized by some miraculous powers. The five remaining churches have serious spiritual problems.

Taking into consideration these views of the Bennetts, Ryrie, and Edgar, at least four points should be made:

First, the evidence for continuance of these gifts is mainly experiential, and that mostly anecdotal, via second- or third-hand reports. The difficulty, of course, is how to interpret experience, even one's own.

Second, an emphasis on experience as the source of Christian doctrine, or on the experiential approach to Scripture, raises serious questions as to the validity and reliability of the outcomes. To say the least, the results are suspect, as far as sound theological methodology is concerned!

Third, it should be noted that many so-called miracles/healings are claimed by adherents of world religions other than Christianity, by leaders of cults, and by practitioners of the occult arts. In fact, occult practitioners regularly duplicate many of the "miracles/healings" of those who in Christianity claim to have the gifts of miracles/healing. If those who stress continuance of these gifts invoke the category of "counterfeits", the question may be asked: "Which signs are the counterfeits?"

Fourth, it should frankly be recognized that other explanations for these phenomena of "miracles/healings" are possible, including psychosomatic effects, Satanic or demonic powers, and simple fraud. In fact, the history of occult and psychic phenomena is characterized by fraud to such an extent that it should be one of the first possibilities of explanation considered for any claim of supernormal psychic or occult phenomena. The same possibility must be considered for any claim of miracle or healing by one who says he or she has the sign gift of miracles or healings.

3. The gift of tongues
  - a. Definition of the Issue

In Thomas R. Edgar's *Miraculous Gifts Are They For Today?* (pp. 108-110) we read the following:

The fact that the present-day charismatic stress is often referred to as the "tongues movement" demonstrates the centrality of the "speaking in tongues" to this viewpoint. Nichol, who supports the charismatic movement, states that every Pentecostal believer believes in healing and a postconversion baptism by the Holy Spirit which is demonstrated by speaking in tongues. In addition to the main Pentecostal groups, there are other groups and individuals who stress speaking in tongues. This situation is complicated by the fact that not all agree on what is involved in speaking in tongues.

Therefore, one of the main questions to be answered concerns the nature of the New Testament spiritual gift of tongues -- that is, what was the genuine gift of tongues? Then we must answer the question, "Do today's alleged tongues seem to be the same?" Other items, such as the purpose for the gift of tongues and the proper use of tongues, must also be studied in order to determine whether today's "tongues" fit the Biblical description. The primary issue is to determine if the tongues of today are genuine.

Some will wonder why this is necessary. After all, many sincere Christians have engaged in the activity known as speaking in tongues. They claim that it is the spiritual gift described in the New Testament. In addition, many theologians and preachers have given their approval to the practice of speaking in tongues. However, in addition to the normal need to examine religious practices to see if they conform to Scripture, there are certain factors which demand that a study be made. The primary factor is that there is disagreement between large sections of the church concerning the nature and practice of this gift. Although mainline Pentecostals all agree that the gift of tongues is necessary as a sign of the postconversion "baptism of the Spirit", they do not agree on the nature of the gift. Some believe that it is a heavenly language not known to man; others believe that it is miraculous ability to speak foreign languages. The other charismatics, known as neo-Pentecostals, also disagree on the nature of tongues; in addition they disagree on whether it is a "sign", disagree on the necessity to speak in tongues, and often stress the private or devotional use of tongues in contrast to the public exercise.

The charismatics are a veritable tangle of different opinions on the nature and practice of tongues-speaking. They agree only on the issue that this gift is available today. This disagreement alone is enough to require a thorough study of the gift of tongues, since the charismatic proponents have never come

to unanimous agreement on tongues. To further complicate the situation, large segments of orthodox Christians do not believe that this gift has been present since the apostolic age. This viewpoint includes theologians and Christians familiar with the Bible. Although many try to equate such a view with a few diehards who should be ignored, this opinion has been the position of orthodox Christians since the first century. The opinion that tongues are given today by the Holy Spirit is a modern view contrary to the accepted opinion of Christians for 1800 years. This orthodox opinion cannot be dismissed lightly. The "new" opinion of the charismatics needs to be Biblically verified.

One of the issues that Edgar raises concerns the nature of the gift. Is tongues the gift of rational, meaningful languages foreign to the speaker but not foreign to all hearers, or the act of producing irrational, meaningless ecstatic utterances foreign to speaker and hearers alike?

Before noting what some writers have said in response to this and other relevant questions, and before looking at a series of observations and conclusions, a reading of Boyce V. Blackwelder's translation of and brief notes on I Corinthians 12-14 would appear to be warranted, especially since these chapters constitute the classic passage on the gift.

b. A Translation of I Corinthians 12-14. Understanding Glossals as "Languages"

(Translation by Boyce V. Blackwelder; quoted in *The Person and Ministry of the Holy Spirit* by Charles V. Carter (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1974), pp. 209-215)

Chapter 12

- 1 Now concerning spiritual manifestations, brothers, I want you to be adequately informed.
- 2 You recall that when you were pagans you used to be swept away whenever the impulse happened to seize you, to idols that could impart no knowledge.
- 3 Let me give you the criteria for testing spiritual expression: No one speaking under the influence of the Spirit of God declares "Jesus be cursed!" And no one is able to say "Jesus is Lord!" except by the influence of the Holy Spirit.
- 4 There are varieties of gifts, but they are from the same Spirit.
- 5 And there are varieties of ministries, but it is the same Lord (who enables us to serve).
- 6 And there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who energizes every person.
- 7 To each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit with a view to the common good.

- 8 To one is given, by the Spirit, discourse characterized by wisdom. To another, discourse characterized by knowledge according to the same Spirit.
- 9 To another, (extraordinary) faith by the same Spirit. To another, gifts to heal different kinds of diseases by the one Spirit.
- 10 And to another, the working of miracles. And to another prophecy. And to another, the ability to discriminate between true and false spirits. To another, various languages. And to another, interpretation of languages.
- 11 But all these are imparted by the one and same Spirit, who distributes them to each individual exactly as He chooses.
- 12 For just as the (natural) body is one and has many members, and the members, though many, constitute one body, so it is with Christ (in whom all believers are one).
- 13 indeed, by means of one Spirit all of us -- whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free men -- were baptized into one body, and all were given to drink of one Spirit.
- 14 So, the body does not consist of one member but of many.
- 15 If the foot were to say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not part of the body," it would not cease being part of the body.
- 16 If the ear were to say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not part of the body," it would not cease being part of the body.
- 17 If the entire body were an eye, how could anyone hear? If the entire body were an ear, how could anyone smell?
- 18 But the fact is, God has placed the members -- every one of them -- in the body just as he wished.
- 19 If the whole were just one part, how could there be a body?
- 20 Actually there are many members, but there is only one body.
- 21 The eye cannot say to the hand, "I do not need you;" nor can the head say to the feet, "I do not need you."
- 22 On the contrary, the members of the body which seem to be weaker are certainly necessary,
- 23 and those parts which we regard as less honorable are the ones which we surround with more abundant honor. And the least presentable parts are treated with special consideration,
- 24 which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has formed the body in such a way that special dignity has been given to the (seemingly) inferior parts,
- 25 in order that there may not be any discord in the body, but that the members should exercise mutual concern for one another.
- 26 So if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.
- 27 Now you -- the congregation -- are a body in relation to Christ, and each member has his function to perform.
- 28 And God has placed in the church first, apostles; second, prophets; third, teachers; next, miraculous powers; then gifts of cures, abilities for rendering assistance, capacities for leadership, facility in various languages.
- 29 All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not workers of miracles, are they?
- 30 All do not have gifts of cures, do they? All do not speak in foreign languages, do they? All do not interpret, do they?<sup>1</sup>

- 31 Earnestly desire the greater gifts, and yet I want to show you a way that far surpasses them.

<sup>1</sup> Every question in verses 29 and 30 is introduced by the Greek negative particle ME, which indicates that in each instance the answer No is expected.

### Chapter 13

- If I spoke with the eloquence of men and even of angels, but lacked love, my oratory would amount to no more than unimpressive loquacity.
- 2 And is I had prophetic insight and knew all the secret truths and all the knowledge (available to man), and if I could exercise the widest range of faith -- even to move mountains -- but had not love, I would be nothing.
- 3 And if I gave away all my possessions, and actually sacrificed my body to be burned, but had not love, it would profit me nothing.
- 4 This love (to which I refer) is long-suffering and kind. It is not envious. It does not put itself on display. It is not arrogant.
- 5 It does not express itself in a rude manner. It is not selfish. It is not irritable. It keeps no record of evil (done to it).
- 6 It does not rejoice over wrong-doing but it rejoices with the truth.
- 7 It does not unnecessarily expose anyone. It is eager to believe the best (about everybody). It tries to find love in every situation. It perseveres in all circumstances.
- 8 Love will never lose its preeminence. Where there are prophetic activities, they will be terminated. Where there is eloquent speech, it will cease. Where there is knowledge, it will be transcended.
- 9 indeed, our knowledge is only partial, and our prophesying is partial.
- 10 But when that which is perfect comes, all that is partial will be superseded.
- 11 When I was a child, I used to talk like a child, I used to think like a child, I used to make plans like a child; but now I have become a man, I have given up permanently the ways of a child.
- 12 Actually, at the present we see only dim reflections as if we were looking in a mirror, but then (we shall see) face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know as fully as I myself am known.
- 13 And so faith, hope, and love remain -- these three -- but the greatest of these is love.

### Chapter 14

- Keep pursuing divine love (as for your foremost aim because It is indispensable), yet continue to be zealous for spiritual endowments, especially for the gifts of persuasive preaching.<sup>2</sup>
- 2 He who speaks in a foreign language speaks not to men but to God, for no one understand him.<sup>3</sup> But by the Spirit he declares revealed truths.<sup>4</sup>
- 3 However, the one who preaches persuasively addresses men (in a way that brings) edification and admonition and consolation.
- 4 He who speaks in a foreign language edifies himself, but the persuasive preacher builds up (the spiritual life of) the church.

- 5 Now I might wish that all of you could speak in foreign languages.<sup>5</sup> But I much prefer you to be persuasive preachers.<sup>6</sup> He who preaches persuasively renders a more useful service than he who speaks in foreign languages -- unless, of course, the latter interprets (what he says), so that the church may receive benefit.<sup>7</sup>
- 6 Now, brothers, if I come to you and speak in foreign languages, what good can I do you unless my words convey some meaning either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by clear preaching, or by teaching?
- 7 It is the same with inanimate things, such as the flute or the harp -- if they do not make a distinction in the notes, how can the melody be recognized?
- 8 Again, if a military trumpet does not sound a clear signal, who will prepare himself for battle?
- 9 So it is with you -- unless you speak clearly, how will anyone know what you say? Actually, you will be speaking into the air.
- 10 There are, we may say, many different kinds of speech in the world, and none is without meaning.
- 11 If, however, I do not know the significance of the language (being spoken), I am a stranger to the speaker and the speaker is a stranger to me.
- 12 So with you, since you are eager for spiritual manifestations, strive especially for excellence in edifying the church.
- 13 This is why anyone who speaks in a foreign language should pray that he may interpret (what he says to his hearers).
- 14 If I pray in a foreign language, my spirit prays but my understanding produces no fruit (for the benefit of others).<sup>8</sup>
- 15 What is the inference of what I have been saying? I will pray with the spirit but I will also pray so as to be understood (by my listeners). I will sing with the spirit but I will also sing so as to be understood (by my listeners).<sup>9</sup>
- 16 Otherwise suppose you are giving thanks (to God) in spirit (only), how can the person who is not conversant (with the language you use) say Amen to your thanksgiving if he does not understand what you are talking about?
- 17 indeed you give thanks in a manner edifying to yourself, but the other person receives no benefit (unless he understands what you say).
- 18 I thank God that I might speak in foreign languages more than all of you.<sup>10</sup>
- 19 Nevertheless, in church I would rather speak five words which are understood, in order that I might instruct others, than (to speak) ten thousand words in a foreign language.<sup>11</sup>
- 20 Brothers, do not be children in your thinking. Be babes where malice is concerned, but in your thinking be mature.
- 21 in the Law it stands written, "By men of foreign languages and through the lips of strangers I will speak to this people, and not even then will they listen to me, says the Lord."<sup>12</sup>
- 22 This shows that foreign languages are a sign not to those who believe but to those who do not believe, whereas the clear presentation of God's word is intended not for unbelievers but for believers.
- 23 consequently, if the entire church meets together in one place, and all speak in foreign languages, and uninformed persons or unbelievers come in, will they not say you are crazy?

- 24 But if everyone proclaims God's word clearly, and some unbeliever or uninformed person comes in, he is convicted by all, he is searched out by all,  
25 he sees himself as he is. And so he will bow down and worship God, confessing, "Truly God is among you!"  
26 What are the implications of what I have been saying, brothers? When you meet together, each one has (a contribution to make): a hymn, a teaching, a revelation, a discourse in a foreign language, or an interpretation. Let all things be done with a view to (the) upbuilding (of the church).  
27 If any speak in a foreign language, let only two or at the most three, speak, one at a time, and let someone interpret what is said.  
28 However if no interpreter is present, let the one who would speak in a foreign language keep silent in the church, and let him speak to himself and to God.  
29 Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others consider carefully what is said.  
30 And if anything is revealed to another who is sitting by, let the first speaker yield to him.  
31 For you can all declare God's message one by one, so that all may learn and be encourage.  
32 The spirits of inspired men are under the control of the inspired men!  
33 For God is not (the Author) of disorder but of peace, and (he is) in all churches of the saints.  
34 Let the women maintain silence in the churches. They are not permitted to disturb the decorum of worship, but are to be submissive even as also the Law says.  
35 And if they wish to learn about something, let them ask their own husbands at home. For it is a shame for a woman to disturb the decorum of worship.  
36 Was It with you that the word of God originated? Or are you the only people it has reached?  
37 If anyone claims to be a prophet or to have any spiritual endowment, let him acknowledge that what I am writing to you is a command of the Lord.  
38 But if anyone disregards this, he should be disregarded.  
39 So then, my brothers, be eager to preach persuasively, and do not forbid anyone who has the gift of speaking in foreign languages to exercise it.  
40 But let everything be done in a proper and orderly manner.

#### Notes on Chapter 14

<sup>2</sup> Literally, abut rather that you may prophesy." <sup>3</sup> "No one" is not to be taken in the absolute sense. The speaker would understand and give the interpretation (cf. vv. 5, 6, 13-17). The whole context indicates that anything spoken under the impetus of the Holy Spirit is intelligible. A difficulty might arise because of the languages used, but not because of the absence of meaning. <sup>4</sup> Literally, "mysteries."

<sup>5</sup> Or, I wish. The Greek verb THELO is the form of both the subjunctive and the indicative. In the present context it seems to be the subjunctive, i.e., it expresses a hypothetical statement. <sup>6</sup> Reiteration of preference stated in v. 1. <sup>7</sup> Paul is dealing with young converts, many of whom were former pagans. Some faults of their pre-Christian experience were re-appearing or, more probably, had not yet been overcome. The Corinthians needed to understand the nature of spiritual gifts, and to escape the perils of false expressions. Pagan worship was characterized by frenzied, ecstatic utterances over which reason had no control. Paul does not approve unreasoning emotionalism. His purpose is to lead the Christian believers completely away from the old cultic behavior patterns. To this end he writes in a diplomatic manner and takes a positive approach, emphasizing the qualities and procedures which are paramount in the new life. <sup>8</sup> "If I pray" A third class condition. It expresses a hypothetical statement, not a declaration of fact. <sup>9</sup> "so as to be understood" Literally, "with the understanding also." <sup>10</sup> Or, I speak. The Greek verb LALO is the form of the indicative as well as the form of the subjunctive. In this context (note especially v. 19) it seems to be subjunctive. Cf. same idiom with THELO in v. 5. Paul was a versatile linguist. From his cultural background and schooling he learned Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, and, probably, Latin. As the Apostle to the Gentiles his evangelistic tours carried him into provinces where many local dialects were spoken. <sup>11</sup> "five words which are understood" Literally, "five words with my understanding." <sup>12</sup> Cf. Isa. 28:11-12. Israel heard God's word, delivered plainly by the prophets, but refused to obey. As a result, divine judgment is pronounced upon the rebellious people and God says they will be conquered by barbarous strangers whose language they cannot understand. The prediction was fulfilled by the Assyrian invasion (cf. 2 Chron. 28:16 ff.). That historical incident is analogous to the situation to which Paul applies it. He points out that just as words spoken in strange speech did not lead the Hebrews to obedience, so speaking in foreign languages will not profit the Corinthians.

- c. The Views of Some Writers on the Question of Continuance/Non-Continuance of the Gift of Tongues.

Edgar (pp. 262-263, 275-278) states:

No instance of the gift of tongues has been demonstrated from the apostolic age unto modern times. In addition, the Church as a whole has always felt that the gift of tongues ceased with



the apostles. Chrysostom (345-407) and Augustine (354-430) give clear statements that the gift of tongues ceased long before their time. It is certain that the gift of tongues did cease by the end of the apostolic age. This fact is recognized by many who assume that this gift is present today. An attempt is made to solve this problem by admitting that the gift ceased but claiming that it is given again today. The fact is that this gift did cease. If the gift of tongues had continued normally in the Church as it was given in the beginning, then there would be no question or issue raised regarding its occurrence today. The issue is raised because it did in fact cease. Since there is no statement in Scripture that tongues will not cease, the Church has never felt any difficulty recognizing this fact until the new view arose in some circles that they are present today. The fact that they did not exist for most of church history shows that, during most of the time in which the Church has existed, not all gifts were given.

One incontrovertible fact solves the basic question, "Are some gifts temporary?" That fact is that the gift of New Testament apostle has ceased. An apostle must have seen the resurrected Lord, according to 1 Corinthians 9:1-2. Paul is the last one who qualified (1 Corinthians 15:8) and was the last apostle. Other passages, as we have previously discussed, also support this. An apostle had to be able to perform signs, miracles, and wonders, according to 2 Corinthians 12:12. The examples given in the New Testament have not been duplicated since. Paul says that such signs confirmed his evangelistic ministry as apostle to the Gentiles. The overwhelming consensus of the Church since earliest times is that apostles were only in the beginning Church, thereby admitting that at least this one gift was temporary. No one has realistically claimed to be an apostle in the full sense of the New Testament apostle (the Twelve and Paul). Therefore it is clear that one gift was temporary. This establishes the fact that all gifts are not continually given to the Church -- that some gifts are in fact temporary. And if one gift is temporary, others may be also.

Ephesians 2:20 declares that apostles and prophets are the foundation for the universal Church. . . .

Second Corinthians 12:12 reveals that the apostles performed miraculous signs. These works were signs and were proof of apostleship. we would expect, therefore, that miraculous sign-works, since they were evidence of apostleship, were also a characteristic of apostleship. It is unlikely that such works extended to any great extent outside the apostolic circle. The miraculous works were linked, therefore, with the foundational gift of apostle. Paul points out explicitly in Romans 15:19 that his evangelistic ministry to unbelieving Gentiles, as the apostle to the Gentiles, was confirmed to the recipients by miraculous signs. This agrees with 2 Corinthians 12:12. Mark 16:15-20, discussed more completely in an earlier chapter, reveals that miraculous signs, which included speaking in tongues, healing, and

casting out demons, were given as signs connected with preaching the gospel to unbelievers. These statements were addressed to the eleven apostles. It is stated in Mark 16:20 that they preached the gospel and that the Lord worked with them, confirming their message with signs. Clearly this is what is discussed in the passage. The signs confirmed the preaching of the eleven. The same concept is apparent in Hebrews 2:3-4, where it is stated that the Lord confirmed the original eyewitness proclamation of the gospel to the Hebrews by miraculous signs. Once again the miraculous works were signs to unbelievers and confirmed the testimony of those who actually "heard the Lord". This is stated to be a thing of the past and probably refers to apostolic testimony. All of these passages agree in stating that miraculous works, including tongues and healings, were signs to confirm preaching to unbelievers. This agrees with 1 Corinthians 14:22, where the purpose for the gift of tongues is clearly stated to be a sign to unbelievers. All of these passages agree also in connecting the miraculous works with eyewitness testimony. Although from 1 Corinthians it appears that some outside the apostolic circle did exercise miraculous gifts, the testimony is consistent that these were signs to the unbelieving, and were particularly connected with the original gospel proclamation.

There is therefore Biblical evidence that apostle and prophet were only for the beginning or foundational stage of the universal Church (Ephesians 2:20). There is Biblical evidence that the miracles and signs were only for the first generation of believers and were past by the time some of the New Testament was written (Hebrews 2:3-4; Mark 16:17-20). There is Biblical evidence that the sign gifts were mainly apostolic and that their purpose was to confirm the original outreach of the Church. From the Bible alone we would expect the gifts of apostle, prophet, healings, miracles, and tongues to be temporary.

In addition to the direct Biblical evidence, we have also seen that many events described in the book of Acts have not continued in church history, such as Pentecost and the blinding of Elymas the sorcerer. This is additional proof that the Church is not experiencing all of the phenomena which occurred in the beginning Church. New Testament Scripture is not being produced today -- another indication of change.

History demonstrates that the gift of tongues ceased about nineteen hundred years ago. No true prophets, healers, or miracle-workers fitting the description of those in the New Testament have been seen since that time. The alleged miracles of today do not agree with the miracles in the Bible. The healings of today do not agree with the Bible and often fail, which is contrary to the Bible. Snake-handling and poison-drinking, although seldom practiced, often fail. More decisive than any of these discrepancies is the fact that the alleged gift of tongues of today bears little resemblance to the Biblical gift of tongues. Church history amplifies this fact, since there are no instances of miracle-working, healing, or tongues-speaking in all of church history which agree with the Biblical descriptions of these gifts.

It seems to be a historical fact that they have indeed ceased. Does the Bible give any information signifying that some gifts were only temporary? Yes, it does, as we have seen in this chapter.

The stated purpose of the sign gifts as confirmatory fits the special need of the beginning Church.

Since the Bible implies that some gifts are temporary, and since the gift of apostle must be for the beginning Church only, and since there are obvious changes indicated during New Testament times, there is no basis to assume that all of the spiritual gifts are to be continually given to the Church, unless the Bible states this or unless they have in fact continued. But the Bible does not state this, and they have not continued. Therefore the assumption that all gifts are to be present in the Church today is entirely gratuitous and is contradictory to the opinion of the church since early times. It is without Biblical or historical support. However, the view that some gifts are temporary is a Biblical fact and is also supported by the nonoccurrence of these gifts in history.

Charles V. Carter (pp. 215-220) states:

The occurrence of the miracle of other tongues (languages) at Pentecost and subsequently is manifold in its significance.

First, the miracle was wrought in and through the Christian disciples by the divine energy of the Holy Spirit, by whom they were filled on that occasion (Acts 2:4).

Second, it was administered in a practical way through the disciples under the superintendence of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:46), and thus it consisted of Spirit-inspired "utterances", and not of a miracle of hearing by the multitude, as some have mistakenly supposed.

Third, it was made necessary by the presence of the multitudes speaking some fifteen different languages and/or dialects at Pentecost, who could not otherwise have heard intelligibly the gospel of Christ's resurrection from the dead, which provided salvation for them (Acts 2:11, 32-36).

Fourth, it consisted of correct and intelligible bona fide languages and/or dialects which were clearly understood by the hearers (Acts 1:8, 11, 37).

Fifth, it served as the vehicle for God's message that produced in many of the hearers the divinely intended result of repentance unto salvation (Acts 2:37-39).

Sixth, it was instrumental in bringing about the conversion of approximately 3,000 hearers at Pentecost who were baptized and added to the Christian church (Acts 2:41).

Seventh, it was attested as a genuine miracle by its value manifested in the spiritual enlightenment, conviction, and conversion of this large number of converts.

Eighth, Luke's record in Acts 2 is the most clearly definitive account of the "gift of tongues" which we have in the New Testament. Though tongues are referred to definitely in three

other recognized, genuine New Testament passages (Acts 10, 19, and I Cor. 12-14), it is only in Acts 2:1-11 that the meaning is made explicit. Here it is manifestly a divinely given vehicle of linguistic communication for the evangelization of the multitudes in a situation that demanded and justified it, and as a token of the universal message and mission of the Christian gospel.

Ninth, While I Corinthians was probably written somewhat earlier than Acts (I Cor. between A.D. 54-57 -- Acts c. A.D. 63), the question of tongues did not arise at Corinth until nearly a quarter of a century after its occurrence at Pentecost. Luke, the author of Acts, was the companion and fellow worker of Paul during most of his second and third missionary journeys, as also during his two-year Caesarean imprisonment, and on his voyage to Rome and imprisonment there. Consequently it is most certain that Paul would have supplied him information for the Acts record covering those periods when Luke was not with him (especially on Acts 10 and 19). Thus Paul would naturally have approved the interpretation of the events that Luke recorded, though Luke may have gotten his information concerning Pentecost and other events up to the appearance of Paul at Troas from other sources, unless indirectly through Paul (see Acts 8:1-4; 9). In any event his thorough acquaintance with Paul's view on the subject of "tongues", as also other theological issues, seems almost certain. This is absolutely no Biblical evidence of any difference of opinion between Luke and Paul on this "tongues" question, or any other issue in fact. Therefore, on the basis of these facts we would concur with Blackwelder when he says,

We may assume that the viewpoint of Acts is decisive for what Paul writes in 1 Corinthians (on "tongues").

Some expositors begin by attempting to reconstruct the situation at Corinth and then either try to make Luke's account fit what they surmise occurred at Corinth or suggest that there were two different categories of the gift of tongues. Such an approach is unsatisfactory, for it is Luke who describes what the gift was. Paul writes (to the Corinthians) to correct false ideas regarding it. Therefore, if we are to avoid speculation about speaking in tongues, we must get our bearings from the basic treatment which is given in Acts 2:1-11 . . . If the true gift of glossolalia is manifested, it will be according to the pattern of Acts 2:4-11.

Blackwelder is on solid ground when he denies that there is any Scriptural evidence that anyone under the influence of the Holy Spirit ever spoke in an "unknown tongue". Since *glossais* means "languages," and languages are means of person-to-person communication, they will necessarily be known to some people.

Tenth, that the gift of languages, as recorded in Acts 2, was for evangelization purposes, rather than for the personal edification of the believer, as is claimed by advocates of the "unknown tongues" doctrine, is further evident from the absence of any mention of tongues in Acts 2 beyond its initial employment in

preaching the gospel to the polyglot multitudes present at the Feast of Pentecost. Peter's quotation of Joel's prophecy of the Spirit's effusion makes no reference whatsoever to tongues as a concomitant of the Spirit's effusion(see Acts 2:17-21). Any claim that the Samaritans spoke in tongues on the occasion of their baptism in the Spirit is purely gratuitous, and thus unwarranted as far as the scriptural record reveals.

After the approximately 3,000 converts had been baptized and were received into the fellowship of the church (2:41), no further mention of tongues is found in relation to these believers in the Acts record. Indeed they were edified in the apostles' "doctrine", "fellowship", "breaking of bread", "prayers", acts of charity, rejoicing, "singleness of heart", and by "praising God", with resultant profound spiritual and moral influence on their non-Christian neighbors. This beneficent influence produced converts to Christianity among them daily (2:42-47), but nowhere is there further mention of tongues among these converts. Nor was there further need for tongues now that the multitudes at Pentecost had heard the gospel distinctly and intelligibly in their own languages, a large percentage of whom must have returned to their respective homes following Pentecost.

Eleventh, a careful examination of the structure of Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost, as recorded in Acts 2, clearly reveals that the burden of his message concerned the crucifixion and the resurrection of Jesus Christ with His consequent universal Lordship, facts which were designed of God to produce repentance and saving faith in the minds and lives of his hearers (Acts 2:22-40). It is only Luke, the author of Acts, and not Peter, who records that the disciples spoke forth the gospel by miraculous aid in the various languages of the people present.

Twelfth, thus it may be reasonably allowed, within the foregoing framework of interpretation, that the divine gift and use of languages in Jerusalem at Pentecost signified the beginning of the universal missionary program of the gospel as it is set forth clearly by Christ in Acts 1:8, though Christ does not there, nor anywhere else in fact (unless Mark 16:16-17 be credited as genuine), mention "tongues" in any relationship to redemption or the gift of the Spirit, or in any other manner. One may fairly ask why Christ never once mentions "tongues" in relation to the promised gift of the Spirit which John treats so fully in his Gospel. Chapters 14-16, if God intended this phenomenon as an evidence of the gift of the Holy Spirit? It should be noted the Spirit is not mentioned in Mark 16:16-17, even if this passage should be considered genuine. Nor is there any mention of tongues in connection with the descent of the Spirit upon Jesus at His baptism (Matt. 3:16; John 1:32-33), nor by John the Baptist in his prediction of the baptism in the Spirit in Matthew 3:11. Therefore we conclude that wherever "tongues" occur in Scripture they are to be understood as genuine languages for communicating the gospel, except where perversions of this phenomenon occurred at Corinth.

d Some Observations on the Phenomenon of Glossolalia and its Relevance Today

- (1) The phenomenon of speaking in tongues recorded in Acts 2, 10, and 19 represents the act of speaking in languages that are foreign to the speaker. In the nature of the case, this is not simply a spiritual gift but a supernatural gift -- beyond the natural or spiritual abilities of the speaker - and it is imparted by the Holy Spirit.
- (2) In two of the three instances of foreign-language speaking in Acts, the speaking is closely connected with prophesying. In Acts 2:16-18 Peter says that this speaking is the effect of the predicted outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and that this outpouring results in all classes of human beings, regardless of age or gender -- sons and daughters, young men and old men, menservants and maidservants -- prophesying, seeing visions, and dreaming dreams (which are all modes of special revelation directly related to prediction of future events). And in Acts 19:6 Paul laid his hands on some disciples of John who had newly accepted Jesus as the Messiah who had accomplished redemption; and they spoke in foreign languages and prophesied. Both of these instances appear to say that the speakers prophesied in the foreign language that they were speaking.
- (3) The specific content of the act of speaking in foreign languages, as recorded in Acts 2:11, was "the mighty works of God;" and as recorded in Acts 10:46, "praise to God for His great mercy". No specific content is reported in Acts 19. We are not told which of the mighty acts of God were being extolled, or for what particular mercy they were praising God, but it is highly likely that the great work of God's gracious and merciful redemption through Christ was included. Perhaps some aspect of the spread of the gospel were predicted, or perhaps some features of the end time related to Christ's Second Coming.
- (4) The purpose of the act of speaking in foreign languages in Acts was twofold: apologetic and evangelistic. The Holy Spirit imparted this gift in order to provide supernatural evidence of the truth-claims made by the disciples of Christ, so that nonbelievers would receive and trust in Christ and His redemptive work, and believers would be convinced that God had extended His saving grace from Israel to all mankind, whether Jew, Samaritan, or Gentile.
- (5) The phenomenon of speaking in tongues recorded in I Corinthians 12-14, considered in itself without regard to its antecedent in Acts, could represent either the act of speaking in rational, meaningful languages that were foreign to the speaker but not foreign to all hearers, or the act of producing irrational, meaningless ecstatic utterances that were foreign to speakers and hearers alike. However, since the only antecedent we

have for the Corinthian phenomenon is the Acts phenomenon, it is highly probable that the Corinthian phenomenon represents the same act of speaking in foreign languages as is found in the book of Acts. Any claim to the contrary would appear to require sufficient evidence for such a radical change of understanding of the phenomenon of tongue-speaking. The burden of proof lies heavily on those who would claim that such a change (from foreign-language speaking to ecstatic, nonrational utterance) has occurred.

- (6) What happened to this supernatural gift of foreign-language speaking following the apostolic age? It would appear that its apologetic and evangelistic purposes were fulfilled in the early church, when the message of Christ's coming and atonement had reached all parts of the inhabited world (Colossians 1:5-6, 23). The act had served its purpose, by providing supernatural evidence of truth-claims of the disciples of Christ, with the result that many nonbelievers had received and trusted in Christ and His redemptive work, and believers had been convinced that God had extended His saving grace to all mankind. Since its purpose had been fulfilled, the gift appears to have ceased.
- (8) What about the phenomenon of supernatural speaking in foreign languages today? The phenomenon appears to have disappeared very early in the history of the Church; and no sizable group in the church today makes a claim to the possession or exercise of this gift. A number make the claim that, although glossolalic utterances are not given in any known language, nevertheless they are heard as a known foreign language by those who have the supernatural gift of interpreting tongues. Since Acts 2:4 clearly states that the disciples spoke in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance, this claim is not only unverifiable, but also contrary to scriptural evidence!
- (9) The conception of tongue-speaking in currency today is that of producing nonrational (i.e., without the use of the mind), ecstatic utterances that are foreign to speakers and hearers alike. It now appears clear that these utterances do not constitute language in any meaningful sense of the term. Descriptive linguistics during the past twenty years has been comparing recordings of alleged glossolalia with known human languages. Although linguists have not compared recordings of glossolalia with each of the three thousand or more languages in use in the world today, nevertheless they know enough about representative languages of every known language family in the world to recognize whether or not tongue-speaking is similar to any of these languages. It is not. Not only are these ecstatic utterances devoid of any language structure, they are characterized by an excessive frequency of repetition, especially of one or two vowels; and when they are interpreted, the same phrases or clauses are translated to mean entirely different things! in addition, it has been noted that tongue-speaking,

although not a language, is frequently similar to the speaker's own language background; and that interpretations of tongue-speaking are frequently rendered in King James style, including King James vocabulary and thought-form! (This phenomenon of King James style can be explained in various ways, including the following: (a) King James English is the language of the Holy Spirit(!); (b) the King James Version is inspired(!); (c) King James English is the language used in tongue-speaking, thus tongue-interpreting is done in King James English; (d) Tongue-interpretation is done in the interpreter's own style; and since so many tongue-interpreters are steeped in the King James Version (and English), therefore their vocabulary, grammar, and thought patterns in their interpretation are in King James style.

- (10) If modern glossolalia cannot be identified with the Holy Spirit's gift of foreign languages spoken of in Acts and I Corinthians, then what is the source of this phenomenon? Any attempted explanation of its source must take into account the fact that tongue-speaking is not unique to Christianity, but is a universal phenomenon occurring in many religions as well as in the world of the occult; and it is quite clear that in such cases the phenomenon is not the expression of a gift of the Holy Spirit! in addition, any attempted explanation of the source of modern glossolalia must recognize the fact that, in a number of Christian groups, tongue-speaking is both taught and caught. Persons are encouraged to learn how to do it by practicing the repetition of certain sounds, by going with the flow of their feelings, and by letting the pure experience carry them along. And persons are stimulated to speak in tongues by the example of those around them that are producing ecstatic utterances.

In the "Guldebook for the Life in the Spirit Seminars" entitled "Finding New Life in the Spirit," published by Servant Publications, South Bend, Indiana (with the imprimatur of the Bishop of Fort Wayne-South Bend), the following statements are found:

This promise is for you, for you who want something more . . .  
Perhaps you know him and have wondered if there should not be more.  
Perhaps you have only dimly heard of him and wish you could find him.  
Now he speaks to you. Now he offers you a promise, a free gift, a new life -- without price. He offers it to you freely, just as he created you freely, because he loves you. . . .

Preparing to be baptized in the Spirit

God loves you. He wants to give you the fullness of life in the Spirit. He has promised that he will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask. Simply ask in confidence.

Satan will tell you that you do not deserve to be baptized in the Spirit, that you are not worthy of it. And he is right. No one is worthy of it. But God is not going to baptize you in



the Spirit because you are worthy of it, he will do it because he loves you. He will do it because Jesus died for you.

Jesus will change your life when you make the commitment to him and are prayed with. You will begin a new life in the Spirit. You can count on it. Simply rely on God's promise.

Do not look for a particular kind of experience. Some people experience a great deal at the moment when they are prayed with, while others experience very little. What you want is the Holy Spirit, not an experience. Once you are in a new relationship with the Holy Spirit, you will experience a new sense of his presence. You will see him work in your life in a new way.

Ask the Lord for the gift of tongues. Tongues is a gift of God, and even if you do not understand fully what it will do for you, trust God that his gifts really are gifts and worth having. If you are unwilling to receive the gift of tongues, you are putting a block on the Lord's work and the Holy Spirit will not be free to work fully in you. Open yourself to all of God's gifts, with no reservations. . . .

#### The commitment to Christ

In the next seminar, you will make a commitment to Christ before being prayed with to be baptized in the Spirit. The leader will ask you three questions, and after you answer them, you will say a prayer expressing a commitment to Christ. Meditate on these questions and on the prayer during this week:

Do you renounce Satan and all wrongdoing?

Do you believe that Jesus is the Son of God, that he died to free us from our sins, and that he rose to bring us new life?

Will you follow Jesus as your Lord?

Lord Jesus Christ, I want to belong to you from now. I want to be freed from the dominion of darkness and the rule of Satan, and I want to enter into your kingdom and be part of your people. I will turn away from all wrongdoing, and I will avoid everything that leads me to wrongdoing. I ask you to forgive all the sins that I have committed. I offer my life to you, and I promise to obey you as my Lord. I ask you to baptize me in the Holy Spirit and give me the gift of tongues.

#### Baptized in the Spirit

Last night you were prayed with. Today is a new day. You may feel a new joy, a new peace, a praise of God welling up within you. You may feel doubt, a feeling that you made a fool of yourself last night, a feeling of confusion or depression. You may even feel all of those things at once. But the life of the Spirit is not based on feelings.

Today is the day to begin a new life in faith. If you committed your life to Christ and asked him to baptize you in the Holy Spirit, then you were baptized in the Spirit. You may feel

any number of things, but you made a new beginning last night. Now you must live that new beginning in faith.

Consider the facts. When you are baptized in the Spirit, the Holy Spirit is in you in a new way. You are not yet fully controlled by the Holy Spirit, you still have to grow into the life of the Spirit, but he is in you in a new way.

Satan is also concerned with you in a new way. Since you now have more spiritual power you are more dangerous to him, and he would like to stop you. After Jesus was baptized he entered into spiritual battle in a new way (Luke 4:1-13). In the same way, now that you have been baptized in the Holy Spirit, you enter into spiritual battle in a new way.

Have no fear. Simply put your faith in God. Resist all doubts and anxieties. Let the joy and peace and praise of God fill you. In humility begin to learn from God and from your brothers and sisters how to live the life of the Spirit. Remember that you are only a beginner.

Do not let the gift of tongues worry you. If you did not pray in tongues last night, just look for it to happen. It could happen almost anytime. If you said something last night but are not sure whether it was tongues or not, keep on saying it. If it was tongues, it will grow and develop. If it was not tongues, it can turn into tongues. If you did pray in tongues but it sounds like stuttering, keep on doing it. It will grow and develop.

Pray in tongues every day. It will grow in value for you. . . . When you live in the Spirit, the Spirit prays in you. Let him pray in you often during the day, sometimes in English, sometimes in the new tongue he has given you. Even if you have only a few syllables in a new tongue or if you are not sure of it, pray in that tongue every day and it will grow.

NOTE: "Finding New Life in the Spirit" is copyrighted by Charismatic Renewal Services, inc., South Bend, Indiana.

Dennis and Rita Bennett (pp. 66-67, 71-75) write:

There are a number of people who have spoken in tongues, but don't know it! Every now and then when talking about this manifestation someone will say: "oh, you mean that funny little language I have spoken ever since I was a child -- is that it? It makes me feel happy and close to God!"

A pleasant little Dutch lady, perhaps thirty-five years of age, was talking with Dennis after a meeting recently.

"I spoke in tongues once, about eight months ago," she said, a bit wistfully, "and I'd like to do it again!"

"Why don't you?"

"Oh, I wouldn't dare to try. You see, I have a little play language that I talk for my children when we're having fun together. They think it's funny, and we have a good time. I'm afraid that if I tried to speak in tongues, that little play language would come!"

By this time Dennis was smiling: "That's your tongue!" he said.

The little lady was startled: "Oh no," she said, shaking her head firmly, "that's just a play language!"

After several more minutes of discussion, Dennis said to her: "Would you be willing to speak this little 'play language' as you call it, to God? Talk to God in it?"

It took a little more persuasion, but finally she bowed her head and began to talk quietly in a beautiful language. In not more than thirty seconds, she was in joyful tears: "That's it! That's it!" she said.

A young couple from England who were touring the United States stopped at St. Luke's some seven years ago. They were curious to find out more about the baptism in the Holy Spirit. As they talked, we tried to explain to them what speaking in tongues meant. A half-amused, half-puzzled smile came on the face of the young man:

"Could this be something I've been doing in my prayers ever since I was three years old?" he asked. His wife also smiled: "Me, too!" she said. Unknown to one another, they had both been speaking in tongues from time to time in their prayers ever since they were very young children.

The Psalmist said, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit: "Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it!" (Ps. 81:10) and, "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord!" (Ps. 81:1).

A joyful noise may not yet be speaking in tongues, but even this is pleasing to the Lord. It won't be long before it will be your Holy Spirit language, as God will honor your simple faith.

Several things may happen at this point: you may not succeed in beginning to speak, due to self-consciousness and inhibition. That's all right -- you haven't "flunked" the test! You simply have to keep on until you do decide to make that first sound. It is like the parachutist jumping out of the airplane for the first time. If he wants to be a parachute jumper, he's got to jump! There's no other way! Don't back off at this point as some do, and say:

"I guess God doesn't want me to have it!" It's you who are holding back!

You may begin to speak, but only get out a few halting sounds. That's wonderful! You've broken the "sound barrier"! Keep on with those sounds. Offer them to God. Tell Jesus you love Him in those "joyful noises"! As you do, they will develop and grow into a fully developed language. It may take days, or even weeks -- not because of God, but again, because of you. In a very real sense, any sound you make, offering your tongue to God in simple faith, may be the beginning of speaking in tongues. We have seen lives visibly changed by the release of the Spirit brought through one sound -- one little syllable! If you have ever uttered one such sound while trusting God the Holy Spirit to guide

you, from then on don't say: "I haven't spoken in tongues yet," but rather: "I'm beginning to speak in tongues!" Remember the manifestations of the Spirit are always God and us working together. "The Lord working with them . . . with signs following" (Mark 16:20 KJV).

Then again you may begin to speak immediately in a beautiful language. That's wonderful, too, but it doesn't mean you're any holier than the others! It just means that you are a little freer in your spirit, and less inhibited. In any case, the thing to do is to keep on speaking -- or keep on trying to speak. . . .

There are some believers who have asked to be baptized in the Holy Spirit, but have been unable to begin to speak in tongues. They consider this to be because God doesn't want them to do so; it isn't for them. We find, however, that with proper explanation, and answering of questions, and instruction, such persons often will break through their inhibitions and begin to speak in the Spirit

. . .

We are convinced, from the Scriptures and after praying with thousands of people to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit over the past ten years and more, that there is no believer who cannot speak in tongues if he or she is properly prepared and really ready to trust the Lord.

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What explanation of the source of this phenomenon can be given? Three major answers to this question have been proposed:

- (a) that it is a gift of God not directly related to the biblical phenomenon of speaking in a foreign language, but a separate gift of the Holy Spirit given as an assurance of salvation, or as a means of power and resiliency to meet the problems of life, or as an evidence of spiritual maturity (as a second distinct work of grace). It is claimed that it is this gift to which I Corinthians 12-14 refers;
- (b) that it arises from hidden, dark forces; i.e., from evil spirits, who are always ready to influence those who unwittingly open themselves to unknown forces that they think are good but which are really evil and Satan-inspired;
- (c) that it arises from the psyche of man, and is triggered by some mechanism in the autonomic nervous system that is common to all human beings; and that it provides an emotional release from tension, frustrations, and fears, and results in feelings of relaxation, peace, joy, and elation.

### Conclusions

- (1) In Scripture the phenomenon of supernatural speaking in a foreign language is not regarded as an evidence of regeneration, or of indwelling, or of spiritual maturity, but as an evidence of the filling of the

Holy Spirit. This phenomenon had a primarily evangelistic purpose: to proclaim and certify the good news of salvation from sin to those whose primary language was foreign to the one attempting to communicate the gospel.

- (2) The modern phenomenon of tongue-speaking, defined as non-linguistic ecstatic utterance, has no warrant in scripture, either exegetically or theologically. Therefore modern tongue-speaking should not be regarded as a supernatural or a spiritual gift of the Holy Spirit, at least so far as the gifts of the Spirit enumerated in Scripture are concerned.
- (3) Tongue-speaking, defined as non-linguistic ecstatic utterance, should probably not be regarded as a Satanically-inspired counterfeit to the work of God, unless it clearly turns men's attention away from Christ and the gospel and toward the seeking of an experience of escape from reality and of self-gratification.
- (4) Given the lack of scriptural warrant for modern tongue-speaking, and the universality of glossolalia in various religions and the occult, modern tongue-speaking should probably be regarded as an expression of the human psyche -- one which provides a temporary release from emotional tension and a temporary emotional "high". As such, it may have some value for psychology and psycho-somatic medicine, but even here its side effects must be considered, including psychological dependence and escape from the need to come to grips with real problems in order to seek lasting solutions.
- (5) If evangelical Christians are drawn away from evangelizing the lost with the gospel, and drawn toward evangelizing other Christians with the baptism of the Holy Spirit and tongue-speaking, then the phenomenon has a net negative value, and holds promise of creating great harm and doing real damage to the Church of Jesus Christ.
- (6) The Apostle Paul says, "Do not forbid to speak in foreign languages. But let all things be done properly and in an orderly manner." (I Cor. 14: 39-40). Paul enumerates four guidelines in I Corinthians 14:26-28 for the exercise of this gift in the church: (a) the gift must be exercised for the edification of the church; (b) two or at the most three should exercise the gift during any one meeting of the church; (c) those who exercise the gift should do so consecutively; i.e., one at a time; (d) there must be an interpreter present to translate the utterance. Thus if anyone claims this gift, his or her utterances in the church are to be tested and evaluated according to their content (in the light of scriptural teaching) and the guidelines enumerated above.
- (7) This controversial issue is not going to disappear from evangelical churches in the near future; therefore believers need to be instructed and helped in their formation of convictions and attitudes on this matter. In view of the volume of religious books, pamphlets, periodicals, and speakers that address this phenomenon favorably, the people of God need solid teaching and preaching directed to this issue, so that they will not be left without assistance in their attempts to evaluate and develop a scripture stance on glossolalia.

## XI. Summary of the Doctrine of Spiritual Gifts

In three scriptures the term "spiritual gifts" is mentioned: Romans 1:11; I Corinthians 12:1; and I Corinthians 14:1.

In Romans 1:11, Paul says: "I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong." The word translated "spiritual" is PNEUMATIKOS and the word translated "gift" is CHARISMA.

In I Corinthians 12:1, he writes "Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant." This verse simply uses the word PNEUMATIKOS ('spiritual') and supplies the word "gifts".

In I Corinthians 14:1, Paul urges: "Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy." This verse also uses only PNEUMATIKOS ('spiritual') and supplies the word "gifts".

- A. If spiritual gifts are defined as those natural, spiritual, or supernatural abilities, capabilities, and inclinations that the Holy Spirit bestows on human beings to enable them to accomplish specific functions in the outworking of God's purposes, then certain questions of a general nature arise.
1. Can natural gifts, spiritual gifts, and supernatural gifts (distinguished in terms of the time of communication and the kind of enablement) be viewed as distinct varieties of spiritual gifts?

In order even to discuss this question we must attempt a definition for each of these varieties:

Natural Gifts may be defined as those aptitudes, abilities, and attitudes communicated by the Spirit of God at physical birth and/or acquired, nurtured, and expressed during earthly life, by means of providential enablement.

Spiritual gifts may be defined as those aptitudes, abilities, and attitudes communicated by the Spirit of God at spiritual rebirth, and/or acquired, nurtured, and expressed during the Christian life, by means of spiritual enablement.

Supernatural gifts may be defined as those aptitudes, abilities, and attitudes communicated by the Spirit of God at His anointing for a specific vocation or task, and acquired, nurtured, and expressed during the exercise of ministry, by means of supernatural enablement.

The disputed category in this listing is, of course, natural gifts. If spiritual gifts are capacities, abilities, or skills that enable a believer to accomplish a specific service or task for God, then can so-called natural gifts be included in this category in a larger sense? Can they be pressed into His service? Can they be viewed as characteristics with which the Spirit of God endowed believers at birth (and even before birth, in terms of their genetic makeup, transmitted through their parents)? Can natural gifts be viewed as characteristics and abilities and skills that have been developed under the superintendence and guidance of the Holy Spirit, so that when persons become believers, they are able to seek for and find the calling and tasks for which God has prepared them by discerning the capacities, abilities, skills, and inclinations with which God has gifted them?

If natural gifts (along with spiritual gifts and supernatural gifts) can be included in the general category of gifts God gives to human beings to enable them to accomplish a specific service or task for God, should natural gifts be included in or excluded from the category of spiritual gifts?

Charles W. Carter addresses this issue (pp. 270-271):

The New Testament makes abundantly clear the distinction between God's gift of the Spirit to believers, and the gifts which the Spirit bestows upon believers. It is the latter with which we are concerned at this juncture. However, before examining these spirit-gifts, it is well that we take brief notice of an important distinction that must be made between such gifts as the Spirit may bestow upon a believer, and those natural or constitutional gifts that may characterize an individual, but which may be realized only when awakened and developed under the influence of the Spirit who has been given to him by God.

There is frequently much confusion at this point, and admittedly the distinction is not always easy to make. Certainly when considered in a very broad sense, both the talents or abilities constitutional to an individual, and the special endowments by the Spirit are the gifts of God, perhaps in the sense that life itself is a gift of God. But when considered more definitively there is a marked difference between the two. In consideration of what may be termed natural or constitutional gifts, the gift of the person of the spirit may illumine, quicken, and nurture these potentialities in an individual to the development of greater usefulness, whereas without the presence of the spirit in the life of an individual such potentialities may remain dormant throughout life and thus never serve any useful purpose. . . .

Likewise, natural, potential gifts are present in many, and perhaps most, lives. It is the presence of the gift of the Spirit that is necessary to awaken, nurture, and develop those potentialities. Probably a far greater percentage of what are commonly called the gifts of the Spirit fall into this category than are in the class of special enduements by the Spirit. But,

we repeat, it is not always easy to make this distinction because, in large measure at least, it is often impossible to evaluate the potential of any person until such potential has been actualized in his life. Nor can the individual himself evaluate his own potential until it is actualized in response to the right challenge. No instrument, psychological or otherwise, has ever yet been devised to measure the potential of an individual, and probably there never will be one.

However, whether natural endowment, awakened by the gift of the Spirit, or special enduements of the Spirit, the Scripture makes frequent reference to what are designated the gifts of the Spirit.

2. Should motivation -- inclination, desire, and willingness -- be considered part of a spiritual gift, so that the Spirit of God not only gives us the ability to do a thing but also the desire to do it?

This ties in with another question: if we possess a spiritual gift, do we need, not only the ability and the motivation to use it, but also the power to make that gift effective as service to God?

The idea of power to make a spiritual gift effective for God suggests the need to seek the enabling of the Holy Spirit. This suggests the need of prayer which in turn suggests that we need to feel our helplessness to accomplish anything for God in our own ability, motivation, and power; and our great need to seek the filling of the Holy Spirit, as we use our gift in conscious dependence on His grace.

3. Can a person have a gift but not use it? What happens to the gift in such a case?

It would seem that, in the nature of the case, some gifts may be lost or their usefulness diminished through failure to exercise them, or through abuse of them, or through simple inability to perform their intended functions.

4. What should our attitude be toward the possibility of recurrence of the supernatural gifts?

Should we be totally skeptical and quick to dismiss all claims and manifestations as false?

Should we be totally believing and quick to accept all claims and manifestations as true?

Or should we take the position of cautious openness to the possibility of the recurrence of the supernatural gifts, coupled with the determination to test and evaluate each claim and each manifestation



by the scriptural standards? If we take this stance, should openness and determination to evaluate be combined with a generally skeptical attitude or a generally believing, acceptant attitude?

5. How can we recognize the spiritual gift(s) God has given us?

- a. We need to realize that God has given each believer at least one spiritual gift.

Romans 12:1-6 says: "Just as each of us has one body with many members and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us."

Ephesians 4:7-8 says: "But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why It says: 'When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men.' "

- b. We need to ask God to guide us to discern our gift(s).
- c. We need to get to know ourselves
- (1) By evaluating our background
  - (2) By realistically appraising and assessing our abilities and skills
  - (3) By trying our hand at various kinds of service, in order to discern our aptitudes and inclinations
- d. We need to submit to the Lordship of Christ, and to become willing to serve Him in whatever way He would be pleased to use us
- e. We need to be hesitant to claim a particular gift until we have tested it in the crucible of experiential exercise, and then only after a period of time.

B. The question of continuance or noncontinuance of the spiritual gifts

Thomas R. Edgar (pp. 42-45) writes:

The above discussion should be sufficient to show that the proper goal for the individual believer is a godly life and spiritual maturity. This is the end toward which all believers should be moving. There is not the slightest hint in the Bible that possession of a spiritual gift (regardless of which specific

one) helps a believer in his spiritual growth -- that is, toward this spiritual goal. The ministry of other gifted individuals to him may help the believer toward that goal, or the use of one's own gift ministry to others may help others to that spiritual goal of a mature and godly Christian life. Gifts are not for our own use and benefit but are to be used in service to others.

The Corinthian church is a perfect example of this. They had numerous gifts: Paul said to the Corinthians, "You do not lack (fall short) in any gift." (1 Corinthians 1:7) It is evident from chapters 12-14 that the Corinthians were very zealous and excited about certain spiritual gifts -- specifically, the gift of tongues. First Corinthians 14:12 indicates that the Corinthians were zealous in this area. The Corinthian church had numerous spiritual gifts and used them; however, this did not produce spiritual believers. The Corinthian church apparently had more problems than any other church addressed in the New Testament. The believers were described as carnal and unable to receive more than the basics of Christian truth (1 Corinthians 3:1-3). This church was full of factions and cliques (chapters 1-4); it condoned gross sin (chapter 5); they dragged each other before unbelieving judges to settle their numerous quarrels (chapter 6); they did not exercise love of the brethren, they were puffed up over their gifts and knowledge, and they misused their gifts (chapters 12-14); they had doctrinal problems (chapter 15); etc. This church is often called "the worst church in the New Testament"; and yet it is the only church in the New Testament that placed a special emphasis on spiritual gifts. Did the spiritual gifts make them carnal? No! But they did not use their gifts for ministry to others. Apparently they were proud of their gifts and exercised them to glorify themselves. The Corinthian church demonstrates that possessing gifts in general or even any specific gift, such as the gift of tongues, does not increase the spirituality or spiritual growth of the possessor. Gifts were not given for this purpose. . . .

The main emphasis in the New Testament is on the godliness and spiritual maturity of believers. This is the goal toward which all Christians are to move. God has given the Holy Spirit to each believer in order to enable each one to become godly. Christians are continually exhorted to show love, faith, holiness, sound doctrine, etc. God has given spiritual gifts so that Christians may minister to one another and help one another to reach that goal. Spiritual gifts are a means to that end. They are not the end itself but only a means. Mere possession of any gift does not enhance spirituality. There is not the slightest indication in the Bible that spiritual gifts are given to build up the possessor, nor is there any indication that they will do so. Gifts are given to perform a function within the whole body of Christ so that believers may minister to others. . . .

There is no instruction in the Bible on how to recognize one's own spiritual gift; instead, the gift becomes obvious through its exercise -- that is, when it is used in ministry. If possession of specific spiritual gifts were important in itself,

the Bible would certainly give some information on how to recognize one's gift. The fact that gifts are given by God's sovereign will and not due to an individual's "seeking" also shows that gifts are not given to individuals because they are spiritual. Each Christian has all that he needs to become spiritual. This includes the Holy Spirit within him and the various gifted individuals within the Church who can minister to him. Spiritual gifts are very important to the Church as a whole, since gifted individuals are necessary to minister to the body of Christ, the Church. This is what gifts are for: to minister to others. However, the individual gift as such is not important to the possessor of it as far as his own spirituality is concerned. It is not given because one is spiritual nor does it enhance one's own spirituality. It is only a means to an end.

Some feel that the user benefits by the knowledge that the Holy Spirit is using him. Not only is this dubious as to real benefit except in some mystical sense, but it would apply to any way or time in which an individual is used by God regardless of whether a gift is used. The idea that such a "feeling" edifies the believer is alien to the New Testament. Gifts are not intended for the possessor's benefit except in an indirect way. The thinking that "I benefit when I teach by being taught by the Spirit" places a mystical aspect on the gift of teaching. If someone teaches more than he already knows, which such a view requires, then he is teaching apart from his understanding. Paul disparages this in 1 Corinthians 14. If such thinking implies that the teacher learns by preparing to teach, this is a different matter entirely and is true. However, it does not involve the gift of teaching but depends on the individual's ability to study Scripture. The gift of teaching concerns the ability to communicate the material; it does not insure that there is some miraculous ability to gain the material apart from preparation.

The concern over gifts to be exercised in ministry is proper. The emphasis on gifts as a mark of spirituality or as existing for the benefit or prestige of the one possessing the gift is false. There is need to be careful today concerning one's emphasis. Why be concerned about spiritual gifts? If it is to build up one's prestige, this is wrong. If it is to make the user more spiritual, this is also incorrect. Only if the concern for gifts is to make one's ministry to others more effective is the attitude correct. In other words, if someone is zealous for spiritual gifts so that he may use his gift to serve the Lord by ministering to other people, then he has the correct outlook. Any other zeal for gifts is improper; any other use for gifts is improper. There is no place in the Bible where believers are instructed to use their spiritual gifts in order to enhance their own spirituality or for their own benefit. Gifts are always used for the benefit of others. Gifts are important for this use; for the benefit of the possessor they are relatively unimportant.

J. I. Packer, in *Keep in Step with the Spirit* (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1984), pp. 200-234, 244-248, writes:

We move now to the main question, to which we have thus far been clearing the way. In what terms should we theologize -- that is, explain in terms of God -- the characteristic charismatic experience? What should we take the Holy Spirit to be doing in the lives of charismatics at the point where they profess a spiritual experience transcending that of other Christians? This is in fact the major question the movement raises; by concluding from its central convictional and ethical fruits that God is in it and by finding closer correspondence between "charismatic" and "noncharismatic" spirituality than is sometimes noticed, I have made it a more difficult question than it would be otherwise. If the typical spiritual experience in charismatic communities was Christless, loveless, and prideful, our question would not arise, for there would be no reason to ascribe such experience to the Holy Spirit at all; but as it is, the question presses acutely and cannot be evaded. For the fact we must now face is that the theology most commonly professed within the movement to account for its own claimed distinctives is deeply unbiblical.

The problem this fact creates for a movement that sees itself as a force for the renewing of true Christian experience is surely obvious. Experience is a slippery word, and experiences (that is, specific states of thought and feeling) coming to imperfectly sanctified sinners cannot but have dross mixed with their gold. No experience just by happening can authenticate itself as sent by God to further his work of grace. The mere fact that a Christian has an experience does not make it a Christian experience. The sign that an experience is a gift of God's grace is that when tested by Scripture, it proves to have at its heart an intensified awareness of some revealed truth concerning God and our relationship to him as creatures, sinners, beneficiaries, believers, adopted sons, pledged servants, or whatever. We have measured charismatic experience by this criterion and not found it wanting. But when that experience is pointed to -- and it often is -- as evidence for beliefs that appear to be biblically mistaken, we are left with only two options: either to reject the experiences as delusive and possibly demonic in origin, after all, or to re-theologize them in a way which shows that the truth which they actually evidence and confirm is something different from what the charismatics themselves suppose. This is the choice we now have to make with regard to at least the mainstream of charismatic testimony.

Some, noting the mistakes charismatic experience is said to verify, have taken the first course and written off the movement as delusive and dangerous. Nor can one altogether blame them when one thinks of the euphoric conceit with which the mistaken assertions are sometimes (not always) made, the naive mishandling of Scripture that often goes with them, and, most distressing of all, the seeming unconcern of so many charismatic spokesmen about

questions of truth. I confess myself to be one among the many whom these features of the movement bother. Nonetheless, I think I see God's touch in charismatic experience, and therefore I venture upon the second course -- that of retheologizing. The reader must judge how I get on.

First we glance at the traditional Pentecostal account of charismatic experience, which most Protestant charismatics outside Germany embrace. This, the restorational view as I have called it, makes the essence of the disciples' experience on Pentecost day, as described in Acts 2, and of the Corinthians experience, as described in 1 Corinthians 12-14, into norms, ideals, and goals for Christians now. The view centers on a conception of Spirit baptism as "as experience distinct from and usually subsequent to conversion in which a person receives the totality of the Spirit into his life and is thereby fully empowered for witness and service." Until Spirit baptism takes place, the Christian is thought to lack essential resources that God has in store for him; therefore he is charged to seek this experience till he finds it. When it comes thus to upgrade him, glossolalia usually (some say invariably) occurs as the outward sign of what has happened. Since only hereby does he receive "the totality of the Spirit" (however that odd phrase be construed), his experience as thus theologized may properly be viewed as completing his initiation into Christ just as in Anglo-Catholic theory among Episcopalians, receiving the Spirit in confirmation has been seen as completing the initiation that water baptism began.

Recent thorough examinations of this view by James D. G. Dunn, F. D. Bruner, J. R. W. Stott and A. A. Hoekema makes it needless for us to weigh it in detail here. Suffice it to say, first, that if accepted, it compels an evaluation of noncharismatic Christianity -- that is, Christianity that neither knows nor seeks postconversion Spirit baptism -- as low-road, second-class, and lacking something vital; but, second, that it cannot be established from Scripture, for this view has no coherent answer to biblical counterquestions like the three following.

Can it be convincingly denied that 1 Corinthians 12:13 (NIV) ". . . We were all baptized by one Spirit into one body -- whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free -- and we were all given the one Spirit to drink," refers to one aspect of what we may call the "conversion-initiation complex" with which the Christian life starts, so that according to Paul every Christian as such is Spirit baptized? Surely not. . . .

Can it be convincingly denied that the narratives of Acts, from Pentecost on, assume that faith-repentance (Luke alternates these words when specifying response to the gospel) and the gift of the Spirit in the fullness of his new covenant ministry come together? Surely not. . . .

Can it be convincingly denied that, as Luke presents the matter, the sole reason why Jesus' first disciples had a "two stage" experience, believing first and being Spirit baptized after, was dispensational, inasmuch as nine o'clock on Pentecost

morning was the moment when the Spirit's new covenant ministry among men began so that their "two stage" experience must be judged unique and not a norm for us at all? Surely this, too, is certain. . . .

Two more counterquestions about tongues now arise.

Can it be convincingly denied that when Paul wrote, "Do all speak in tongues? (1 Corinthians 12:30), he expected the answer. "No"? Again, surely not.

Can charismatic glossolalia which is frequently a learned skill and technique, which lacks language structure, and which its own practitioners regard as mainly for private use, be convincingly equated with the tongues of 1 Corinthians 12-14, which were for public use, which were a "sign" to unbelievers ("a negative sign towards their judgment", as Stendahl explains it), and which Paul "thought about as a language", conveying meaning and therefore capable of being interpreted? Can the identity of these two glossolalic phenomena be convincingly affirmed? Surely not. . . .

As for the tongues spoken for two generations in Pentecostal churches and nowadays by millions of charismatics also, linguists, sociologists, doctors, psychologists, and pastors have studied them firsthand with some thoroughness. The study has its hazards, for the phenomenon is widespread among all sorts of people, and the risk of generalizing from untypical cases is high. Also, it is clear that some students find glossolalic piety unsettling, indeed unnerving, so that strong defensive prejudices arise to cloud their judgment. However, there seems to be, if not unanimity, at least a growing agreement among present-day investigators on the following points.

(1) Whatever glossolalists may believe to the contrary, glossolalia is not language in the ordinary sense, though it is both self-expression and communication; and whatever Freudian theorists may have suspected or feared, it is not a product of the kind of disassociation of mind and bodily function that argues stress, repression, or mental sickness. It is, rather a willed and welcomed vocal event in which, in a context of attention to religious realities, the tongue operates within one's mood but apart from one's mind in a way comparable to the fantasy languages of children, the scat singing of the late Louis Armstrong, yodeling in the Alps, and warbling under the shower or in the bath. Dennis Bennett, who was a pioneer of charismatic renewal in the Episcopal Church, actually identifies childish pseudolanguages with the glossolalic gift and on this basis claims that "it is not unusual to find a person who has been speaking in tongues ever since childhood but who did not know the significance of what he or she was doing." . . .

(2) Though sometimes starting spontaneously in a person's life, with or without attendant emotional excitement, glossolalia is regularly taught (loosen jaw and tongue, speak nonsense syllables, utter as praise to God the first sounds that come, and so forth) and through such teaching it is in fact learned it is not something hard to do if one wants to.

(3) Contrary to the somber ideas of earlier investigators, who saw it as a neurotic, psychotic, hysterical or hypnotic symptom, psychopathological or compensatory, a product of emotional starvation, repression or frustration, glossolalia argues no unbalance, mental disturbance or prior physical trauma. It can and does occur in folk so affected, for whom it is often, in effect, a support mechanism, but many if not most, glossolalics are persons of at least average psychological health, who have found that glossolalia is for them a kind of exalted fun before the Lord.

(4) Glossolalia is sought and used as part of a quest for closer communion with God and regularly proves beneficial at conscious level, bringing relief of tension, a certain inner exhilaration, and a strengthening sense of God's presence and blessing.

(5) Glossolalia represents, focuses, and intensifies such awareness of divine reality as is brought to it; thus it becomes a natural means of voicing the mood of adoration, and it is not surprising that charismatics should call it their "prayer language". As a voice of the heart, though not in the form of conceptual language, glossolalia, in Christianity as elsewhere, always "says" something -- namely, that one is consciously involved with and directly responding to what Rudolf Otto called the "holy" or "numinous", which sociologists and anthropologists now generally call "the sacred".

(6) Usually glossolalia is sought, found, and used by folk who see the tongues-speaking community as spiritually "special and who want to be fully involved in its total group experience.

All this argues that for some people, at any rate, glossolalia is a good gift of God, just as for all of us power to express thought in language is a good gift of God. But since glossolalists see their tongues as mainly if not wholly for private use and do not claim to know what they are saying, while Paul speaks only of tongues that are for utterance and interpretation in public and perhaps thinks that the speaker will always have some idea of his own meaning, it is not possible to be as sure of the identity of the two phenomena as restorationism requires.

Uncertainty peaks, as it seems to me, in connection with the interpretation of tongues. By interpretation, I mean the announcing of the message content that (so it is claimed) a glossolalic utterance has expressed. Restorationism invites us to equate both tongues and interpretation with the charismata at Corinth. Paul's word for "interpret" is diemeneuo (1 Corinthians 12:30; 14:5, 13, 27), which can mean explaining anything not understood (so in Luke 24:27) and in connection with language naturally implies translating the sense that is "there" in the words (as in Acts 9:36). Paul certainly speaks as if the Corinthian sounds carried translatable meaning (14:9-13), and present-day interpreters assume the same about present-day tongues, offering their interpretations as translation, in effect.

But then their performances perplex. Interpretations prove to be as stereotyped, vague, and uninformative as they are spontaneous, fluent, and confident. Weird mistakes are made. Kildahl tells how the Lord's Prayer in an African dialect was interpreted as a word on the Second Coming. An Ethiopian priest whom I tutored went to a glossolalic gathering which he took to be an informal multilingual praise service and made his contribution by standing and reciting Psalm 23 in Ge'ez, the archaic tongue of his native Coptic worship; at once it was publicly interpreted, but as he said to me next day in sad bewilderment, "It was all wrong." Kildahl also reports that of two interpreters who heard the same tape-recorded glossolalia, one took it as a prayer for "guidance about a new job offer" and the other as "thanksgiving for one's recent return to health after a serious illness." Told that there was a clash here, "without hesitation or defensiveness, the interpreter said that God gave to one interpreter one interpretation, and gave to another interpreter another interpretation." The interpreter's experience is that "interpretations" comes to mind immediately; in other words, such thoughts as impress themselves on the mind straight after the tongues have been heard are taken as being interpretations of them. The claim is that God gives the interpretations directly; and as with charismatic prophecy, for which a similar claim is made, so long as what is said is biblically legitimate, it stands irreformable because it is uncheckable. One can see how empathy with a glossolalic speaker as a person, or with his or her tone of voice, or with the atmosphere of a meeting, could produce "interpretations" that would be relevant and would edify, particularly if the interpreter's mind was well stocked with Scripture truth to start with. But how such interpretations could directly express the meaning of sounds just heard, so as to be in effect translations from an unknown language into a known one, is harder to understand.

Without venturing to dismiss all interpretation as delusive on the basis of a few slips that showed, and while agreeing with Samarin that the sense of group rapport which the glossolalia-plus-interpretation ritual creates may be valuable in itself, I think it would be hazardous to assume that here we have a restoring of the gift of interpretation of which Paul wrote. The evidence is just too uncertain.

Now some counter-questions must be asked about healing and prophecy.

Can charismatic healing ministries be convincingly equated with the healing gifts mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:28, 30? Surely not.

Can charismatic prophecy be convincingly viewed as the restoring of a New Testament sign gift? Surely not. . . .

Some conclusions are now in order. Here are nine.

1. SPIRIT BAPTISM. The common charismatic theology of Spirit baptism (common, at least, in the worldwide movement as a whole,



if not in particular segments of It in Britain and Germany) is the Pentecostal development of the two-level, two-stage view of the Christian life, which goes back through the last-century holiness movements (Keswick, Higher Life, Victorious Life), and the power-for-service accounts of Spirit baptism that intertwined with them, to John Wesley's doctrine of Christian perfection, otherwise called perfect love, entire sanctification, the clean heart, or simply the second blessing. This charismatic theology sees the Apostles' experience at Pentecost as the normative pattern of transition from the first and lower level to the higher, Spirit-filled level. But this idea seems to lack both biblical and experiential justification, while the corollary that all Christians who are strangers to a Pentecostal transition experience are lower-level folk, not Spirit filled, is, to say the least, unconvincing. Yet the honest, penitent, expectant quest for more of God (out of which has come for so many the precious experience miscalled Spirit baptism) is always the taproot of spiritual renewal, whether impeccably theologized or not; and so it has been in this case.

2. SIGN GIFTS. The restorationist theory of sign gifts, which the charismatic movement also inherited from older Pentecostalism, is inapplicable; nobody can be sure, nor does it seem likely, that the New Testament gifts of tongues, interpretation, healing, and miracles have been restored, while Spirit-given prophecy, which in essence is not new revelation (though in biblical times this was often part of it), but rather power to apply to people truth already revealed, is not specially related to the charismatic milieu; it has in fact been in the church all along. Yet the movement's accompanying emphasis on every-member ministry in the body of Christ, using ordinary spiritual gifts, of which all have some, is wholly right and has produced rich resources of support and help for the weak and hurting in particular.
3. STRENGTHS. The charismatic stress on faith in a living Lord, learning of God from God through Scripture, openness to the indwelling Spirit, close fellowship in prayer and praise, discernment and service of personal need, and expecting God actively to answer prayer and change things for the better, are tokens of true spiritual renewal from which all Christians should learn, despite associated oddities to which mistaken theology gave rise.
4. GLOSSOLALIA. Charismatic glossolalia, a chosen way of nonverbal self-expression before God (chosen, be it said, in the belief that God wills the choice), has its place in the inescapable pluriformity of Christian experience, in which the varied makeup of both cultures and individuals is reflected by a wide range of devotional styles. It seems clear that as a devotional exercise glossolalia enriches some, but that for others it is a valueless irreverence. Some who have practiced it have later testified to the spiritual unreality for them of what they

were doing, while others who have begun it have recorded a vast deepening of their communion with God as a result, and there is no reason to doubt either testimony. Glossolalic prayer may help to free up and warm up some cerebral people, just as structured verbal prayer may help to steady up and shape up some emotional people. Those who know that glossolalia is not God's path for them and those for whom it is a proven enrichment should not try to impose their own way on others, or judge others inferior for being different, or stagger if someone in their camp transfers to the other, believing that God has led him or her to do so. Those who pray with tongues and those who pray without tongues do it to the Lord; they stand or fall to their own Master, not to their fellow servants. In the same sense that there is in Christ neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female, so in Christ there is neither glossolalist nor nonglossolalist. Even if (as I suspect, though cannot prove) today's glossolalists do not speak such tongues as were spoken at Corinth, none should forbid them their practice; while they for their part should not suppose that every would-be top-class Christian needs to adopt it.

5. SIN. Two questions needing to be pressed are whether, along with a sense of worship and of love, the charismatic movement also fosters a realistic sense of sin and whether its euphoric ethos does not tend to encourage naive pride rather than humility among its supporters.

6. THE SPIRIT. Though theologically uneven (and what spiritually significant movement has not been?) the charismatic renewal should commend itself to Christian people as a God-sent corrective of formalism, institutionalism, and intellectualism. It has creatively expressed the gospel by its music and worship style, its praise-permeated spontaneity and bold ventures in community. Charismatic renewal has forced all Christendom, including those who will not take this from Evangelicals as such, to ask: What then does it mean to be a Christian and to believe in the Holy Spirit? Who is Spirit filled? Are they? Am I? With radical theology inviting the church into the barren wastes of neo-unitarianism, it is (dare I say) just like God -- the God who uses the weak to confound the mighty -- to have raised up, not a new Calvin or John Owen or Abraham Kuyper, but a scratch movement, cheerfully improvising, which proclaims the divine personhood and power of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit not by great theological eloquence, originality, or accuracy, but by the power of renewed lives creating a new, simplified, unconventional, and uncomfortably challenging life-style. *O sancta simplicitas!* Yet the charismatic life stream still needs an adequately biblical theology and remains vulnerable while it lacks one.

7. TOTALITY. The central charismatic quest is not for any particular experience as such, but for what we may call thoroughgoing and uninhibited totality in realizing God's presence and responding to his grace. In worship, this totality means full

involvement of each worshiper and the fullest openness to God. In ministry, it means not only nor even chiefly the use of sign gifts, but the discerning and harnessing of all capacities to serve.

8. IMMATURITY. The charismatic movement is theologically immature, and its public speech and style seem on occasion half-baked as a result. Its exponents of renewal have not in every case learned to be consistently God centered, Trinitarian, and forward looking, and on occasion appear to be man centered and experience centered in their interests, tritheistic in their theology, and mindlessly mesmerized by the present moment, as children are.

The movement's intellectual and devotional preoccupation with the Holy Spirit tends to separate him from the Son whom he was sent to glorify and the Father to whom the Son brings us. The result too often is a concentrated quest for intense experiences, emotional highs, supernatural communications, novel insights, exotic techniques of pastoral therapy, and general pietistic pizzazz, not closely linked with the objectivities of faith and hope in Christ and the disciplines of keeping the Father's law. The charismatics' passion for physical and mental euphoria (health in the sense of feeling good and functioning well) reflects strong faith in the supernatural but feeble grasp of the moral realities of redemption, of the significance for our discipleship of self-denial, accepted weakness and apparent failure, and of the spiritual values that belong to hard thought, frustrated endeavor, pain accepted, loss adjusted to, and steady faithfulness in life's more humdrum routines.

What emerges, therefore, is intensity with instability, insight not always linked with intelligence, an oversimplified one-sidedness in spirituality, and an enthusiasm that is too often escapist. Thomas Small, theologian of the British renewal, sees all this as the result of not sufficiently focusing on the Father, and that is certainly part of the story; but I think it is part two rather than part one and that the root of the trouble is failure to focus sufficiently on the Jesus of the New Testament -- Jesus, the incarnate Son of God, who is man for God, our model of discipleship, as well as being God for man, our sin-bearing Saviour. I mean by that, not that charismatics do not trust, love, and worship Jesus -- to say such thing would be absurd -- but that they do not sufficiently grasp the link between what he was in his state of humiliation in this world and what his people, individually and corporately, are now called to be since Pentecost, as they were before (see Luke 14:25-33; John 15:18-16:4; Acts 14:22; Romans 8:17-23, 35-39; 2 Corinthians 4:7-18; 12:7-10; Hebrews 12:1-11). If I am right, this would be, ironically enough, a Spirit-frustrating, Spirit-grieving and Spirit-quenching feature right at the heart of this Spirit-exalting movement, and it would throw much light on the renewal's disconcerting tendency, underlined by Small, to run out of steam and get stuck.

But in any case, whichever is the right diagnosis, it can hardly be doubted that the immaturities of the charismatic vision of Christian life can only be cured through a theological deepening that will result in an acuter self-awareness and self-criticism. It is to be hoped that such a deepening will soon come.

9. REVIVAL. The charismatic movement, though a genuine renewing of much that belongs to healthy biblical Christianity, does not exhibit all the features that belong to God's work of revival. While vigorously grasping the joys of firm faith, it knows too little of the awesome searchlight of God's holiness and the consequent godly sorrow of radical repentance. Also, in settling for the joys of faith and the celebrating of gifts the movement has, as it seems, been satisfied too easily and too soon. There is need to go, not back, but on from the point it has currently reached to seek the richer reality of God's reviving visitation, toward which this movement, please God, will prove to have been a step on the way. . . .

Packer goes on to say:

. . . We need to move, not away from, or past, but through and then beyond the charismatic renewal. For Scripture shows that there is more to the renewing of the church than the common charismatic emphases cover.

Scripture points to a recurring process whereby, following upon coldness, carelessness, and unfaithfulness among God's people, God himself acts in sovereignty to restore what was ready to perish by means of the following set of events:

**GOD COMES DOWN.** (See Isaiah 64:1). He makes known his inescapable presence as the Holy One, mighty and majestic, confronting his own people both to humble and to exalt, and reaching out into the wider world in mercy and in judgment.

**GOD'S WORD COMES HOME.** The Bible, its message, and its Christ reestablish the formative and corrective control over faith and life that are theirs by right.

**GOD'S PURITY COMES THROUGH.** As God uses his Word to quicken consciences, the perverseness, ugliness, uncleanness, and guilt of sin are seen and felt with new clarity, and the depth of each person's own sinfulness is realized as never before. Believers are deeply humbled; unbelievers are made to feel that living as they do with sin and without God is intolerable, and the forgiveness of sins becomes the most precious truth in the creed.

**GOD'S PEOPLE COME ALIVE.** Repentance and restitution, faith, hope, and love, joy and peace, praise and prayer, conscious communion with Christ, confident certainty of salvation, uninhibited boldness of testimony, readiness to share, and a spontaneous

reaching out to all in need become their characteristic marks. There is a new forthrightness of utterance, expressing a new clarity of vision with respect to good and evil; and a new energy for reformation -- personal, ecclesiastical, and social -- goes along with it.

While all this is happening, outsiders come in, drawn by the moral and spiritual magnetism of what goes on in the church.

Whence comes this analysis? First, from accounts of this restoring work of God in Scripture -- the early chapters of Acts, plus the narratives of spiritual awakening under Asa, Hezekiah, Josiah, and Ezra (2 Chronicles 15, 29-31, 34, 35; Ezra 9-10; Nehemiah 8-10). Second, from the theology of restoration set forth by the prophets, most notably Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Zechariah, and by the prayers for restoration in such psalms as 44, 67, 80, and 85. Third, from the annals of similar stirrings in later days under such leaders as Bernard, Francis of Assisi, Savonarola, Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, John Wesley, Charles Finney, Robert Murray McCheyne; the Puritan awakening in seventeenth-century England; England's Evangelical Revival and America's Great Awakening in the mid-eighteenth century; spiritual quickenings round the globe in the 1850s and again in the 1900s; and late movements like the East African revival, which began in the 1930s and still goes on. The family likeness of these movements, both to each other and to biblical prototypes, is remarkable. What we are looking at here is a distinctive and recurring work of God whereby again and again he rouses languishing churches and through the consequent evangelistic overflow extends the kingdom of Christ.

What name shall we give to this momentous divine work? The time-honored term since the seventeenth century has been revival. But because of its associations with certain types of preaching mission, of emotional piety, and of public hysteria, this word presents difficulties to some, and one can understand charismatics and others with other programs preferring to talk of renewal instead. We should not make an issue of this or any other verbal preference. . . . What we need to ask, however, is whether the charismatic ideal and experience of renewal is fully equivalent to the evangelical ideal and experience of revival. And the answer, I think, is: not quite.

The charismatic movement, as we have seen, seeks the renewal of the whole church by at least the following means:

1. Rediscovery of the living God and his Christ and the supernatural dimensions of Christian living, through Spirit baptism or the Spirit's "release"
2. Returning to the Bible as the inspired Word of God, to nourish one's soul upon it
3. Habits of private and public devotion designed to bring the whole person, body and soul, into total, expectant dependence on the Holy Spirit (glossolalia comes in here)

4. A leisurely, participatory style of public praise and prayer
5. A use of spiritual gifts for ministry in the body of Christ by every member of Christ
6. Exploration of the possibilities of ministry through a communal life-style
7. An active commitment by this and other means to reach out to the needy in evangelism and service
8. A high level of expectancy that the hand of God will again and again be shown in striking providences ("miracles"), prophetic messages to this or that person, visions, supernatural healings, and similar manifestations

Does this ideal of renewal at any point go beyond the historic evangelical notion of revival? Yes: A vein of what I have called super-supernaturalism runs through it, becoming visible in the stress on tongues, prophecies, healing, and the expectation of miracles. In evangelical thinking about revival this has no warrant, and in evangelical experience of revival it has constantly been diagnosed as a mark of disturbing immaturity rather than of high spirituality.

Does the charismatic ideal of renewal at any point fail short of what Evangelicals mean by revival? Yes: The notes of humility and awe in the presence of the holy God and of the need to realize the sinfulness of sin, the evil of egoism and the radical nature of repentance are rarely struck. As a result, the child-to-Daddy, buddy-to-Jesus informality that charismatics often embrace and cultivate as a corrective of the cold and distant formalism of prerenewal religion easily becomes more childish than childlike and actually stunts growth.

Now that is a serious shortcoming, for a deepened sense of who and what God is and a quickened realization of one's own unworthiness and of the marvel of God's grace to so rotten a sinner as oneself is the taproot of all real revival. So it is further into this sense of things that all who appreciate the charismatic movement and have benefited from its enormously fruitful delineations of openness to the Spirit and responsiveness to Christ should now be seeking to move. For the Spirit's work of magnifying the Mediator in Christian eyes today will not be fully done till he has brought us all to a more galvanizing awareness of the holiness of God and greatness of our need of the mercy that Christ has brought than any of us has yet known.

Revival conditions are not with us at present; this is a day of small things, and we remain pygmy saints. One can be thankful for the contemporary willingness of Bible-believing, Christ-loving Christians to receive from each other across denominational boundaries and despite theological differences within the evangelical spectrum; it was not always so. Each of us has cause for gratitude for what we personally have received from sources with which, in terms of theology, we could not altogether identify. Yet none of us is entitled to be satisfied and complacent with what we now have; all of us must seek, rather, to

be led on to a profounder quickening yet, and it is in this quest that charismatic and noncharismatic, old Augustinian, old Wesleyan, and old Keswick believers should be finding unity in the Spirit today.

Anthony Hoekema, in *Holy Spirit Baptism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), pp. 70-71, 77-78, writes:

Summing up, then, we may say that, as far as the permanence of these miraculous charismata is concerned, we must at least raise some serious questions (their function was to authenticate the gospel when it was first preached and the apostles as the authoritative agents of God in founding the church; they have largely disappeared from the church). As far as the usefulness of these miraculous charismata is concerned, we must not only raise questions but honestly recognize the fact that, in the New Testament taken as a whole, it is not the miraculous charismata that are recommended for the continuing life of the church but the non-miraculous ones. There is no apostolic command to the church to continue to speak with tongues or to continue to exercise gifts of healing, but there are many apostolic injunctions to cultivate such non-miraculous gifts as ruling, teaching, ministering, giving, and showing mercy.

It is of course, true that the church must still manifest the power of the Holy Spirit in its life and worship today. That power, however, is to be seen, not first of all in miraculous phenomena of an ecstatic or spectacular sort, but rather in the life-changing dynamic of the gospel of Jesus Christ. This is what the Scriptures stress. Note, for example, how the New Testament speaks of the gospel as the power of God for salvation (Rom. 1:16), of the power of the Spirit revealed in speech and preaching (I Cor. 2:4), of a power that is made perfect in weakness (II Cor. 12:9), of the "exceeding greatness" of God's power which is available to believers for victorious Christian living (Eph. 1:19-20), of the power whereby believers are guarded unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time (I Pet. 1:5), and of a power through which we can do all things in Him that strengthens us (Phil 4:13).

Our subject in this chapter has been the gifts of the Spirit and the fruit of the Spirit. As we reflect on what we have found to be the Scriptural teaching on these matters, we conclude that we need both the gifts of the Spirit and the fruit of the Spirit. To say that we need the fruit of the Spirit rather than the gifts of the spirit, as is sometimes done, would be to detract from the value of the Spirit's gifts. We need both.

In desiring and seeking the gifts of the Spirit, however, there are certain cautions that must be observed. First, we have found no evidence in the New Testament that the church today is instructed to seek the "miraculous" gifts of the Spirit like

speaking with tongues or gifts of healing. We have also found no evidence that speaking in tongues is either a proof of one's having received a post-conversion "Spirit-baptism" or a special means whereby one is enabled to live on a higher spiritual level than those who do not have this gift. There is no Scriptural basis, therefore, for the claim that believers today must still seek these miraculous gifts of the Spirit.

Further, not every believer may seek all the gifts of the Spirit which are still distributed to God's people, since these gifts are distributed variously, and since God has never promised that every believer would have all of these gifts. This means, among other things, that we must not envy the gifts of a fellow-Christian, or think ourselves inferior to someone who has more gifts than we, but that we must rather do the very best we can to serve the Lord with the gifts He has given us.

Most important of all, we should never seek the gifts of the Spirit apart from the fruit of the Spirit. For Paul makes it very clear that to exercise spiritual gifts in an unloving way is to go contrary to the purpose for which these gifts were given (I Cor. 13:1-3). Teaching is a most valuable gift, but those whose teaching has its roots in conceit and causes dissension and slander are condemned in no uncertain terms (I Tim. 6:3-5). Ruling is a gift for which the possessor should be very thankful, but a Diotrephes who abuses his ruling office for his own selfish purposes is sharply rebuked by the Apostle John (III John 9-10). The warning uttered by these New Testament writers still holds for us: anyone who is more concerned to reveal the gifts of the Spirit than to show the fruit of the Spirit, or who revels in the possession of certain spiritual gifts apart from the exercise of the fruit of the Spirit, is out of harmony with the will of God.

Exercising the gifts of the Spirit while at the same time revealing the fruit of the Spirit, however, is bound to bring great blessings. The surest proof of being filled with the Spirit is to see both the gifts and the fruit in our lives. This means using the gifts of the Spirit not for our own self-centered purposes, but for the benefit of others, while at the same time growing in spiritual fruitfulness.

Let us not neglect the Spirit's gifts. But, above all, let us seek the Spirit's fruit. For where the Spirit is wholly yielded to, there the fruit will abound.



## THE CHURCH AND ITS ORDINANCES (ECCLESIOLOGY)

### I. The Nature of the Church

#### A. Old Testament Background

##### 1. Old Testament terms

- a. "My special treasure" -- Exodus 19:5
- b. "a kingdom of priests" -- Exodus 19:6
- c. "a holy nation" -- Exodus 19:6
- d. "the Lord's portion" -- Deuteronomy 32:9
- e. "His people" -- Deuteronomy 32:9
- f. "the allotment of His inheritance" -- Deuteronomy 32:9
- g. "Jacob My servant" -- Isaiah 45:4
- h. "Israel My chosen" -- Isaiah 45:4
- i. "Zion" -- Isaiah 51:16
- j. "congregation" (EDAH -- קָהָל)

This term is used 149 times in the Old Testament. In the A.V. it is translated "congregation" 124 times, "company" 13 times, "assembly" 9 times, and "multitude", "people", and "swarm" one time each. In the LXX it is translated SUNAGOGE 127 times. Selected references include:

Exodus 12:3 -- "Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying, "On the tenth of this month they are each one to take a lamb for themselves, according to their father's households, a lamb for each household."

Exodus 12:19 -- "Seven days there shall be no leaven found in your houses; for whoever eats what is leavened, that person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is an alien or a native of the land."

Leviticus 4:13 -- "Now if the whole congregation of Israel commits error, and the matter escapes the notice of the assembly (QAHAL), and they commit any of the things which the Lord has commanded not to be done, and they become guilty."

Leviticus 4:15 -- "Then the elders of the congregation shall lay their hands on the head of the bull before the Lord, and the bull shall be slain before the Lord."

Leviticus 8:4-5 -- "so Moses did just as the Lord commanded him. When the congregation was assembled at the doorway of the tent of meeting, Moses said to the congregation, "This is the thing which the Lord has commanded to do."

Numbers 16:6 -- "Do this: take censers for yourselves, Korah and all your company."

Numbers 16:19-22 -- "Thus Korah assembled all the congregation against them at the doorway of the tent of meeting. And the glory of the Lord appeared to all the congregation. Then the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, "Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them instantly." But they fell on their faces, and said, "O God, Thou God of the spirits of all flesh, when one man sins, wilt Thou be angry with the entire congregation?"

Joshua 18:1 -- "Then the whole congregation of the sons of Israel assembled themselves at Shiloh, and set up the tent of meeting there; and the land was subdued before them."

Judges 14:8 -- "When he returned later to take her, he turned aside to look at the carcass of the lion; and behold, a swarm of bees and honey were in the body of the lion."

Psalms 1:5 -- "Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous."

k. "assembly" (QAHAL -- קָהָל)

This term is used 123 times in the Old Testament. In the A.V. it is translated "congregation" 85 times, "company" 18 times, "assembly" 17 times, and "multitude" 3 times. In the LXX it is translated EKKLESIA 60 times, SUNAGOGE 36 times, and by some other words, including OCHLOS, PLETHOS, SUSTASIS, and SUNEDRION. Selected references include:

Genesis 48:4 -- "And He said to me, "Behold, I will make you fruitful and numerous, and I will make you a company of peoples, and will give this land to your descendants after you for an everlasting possession."

Exodus 12:6 -- "And you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month, then the whole assembly of the congregation (EDAH) of Israel is to kill it at twilight."

Exodus 16:3 -- "And the sons of Israel said to them, "Would that we had died by the Lord's hand in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat, when we ate bread to the full; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

Numbers 19:20 -- "But the man who is unclean and does not purify himself from uncleanness, that person shall be cut off from the midst of the assembly, because he has defiled the sanctuary of the Lord; the water for impurity has not been sprinkled on him, he is unclean."

I Kings 8:14 -- "Then the king faced about and blessed all the assembly of Israel, while all the assembly of Israel was standing."

II Chronicles 6:12 -- "Then he stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the assembly of Israel and spread out his hands."

Ezra 10:1 -- "Now while Ezra was praying and making confession, weeping and prostrating himself before the house of God, a very large assembly, men, women, and children, gathered to him from Israel; for the people wept bitterly."

Nehemiah 5:13 -- "I also shook out the front of my garment and said, 'Thus may God shake out every man from his house and from his possessions who does not fulfill this promise; even thus may he be shaken out and emptied.' And all the assembly said, 'Amen!' And they praised the Lord. Then the people did according to this promise."

Psalms 149:1 -- "Praise the Lord! Sing to the Lord a new song, And His praise in the congregation of the godly ones."

Jeremiah 31:8 -- "Behold, I am bringing them from the north country, And I will gather them from the remote parts of the earth, Among them the blind and the lame, The woman with child and she who is in labor with child, together; A great company, they shall return here."

NOTE: The *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (TWOT) asserts that "QAHAL and EDAH seem to be synonymous for all practical purposes" (Volume 1, p. 388).

## 2. Summary of Old Testament data

In the Old Testament the congregation of the children of Israel was chosen, called out of Egypt, and redeemed by the blood of the Passover lamb, which looked forward to the atoning sacrifice of the Lamb of God. The congregation was to be God's special treasure, a kingdom of priests, a holy nation, the Lord's portion, the people of God, the allotment of His inheritance, and His servant.

The congregation was led by elders, Levites, and priests; assembled regularly and on special occasions for instruction and public worship; and exercised discipline when it became necessary.

B. New Testament Data

1. New Testament terms

- a. "one body," "the body," "His body" -- I Corinthians 12:13; Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 5:30
- b. "fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God" -- Ephesians 2:12, 19
- c. "one new man" -- Ephesians 2:15
- d. "a holy temple" -- Ephesians 2:21
- e. "the true circumcision" -- Philippians 3:3
- f. "a chosen race" -- I Peter 2:9
- g. "a royal priesthood" -- I Peter 2:9
- h. "a holy nation" -- I Peter 2:9
- i. "a special people," "the people of God" -- I Peter 2:9-10
- j. "a kingdom, priests" -- Revelation 1:6
- k. "assembly" (SUNAGOGUE -- συναγωγή)

This term is used 57 times in the New Testament. In the A.V. It is translated "synagogue" 55 times, "assembly" once, and "congregation" once. In the LXX it translated EDAG 127 times and QAHAL 36 times. Selected references include:

Matthew 4:23 -- "And Jesus was going about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people."

Luke 7:5 -- "for he (a certain centurion) loves our nation, and it was he who built us our synagogue."

Luke 8:41 -- "And behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was an official of the synagogue; and he fell at Jesus' feet, and began to entreat Him to come to his house."

Acts 9:20 -- "and Immediately he [Paul] began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, 'He is the Son of God.' "

Acts 13:43 -- "Now when the meeting of the synagogue had broken up, many of the Jews and of the God-fearing proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, were urging them to continue in the grace of God."

Acts 17:17 -- "So he was reasoning in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Gentiles, and in the market place every day with those who happened to be present."

James 2:2 -- "For if a man comes into your assembly with a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, and there also comes in a poor man in dirty clothes,"

Revelation 2:9 -- "I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich), and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan."

I. "church" (EKKLESIA -- ἐκκλησία)

This term is used 115 times in the New Testament. In the A.V. It is translated "church" 112 times, and "assembly" 3 times. In the LXX It is used 100 times, and translates QAHAL 60 times, and the derivatives of QAHAL 40 times. Selected references show that the uses of EKKLESIA in the New Testament divide into two classes, based on distinct meanings:

- a. Class #1 -- the whole Body of believers, an Organism made up of true believers

Matthew 16:18 -- "And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it."

Romans 12:5 -- "so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another."

Ephesians 1:22-23 -- "And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all."

Ephesians 5:25-30 -- "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her; that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless. So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, because we are members of His body."

Colossians 1:18 -- "He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything."

Hebrews 12:22-23 -- "But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the general assembly and the church of the first-born who are enrolled in

heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to spirits of righteous men made perfect."

- b. Class #2 -- a local congregation of believers, an organization of professing Christians who regularly assemble for worship, together with their officers

Romans 16:3-5 -- "Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who for my life risked their own necks, to whom not only do I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles; also greet the church that is in their house. Greet Epaenetus, my beloved, who is the first convert to Christ in Asia."

I Corinthians 1:2 -- "to the church of God which is in Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with all who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours:"

I Corinthians 16:19 -- "The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Prisca greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house."

Galatians 1:2 -- "and all the brethren who are with me, to the churches of Galatia."

Philippians 4:15 -- "And you yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone."

Colossians 4:15-16 -- "Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea and also Nympha and the church that is in her house. And when this letter is read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and you, for your part read my letter that is coming from Laodicea."

I Thessalonians 1:1 -- "Paul and Silvanus and Timothy to the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace."

Philemon 2 -- "and to Apphia our sister, and to Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house."

III John 9-10 -- "I wrote something to the church; but Diotrephes, who loves to be first among them, does not accept what we say. For this reason, if I come, I will call attention to his deeds which he does, unjustly accusing us with wicked words; and not satisfied with this, neither does he himself receive the brethren, and he forbids those who desire to do so, and puts them out of the church."

Revelation 1:11 -- "saying, 'Write in a book what you see, and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.' "

NOTE: Acts 9:31 appears to be a collective usage of EKKLESIA: "So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and, going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to increase.

NOTE: The *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* asserts that "EKKLESIA and SUNAGOGE . . . mean much the same and often correspond to the same Hebrew word QAHAL" and that "both words are used both technically and non-technically, as underlined by the fact that translation varied between 'assembly', 'company', and 'congregation'." (Volume 3, p. 528). The TDNT further states that "there is no point in laying particular stress on the derivation of the noun EKKLESIA from the verb EKKALEIN and the related adjective EKKLETOS. In this respect it is significant that neither EKKALEIN nor EKKLETOS occurs in the New Testament. (Volume 3, p. 530).

## 2. Summary of New Testament data

In the new Testament the church has been chosen, called out of the world, and redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, Jesus Christ. The church is both the body of Christ and local congregations of believers, both an organism and organized groups of professing Christians. The church is to be fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God, one new man, a holy temple, the true circumcision, a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a special people, the people of God, and a kingdom of priests. The church is to be led by elders and deacons; to assemble regularly and on special occasions for instruction and public worship; and to exercise discipline when it becomes necessary.

## C. Aspects of the Church

### 1. Invisible and Visible Aspects

Both Luther and Calvin spoke of a visible and an invisible church, but they did not refer to two different Churches, but to two aspects of the one Church of Jesus Christ.

#### a. The invisible Church

On the one hand the Church is made up of true believers only, the elect whose spiritual state is known infallibly to God alone: "The Lord knows those who are His." (II Timothy 2:19) The nature of saving faith and regeneration, and the possibility of self-deception and hypocrisy point up the validity of this aspect.

b. The visible Church

On the other hand the Church is made up of professing believers, whose profession is visible to human beings. Some of these are true believers and some are not: "They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, in order that it might be shown that they all are not of us." (I John 2:19). The occasional need for extreme discipline also points up the validity of the distinction. Thus the apostle Paul writes: "For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Do you not judge those who are within the church? But those who are outside, God judges. Remove the wicked man from among yourselves." (I Corinthians 5:12-13). He goes on to say: "Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God." (I Corinthians 6:9-10).

2. Space Aspects

a. The Universal Church

The universal Church is the Church as it is found throughout the world. At times the catholic or universal church is identified with the invisible Church. Thus the Belgic Confession states: "We believe and profess one catholic or universal Church, which is a holy congregation of true Christian believers, all expecting their salvation in Jesus Christ, being washed by His blood, sanctified and sealed by the Holy Spirit." (Article 27). And the Westminster Confession states: "The catholic or universal Church, which is invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect, that have been, are or shall be gathered into one, under Christ the Head thereof; and is the spouse, the body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all." (Chapter 25). However, for the sake of clarity it might be better to use the term "universal Church" when we are referring to the Church throughout the world, whether we are speaking of it as invisible or visible.

b. The Local Church

The local church is the local body of professing believers, together with their officers, that carry on the functions of the Church.

3. Time Aspects

a. The Church of All Ages

b. The Old Testament Church, the New Testament Church

c. The Church of One Time Period (e.g., the twentieth-century Church)



4. Militant and Triumphant Aspects

a. The Church Militant

Louis Berkhof describes this aspect as follows: "The Church in the present dispensation is a militant Church, that is, she is called unto, and is actually engaged in, a holy warfare. This, of course, does not mean that she must spend her strength in self-destroying internecine struggles, but that she is duty bound to carry on an incessant warfare against the hostile world in every form in which it reveals itself, whether in the Church or outside of it, and against all the spiritual forces of darkness . . . . She must be engaged with all her might in the battles of her Lord, fighting in a war that is both offensive and defensive." (*Systematic Theology*, Fourth Revised Edition, p. 565).

b. The Church Triumphant

Berkhof describes this aspect as follows: "If the Church on earth is the militant Church, the Church in heaven is the triumphant Church. There the sword is exchanged for the palm of victory, the battle-cries are turned into songs of triumph, and the cross is replaced by the crown. The strife is over, the battle is won, and the saints reign with Christ forever and ever." (*ibid.*)

D. The Relationship of the New Testament Church to the Old Testament Congregation

1. A dispensational view of the relationship

The following quotations are excerpted from John F. Walvoord's book, *The Church in Prophecy* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1964), specifically chapters 1-3:

"The purpose of God not only to provide a Redeemer but also a testimony to His name through a godly seed gradually unfolds in the Old Testament."  
(page 14)

"By some, the nation Israel is considered to be an early stage of the church and organically one with the church of the New Testament . . . This point of view has also supported the concepts that the church in the Old Testament is essentially one with the church of the New Testament. Premillenarians . . . tend to distinguish believers in Christ in the present age from the saints of the Old Testament, that is, a body of believers whose sins are forgiven and who will have a blessed eternity in the presence of God. Disagreement exists as to whether the term church is properly applied to these saints of the Old Testament . . . . A careful study of both the old and New Testament, however, seems to justify the conclusion that something new began on the Day of Pentecost, namely, a body of believers distinct in divine purpose and situation from saints who preceded them in the Old Testament."  
(page 16-17)

". . . gahal, when translated ekklesia, is always used in reference to an assembly or meeting of some description in one locality, i.e., a physical assembly, and the word is never used to represent the idea of a mystic company of saints joined in a spiritual way, though scattered geographically. The idea of the church as an ecclesia composed of individual saints widely scattered geographically is never found in the Old Testament."

(page 18)

"Of the major significance is the declaration, 'I will build my church.' What is here contemplated is obviously not a continuation of that which had begun in the Old Testament . . . . In the face of national rejection on the part of Israel, He proclaims a new divine purpose, namely the formation of a new assembly to be delineated on a spiritual rather than racial lines and without the territorial or political characteristics. It was to be composed of those who, like Peter, had confessed Jesus Christ as the Son of God."

(page 21)

"Most expositors agree that the New Testament church in some sense began on the Day of Pentecost . . . . The church could not properly begin until after His death and resurrection and the coming of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, the prophecy of Christ that they would be baptized by the Spirit 'not many days hence' (Acts 1:5) was fulfilled and with this the New Testament church formally began. . . . The apostolic church could be distinguished as having two major aspects: (1) its outer testimony as a body of professed followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, and (2) the spiritual church composed of all true believers and referred to as "the body of Christ" (I Corinthians 12:13, 27). The distinction is one of a sphere of profession in contrast to a sphere of reality, the outward in contrast to the inward, the geographic or local in contrast to the universal."

(pages 22-23)

"The program for the church was unfolded in principle on the last night Christ spent with His disciples prior to His crucifixion and is contained in the Upper Room Discourse (John 13-17). Here is the great Magna Charta of the church . . . . Prominent in the revelation given by Christ to His disciples is the promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost and in the subsequent experience of the church. Christ announced this in John 14:16-17 . . . In these verses Christ anticipated that the Spirit of God would come after His ascension to heaven and would take up the task of building a church or a body of true believers composed of both Jews and Gentiles . . . . the Spirit thus given is promised to abide with believers in this present age forever, in contrast to the ministry of the Spirit in the Old Testament in which he would come only in a temporary way as in the case of King Saul . . . . Christ contrasts what was true before and after Pentecost in the expression, 'for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.' Here is the theological distinction between the work of the Spirit before Pentecost and after Pentecost. . . prior to Pentecost . . . it is described as the ministry of one who dwells with the saints. After Pentecost, a new relationship is described as the Holy Spirit being in you (John 14:17)."

(pages 36-37)

"In John 14:20, an additional fact is mentioned . . . which is of great significance in view of the subsequent unfolding of the doctrine of the body of Christ . . . the statement, 'ye in me', affirms a new position to be given the church, the body of Christ, far more intimate and blessed in its relationship than anything ever offered to the nation Israel in the Old Testament . . . Instead of being related to God as Israel was by covenant relationship and by being members of a chosen physical race, the church was to have a spiritual unity with Christ in which they would be identified with Christ, the Head of the church, would be members of His body, and would constitute together an organism with a living union rather than an association based essentially either on race or covenant. . . The important fact was their personal union with Jesus Christ and to all fellow believers." (pages 39-40)

"Taken as a whole, the high-priestly prayer of Christ in John 17 is a panoramic view of God's divine purpose in this present age, and is in sharp distinction to His purpose for Israel in many respects, since it is a revelation of God's divine purpose for the church composed of both Jews and Gentiles." (page 41)

## 2. A nondispensational view of the relationship

### What is the Church?

In its broadest sense the Church may be defined as follows:

- the people of God of all ages, from Adam to the last person who will be savingly united to Christ and the benefits of His redemption;
- all those saved by grace through faith on the ground of Christ's atoning work;
- all those whom God has foreknow, predestinated, called, justified, and sanctified;
- all those who have been born of God, who have become members of God's redemptive family, who are indwelt by the Spirit of God;
- the whole body of professing believers in God's salvation, manifested in local gatherings with their officers and ministers, and carrying out the functions of ministry of the word, right administration of the ordinances, and proper exercise of discipline.

### Is the Church an Exclusively New Testament Phenomenon?

The definitions given above apply to the saints of the Old Testament as well as those of the New Testament.

However, there are clear distinctions between the Old Testament as well as those of the New Testament body of believers. In what do these distinctions lie?

### Negatively

The distinction does not lie in the concept that New Testament believers are savingly united to Christ and the benefits of His redemption, whereas Old Testament believers were not.

The distinction does not lie in the concept that New Testament believers are saved by divine grace through faith on the basis of Christ's atonement, whereas Old Testament believers were saved by divine indebtedness on the basis of fulfillment of the Law.

The distinction does not lie in the concept that New Testament believers are foreknown, predestined, called, justified, and glorified, whereas Old Testament believers were not.

The distinction does not lie in the concept that New Testament believers are born of God, members of God's family, and indwelt by the Holy Spirit, whereas Old Testament believers were not.

The distinction does not lie in the concept that the New Testament body is made up only of true believers, whereas the Old Testament body was made up of a mixture of unbelievers and believers. The New Testament body in its external expression is made up of professing believers (those merely professing) and those who are true believers, just as the Old Testament body in its external expression was made up of professing believers and those who were true believers.

The distinction does not lie in the concept that the New Testament body in its external expression has officers and ministers, and carries out the functions of the preaching of the Word, the administration of ordinances, and the exercise of responsible discipline, whereas the Old Testament body in its external expression did not.

Then where do the distinctions between the Old Testament body and the New Testament body lie? in what do these distinctions consist?

### Positively

First of all, from Adam until Moses, the people of God appear to have been externally expressed in family congregations (e.g., Noah, Abraham, Lot, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Job, the Children of Israel in Egypt). From Moses until Christ, the people of God were externally expressed in a twofold manner: first, as a religious community of professing believers in Jehovah, whose worship was governed by His laws and administered by His appointed religious officials; and second, as a political state ruled by Jehovah, governed by His laws, and administered by His appointed civic officials. From Moses until the Exile, all religious exercises (in the narrow sense) took place either at the Tabernacle or Temple, or in the home (although it is highly probable that local gatherings of believers met regularly under the leadership of the Levites for the purpose of hearing and understanding the Word, prayer, and singing of psalms). During the time of the Exile in Babylon, when the temple lay in ruins, these gatherings (called synagogues) were the centers of expression of religious exercises in the narrow sense; and appear to have developed into organized form, with officers and structured worship formats that were highly visible by the time of Christ.

Under the New Testament the people of God are externally expressed as a religious community, but not as a political entity (either a state, or a state

within a state). At first, the professing community was administered only by the apostles chosen by Christ Himself. However, it soon became apparent that oversight of the temporal needs of the gathered community was necessary, and thus the apostles appointed the first deacons to administer this area of need. A little later, when the disciples (at first without the apostles) were scattered by persecution, and congregations were established in various parts of the empire, including Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor, Greece, and Italy, it became apparent that some kind of administrative oversight and leadership was necessary, and elders and deacons were appointed in these congregation, either by apostles, representatives of apostles, or by the people employing apostolically-formulated criteria for the appointment of these officers. Although worship under the New Testament is to take place primarily in the context of the gathered professing community, this does not rule out the appropriateness or utility of family or private worship.

Under the Old Testament, during the period from Adam to Moses, the head of the household appears to have been the administrator of religious exercises. During the period from Moses to the Exile, the administration of religious exercises was committed to divinely appointed religious officials, including priests and teaching Levites. During the period from the Exile to Christ, the administration of religious exercises connected with the Temple was in the hands of the priests and Levites (once the Temple was rebuilt), but the administration of the religious exercises connected with the synagogues was in the hands of ruling elders (with one head elder), synagogue attendants, and teaching Levites.

Under the New Testament, the administration of religious exercises is committed to divinely appointed religious officials, including teaching elders (ministers in the technical sense), ruling elders, and deacons.

Second of all, in addition to these differences in external administration of religious exercises between the Old Testament professing religious community and the New Testament professing religious community, there are no clear differences in the external form of religious exercises between the two professing religious communities.

Under the Old Testament, from Adam to Moses, family and personal worship seems to have been fairly simple, centered mainly in believing contemplation of God and believing obedience to the revealed will of God, chiefly by means of sacrifices and offerings. From Moses to Christ, corporate, family, and personal worship was centered mainly in the sacrifices and offerings connected with the Tabernacle and Temple, the celebration of the regular religious festivals, and the observance of the ceremonial regulations regarding unclean things, purification, dietary strictures, tithes, and the Sabbath. But in addition there were doubtless regular local gatherings under the leadership of teaching Levites, in which believers studied God's Word, prayed, and sang together. Although there were many religious exercises under the Old Testament, there were two that were highlighted in the life of the Old Testament believer: circumcision and Passover. The first was the sign and seal of initiation into the covenant community (both religious and political); the second was the sign and seal of continuation in the covenant community (both religious and political). The spiritual seed of Abraham (believing Israelites) carried out all of these religious exercises as expressions of true saving faith; those who were not Abraham's spiritual seed (not believing Israelites) either

were not observant Jews, or carried out these religious exercises in order to earn merit and a right standing before God. Neither the sacrifices nor the festivals nor the ceremonial regulations benefitted those unbelieving Israelites who carried them out, since their observance was not mixed with faith in Jehovah or in the coming Redeemer and sin-bearer, the Messiah.

Under the New Testament the Temple service has been abrogated through the atonement of Christ, the religious festivals have either been abrogated through the atonement of Christ or repealed by positive divine enactment, and the ceremonial regulations have either been repealed, their essential principles carried over into the new dispensation, or replaced by fewer and simpler ordinances. Under the New Testament there are two religious exercises that are highlighted in the life of the New Testament believer: baptism and the Lord's Supper. The first is the sign and seal of initiation into the covenant community (now only in the religious sense); the second is the sign and seal of continuation in the covenant community (again only in the religious sense). The spiritual seed of Abraham (believing Jews and Gentile) carry out these (and other) religious exercises as expressions of true saving faith; those who are not Abraham's spiritual seed carry out these religious exercises in order to earn merit and a right standing before God. Neither these exercises (not any others) benefit these unbelieving members of the covenant community, since their observance is not mixed with faith in God or in His Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thus, although there are clear differences of external administration and form between the Old and New Testament dispensations, these differences do not affect the underlying unities of the Covenant of Grace, the Decree of Predestination, and the spiritual seed of all ages.

### Are There Then Two Churches?

If there is but one people of God (whether comprised of Jews or Gentiles or both) who are saved by grace through faith on the ground of Christ's atoning work, the question still remains as to whether we need to distinguish between the New Testament Church (which began when the blood of the New Testament was poured out at Calvary) and the Old Testament Church (which began when the blood of the Old Testament was first poured out in the period after the Fall). The clear dispensational differences established in Scripture itself, which pertain not only to the "superior" atonement of Christ as compared with the sacrifices of the Old Testament, but also to the differences of external administration and form of worship between the testaments, would appear to establish a firm foundation for a distinction between the Old Testament church and the New Testament Church.

Yet because the covenant communities are really one in Christ, there are not two bodies, two churches, but one. There is one church, but it appears in two forms: the Old Testament Church and the New Testament Church. And because the believers of both communities are one in Christ, we may properly speak of them as Old Testament Christians and New Testament Christians. Just as Christ built the Old Testament form of His Church by His Word and Spirit, so He is building the New Testament form of His Church by His Word and Spirit.

Some Problems that Some Dispensationalists Have with This conception of the Church

(1) The Problem of the Time Element in God's Program

This is really a cluster of problems, centering around the time of Christ's death and resurrection, and the question of which spiritual realities are tied to that time. The basic problem is this: How can spiritual blessings which are based upon the time-space facticity of Christ's death and resurrection be applied before those events occur?

For example, how could Old Testament believers be regenerated or indwelt by the Holy Spirit until Christ died, rose, ascended, and sent the Holy Spirit at Pentecost? And how could there be an Old Testament body of Christ until Christ sent the Holy Spirit? And how could Christ build a church until He became incarnate and accomplished redemption? These are all time problems. Furthermore, how could old Testament believers be united to a Christ who was not yet incarnate, who had not yet died and risen and ascended to the right hand of the Father?

One answer is simply to conclude that none of these blessings could come to any Old Testament believer until Christ actually accomplished redemption in time. Another answer is that Christ's redemptive work was certain in God's eternal purpose; thus all atonement blessings could be applied in the Old Testament period, and especially to the Old Testament believer.

(2) The Problem of Dispensational Differences in the Ministries of the Holy Spirit

The problem here is this: Which of the personal ministries of the Holy Spirit (conviction, regeneration, indwelling, filling, fullness, sanctification, assurance, etc.) recognized as the rightful portion of the New Testament believer were also the rightful portion of the Old Testament believer?

Are the differences total? Is this an either-or situation? Or are there some ministries which pertain to both, some which differ in degree, and perhaps some which differ in kind? And which are which?

Indwelling is certainly one sticking point, but I believe the problem here is one of definition, not of spiritual reality.

If the baptizing of the Holy Spirit is taken as a technical concept related to the forming of a new body (entirely new, that is) by the Holy Spirit, who baptized New Testament believers (both Jews and Gentiles) into union with the Head of the new body; and if this baptism is identified with what happened on the Day of Pentecost and on subsequent occasions with groups and individuals; then there is another sticking point. However, if I Corinthians 12:13 is understood indeed as the Holy Spirit's ministry of uniting all true believers to Christ and thus to each other in one body; and if Acts 2 is understood as something quite different (at least as far as the 120 disciples in the upper room are concerned), i.e., as the pouring out of the Holy Spirit in the ministry of filling; and if both I Corinthians 12:13 and Acts 2 are understood as baptisms, then "the baptism of the Holy Spirit" loses its alleged technical significance, and stands for differing ministries of the Spirit.

In such a case, the idea of Pentecost as "the birthday of the Church" would not stand, even though the New Testament church could be understood to begin shortly before this time, at the accomplishment of the New Testament in Christ's blood at the cross.

However, that there are differences in degree in some of the ministries of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament and the New Testament can be affirmed, and perhaps some differences of kind. However, these ministries need to be clearly defined before comparisons can be made.

### (3) The Problem of the New Testament "Mystery" Concept

There are actually two problems here. One is whether a "mystery" is something totally unknown in past ages or only dimly and partially known. The other is whether an epistemological mystery indicates an ontological mystery (in the absolute sense of mystery).

That is, if a spiritual reality (say, regeneration) was not revealed at all in the Old Testament, or not as clearly revealed in the Old Testament as in the New, does it follow that the spiritual reality did not exist in the Old Testament?

Can we adopt the hermeneutical principle that NON-REVELATION OF A TRUTH = NON-EXISTENCE OF THE CORRESPONDING REALITY, and apply this principle consistently?

John F. Walvoord (*The Church in Prophecy*, pp. 26-27) says that the term "mystery" is "properly used throughout the New Testament to describe truth revealed in the New Testament which was hidden from view as far as Old Testament revelation is concerned."

And Lewis Sperry Chafer (*Systematic Theology*, Volume 6, pp. 72-73) says that "Of the present ministries of the Holy Spirit in relation to the believer - regeneration, indwelling or anointing, baptizing, sealing, and filling -- nothing indeed is said with respect to these having been experienced by the Old Testament saints, excepting a few well-defined instances where individuals were said to be filled with the Spirit. Old Testament saints are invested with these blessings only theoretically, and without the support of the Bible, by those who read New Testament blessings back into the Old Testament . . ." Earlier in the same volume Chafer writes: "individual regeneration, so far as the testimony of Scripture is concerned, is a New Testament provision. Though Israelites were rightly related to God as such by physical birth, they anticipated in time to come the reception of eternal life as an 'inheritance' . . ." (Volume 6, p. 36).

Yet Chafer makes a fatal concession -- one for which he has been roundly and deservedly criticized! He says (p. 73) "With respect to regeneration, the Old Testament saints were evidently renewed; but as there is no definite doctrinal teaching relative to the extent and character of that renewal, no positive declaration can be made."

But what can this mean? Old Testament saints were not regenerated, yet were evidently renewed? What is the meaning of "renewed" in this sentence? And since Chafer himself states that "there is no definite doctrinal teaching relative to the extent and character of that renewal," and that therefore "no positive declaration can be made," how can Chafer make the positive declaration that "Old Testament saints were evidently renewed?"



And what is even more difficult to understand is that Chafer made this positive declaration in 1948, whereas C. I. Scofield, writing in 1899 in his *Plain Papers on the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit* stated the following (pp. 30-31):

In the Old Testament the Holy Spirit is revealed . . . as a divine Person. As such He is associated in the work of creation strives with sinful man . . . gives skill of hand . . . bestows physical strength. . . and qualifies the servants of God for a various ministry . . . To this should be added that operation of the spirit by which the men of faith in the Old Testament ages were regenerated. While this doctrine is not explicitly taught in the Old Testament (except prophetically), our Lord's words in John 3:5 and Luke 13:28, leave no doubt as to the fact itself. Since the new birth is essential to seeing and entering the kingdom of God, and since the Old Testament saints are in that kingdom, it follows necessarily that they were born of the Spirit.

Chafer's positive declaration is again difficult to understand in the light of the statements of William Kelly, writing in 1915 in his *Lectures on the New Testament Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*. Kelly states (p. 295) that "the saints had a new nature all through the Old Testament times (though not revealed then) . . ." He also says: "there is such a thing as spiritual life; and there always was such a thing; for it is the necessary condition of having to do with God. There always was, as there is, a positive new nature given to the believer; that is, it is not merely a question of faith, but of a new life." (pp. 3-4) Even more explicitly, he asserts: "Of course, He, the son, is the quickener of all saints, and therefore it is to me no question whether the Old Testament saints have not been quickened as really as ourselves; assuredly they must be and were. I hold, that there never was but one Saviour, and consequently that the new birth, which all need for God's kingdom, is ever the impartation, by the Spirit, of the life which is in the Son of God." (p. 21) And so that Kelly will not be misunderstood, he states: "in point of fact, no intelligent believer doubts it was true from the fall onwards, and that the Old Testament saints were born of water and the Spirit no less than those of the New Testament." (p. 52)

Notice! Neither Scofield nor Kelly subscribe to the principle that lack of explicit teaching concerning an operation of the spirit in a particular time period indicates absence of that operation during that time period!

Simply because the concept of the church as a spiritual body in which Christ and all believers are united was not revealed in the Old Testament, does this mean that the church in this sense could not have existed during the Old Testament? Only if one adopts the assumption: "not revealed therefore nonexistent."

Almost all dispensationalists in the early period of the movement rejected this assumption; a number in the middle period adopted it; and quite a few in the contemporary period have once again rejected it.

However, if one rejects this assumption -- NOT REVEALED, THEREFORE NONEXISTENT -- how can one continue to stress the idea that the church was nonexistent in the Old Testament period, simply on the ground that the concept of the church (and the New Testament church, at that!) was not revealed in the Old Testament?

(4) The Problem of the Hermeneutics of Prophecy

The problem here is one arising out of the fear that any recognition of a unity between the old Testament covenant community and the New Testament community could result in the obscuring or even the destruction of the clear distinction between the place of Israel and the place of the church in God's prophetic program, thus opening the way either for a figurative-spiritualization interpretation of Old Testament predictions related to Israel, or for a post-tribulationist rapturist view.

Although I am sympathetic to these fears, I believe that they are groundless, and for two reasons.

First, it simply does not follow that "a consistent application of Covenant Theology to eschatology leads inevitably to Amillennialism." In point of fact, there is nothing in the concepts of the Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace in their outworking that even hints at a particular stance on the millennial issue! That issue must be settled by the hermeneutics of predictive prophecy one adopts and employs! Consistent Covenant Theologians have numbered among them Premillennialists, Postmillennialists, and Amillennialists. The difference is not consistency it is hermeneutics!

The second reason I believe these fears are groundless is that it is possible to be a non-dispensationalist and be a pre-tribulationist, and an imminent pre-tribulationist at that! It does not follow that giving up an absolute distinction between Israel and the church leads inevitably to post-tribulationism (although many former dispensationalists have become post-tribulationists), unless, of course, the only basis for holding to pre-tribulationism lies in dispensational arguments and assumptions. It is possible to be an imminent pre-tribulationist and a covenant theologian with no more dispensational convictions than those of the Westminster Divines, who held that the one Covenant of Grace (God's single Plan of Salvation) was unfolded under different dispensations and by means of various historical covenants!

However, let us see whether it is possible to make good the claim that the fears of some that belief in the unity of the one body in all ages (with dispensational distinctions) will destroy any understanding of God's prophetic program are indeed groundless. Let us, for examples, take two dispensational arguments for pre-tribulationist Rapture, and see what happens eschatologically if we remove the dispensational assumptions in these arguments.

Let us take, first of all, the argument from Daniel's vision of the 70 weeks. The argument goes as follows:

- (a) The whole vision of Daniel 9:24-27 pertains to Israel.
- (b) The church does not appear in the first 69 weeks of Daniel's prediction; therefore it cannot appear in the 70th week.
- (c) Daniel's 70th week is the Tribulation Period
- (d) Since the church does not appear in the 70th week, it must be raptured before the 70th week begins.
- (e) Thus the Rapture of the church must be pre-tribulationist.

And let us take, secondly, the argument from the "restrainer" of II Thessalonians 2. The argument runs as follows:

- (a) The "restrainer" of II Thessalonians 2:7 is the Holy Spirit indwelling the church.
- (b) The "restrainer" must be taken out of the way before the Man of Sin is revealed.
- (c) The Man of Sin is revealed in the Tribulation Period.
- (d) The "restrainer" (and therefore the indwelt church) must be taken out of the way before the Tribulation Period.
- (e) Thus the Rapture of the church must be pre-tribulational.

In the first argument let us remove the assumption that the church cannot appear in the 70th week by simply dropping the hermeneutical fallacy: that simply because the church is not revealed in the prediction of the 70th week, that therefore the church cannot exist (side by side with Israel) during the 70th week on earth. Does this cause us to immediately conclude to a posttribulational view? Hopefully not! In fact, if the church is viewed as comprised of all believers of all ages, and if a great many people become believers during the 70th week (during the Tribulation Period), and if these are members of the Tribulation form of the church, it does not follow that the New Testament believers cannot be raptured prior to the Tribulation Period! The point is, that simply recognizing the Tribulation believers as members of Christ's church does not settle the issue as to when the Rapture occurs in relation to the Tribulation.

In the second argument let us remove the assumption that if the Holy Spirit is "taken out of the way" He must be removed from earth to heaven. Let us also remove the assumption that, since "indwelling" means spatial presence in the believer's body, and since the Holy Spirit as indwelling the church will be "taken out of the way," therefore the church must also be "taken out of the way," i.e., raptured. If the restrainer is indeed the Holy Spirit (as I believe it is), His restraint upon the full expression of human depravity can be "taken out of the way" at the same time that He continues to be omnipresent (as He always has been, in all dispensations!), and at the same time that He regenerates and sustains Tribulation believers. And if the indwelling of the Spirit refers to that special saving relationship which the omnipresent Spirit maintains to the believer, then it is possible for Tribulation believers to be indwelt by the Spirit, and for New Testament believers to be raptured prior to the Tribulation Period (on some other ground, of course).

A recognition of the unity of Christ's church in all ages does not dictate our eschatological position on the millennial question or on the tribulation issue!

## II. The Functions of the Church

### A. Scriptures that speak of the functions of the Church

Acts 2:41-47 -- "so then, those who had received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostle's teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. And everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. And all those who had believed were together, and had all things in common; and they began selling their property and possessions, and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. And day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved."

Acts 4:31-35 -- "And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak the word of God with boldness. And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul; and not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own; but all things were common property to them. And with great power the apostles were giving witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was upon them all. For there was not a needy person among them, for all who were owners of land or houses would sell them and bring the proceeds of the sale,, and lay them at the apostle's feet; and they would be distributed to each, as any had need."

Acts 5:42 -- "And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they kept right on teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ."

Acts 13:1-4 -- "Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers: Barnabas, and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. And while they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.' Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia and from there they sailed to Cyprus."

Acts 20:7 -- "And on the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul began talking to them, intending to depart the next day, and he prolonged his message until midnight."

Romans 12:4-13 -- "For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let each exercise them accordingly; if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith;

if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality.

B. Categorization of the functions of the Church

1. The prophetic function
  - a. Preaching
  - b. Teaching
  - c. Counseling
  - d. Reaching out in evangelistic and missionary activity
  - e. Attempting to influence our society and culture
2. The worship function
  - a. Assembling for worship
  - b. Conducting worship services
  - c. Conducting form ceremonies
  - d. Administering the ordinances/sacraments
  - e. Corporate prayer
3. The fellowship function
  - a. sharing the understanding of Scripture
  - b. Sharing Christian experience
  - c. Sharing hospitality
  - d. Sharing leisure-time activities
  - e. Sharing of special social occasions
4. The stewardship function
  - a. Stewardship of human resources

- b. Stewardship of material resources
    - (1) Money
    - (2) Physical Property
- 5. The discipline function
- 6. The civil responsibility function

### III. The Government of the Church

#### A. The Nature of Government in General

##### 1. A definition of government

*Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* defines "govern" as follows: 1. To direct and control; rule. 2. To regulate, restrain. 3. To be a rule or law for; to determine. To exercise authority. Govern connotes as its end a keeping in a straight course or smooth operation for the good of the individual and the whole.

##### 2. The three functions of the government

in general, government exercises three basic functions:

###### a. The first function of government is PROTECTION

This refers to that authority that protects us from wrongdoing by others, or protects others from wrongdoing by us.

Example: the police; the FBI; the Criminal Code

Example: immigration laws concerning undesirable aliens

Example: custom regulations concerning dope, certain foods, plants

Example: mail tampering laws

Example: false alarm laws

###### b. The second function of government is that of ENSURING COOPERATION

This refers to that authority that makes laws which to some degree interfere with our freedom, which by and large have to do with things that are not wrong in themselves, but which guarantees cooperation, so that we do not interfere with one another's freedom.

Example: most traffic regulations (lights, signs, lanes, signals)

Example: regulations prohibiting trespassing on private property

Example: regulations regarding disturbing the peace

Example: anti-trust and monopoly regulations

###### c. The third function of government is DIRECTION

This refers to that authority that directs activity, that attempts to regulate details of operation or of life in order to get a job done.

Example: regulations in the armed forces

Example: any organization characterized by a hierarchical structure, a chain of command, in which one person has the right to direct another person's work, or in which one person is responsible to closely supervise another person's activity, in order to accomplish a task or reach a goal.

B. The Nature of the Government of the Church

1. A definition of church Government

Church government is that authority committed by Christ to His Church which defines, establishes, and regulates its organization and the exercise of its functions.

Chapter 26 of the *Philadelphia Confession of Faith* (A.D. 1689) states:

The Lord Jesus Christ is the head of the church, in whom, by the appointment of the Father . . . all power for the calling, institution, order, or government of the church, is invested in a supreme and sovereign manner; . . .

In the execution of this power wherewith he is so entrusted, the Lord Jesus calleth out of the world unto himself, through the ministry of his word, by his Spirit, those that are . . . given unto him by his Father, that they may walk before him in all the ways of obedience, which he prescribeth to them in his word. Those thus called, he commandeth to walk together in particular societies, or . . . churches, for their mutual edification, and the due performance of that public worship, which he requireth of them in the world.

To each of these churches thus gathered, according to his mind declared in his word, he hath given all that . . . power and authority, which is any way needful for their carrying on that order in worship and discipline, which he hath instituted for them to observe, with commands and rules for the due and right executing of that power.

A particular church, gathered and completely organized, according to the mind of Christ, consists of officers and members: and the officers appointed by Christ to be chosen and set apart by the church (so called and gathered) for the peculiar administration of ordinances, and execution of power or duty, which he entrusts them with or calls them to, to be continued to the end of the world, are . . . bishops or elders, and deacons.

Chapter 1 of the *Form of Government* of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. (A.D. 1788) states:

That our blessed Savior, for the edification of the visible Church, which is his body, hath appointed officers, not only to preach the gospel and administer the sacraments, but also to exercise discipline, for the preservation both of truth and duty; and that it is incumbent upon these officers, and upon the whole Church, in whose name they act, to censure or cast out the



erroneous and scandalous, observing, in all cases, the rules contained in the Word of God. . . .

That all church power, whether exercised by the body in general or in the way of representation by delegated authority, is only ministerial and declarative; that is to say, that the Holy Scriptures are the only rule of faith and manners; that no church judicatory ought to pretend to make laws to bind the conscience in virtue of their own authority; and that all their decisions should be founded upon the revealed will of God. . . .

2. The three functions of government as applied to the church

How do the three functions of government relate to the government of the church? when do these functions (protection, ensuring cooperation, direction) come into play?

a. The first function -- PROTECTION -- as applied to the church

Whenever a person disturbs the services of worship, or attacks someone in the church (verbally or physically), or steals money from the offering or the church safe, or accidentally or purposely knocks down the church sign, or teaches heresy to the young people, or vandalizes the sanctuary, the first function comes into play. Whenever someone harms or endangers the persons or property or doctrine or reputation of the church, the function of protection is called for.

With regard to the exercise of this first function of government in the church, It should be decided (before problems arise) which matters are to be handled by the church itself, and which are to be handled by the secular authorities. To this end, policies need to be formulated, publicly stated, and taught to the people, so that the persons responsible for taking care of these problems will know what to do in such situations. A suggested form for one such policy statement is as follows:

It shall be the policy of the Faith Church of Tipton to report to the appropriate law enforcement authorities all crimes against the persons or property of Faith Church.

b. The second function -- ENSURING COOPERATION -- as applied to the church

If some church members want Sunday school before the morning worship service and others want it afterward, how is the issue decided? Some may want two Sunday morning services while others want one. Some want the evening service to be canceled due to poor attendance; others want it continued (even though they don't attend themselves). Some want prayer meeting in the church building; others want cottage prayer meetings in various homes. Some want to use the church van for an adult spiritual retreat; others want it for a teenage swim party (but with a devotional, of

course!). Some want the church services held to one hour in length, with a twenty-minute sermon; others want them to be seventy-five or ninety minutes long; still others want them to be flexible in length. Some want a more formal service of worship, with more liturgy; others want a more informal service, with less preaching and more singing and testimonies. Some want the church to give more than it presently does to a particular missionary, college, or seminary; others want the church to pay the pastor a higher salary; still others want the church to add a gymnasium or a new wing to the educational building. Some want the church to hire a part-time church secretary; others feel that the pastor's wife should do the secretarial work. Whenever there is an actual or potential conflict between the concerns or interests or preferences of individuals or groups in the church, the second function of government comes into play.

In order to implement the second function of government in the church, a set of mechanisms must be developed to permit, promote, and encourage cooperative resolution of conflict and peaceful restoration of harmony. Forums for expression of viewpoint and opinion should be provided; a spirit of compromise and concession on matters not wrong in themselves should be fostered; and a clearly-understood, equitable decision-making process should be established, including agreement on the part of the members of the church or group to abide by the outcomes of that process. This process should be agreed to by the members, and written into bylaws.

In connection with decision-making, it should be noted that some churches proceed on the basis of high percentage majorities; others proceed on the basis of the wise decision of the officers (after opportunity has been provided for all viewpoints to be aired and all aspects to be carefully weighed); still others proceed on the basis of the leader's decision. Whichever procedure is employed, it should be defined, established, and observed.

c. The third function -- DIRECTION -- as applied to the church

Whenever the church directs people to do certain things and tells them how and when to do them, the third function comes into play. For example, the officers of the church direct the treasurer how to spend the church's money, which obligations to pay and when, and how often they want him to make reports to them and to the congregation. The officers have authority to require the sexton to open the church buildings for all services and special gatherings and to lock them between times, to clean the buildings, to take out the trash, to make certain that the buildings are heated or cooled at the appropriate times, and to maintain the facilities in good working order. Other people in the church may miss some of the meetings or gatherings, but he may not miss any of them, so far as his responsibilities are concerned. The officers also have authority to direct those who

are under church discipline to do certain things to rectify or make restitution for public sins. Whenever the church directs people to do certain things and tells them how to do them, the third function comes into play.

In connection with this third function, the principle that certain individuals hold authority to direct other individuals to do certain things must be counterbalanced by the principle that wielders of authority must be held accountable for its exercise by those who confer that authority. Supervisors and managers of other people in the church must not only plan, organize, and direct the activities of those people; they must control and evaluate them, remembering that they in turn will be held accountable for their performance.

Also in connection with this function, it should be remembered that, although membership in the body of Christ is not optional for a believer, nevertheless membership in a local body of believers is a matter of voluntary association (as to which body one affiliates with). Those who have responsibility to direct the work of other persons should remember that persons who hold paid positions in the local church are often more susceptible to direction and evaluation than persons who hold nonremunerated positions; thus one must be careful how he goes about directing both kinds of persons.

### C. The Need of Government in the Church

#### 1. It is needed to fulfill the teaching of Scripture

The Church is an organism, a living body of believers. But it is also to have a form of organization.

Acts 14:23 -- "And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed."

Titus 1:5 -- "For this reason I left you in Crete, that you might set in order what remains, and appoint elders in every city as I directed you."

I Timothy 3:1-2, 8, 14-15 -- "It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do. An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach. . . . Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain, . . . I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long; but in case I am delayed, I write so that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth."

2. It is needed to ensure good order in the Church's fulfillment of its functions

Who is to preach the Word?

Who is to administer the ordinances?

Who is to exercise discipline?

Who is to administer the stewardship of the Church's resources?

3. It is needed to prevent the rise of unscriptural forms of government

Unscriptural forms inevitably arise when the scriptural pattern is ignored or rejected. Some forms inevitably hinder or prevent the church from carrying out its functions in a God-ordained manner. For example, a dictatorial pastor who gathers all local church power to himself will hinder the church from developing leadership qualities in its officers. This in turn will hinder the church from exercising its proper prophetic and teaching functions, by denying to able lay persons the opportunity to exercise their gifts and abilities in these areas. And he will almost certainly hinder or prevent the exercise of appropriate church discipline, especially when it concerns his favorites or (especially) himself or his family.

Of course, the possibility of the existence of an informal power structure in the church must always be taken into account. But a visible organizational structure is better than one that is invisible; and the scriptural pattern is always to be preferred above one that is man-made.

4. It becomes increasingly important with the purchase and ownership of church property

#### D. The Form of Government of the Local Church

1. Scriptural evidence concerning local church government

- a. Local church officers

(1) Bishop-elder-pastor

(a) The terms individually considered

Bishop, Overseer, Superintendent (ἐπίσκοπος)

I Peter 2:25 -- "For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Bishop (ἐπίσκοπον) of your souls."

Philippians 1:1 -- "Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers (ἐπισκόποις) and deacons."

I Timothy 3:1 -- "It is a trustworthy statement: If any aspires to the office of overseer (ἐπισκοπή), it is a fine work he desires to do."

Elder (πρεσβυτέρος)

Acts 14:23 -- "And when they had appointed elders (πρεσβυτέρους) for them in every church (κατ' ἐκκλησίαν), having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed."

I Timothy 5:17 -- "Let the elders (πρεσβύτεροι) who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching."

Titus 1:5 -- "For this reason I left you in Crete, that you might set in order what remains, and appoint elders (πρεσβυτέρους) in every city (κατὰ πόλιν) as I directed you."

James 5:14 -- "Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church (τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους τῆς ἐκκλησίας), and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord."

Shepherd Pastor (ποιμὴν)

John 10:11 -- "I am the good shepherd; (ποιμὴν) the good shepherd (ποιμὴν) lays down his life for the sheep."

I Peter 2:25 -- "For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd (ποιμένα) and Bishop of your souls."

John 21:16 -- "He said to him again a second time, 'Simon, son of John, do you love He?' He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.' He said to him, 'Shepherd My sheep.' " (Ποίμαινε τὰ πρόβατά μου)

Ephesians 4:11 -- "And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers." (τοὺς δὲ ποιμένας καὶ διδασκάλους)

(b) The interchangeability of these terms

Acts 20:17, 28 -- "And from Miletus he (Paul) sent to Ephesus and called to him the elders (πρεσβυτέρους) of the church . . . . 'Be on guard for yourselves and, for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers (ἐπισκόπους), to shepherd (ποιμαίνειν) the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.' "

Titus 1:5, 7 -- "For this reason I left you in Crete, that you might set in order what remains, and appoint elders (πρεσβυτέρους) in every city as I directed you . . . . For the overseer (ἐπίσκοπον) must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain."

I Peter 5:1-4 -- "Therefore, I exhort the elders (πρεσβυτέρους) among you, as fellow elder (συμπρεσβύτερος) and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, shepherd (ποιμάνετε) the flock of God among you, exercising oversight (ἐπισκοποῦντες) not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. And when the Chief shepherd (ἀρχιποιμένος) appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory."

(c) The qualifications of this office

Qualifications as to character and function (both what he is to be and what he is able to do)

I Timothy 3:2-7 -- "An overseer (ἐπίσκοπον), then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, uncontentious, free from the love of money. He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?); and not a new convert, lest he become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil. And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he may not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil."

Titus 1:5-9 -- "For this reason I left you in Crete that you might set in order what remains, and appoint elders (πρεσβυτέρους) in every city as I directed you, namely, if any man be above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who are faithful, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict."

Qualifications as to function (what he is to be able to do)

He should be able to preside, rule, lead, administrate, oversee in the church (Hebrews 13:7, 17, 24; I Timothy 5:17; 3:5; 1 Thess. 5:12).

He should be able to pastor the church of God (Acts 20:28; I Peter 5:2; John 21:15-17).

He should be able to watch over the souls of the congregation (Hebrews 13:17).

He should be able to oversee the welfare of the people of God (Acts 20:28)

He should be able to labor diligently among the people of God (1 Thessalonians 5:12).

He should be able to communicate the Word of God to the people of God (Hebrews 13:7; 1 Thessalonians 5:12).

He should be able to exhort by sound doctrine, and to refute those who oppose sound doctrine (Titus 1:9).

He should be able to guard the people of God against false teachers and their teachings (Acts 20:28a, 29-31; Titus 1:10-11)

He should be able to review and evaluate the ministry of those who minister as itinerant evangelists and missionaries of the church (Acts 21:11-19).

He should be able to consider theological questions related to the basis of Christian life and fellowship, and to give judgment to the church on such issues (Acts 15:1-2, 6-7a, 22-25).

He should be able to provide an example of faith and humility to the people of God (Hebrews 13:7, 1 Peter 5:3).

He should be able to pray for sick believers in the church (James 5:14).

He should be able to oversee the disposition of contributions to the church (Acts 11:30).

If a man does not have the requisite character, gifts, knowledge, time, health, energy, and either the "know-how" or willingness to learn how to carry out these functions, he should not (with occasional exception) be chosen to this office.

Both qualities of character and ability to perform the functions relevant to the office of bishop-elder-pastor are needful. A godly character that adorns the doctrine coupled with sound beliefs and the necessary leadership, administrative, and pastoral gifts and abilities are requisite to this office.

(d) The twofold classification within this office

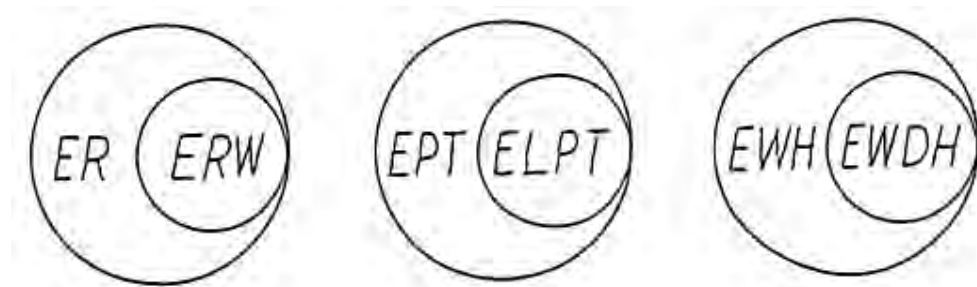
1 Timothy 5:17 -- "Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching."

Analysis of the features of the text, considered separately, yields the following:

First, we have elders who rule, and we have elders who rule well

Second, we have elders who preach and teach, and we have elders who labor (work hard) at preaching and teaching

Third, we have elders who are worthy of honor, and we have elders who are worthy of double honor

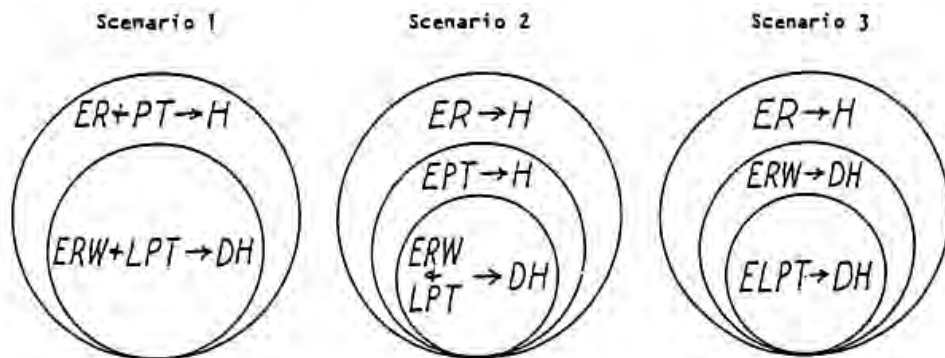


Combining the separate features of the text yields the following scenarios:

Scenario 1 -- Elders who rule and preach and teach are to be given honor. Elders who rule well and labor in preaching and teaching are to be given double honor.

Scenario 2 -- Elders who rule are to be given honor. Elders who preach and teach are to be given honor. Elders who rule well and labor in preaching and teaching are to be given double honor.

Scenario 3 -- Elders who rule are to be given honor. Elders who rule well are to be given double honor. Elders who labor in preaching and teaching are to be given double honor.



Scenario 3 would seem to best fit the text. The text singles out those who labor in preaching and teaching as a distinct group. Laboring in preaching and teaching suggests occupation. It is the occupation of these elders to preach and teach.



The text says that those who work hard at preaching and teaching are worthy of double honor. What is the nature of this honor? is it tangible or non-tangible?

These elders who labor at preaching and teaching have this as their occupation. It is their vocation in life. Those elders who rule but do not labor in preaching and teaching have other occupations. They pursue the occupations for which God has gifted and prepared them. If honorable, these occupations are their vocation in life. The nature of the honor they should receive could be non-monetary, since they already earn their living by means of their occupations. What form could this honor take?

I Thessalonians 5:12-13 exhorts the members of the church to give recognition to their elders, to respect them, to hold them in high esteem, and to show love to them. Hebrews 13:7 exhorts believers to remember the labors of their elders, to imitate their faith, to obey them and submit to them, and to make their tasks as joyful as possible, with as little grief as possible! Although these forms of "honor" are non-monetary, they are extremely important

But what about those elders who labor in preaching and teaching? Is their "honor" to be only non-material? Or can and should it also be tangible and material?

I Timothy 5:18 (the next verse after the text) says: "For the scripture says, 'You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing,' and 'The laborer is worthy of his wages.' " In I Corinthians 9:9-11 we read: "For it is written in the Law of Moses, 'You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing.' God is not concerned about oxen, is He? Or is He speaking altogether for our sake? Yes, for our sake it is written, because the plowman ought to plow in hope, and the thresher to thresh in hope of sharing the crops. If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we should reap material things from you?"

Our occupation in life is the way God has ordained that we earn our living, our means of providing for our needs and those of our dependents. These teaching elders are to earn their livelihood by means of their labor, their occupation. The Lord has directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel (I Corinthians 9:14).

(e) The ordination to this office

II Timothy 1:6 -- "And for this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands."

I Timothy 5:22 -- "Do not lay hands upon anyone too hastily and thus share responsibility for the sins of others; keep yourself free from sin."

I Timothy 4:14 -- "Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed upon you through the prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery."

The word translated "presbytery" (πρεσβυτερίον) occurs three times in the New Testament. What does it mean?

In Luke 22:66 it means the Sanhedrin, the Council of Elders of Israel, both chief priests and scribes. In Acts 22:5 it means the Council of Elders. Here in I Timothy 4:14 It appears to refer to more than an ad hoc

gathering of elders. This πρεσβυτερίον would appear to be a clearly-defined, continuing body of elders, evidenced by the distinct name instead of merely the plural of elder. Ordination by this body was simply a human recognition of God's ordination. Because this body believed God had chosen a man, the members of the body laid their hands on him, showing their recognition and approval to the whole church.

(2) Deacon

(a) The meaning of the word δίακονος

The word δίακονος has a variety of meanings in the New Testament. In its thirty uses, there are three basic areas of meaning, with variation.

- A. "servant" -- a general usage, one who serves
  - 1. a servant of man (emphasis on position)
  - 2. a servant of God (emphasis on position)
  - 3. one who actively serves (emphasis on function)
  - 4. one who imparts or communicates something (emphasis on action)
- B. "minister" -- a special usage, denoting one who serves God in a special way, one especially set apart for Christ's service
  - 1. one who actively serves (emphasis on function)
  - 2. one who imparts or communicates something (emphasis on action)
- C. "deacon" -- a technical usage, denoting a distinct office in the local church

These meanings of δίακονος may be seen in its uses:

Matthew 20:26 -- "It is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant."

Matthew 22:13 -- "Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' "

Matthew 23:11 -- "But the greatest among you shall be your servant."

Mark 9:35 -- "And sitting down, He called the twelve and said to them, 'If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all, and servant of all.' "

Mark 10:43 -- "But it is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant."

John 2:5 -- "His mother said to the servants, 'Whatever He says to you, do it.' "

John 12:6 -- "If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall my servant also be; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him."

Romans 13:4 -- "for it (the governing authority) is a servant of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a servant of God, an avenger who brings wrath upon the one who practices evil.'

Romans 15:8 -- "For I say that Christ has become a servant to the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God to confirm the promises given to the fathers."

Romans 16:1 -- "I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a servant (or deaconess) of the church which is at Cenchrea"

I Corinthians 3:5 -- "What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one."

II Corinthians 3:6 -- "who also made us adequate as ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life."

II Corinthians 6:4 -- "but in everything commending ourselves as ministers of God, in much endurance, in afflictions, in hardships, in distresses."

II Corinthians 11:15 -- "Therefore it is not surprising if his (Satan's) servants also disguise themselves as ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their deeds."

II Corinthians 11:23 -- "Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as if insane) I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death."

Galatians 2:17 -- "But if, while seeking to be justified in Christ, we ourselves have also been found sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? May it never be!"

Ephesians 3:7 -- "of which I was made a minister, according to the gift of God's grace which was given to me according to the working of His power."

Ephesians 6:21 -- "But that you also may know about my circumstances, how I am doing, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make everything known to you."

Philippians 1:1 -- "Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons."

US. = <u>DIAKONOS</u>	SERVANT of man	SERVANT of God	SERVANT who serves	SERVANT who imparts	MINISTER who serves	MINISTER who imparts	OF GOD (office)
MATTHEW 20:26			X				
MATTHEW 22:13	X						
MATTHEW 23:11			X				
MARK 9:35			X				
MARK 10:43			X				
JOHN 2:5	X						
JOHN 2:9	X						
JOHN 12:26		X					
ROMANS 13:4		X					
ROMANS 13:4		X					
ROMANS 15:8			X				
ROMANS 16:1			X				X
I CORINTHIANS 3:5		X					
II CORINTHIANS 3:6						X	
II CORINTHIANS 6:4					X		
II CORINTHIANS 11:15			X				
II CORINTHIANS 11:15					X		
II CORINTHIANS 11:23					X		
GALATIANS 2:17				X			
EPHESIANS 3:7						X	
EPHESIANS 6:21					X		
PHILIPPIANS 1:1							X
COLOSSIANS 1:7					X		
COLOSSIANS 1:23						X	
COLOSSIANS 1:25					X		
COLOSSIANS 4:7					X		
I THESSALONIANS 3:2					X		
I TIMOTHY 3:8							X
I TIMOTHY 3:12							X
I TIMOTHY 4:6					X		

Colossians 1:7 -- "just as you learned it from Epaphras, our beloved fellow bond-servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf."

Colossians 1:23 -- "If indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister."

Colossians 1:25 -- "Of this church I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God."

Colossians 4:7 -- "As to all my affairs, Tychicus, our beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow bond-servant in the Lord, will bring you information."

I Thessalonians 3:2 -- "and we sent Timothy, our brother and God's minister (or fellow-worker -- textual variant -- συνεργὸν -- given a B rating by UBS) in the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you as to your faith."

I Timothy 3:8 -- "Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain"

I Timothy 3:12 -- "Let deacons be husbands of only one wife, and good managers of their children and their own households."

I Timothy 4:6 -- "In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, constantly nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following."

(b) The function of the office of deacon

The function may be determined from three considerations:

First, the word itself, and its meanings in the New Testament

Second, the circumstances surrounding the apparent institution of the office, as recorded in Acts 6:1-4

verse 1 -- "Now at this time while the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic Jews against the native Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of food."

The word "serving" is διακονία ("service, ministering, communication")

verse 2 -- "And the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, 'it is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to service tables.' "

The word "serve" is διακονεῖν, from διακονέω.

The word "tables" is τραπέζαις from τράπεζα. This word has two basic meanings: (1) a table the table on which food is placed; (2) the table or stand of a money changer.

verse 3 -- "But select from among you, brethren, seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task."

The words "of good reputation" translate μαρτυρουμένους, from μαρτυρέω, which in the middle and passive means "well reported of, accredited, attested, approved."

The word "task" is χρείας, from χρεῖα. This word has two meanings: (1) necessity, need; (2) duty, business, task.

verse 4 -- "But we will devote ourselves to prayer, and to the ministry of the word."

The word "ministry" is διακονία.

Notice: The same word (διακονία) is used to refer to the serving of daily food (verse 1) and the communication of the Word (verse 4). Both of these actions are service to God, and both minister to the needs of the saints; the former to their physical needs; the latter to their spiritual needs. These first "deacons" are placed in charge of looking after the physical or temporal needs of the saints.

Third, the continuing need for persons to superintend the ministry to the widows and the poor. of the church, together with other temporal responsibilities of the church

I Timothy 5:3-10, 16 -- "Honor widows who are widows indeed; but if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to practice piety in regard to their own family, and to make some return to their parents; for this is acceptable in the sight of God. Now she who is a widow indeed, and who has been left alone has fixed her hope on God, and continues in entreaties and prayers night and day. But she who gives herself to wanton pleasure is dead even while she lives. Prescribe these things as well, so that they may be above reproach. But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever. Let a widow be put on the list only if she is not less than sixty years old, having been the wife of one man, having a reputation for good works; and if she has brought up children, if she has shown hospitality to strangers, if she has washed the saint's feet, if she has assisted those in distress, and if she has devoted herself to every good work . . . . If any woman who is a believer has dependent widows, let her assist them, and let not the church be burdened, so that it may assist those who are widows indeed."

I Timothy 6:17-18 -- "instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share."

Hebrews 13:16 -- "And do not neglect doing good and sharing; for with such sacrifices God is pleased."

Galatians 6:10 -- "So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith."

Galatians 2:10 -- "They (James and Peter and John) only asked us to remember the poor -- the very thing I also was eager to do."

Note: Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 260-c. 339), in his Ecclesiastical History (Book 6, Chapter 43) quotes a letter from Cornelius, bishop of the church of Rome, to Fabius, bishop of the church of Antioch. This letter, written about 250, mentions the organization of the church of Rome and the persons it supported.

Under the bishop there were 46 presbyters, 7 deacons and 7 subdeacons (the subdeacons were appointed because Rome was divided into 14 charity districts, which coincided with its 14 civil districts), 42 acolytes (assistants), and 52 exorcists, readers (those preparing for the office of presbyter), and janitors (those who took care of church property and admitted none but the baptized to certain parts of the service).

Cornelius states that more than 1,500 dependents (widows and poor persons) were supported by the church of Rome, which church may have included as many as 30,000 adherents. The number 1,500 represented 5% of the 30,000 adherents.

The questions which must be asked today include: "is there a continuing need for the office of deacon? Are there widows in our churches who are destitute (either because they have no remaining family or because their family refuses to support them) and totally dependent on God? Are there poor persons in our churches who are poor, not because they refuse to work, but because they can't earn enough to live, are chronically ill or handicapped, or simply can't find work, whose income is insufficient for their basic needs? Do Christian churches have any responsibility toward such persons, in term of assistance or support? If persons in our churches who live on the borderline of poverty become infirm or invalid, do our churches have any responsibility to care for them? Or should we leave this responsibility (if we have one) to the civil government? If the needs of such persons are not covered by social security, medicare, welfare assistance, workmen's compensation, or meager pensions or annuities, should the church help make up or provide the difference in basic costs of living? And if the church has a responsibility in this area, should the deacons oversee it in an organized manner?

If there is a continuing need for the office of deacon in the church, should persons be chosen to fill this position who are competent to carry out the functions of the office?

(c) The qualifications for the office of deacon

Acts 6:3, 5-6 -- "But select from among you, brethren, seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task . . . . And the statement found approval with the whole congregation; they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch. And there they brought before the apostles; and after praying, they laid their hands on them."

I Timothy 3:8-13 -- "Deacons likewise must be man of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain, but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. And let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach. Women (either deacons' wives or deaconesses) must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things. Let deacons be husbands of only one wife, and good managers of their children and their households. For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus."

If a candidate for this office does not have the requisite character, gifts, knowledge, time, health, energy, and either the "know-how" or the willingness to learn how to carry out these functions, he should not (with occasional exception) be chosen to this office.

(d) The ordination to this office

Acts 6:6 -- "And these they brought before the apostles; and after praying, they laid their hands on them."

Again, ordination is simply a human recognition of God's ordination. The laying on of hands shows recognition of God's choice and approval to the whole church.

(3) Scriptural basis for other local church officers

There is no scriptural basis for other offices in the church, other than the general principles of expediency (as employed, for example, in Acts 6 and 15). Thus there is no specific scriptural basis for the offices of board member (unless this refers to a member of the board of elders or the board of deacons), steward, trustee, treasurer, sexton, or janitor. There is of course Old Testament basis for the office of musician (I Chronicles 15:16-22; 16:1-7, 37) and of doorkeeper or perhaps sexton (I Chronicles 15:23-24; 16:38, II Chronicles 8:14), but some would not admit such evidence because of the dispensational difference. And there is New



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LEVELS OF AUTHORITY IN LOCAL CHURCH POLITIES

PATTERN	FIRST LEVEL	SECOND LEVEL	THIRD LEVEL	FOURTH LEVEL
1	Pastor			
2	Pastor	Congregation		
3	Pastor	Deacons	Congregation	
4	Pastor	Board	Congregation	
5	Pastor	Elders	Congregation	
6	Pastor	Elders	Deacons	Congregation
7	Pastor	Elders, Deacons	Congregation	
8	Pastor, Deacons	Congregation		
9	Pastor, Board	Congregation		
10	Pastor, Elders	Deacons	Congregation	
11	Pastor, Elders, Deacons	Congregation		
12	Pastor, Congregation	Deacons		
13	Pastor, Congregation	Board		
14	Pastor, Congregation	Elders		
15	Pastor, Deacons, Congregation			
16	Pastor, Board, Congregation			
17	Pastor, Elders, Congregation			
18	Deacons.	Pastor	Congregation	
19	Board	Pastor	Congregation	
20	Elders	Pastor	Deacons	Congregation
21	Elders	Pastor	Congregation	
22	Deacons	Pastor		
23	Board	Pastor		
24	Elders	Pastor		
25	Elders, Deacons	Pastor	Congregation	
26	Elders, Deacons	Pastor		
27	Elders, Deacons	Congregation	Pastor	
28	Elders, Deacons	Congregation		
29	Deacons	Congregation	Pastor	
30	Board	Congregation	Pastor	
31	Elders	Congregation	Pastor	Deacons
32	Elders	Congregation	Pastor	
33	Deacons	Congregation		
34	Board	Congregation		
35	Elders	Congregation		
36	Congregation	Pastor	Elders	Deacons
37	Congregation	Pastor	Board	
38	Congregation	Pastor	Deacons	
39	Congregation	Pastor		
40	Congregation	Elders	Pastor	
41	Congregation	Board	Pastor	
42	Congregation	Deacons	Pastor	
43	Congregation	Elders, Deacons	Pastor	
44	Congregation	Elders	Deacons	Pastor
45	Congregation	Elders	Deacons	
46	Congregation	Elders		
47	Congregation	Board		
48	Congregation	Deacons		
49	Congregation			

Testament evidence for the office of treasurer (in the case of Judas Iscariot), but some would not appreciate the association

If the board of elders designates one of their number to serve as treasurer, or delegates this task to someone in the church who is not an elder, there is nothing against it in Scripture. And if the elders constitute themselves the trustees of the church (for governmental purposes), there is nothing against it in Scripture. The same principles of internal designation or external delegation hold true for the board of deacons, subject of course to the oversight of the elders.

## 2. The scriptural pattern of local church government

As we have seen, the scriptural pattern is:

- a. Rulership and oversight and superintendence by bishops-elders-pastors
  - (1) Bishops-elders-pastors who rule
  - (2) Bishops-elders-pastors who rule and labor in the Word and teaching
- b. Administration of temporal matters by deacons

God has given us this pattern in Scripture, and nowhere do we find a blanket allowance for the institution of some other form or pattern that we might think is better. To the contrary, we find that this pattern has been given to us in order that we may know how to conduct ourselves in the church (I Timothy 3:15).

## 3. Contemporary patterns of local church government

Some local church polities stress a powerful pastor; some stress a powerful board (either a general board, or a board of elders or deacons); and some stress a powerful congregation. All local churches fall, somewhere along a continuum between the extremes of an all-powerful pastor and an all-powerful congregation, with all sorts of combinations and permutations between. A large number of these patterns are charted on the following page.

## 4. The scriptural pattern and the pattern of our own local church

- a. The question is sometimes raised, "What's the difference what pattern we have or what we call the officers? We have deacons, you have elders, others have board members. What does it matter?"

The first part of the question is important. If the scriptural pattern has been given to us so that we may know how to organize the local church to carry out its God-ordained functions, then the matter is not a matter of option. We are obliged to follow this pattern.

On the other hand, we may feel that the second part of the question is not as important. After all, since the names of the officers are either translations or transliterations (bishop or overseer for ἐπίσκοπος, pastor or shepherd for ποιμήν, elder for πρεσβυτέρος, and deacon for διάκονος), we may feel that we are free to use whatever names we

choose. This is not true. The scriptural names are connected with specific qualifications and functions. And so we must reply, "Why not use the scriptural names for the scriptural offices?" If we do not use the names, qualifications, and functions given in Scripture, we are likely to set up offices of our own devising, with qualifications and functions that fit our own conception of the way government in the church should operate.

- b. A second question that must be raised is, 'What can be done to bring our current pattern of local church government into line with the scriptural pattern?'

In this connection, some suggestions would appear to be in order:

- (1) Resist the impulse to become a "young turk", and to make sweeping changes immediately.

We need to remind ourselves that the church is the people. Change in the church means change in the people. Change must not be forced, unilaterally from the top, but motivated. The people need to be motivated to change; they must see the need for change. Church development is people development!

- (2) Lay the groundwork for change by patiently and systematically teaching what the scriptures have to say about the government of the church.
- (3) Allow the Spirit of God to use the scriptural teaching to form (or reform) the views and convictions of the current officers and members on church government, so that the impulse to modify and change the current pattern comes from them, rather than from you.
- (4) As a groundswell for change develops, work with the current officers and members to bring about a smooth transition from the present pattern to the scriptural pattern.
- (5) If change doesn't come as quickly as you would wish, keep on educating, praying, and quietly working for change, trusting that God will bring about the needed change in His good time. Be patient with God and with His people!

## 5. The Scriptural Pattern in Church History

### a. As witnessed to by the Apostolic Fathers

- (1) Clement of Rome, Genuine Epistle to the Corinthians (dated at 95 A.D.)

Paragraph 42 -- "So preaching everywhere in country and town, they (the Apostles) appointed their first-fruits, when they had proved them by the Spirit, to be bishops and deacons unto them that should believe. And this they did in no new fashion; for indeed it had been written concerning

bishops and deacons from very ancient times; for thus saith the scripture in a certain place, 'I will appoint their bishops in righteousness and their deacons in faith.' "

Paragraph 44 -- "And our Apostles knew through our Lord Jesus Christ that there would be strife over the name of the bishop's office. For this cause therefore, having received complete foreknowledge, they appointed the aforesaid persons, and afterwards they provided a continuance, that if these should fall asleep, other approved men should succeed to their ministration. Those therefore who were appointed by them, or afterward by other men of repute with the consent of the whole Church, and have ministered unblameable to the flock of Christ in lowliness of mind, peaceably and with all modesty, and for long time have borne a good report with all -- these men we consider to be unjustly thrust out from their ministration. For it will be no light sin for us, if we thrust out those who have offered the gifts of the bishop's office unblameably and holily. Blessed are those presbyters who have gone before, seeing that their departure was fruitful and ripe: for they have no fear lest any one should remove them from their appointed place. For we see that ye have displaced certain persons, though they were living honourably, from the ministration which had been respected by them blamelessly."

(2) Ignatius of Syria, Epistles written on the way to martyrdom (115-130 A.D.?)

To the Ephesians

Paragraph 2 -- "It is therefore meet for you in every way to glorify Jesus Christ who glorified you; that being perfectly joined together in one submission, submitting yourselves to your bishop and presbytery, ye may be sanctified in all things."

Paragraph 4 -- "So then it becometh you to run in harmony with the mind of the bishop; which thing also ye do. For your honourable presbytery, which is worthy of God, is attuned to the bishop, even as its strings to a lyre."

To the Magnesians

Paragraph 2 -- "Forasmuch then as I was permitted to see you in the person of Damas your godly bishop and your worthy presbyters Bassus and Apollonius and my fellow-servant the deacon Zotion, of whom I would fain have joy, for the he is subject to the bishop as unto the grace of God and to the presbytery as unto the law of Jesus Christ."

Paragraph 6 -- "I advise you, be ye zealous to do all things in godly concord, the bishop presiding after the likeness of God and the presbyters after the likeness of the council of the Apostles, with the deacons also who are most dear to me, having been entrusted with the diaconate of Jesus Christ, . . ."

To the Trallians

Paragraph 3 -- "In like manner let all men respect the deacons as Jesus Christ, even as they should respect the bishop as being a type of the Father and the presbyters as the council of God and as the college of Apostles. Apart from these there is not even the name of a church."

To the Philadelphians

Paragraph 4 -- "Be ye careful therefore to observe one eucharist (for there is one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ and one cup unto union in His blood; there is one altar, as there is one bishop, together with the presbytery and the deacons my fellow-servants), that whatsoever ye do, ye may do it after God."

Paragraph 7 -- "I cried out, when I was among you; I spake with a loud voice, with God's own voice, Give ye heed to the bishop and the presbytery and deacons."

Paragraph 8 -- "But shun divisions, as the beginning of evils. Do ye all follow your bishop, as Jesus Christ followed the Father, and presbytery as the Apostles; and to the deacons pay respect, as to God's commandment. Let no man do aught of things pertaining to the Church apart from the bishop. Let that be held a valid eucharist which is under the bishop or one to whom he shall have committed it. Wheresoever the bishop shall appear, here let the people be; even as where Jesus may be, there is the universal Church. It is not lawful apart from the bishop either to baptize or hold a love-feast; but whatsoever he shall approve, this is well-pleasing also to God; that everything which ye do may be sure and valid."

Paragraph 9 -- "It is good to recognise God and the bishop. He that honoureth the bishop is honoured of God; he that doeth aught without the knowledge of the bishop rendereth service to the devil."

To Polycarp

Greeting -- "Ignatius, who is also Theophorus, unto Polycarp who is bishop of the church of the Smyrnaeans or rather who hath for his bishop God the Father and Jesus Christ, abundant greeting."

Paragraph 6 -- "Give ye heed to the bishop, that God also may give heed to you. I am devoted to those who are subject to the bishop, the presbyters, the deacons."

(3) Polycarp Epistle to the Church of the Philippians

Paragraph 5 -- "Wherefore it is right to abstain from all these things (the lusts in the world), submitting yourselves to the presbyters and deacons as to God and Christ."

(4) The Teaching of the Apostles (The Didache)

Paragraph 15 -- "Appoint for yourselves therefore bishops and deacons worthy of the Lord, men who are meek and not lovers of money, and true and approved; for unto you they also perform the service of the prophets and teachers. Therefore despise them not; for they are your honourable men along with the prophets and teachers."

b. As witnessed to by the Primitive Fathers

(1) Papias, bishop of Hierapolis, Asia (A.D. 116)

He speaks only of presbyters, and expressly calls the apostles themselves, presbyters.

(2) Justin Martyr (A.D. 140)

He treats this subject in his *Apology* from chapter 85 to 88. Neither the term bishop nor the term presbyter is used at all. He denominates the moderator of the Christian assembly "president" (προεστως) six times.

(3) Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons, France (A.D. 178)

He is referred to as presbyter of that church. Yet there were other presbyters who were not bishops. The bishop then was the senior-presbyter, or one that had a primacy among his fellow-presbyters.

(4) Victor, bishop of Rome (A.D. 192)

He speaks of presbyters as the successors of the apostles, the constant rulers of the church.

(5) Clement Alexandrinus, presbyter in the church at Alexandria (A.D. 194)

He twice enumerates the officers of the church-under the names, bishops, presbyters, and deacons. Yet presbyters are the governors, shepherds, and pastors of the church. Thus the bishop should be viewed as the chief presbyter, the moderator, or presbyter who presided.

(6) Tertullian (AD. 200)

He speaks of bishops, presbyters, and deacons. In their assemblies, the presbyters presided. one, as *primus presbyter*, presided over the rest, and for distinction's sake, was called bishop. The order was usual, in the meetings of the ministers in the primitive church, for the ministers' chairs to be set in a semicircle. The middle chair was raised a little above the rest and the highest presbyter, or priest, sat in this, and the other presbyters sat round him. The deacons were never allowed chairs; they always stood.

Neander remarks that Tertullian stood on the boundary between two different epochs in the development of the church. There was, in the time of Tertullian, a growing elevation of the presiding elder, or presbyter-bishop, to which, however, a powerful opposition still existed.

(7) Origen, a presbyter (A.D. 230)

He speaks of bishops and presbyters as being the same order of ministry. Presbyters as well as bishops preside over the church. in his Tract 24, on Matthew 23, he makes the following statement:

"They first desire to be deacons, but not such as the scripture describes, but such as devour widows' houses, and for pretence sake long prayers, and, therefore, shall receive a heavier judgment. Such deacons, consequently, will go about to seize the high chairs of presbyters, (*Primas cathaedras*). Some, also, not content with that, attempt more, in order that they may be called bishops, that is, rabbi; but they ought to understand, that a bishop must be blameless, and have the rest of the qualities described there, (Titus 1:6, etc.) so that, though men should not give such a one the name of bishop, yet ye will be a bishop before God."

- (8) Gregory Thaumaturgus, bishop of Neocaesarea, a pupil of Origen

Gregory, bishop of Nyssa, wrote the following account of this man's introduction into the Christian ministry:

"Being much set on the study of philosophy, he was afraid of engaging in the pastoral charge, and, therefore, avoided all occasions in which he might have been laid hold on, and ordained; which, Phedimus, a neighboring bishop, observing, though Gregory was then distant three days' journey from him, he did, by prayer, dedicate him to the service of God, at Neo-Caesarea, where there were, then, but seventeen Christians; to which the other submitted, and came and served there."

Gregory's only subordinate was one deacon. He had no elders.

- (9) Cyprian, bishop of Carthage (A.D. 248)

In Cyprian's view, the bishop is not distinguished from the other presbyters by any higher order, or by any exclusive authority and prerogatives. He allows him indeed a primacy of office as president, but not of order, as prelates claim. Cyprian nowhere recognizes the existence of an order of bishops having the sole power of ordination, government, and discipline; and essentially distinct from presbyters. On the contrary, he everywhere divides the clergy into two classes, the one including bishops and presbyters, and the other deacons.

The Cyprianic bishop did not have sole or absolute power. He did not have the presidency over a plurality of congregations. He did not have a negative voice in the councils of the church. He ruled the church in common with the other presbyters, though, as president, he was called bishop. He did nothing of importance without consulting his presbyters. He was chosen by the people of his charge. He administered the ordinances. He recognized in his associate presbyters the power, by divine right, to govern the church, and discharge every ministerial function, during his absence. He even gives to the presbyters the name *praepositus* or president, which he assumes to himself. He attributes to bishops no greater preeminence over presbyters than Peter had over the other apostles.

- (10) Firmilian, bishop of Caesarea, intimate friend of Origen and Cyprian. In Cyprian's 65th epistle, an epistle of Firmilian is preserved:

"... but the other heretics, also, if they separate from the church, can have no power or grace, since all power and grace are placed in the church, where presbyters, presided, in whom is vested the power of baptizing, and imposition of hands, and ordination."

Thus the fullness of episcopal power, authority, and functions, is explicitly vested in presbyters. (Cyprian did not disavow or disapprove of this witness.)

- (11) Novatus, a presbyter of Carthage, in Cyprian's church

During Cyprian's concealment from the rage of persecution, Novatus ordained Felicissimus a deacon, without consulting Cyprian. Although Cyprian blamed Novatus for his factious ambition, yet he did not deprive either Novatus or Felicissimus of office, nor call into question the validity of the ordination.

- c. As witnessed to by the Later Fathers

- (1) Hilary, of Poitiers (A.D. 354)

On I Timothy 3, he observes that the apostle, "after the bishop, subjoins the ordination of the deacon; why? unless the ordination of the bishop and of the presbyter is one, for each of them is a priest. But the bishop is first, seeing every bishop is a presbyter, not every presbyter a bishop; for he is a bishop, who is first among the presbyters . . . . But they ought to be seven deacons and some presbyters, that there may be two in every church, and one bishop in a city."

- (2) Damasus, bishop of Rome (A.D. 366)

We read but of two orders among the disciples of Christ, that is, of the twelve apostles, and the seventy disciples; and who are now in the place of these. . . The primitive church only had these two sacred orders of priests and deacons."

- (3) Aetius, presbyter of Eustathius, bishop of Sebaste (A.D. 368)

He maintained that "by divine appointment, there was no difference between bishops and presbyters. Thus Epiphanius charges him with heresy, and represents him as asking:

"... what is a bishop before a presbyter? In what do they differ? The order is the same, the honor one, and the excellence one; the bishop imposes hands, and so does the presbyter; the bishop perform the whole of public worship, and the presbyter in like manner; the bishop sits upon a throne, and so does the presbyter."



(4) Ambrose, archbishop of Milan (A.D. 374)

In his commentary on the seven stars of Revelation 1, he observes, "We ought, therefore, to understand the seven angels to be the rectors or presidents of the seven churches, because angel means messenger, and they who announce the word of God to the people are not improperly called angels, that is, messengers."

Syricius wrote to Syrus, the presbyter of Ambrose, to reprove him for inattention to his charge, and Ambrose concurred, denominating Syrus brother, and co-presbyter.

(5) Coelus Sedulus Scotus, of Britain (A.D. 390)

(Exposition on Titus 1) "He calleth him a bishop, whom before he named a presbyter. Before, . . . the churches were governed with the common counsel of the presbyters; but after that every one thought those whom he baptized to be his, not Christ's, it was decreed, throughout the world, that one chosen of the presbyters should be set over the rest, to whom all the care of the church should appertain, and the seeds of schisms should be taken away. In the Acts of the Apostles it is written, that when the apostle Paul came to Miletus, he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of that church, unto whom, among other things, he spake thus; Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you bishops, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. And here observe more diligently, how that he, calling the elders of but one city, Ephesus, doth afterwards style them bishops; these things I have alleged, that we might show how, that among the ancients, presbyters to have been the same that bishops were; but, by little and little, that the seeds of dissension might be utterly extirpated, the whole care was transferred to one."

(6) Chrysostom, bishop of Constantinople (A.D. 398)

(Exposition on I Timothy 3:1-10) "Having spoken of bishops and characterized them, saying both what they should possess, and from what they should abstain, and omitting the order of presbyters, Paul has passed over to the deacons. But why is this? Because there is not much difference. For these, also, in like manner, have been set over the teaching and government of the church, and what things he has said concerning bishops, the same also he intended for presbyters; for they have gained the ascendancy over them only in respect of ordaining, and of this thing also they appear to have robbed the presbyters."

(7) Jerome (A.D. 380) (a presbyter)

(Commentary on Titus) "A presbyter, therefore, is the same as a bishop; . . . If any suppose, that it is merely our opinion, and not that of the scriptures, that bishop and presbyter are the same, and that one is the name of age, the other of office, let him read the words of the apostles to the Philippians, saying, Paul and Timothy, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus that are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons. Philippi is a city of Macedonia,

and certainly, in one city, there could not be more than one bishop, as they are now styled. But at that time they called the same men bishops whom they called presbyters; therefore, he speaks indifferently of bishops as of presbyters . . . . These things I have written to show, that among the ancients, presbyters and bishops were the same. But, by little and little, that all the seeds of dissension might be plucked up, the whole care was devolved on one. As, therefore, the presbyters know, that by the custom of the church, they are subject to him who is their president, so let bishops know, that they are above presbyters more by the custom of the church, than by the true dispensation of Christ; and that they ought to rule the church in common, imitating Moses, who, when he might alone rule the people of Israel, chose seventy with whom he might judge the people."

(8) Augustine, bishop of Hippo, Africa (A.D. 395)

In his Epistle 19, to Jerome (a presbyter) he says:

"I entreat you to correct me faithfully, when you see I need it; for, although, according to the names of honor, which the custom of the church has now brought into use, the office of bishop is greater than that of presbyter, nevertheless, in many respects, Augustine is inferior to Jerome.

(9) Pelagius (A.D. 405)

In his Commentary on I Timothy 3, he says, "Why did the apostle make no mention of presbyters, but comprehend them under the name of bishops? because they are second, yea, almost one and the same degree with bishops, as the apostle writes, in the epistle to the Philippians; to the bishops and deacons; when yet in one city there cannot be more bishops than one."

(10) The Paulicians

A description of this group is given by Thomas Smyth, in *Presbytery and Not Prelacy*, The R. L. Bryan company, Columbia, S.C., 1905, pp. 407, 408:

"About the year A.D. 600, there lived in Samosata, not far from the borders of Armenia and Syria, a man named Constantine. Becoming possessed of a Greek New Testament, he was led, by its careful examination, to reject, among other errors, the dogmas of three orders of the clergy, and to believe that all religious teachers were 'equal in rank', and to be 'distinguished from laymen by no rights, prerogatives, or insignia.' in short, he repudiated the whole hierarchical system then established, with all its pernicious and unscriptural doctrines. He, accordingly, began to preach 'primitive Christianity', in the regions of Pontus and Cappadocia, where he found numerous persons ready, with him, to contend, earnestly, for the faith, simplicity, order, and liberty of the gospel. This new sect, which, out of respect for their favorite apostle, were called Paulicians, spread rapidly over Asia Minor. The fiery sword of persecution was unsheathed against them, but out of the blood and ashes of their martyrs, new teachers and converts arose. After enduring a century and a half of persecution, they enjoyed a short respite,

in A. D. 802-811, only to suffer a more severe and terrible extermination. Flying from destruction, they carried with them, as on the wings of the wind, the seed of immortal truth, which, taking root everywhere, diffused, as in apostolic days, the truth, as it is in Jesus. Under Michael III, one hundred thousand Paulicians were barbarously slain, to attest the sincerity of his Christian degree, that they should be either exterminated by fire and sword, or brought back to the Greek church.

In the tenth century, the European Paulicians were recruited by emigrations from their native regions, and by new proselytes. Their villages and castles extended from Thrace, through Macedonia and Epirus, towards the Adriatic. In the eleventh century they were numerous in Lombardy and Isubria, and especially in Milan, and were found, also, in France, Germany, Italy, and other countries, where they were known as the Paterini, Cathari, Puritans, and Albigenses. By the gloomy light of inquisitorial fires, and Romish calumny, false witness, and abuse, we may trace these suffering witnesses for truth and order, even to the period of the reformation, when their light was merged in that fall blaze, which burst upon an emancipated church."

d. As witnessed to by the Schoolmen

(1) Dionysius (A.D. 596)

(Exposition on Philippians 1:1) ". . . by bishops, presbyters are understood; for many bishops did not preside in one city, neither could the apostle descend from bishops to deacons, passing by the presbyters, except under the name of bishops he understood presbyters."

(2) Rabanus Maurus, bishop of Mentz (AD. 847)

"With the ancients, bishops and presbyters were the same, because the first was a name of honor, and the latter of age or experience."

(3) Bernaldus Constantiensis (A.D. 1088)

"Inasmuch, therefore, as bishops and presbyters were anciently the same, they had, without doubt, the same power to loose and to bind, and other things which are now the prerogative of the bishop."

(4) Pope Urban II (A.D. 1091)

"We regard deacons and presbyters as belonging to the sacred order. If, indeed, these are the only orders which the primitive church is understood to have had, for these we have apostolic authority."

(5) Gratian, the father of the canonists (whose work has been to harmonize and reconcile the various and contradictory papal canons and decrees)

"We call the sacred orders the diaconate and presbyterate; these only the primitive church is said to have had."

(6) Joannes Seneca

(Gloss on the Canon law) "They say, indeed, that, in the first primitive church, the office of bishops and priests, and their names, were common; but in the second primitive church, both names and offices began to be distinguished."

(7) Peter Lombard (A.D. 1164)

"The canons determine that two orders only ought, by way of excellency, to be termed sacred, namely, that of the diaconate, and that of the presbyterate, because we read that the primitive church had only these two, and of these alone we have the command of the apostles."

e. As witnessed to by the Roman Catholic Church

"There are three opinions prevalent in this church. Some think that the episcopate is a distinct order from the presbyterate. Some believe that both these orders are one generically, but two specifically, or that they constitute but one order and two degrees. But the prevailing theory is that of those who believe that the episcopate is not a distinct order, but the extension of the order of the presbyterate, by a greater latitude of jurisdiction. To this class belong the master of the sentences, Bonaventura, Thomas Aquinas, Pope Cornelius, Gregory the Great, Alcuin, etc. The council of Trent is with this class of divines, as we may gather from the second canon of the twenty-third session, which makes the priesthood the principal order, and the episcopate only a branch of it. The catechism, too, says, respecting orders, that its highest degree is the priesthood."

-- Thomas Smyth, *Presbytery and Not Prelacy*, The R. L. Bryan Company, Columbia, South Carolina, 1905, p. 415

E. Organized Relationship between Local Churches

1. Scriptural instances of relationship between local churches

Acts 8:5, 12, 14, 25 -- "And Philip went down to the city of Samaria and began proclaiming Christ to them . . . but when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike . . . Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them Peter and John . . . And so, when they had solemnly testified and spoken the word of the Lord, they started back to Jerusalem, and were preaching the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans."

Acts 11:19-23 -- "So then those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose in connection with Stephen made their way to Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except to Jews alone. But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who came to Antioch and began speaking to the Greeks also, preaching the Lord

Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a large number who believed turned to the Lord. And the news about them reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas off to Antioch. Then when he had come and witnessed the grace of God, he rejoiced and began to encourage the. all with resolute heart to remain true to the Lord."

Acts 14:23 -- "And when they (Paul and Barnabas) had appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed."

I Timothy 4:14 -- "Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed upon you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery."

Titus 1:5 -- "For this reason I left you in Crete, that you might set in order what remains, and appoint elders in every city as I directed you."

I Corinthians 16:3 -- "And when I (Paul) arrive, whomever you may approve, I shall send them with letters to carry your gift to Jerusalem."

II Corinthians 3:1 -- "Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, as some, letters of commendation to you or from you?"

Acts 15:1-2, 4, 6, -- "And some men came down from Judea and began teaching the brethren, 'Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.' And when Paul and Barnabas had great dissension and debate with them, the brethren determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders concerning this issue . . . . And when they arrived at Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they reported all that God had done with them . . . . And the apostles and the elders came together to look into this matter." (Note also Acts 15:13-21; 16:4; I Cor. 8, 10; Romans 14)

## 2. Historical patterns of organized relationship between local churches

The three patterns or polities are the Episcopal, the Presbyterial, and the Congregational. They are named according to the location of the final authority, whether in bishops, elders, or congregations.

### a. Basic principles of the patterns or polities (form of government)

#### (1) The Episcopal pattern

- (a) Final authority rests in the bishop
- (b) Unbroken succession of episcopal ordination from the time of the apostles to the present
- (c) A gradation of rank and office, in a hierarchical structure
- (d) All authority in the hands of clergy; none in the hands of the laity

- (e) Apportionment of church into dioceses, each containing a number of local congregations
  - (f) The authority of the clergy as the chief bond of unity
- (2) The Presbyterian pattern
  - (a) Final authority rests in the elders
  - (b) A plurality of elders in each church, forming the Session
  - (c) Distinction between the elder who teaches and the elders who govern
  - (d) The parity of ministers -- no gradation in rank
  - (e) Deacons charged with temporal responsibilities
  - (f) Authority to choose local officers and to decide certain other local matters in the hands of the people
  - (g) Authoritative bodies (presbyteries, synods, general assemblies) to express the unity of the church, to maintain good order by a system of checks and balances, and to preserve the purity of the church.
- (3) The Congregational pattern
  - (a) Final authority rests in the local congregation -- autonomy of churches
  - (b) Two kinds of officers in the local church: the pastor or teaching elder, who ministers spiritual things; and the deacons, who minister temporal things and assist the pastor
  - (c) Freedom from binding common creed or organizational structure
  - (d) Independence of local churches from each other and especially from any higher governing authority
  - (e) Associations or fellowships of churches not viewed as authoritative, but only consultative or advisory
  - (f) Emphasis upon spiritual unity, expressed organizationally not by broader assemblies, but only in the local church
- b. Denominations and Associations holding these patterns or polities
  - (1) The Episcopal pattern  
The Roman Catholic Church, the Eastern Orthodox Churches, the Anglican Church, the Protestant Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal churches, the Lutheran Episcopal churches of Norway, Sweden, and Denmark, and the Moravian Church
  - (2) The Presbyterian pattern  
The Presbyterian churches, the Reformed churches, and some of the Lutheran churches in the United States
  - (3) The Congregational pattern  
The Baptist churches, the Congregational churches, many independent churches, the Disciples of Christ, the United Church of Christ, some Mennonite churches, and the Plymouth Brethren

Insert after p 164

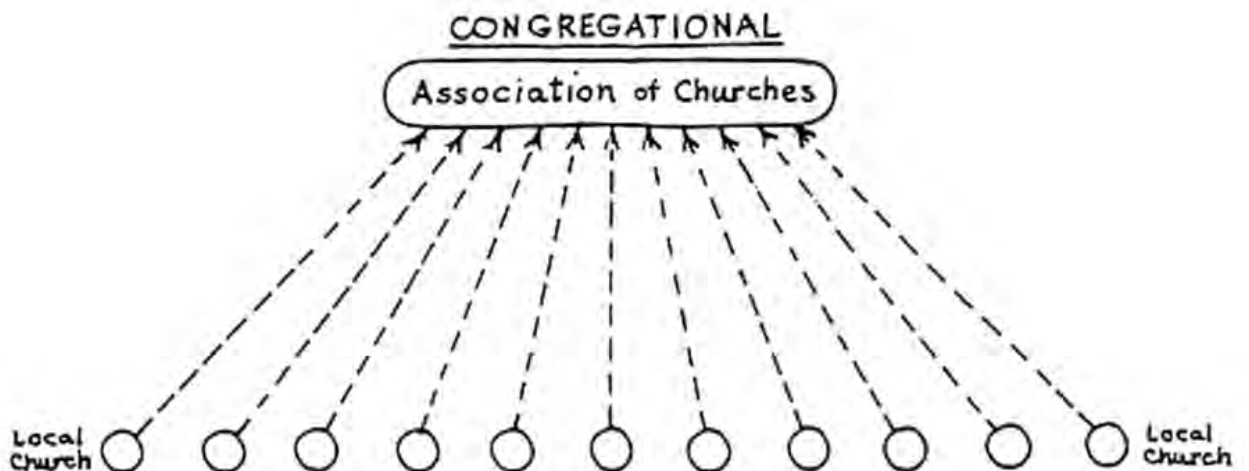
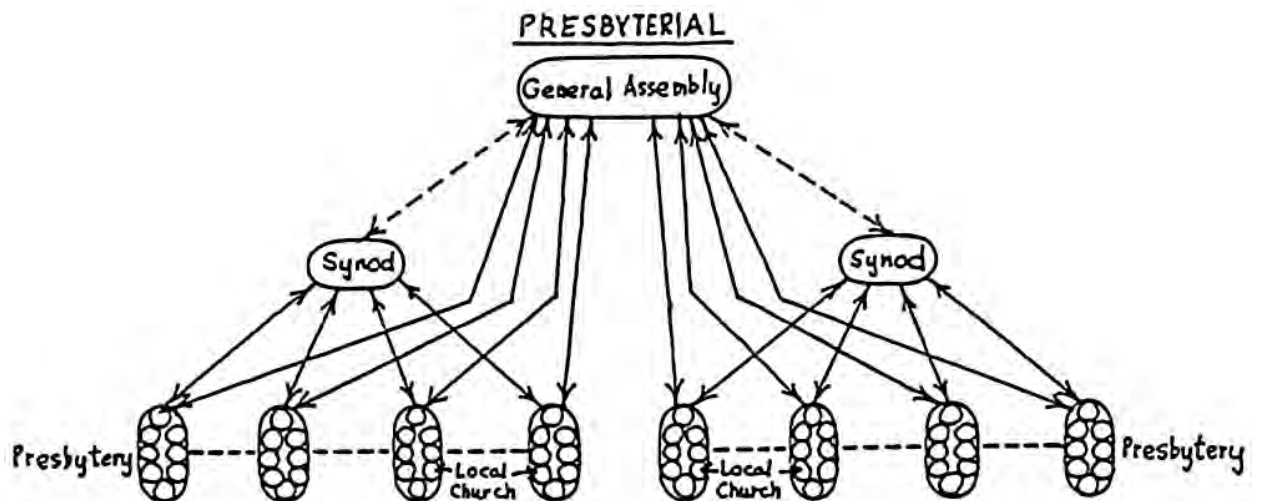
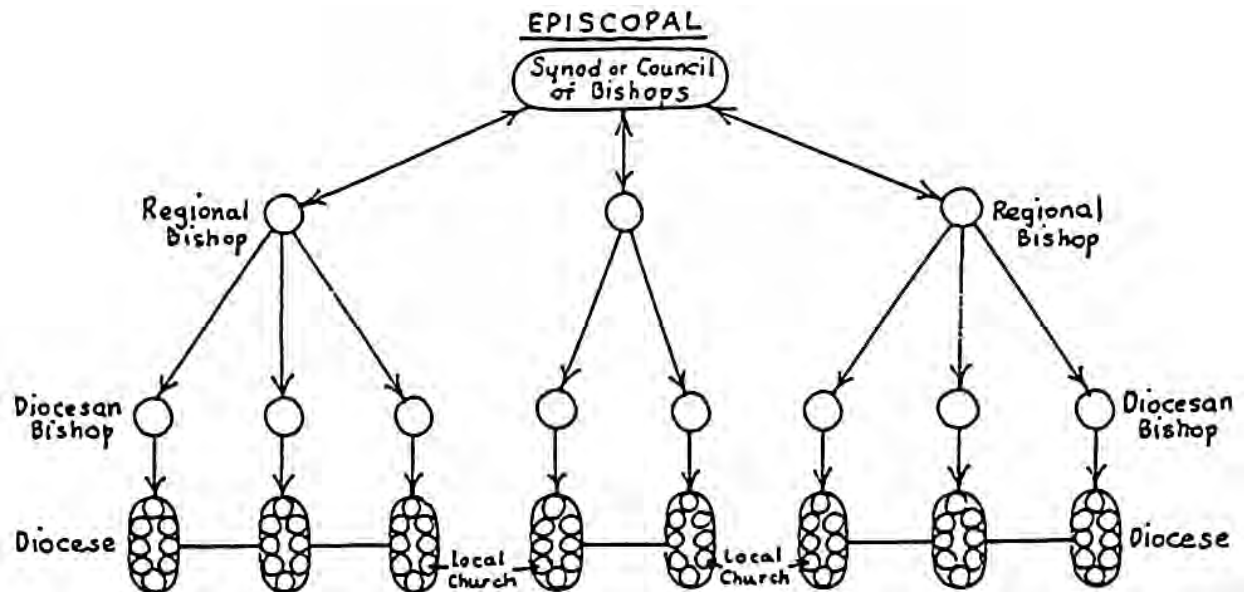
## d. SOME ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF HISTORIC PATTERNS OF RELATIONSHIP AMONG LOCAL CHURCHES

Features	Episcopal		Presbyterial		Congregational	
Administrative body responsible for watch-care over men preparing for the ministry	✓	A	✓	A	✓	A
Placement service to assist ministers and churches	✓	A	X	D	X	D
Mechanism for matching of ministers and churches	✓	A	X	D	X	D
Mechanism for continuing oversight of ministers and churches	✓	A	✓	A	X	D
Administrative body responsible to protect local churches from the entrance of false teachers and doctrine	X	D	✓	A	X	D
Administrative body responsible to protect denominations from the entrance of false teachers and doctrine into its agencies	✓	A	✓	A	X	D
Administrative body responsible for disciplining officials of local churches	X	D	✓	A	✓	A
Feasibility of disciplining ministers	✓	A	✓	A	X	D
Feasibility of disciplining denominational officials	X	D	X	D	X	D
Mechanism for appeal in cases of false accusation, slander, or improper discipline	✓	A	✓	A	X	D
Freedom within local churches to exert administrative power	✓	A	✓	A	✓	A
Denominational efficiency in exerting administrative power upon local churches	✓	D	X	A	X	A
Encouragement of initiative among local lay people	X	D	✓	A	?	?
Encouragement of initiative among local church officers	X	D	✓	A	?	?
Ease of carrying out certain functions of the church on a larger scale	✓	A	?	?	X	D
Tendency toward bureaucratic red tape	✓	D	?	?	X	A
Denominational power to lay assessments on local churches for support of larger-scale functions and projects	✓	D	X	A	X	A
Local property rights held by local congregation	X	D	?	?	✓	A

Q.#1. Does this pattern have this feature? ✓ = yes X = no

Q.#2. Is having this feature an advantage or a disadvantage? A = advantage D = disadvantage

c. Diagrams of the patterns or polities





e. Denominations vss. Denominationalism

- (1) To "denominate" means "to give a name to" in order to distinguish one thing from another, or in order to differentiate a thing with one set of characteristics from one with another.
- (2) Although the term "denomination" can apply to various groups that go by the name "Christian" (such as the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox churches), usually when we use the term we think of Protestant denominations.
- (3) Protestant denominations are groups of professing Christian churches that are distinctive in history, beliefs, structure, or practices.
- (4) The Bible speaks both of the universal Body of Christ and of local churches. All Christians in a certain geographical area might be called part of the Body of Christ, as might all Christian churches.
- (5) In a sinful world imperfect Christians marked by noetic effects of sin understand the Scriptures differently. There is little point in saying that they ought not to do so; they simply do! The exercise of the right of private interpretation (given the effects of sin upon the understanding) virtually guarantees that Christians will formulate differing doctrines and doctrinal systems. Without an infallible authority to decide between formulations, Christians must learn to live and work with these differences.
- (6) If 200 Christians move into a newly-built residential area, discover each other, and meet together to see if a local church can be organized; and if 150 believe in unconditional election and 50 in conditional election, should the 50 give up their belief in favor of the 150? Should the majority decide what beliefs the church (and thus the minority) can or should practice? There is nothing in Scripture that teaches that all Christians in one geographical area should come together and determine what all of them will believe. The doctrinal beliefs of a local church are not decided by vote, but by the shared convictions of its members.
- (7) These three factors -- (a) the evident will of God for believers to for. local churches; (b) the right and necessity of believers to hold to and practice their convictions; and (c) the unfeasibility of local churches holding to and exercising contradictory beliefs and practices in an orderly and efficient manner -- lead to the formation of distinct local churches and denominations.
- (8) Thus, although denominations grow out of man's general sinfulness, they are not in themselves sinful (unless they grow out of specifically sinful attitudes and actions). Denominations are an expediency, a way to carry out the work of God through organizations of local churches. Although our present denominational system is without specific scriptural command, it is not contrary to any

Biblical teaching, and has much to commend it on the ground of practical advantage.

- (9) Having said this, we realize that the problem of manifesting the unity of Christ's church must somehow be resolved. Denominations attempt to give witness to a broader expression of the unity of the Body of Christ than could be given through individual local churches by manifesting the unity of distinctive beliefs and practices between a number of local churches. They also manifest desires to facilitate certain broader functions of the churches that can be carried out more efficiently by a number of churches than by individual local churches.
- (10) One major obstacle in the way of the churches' expression of Christian unity is the attitude of denominationalism
- (11) Denominations and denominationalism must not be confused. Denominations are groups of Christian individuals or churches with distinctive constellations of beliefs and practices; denominationalism is the attitude that one's own denomination's constellation of distinctives is the only one genuinely Christian, and that therefore other denominations' constellations are either sub-Christian or non-Christian. denominationalism evidences an overweening pride in its own ability to determine final truth; sometimes it evidences unscriptural attitudes toward others, including the attitude of schism.
- (12) The sinful attitude of schism is spoken of in I Corinthians 12:15-27. in verse 21 this attitude is expressed in term of the human body: "And the eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you;' or again to the feet, 'I have no need of you.' " And in verse 25 Paul explains why God has composed the body in the way that He has: "that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another."  
If a Christian takes the attitude that another Christian is not of the body of Christ, that is schism. If a Christian church takes the attitude that another Christian church is not of the body of Christ, that is schism. Schism results in tearing apart, rending the body.
- (13) Some denominations have sprung up to express the sinful attitude of schism. Some have sprung up to satisfy the ego needs of human leaders, or to overemphasize a very minor theological hobby-horse. Such denominations are the result of specifically sinful attitudes and actions; and as such deserve to be censured and to have their motivating force replaced. They may even need to be disbanded.
- (14) Some denominations have sprung up out of sincere desires to recover or preserve areas of major truth, or to maintain a witness to some historical tradition, or to give expression to a unique theological insight. Such denominations, so long as they do not adopt the attitude of denominationalism, on the one hand, and adopt the view that other Christian denominations are fellow branches of the body of Christ, on the other, are not sinful per se; and do not militate against the unity of the church.

- (15) Some groups of Christians have banded together to express and preserve their distinctive beliefs and practices, but have refused to be called by any other title than "believers" or "Christians". (Practically, of course, they find that they must call themselves by some name, to distinguish themselves from denominationalists!). Some local groups of Christians have joined with other such groups in organized relationships (associations, fellowships, conventions, conferences), having distinctive constellations of beliefs and practices, and have called themselves by a distinctive name, but have rejected the appellation "denomination". Some local groups of Christians have become so distinctive in their structure, beliefs, and practices that they have rejected any semblance of organized relationship with other local churches, and have attempted to carry out all the functions of the church under their own umbrella. In effect, all of these fit the definition of denominations.
- (16) All of Christ's churches need to study ways and means of most effectively carrying out all of the functions of the church, while at the same time striving to manifest the unity that all true believers and Christian churches already enjoy in Christ!

## APPENDIX: THE ADMINISTRATION OF GOVERNMENT IN THE CHURCH

### A. General Principles of Administration

#### 1. Definition of Administration

Administration is the act or process of managing affairs; superintendence of the execution, use, or conduct of plans, resources, or persons.

Management is the organ of leadership, direction, and decision in our social institutions, and especially in business enterprise.

Administration involves the planning, organizing, directing, and controlling of the operating processes of an organization.

#### 2. Functions of Administration

##### a. Planning

Planning is man's way of projecting his intentions. Planning is an effort to set a course of action and to guide its direction in terms of a set of expectations. Organizational planning includes the formulation of a hierarchy of plans, ranging from broad philosophy through goals, policies, programs, processes, and procedures, all intended to guide actions toward the accomplishment of the objectives of the organization. Planning also involves making projections, developing schedules, and budgeting the various resources of the organization.

##### b. Organization

Formal organization is a systematic plan for unifying the activities of individuals to accomplish a corporate purpose. It is an administrative design which presupposes planning, and which indicates planned relationships between positions and functions without reference to specific individuals. It establishes lines of authority and community, as well as reporting relationships.

Informal organization develops through the interaction of members of a group whose associations are determined by such factors as work location, degree of security, and common interests or values.

Organizing as a function of administration involves the efficient allocation of the appropriate personnel, knowledge, materials, and facilities for the fulfillment of the plans and objectives of the organization. This function requires the careful assignment of duties to appropriate personnel (matching of people to positions), and the empowering of those people to carry out their duties (delegation of authority).

##### c. Direction or Leadership

Organizational leadership denotes the guidance of subordinates toward attainment of organizational objectives. Dwight D. Eisenhower described

leadership as "getting people to do what you want them to do because they want to do it." Leadership implies the ability to persuade people to adopt a certain course of action toward a pre-selected objective.

Leadership also involves the recognition of various possible styles of administrative leadership, together with the selection and cultivation of desirable styles of leadership behavior.

Leadership requires the skills of decision-making, accurate and dynamic communication, individual and group motivation, and wise selection and development of people.

When plans have been communicated to subordinates and are to be put into effect, the leader must enlist the cooperation of subordinates, interpret their work roles for them, make modifications in plans where conflicts arise between goals and plans for achieving them, assess the results of plans, adjust plans to fit changing conditions, and seek to satisfy the needs of both the organization and his subordinates.

d. Control or Evaluation

Controlling the operating processes of an organization involves the development and use of performance standards to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of an organization in achieving its objectives.

Evaluation is important, both for the organization and for the personnel comprising it. Only through a program of evaluation can an organization gain knowledge as to whether and how well it is achieving its goals and objectives. Only through a program of evaluation can individual performance be appraised, so that personnel can know how to improve their effectiveness so as to contribute maximally to the total effort of the organization. And only through a program of evaluation can decisions on personnel retention and advancement be made knowledgeably and responsibly.

B. Administration of the Local Church

1. The Constitution and Bylaws

The constitution of a local church is a written instrument embodying the fundamental principles of the local body that determine the powers and duties of its government and guarantee certain rights to the people. A constitution usually includes the following articles:

- I. Name
- II. Purpose or Object
- III. Doctrine or Statement of Faith
- IV. Membership
- V. Officers
- VI. Church Discipline
- VII. Dissolution
- VIII. Amendment

Some constitutions also include articles on church covenant, conduct, government, pastors, ordination, finances, and appeal.

The bylaws of a local church are rules which specify how the affairs of the church are to be conducted. They stipulate how the responsibilities and duties of the members, officers, and boards and agencies are to be carried out, and how the various organizations within the church are to function. In organizational theory, bylaws specify processes and procedures.

Bylaws usually include such articles as the following:

- I. Meetings
- II. Election of Officers
- III. Board(s)
- IV. Church Committees
- V. Church Organizations
- VI. Rules of Order
- VII. Amendment

2. The Board(s) of the Church

a. Membership of the Board(s)

- (1) Nomination of members
- (2) Training and probation of members
- (3) Election and ordination of members
- (4) Term of office of members
- (5) Dismissal from office of members

b. Internal Organization of the Board(s)

- (1) Officers
- (2) Committees

(a) It is wise to attempt to match the gifts, expertise, and experience of elders/deacons to the purposes and duties of the various committees.

(b) Some committees that might be established are:

- Benevolence Committee
- Building and Maintenance Committee
- Christian Education Committee
- Evangelism Committee
- Finance Committee
- Membership and Discipline Committee
- Missionary Committee
- Music Committee
- Nominating Committee

Ordinances Committee  
Pastoral Relations Committee  
Visitation Committee  
Youth Committee

c. Functions of the Board(s)

(1) Functions of the Board(s) as a whole

(a) Board powers, responsibilities, and duties

(b) Conduct of Board meetings

((1)) Docket

A docket is a working agenda for action which outlines the order in which the proceedings of a meeting of an organization are to take place.

A suggested docket for the conduct of meetings of the Board(s) is:

Call to Order and Opening Prayer  
Adoption of Docket  
Reading of Minutes  
Communications  
Report of Officers  
Reports of Permanent Committees  
Reports of Temporary Committees  
Unfinished Business  
New Business  
Announcements  
Adjournment and Closing Prayer

((2)) Rules of Order

Some form of Robert's Rules of Order Revised is probably the standard set of rules for the conduct of meetings used in most organizations, including church boards.

((3)) Minutes

A secretary should be appointed and made responsible for the keeping of an office record of the proceedings of each meeting of the board(s). Minutes should include the following:

1. Date and times of meeting (time of convening, time of adjournment)
2. Names of members present
3. Names of those who chair, pray, give reports, introduce business, make motions

4. items brought before the board(s) for information, consideration, or disposition
5. Actions taken by the board(s)
6. Official correspondence sent to and from the board(s)
7. Written reports submitted to the board(s)

It should be remembered that Minutes are legal records of board actions; and as such should be kept faithfully, carefully, and in duplicate. The general rule of thumb as to how much should be recorded is that Minutes should be brief. Discussions should not be recorded, unless they express a consensus of the group; and all extraneous material should be eliminated. It should also be stressed that past Minutes should not be altered because of subsequent actions. All supporting material (correspondence, written reports, etc.) should be kept in an "Appendices" section.

(c) Formation of board policies

Policies are standing plans used to guide and control the functions of an organization. They are written statements which represent predetermined courses of action. Policies are determined by decision of the body.

One example of the form of a policy would be:

"It is the policy of the board of elders/deacons to meet on the third Monday of each month at 7:30 p.m."

Another example of the form of a policy would be:

"It is the policy of the \_\_\_\_\_ church to issue payroll check to its employees on the fifteenth day and the last day of each month."

(d) Accountability of the board(s)

3. The Pastor(s) of the Church

a. The selection of the pastor(s)

- (1) Position description
- (2) Pulpit (or Search) Committee
  - (a) Membership
  - (b) Function
- (3) Candidating procedures
- (4) Voting procedures
- (5) Calling procedures



- b. The function of the pastor(s)
  - (1) The pastor's administration of time
    - (a) Establishment of time priorities
    - (b) Establishment of time proportions
    - (c) Establishment of time schedules
    - (d) Scheduling and keeping of engagements
  - (2) The pastor's administration of personnel
    - (a) Professional staff
    - (b) Office staff
    - (c) Board members
    - (d) Other church officers
    - (e) Other church staff
  - (3) The pastor's administration of his office
    - (a) The pastor's library
    - (b) The pastor's files
- c. Accountability of the pastor(s)

#### IV. The Discipline of the Church

##### A. Definition of Church Discipline

Chapter I of the *Book of Discipline of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.*, is entitled The Nature of Discipline. It states:

- "1. Ecclesiastical discipline is the exercise of that authority which the Lord Jesus Christ has committed to the visible church for the preservation of its purity and good order. It may be either judicial or administrative.
2. Judicial discipline is concerned with the prevention and correction of offenses. An offense is anything in the doctrine or practice of a communicant member of the church or of a church court which is contrary to the Word of God. The purpose of judicial discipline is to vindicate the honor of Christ, to promote the purity of His church, and to reclaim the offender.
3. Administrative discipline is concerned with the maintenance of good order in the government of the church in other than judicial cases. The purpose of its exercise is that all rights may be preserved and all obligations faithfully discharged.
4. All communicant members of the church are under the care of the church, and subject to its discipline."

The above statement defines an offense as anything in doctrine or practice contrary to the Word of God. Later in the *Book of Discipline* (Chapter III, section 5) we read: Offenses are either private or public. Private offenses are those known to an individual only, or, at most, to a very few persons. Public offense are those which are notorious and scandalous.

But what about private offenses? Are they subject to discipline? The *Book of Discipline* Chapter III, section 6, states: No charge of a private offense shall be admitted unless the court has assured itself that the course set forth by our Lord in Matthew 18:15-17 has been faithfully followed. From this it would appear that private offenses can properly become public offenses, and are thus subject to church discipline.

What kinds of offenses are subject to church discipline? If the answer is, "All sins are subject to discipline!", then perhaps it is necessary to make a distinction between informal discipline, in terms of private admonition regarding sin and personal attempts to motivate toward greater holiness, and formal discipline, in terms of bringing an offense to the attention of the appropriate persons. Perhaps it is also necessary to make a distinction between sins toward which the offender appears to have an attitude of repentance, and sins toward which the offender shows an unrepentant and perhaps even callous attitude. And perhaps it is also necessary to make a distinction between sins which are common to a good many persons in the church, such as impatience, lack of zeal, or worry, and sins which, if indulged in, will prevent a person from inheriting the kingdom of God, such as those referred to in the following Scriptures:

Romans 1:28-32 -- "And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; and, although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them."

I Corinthians 5:11 -- "But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he should be an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler -- not even to eat with such a one."

I Corinthians 6:9-10 -- "Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God."

Galatians 1:8-9 -- "But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed."

Galatians 5:19-21 -- "Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

Ephesians 5:3-7 -- "But do not let immorality or any impurity or greed even be named among you, as is proper among saints; and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them;"

I Timothy 5:8 -- "But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever."

## B. The Necessity of Church Discipline

1. A number of Reformation and post-Reformation writings stress the necessity of discipline in the church.

- a. In his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1559), Book IV, Chapter 12, section 1, John Calvin states:

"But because some persons, in their hatred of discipline, recoil from its very name, let them understand this: if no society, indeed, no house which has even a small family, can be kept in proper condition without discipline, it is much more necessary in the church, whose condition should be as ordered as possible. Accordingly, as the saving doctrine of Christ is the soul of the church, so does discipline serve as its sinews, through which the members of the body hold together, each in its own place. Therefore, all who desire to remove discipline or to hinder its restoration -- whether they do this deliberately or out of ignorance -- are surely contributing to the ultimate dissolution of the church. For what will happen if each is allowed to do what he pleases? Yet that would happen, if to the preaching of doctrine there were not added private admonitions, corrections, and other aids of the sort that sustain doctrine and do not let it remain idle. Therefore, discipline is like a bridle to restrain and tame those who rage against the doctrine of Christ; or like a spur to arouse those of little inclination; and also sometimes like a father's rod to chastise mildly and with the gentleness of Christ's Spirit those who have more seriously lapsed. When, therefore, we discern frightful devastation beginning to threaten the church because there is no concern and no means of restraining people, necessity itself cries out that a remedy is needed. Now, this is the sole remedy that Christ has enjoined and the one that has always been used among the godly."

- b. The *Scotch Confession of Faith* (1560), Article 18, states:

"The notes (signs) therefore of the trew Kirk of God we beleieve, confesse, and avow to be, first, the trew preaching of the Worde of God, into the quhilk God hes revealed himselfe unto us, as the writings of the Prophets and Apostles dois declair. Secundly, the right administration of the Sacraments of Christ Jesus, quhilk man be annexed unto the word and promise of God, to scale and confirme the same in our hearts. Last, Ecclesiastical discipline uprightlie ministred, as Goddis Worde prescribes, whereby vice is repressed, and vertew nurished."

- c. The *Belgic Confession* (1561), Articles 29 and 32, state:

"The marks by which the true Church is known are these: If the pure doctrine of the gospel is preached therein; if she maintains the pure administration of the sacraments as instituted by Christ; if church discipline is exercised in punishing of sin; . . ."

"Therefore we admit only of that which tends to nourish and preserve concord and unity, and to keep all men in obedience to God. For this purpose excommunication or church discipline is requisite, with the several circumstances belonging to it, according to the Word of God."

- d. The *Heidelberg Catechism* (1563), in Questions 83 and 85, states:

Q. 83 -- What is the Office of the Keys?

A. The preaching of the holy Gospel and Church discipline; by which two things the kingdom of heaven is opened to believers and shut against unbelievers.

Q. 85 -- How is the kingdom of heaven shut and opened by church discipline?

A. In this way: that, according to the command of Christ, if any under the Christian name show themselves unsound either in doctrine or life, and after repeated brotherly admonition refuse to turn from their errors or evil ways, they are complained of to the Church or to its proper officers, and, if they neglect to hear them also, are by them excluded from the holy Sacraments and the Christian communion, and by God himself from the kingdom of Christ; and if they promise and show real amendment, they are again received as members of Christ and his Church.

- e. The *Second Helvetic Confession* (1566), Chapter 18, states:

"And seeing that there must be discipline in the Church, and that, among the ancient Fathers, excommunication was in use, and there were ecclesiastical judgments among the people, of God, wherein this discipline was exercised by godly men; it belongs also to the minister's duty, for the edifying of the Church, to moderate this discipline, according to the condition of the time and public estate, and according to necessity. Wherein this rule is always to be holden, that "all things ought to be done to edification, decently, and in order" (I Cor. xiv. 40), without any oppression or tumult . . . . Yet, notwithstanding there ought to be a discipline among the ministers -- for there should be intelligent inquiry in the synods touching the life and doctrine of the ministers -- those that offend should be rebuked of the elders, and be brought into the way, if they be not past recovery; or else be deposed, and, as wolves, be driven from the Lord's flock by the true pastors if they be incurable. For, if they be false teachers, they are in no wise to be tolerated."

- f. The *Westminster Confession of Faith* (1647), Chapter 30 ("Of Church Censures") states:

- I. The Lord Jesus, as king and head of his Church, hath therein appointed a government in the hand of Church officers, distinct from the civil magistrate.
- II. To these officers the keys of the kingdom of heaven are committed, by virtue whereof they have power respectively to retain and remit sins, to shut that kingdom against the impenitent, both by the Word and censures; and to open it unto penitent sinners, by the ministry of the gospel, and by absolution from censures, as occasion shall require.

- III. Church censures are necessary for the reclaiming and gaining of offending brethren; for deterring of others from the like offenses; for purging out of that leaven which might infect the whole lump; for vindicating the honor of Christ, and the holy profession of the gospel; and for preventing the wrath of God, which might justly fall upon the Church, if they should suffer his covenant, and the seals thereof, to be profaned by notorious and obstinate offenders.
  - IV. For the better attaining of these ends, the officers of the Church are to proceed by admonition, suspension from the Sacrament of the Lord's supper for a season, and by excommunication from the Church, according to the nature of the crime and demerit of the person.
- g. The *Savoy Declaration* (1658), Articles 18 and 19, states
- XVIII. Whereas the Lord Jesus Christ hath appointed and instituted as a means of Edification that those who walk not according to the Rules and Laws appointed by him (in respect of Faith and Life, so that just offense doth arise to the Church thereby) be censured in his Name and Authority: Every Church hath power in itself to exercise and execute all those Censures appointed by him, in the way and Order prescribed in the Gospel.
- XIX. The Censures so appointed by Christ are Admonition and Excommunication; and whereas some offenses are or may be known only to some, It is appointed by Christ that those to whom they are so known do first admonish the offender in private (in public offenses where any sin, before all), and in case of non-amendment upon private admonition, the offense being related to the Church, and the offender not manifesting his repentance, he is to be duly admonished in the Name of Christ by the whole Church, by the Ministry of the Elders of the church; and if this Censure prevail not for his repentance, then he is to be cast out by Excommunication, with the consent of the Church.
- h. The Philadelphia Confession of Faith (1689), Chapter 26, sections 7 and 12, states:
- "7. To each of these churches thus gathered, according to his mind declared in his word, he hath given all that . . . power and authority, which is any way needful for their carrying on that order in worship and discipline, which he hath instituted for them to observe, with commands and rules for the due and right exerting and executing of that power.
12. As all believers are bound to join themselves to particular churches, when and where they have opportunity so to do; so all that are admitted unto the privileges of a church, are also . . . under the censures and government thereof, according to the rule of Christ."
2. It seems rather curious, in view of the emphasis on church discipline during the Reformation and post-Reformation periods, to find little or no emphasis on discipline in so many of the churches today, including those that trace their heritage to the Reformation. It is also intriguing to

find so few references to church discipline in standard nineteenth and twentieth century works on systematic theology. Such a survey discloses the following information:

Lois Berkhof, in his *Systematic Theology*, devotes two and a half pages to the subject.

J. Oliver Buswell, Jr., in his work, *A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion* (two volumes) has a brief segment on biblical separation, but nothing on church discipline per se.

Levis Sperry Chafer, in his *Systematic Theology* (eight volumes) makes no reference to church discipline.

P. B. Fitzwater, in his *Christian Theology* makes no reference to the subject.

A. A. Hodge, in his *Outlines of Theology* makes no reference to church discipline.

Charles Hodge, in his *Systematic Theology* (three volumes) has a few lines on church discipline, referring to it as one of the functions of the church.

E. Y. Mullins, in his work, *The Christian Religion in Doctrinal Expression* makes no reference to the subject.

Heinrich Schmid, in his *Doctrinal Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* makes no reference to church discipline.

William G. T. Shedd, in his *Dogmatic Theology* (three volumes), makes no reference to the subject.

Augustus Hopkins Strong, in his *Systematic Theology* (three volumes), devotes two pages to church discipline.

Henry C. Thiessen, in his *Lectures in Systematic Theology* devotes ten lines to the subject.

3. What are some of the causes of this lack of emphasis on church discipline? This is a difficult question to answer. However, among those causes that could be mentioned, perhaps the following can be said to have contributed substantially to this current situation:
  - a. The Sacred-Secular Distinction -- the compartmentalization of life into sacred and secular dimensions, and the feeling that the church is to concern itself only with the sacred dimension of life.
  - b. The Public-Private Distinction -- the further compartmentalization of life into public and private domains; and the feeling, especially in American society, that organizations (including the church) do not have the right to obtrude themselves into the private beliefs or behaviors of their members.

- c. Religious Pluralism in America -- the further complication of a society characterized by religious pluralism, in which differing moral and ethical standards make it somewhat less difficult to find acceptance in a church in which one's beliefs and behaviors are not questioned or challenged, than in a society in which moral and ethical standards are fairly uniform.
  - d. The Moral Equality of All Human Beings -- the feeling, especially in American society, that all human beings are basically equal, and essentially on the same moral plane; and therefore that individuals have no right to judge other human beings, when the human beings who presume to judge are basically no different from those they judge. All men are equally imperfect, fallible, sinful beings; and therefore the human beings that serve as officers of the church have no right to judge other human beings.
  - e. The Costliness of Discipline -- the costly nature of discipline (whether of children in a home or of the people of God in the church), in terms of expenditure of time, emotional stress to church leaders, and potential misunderstanding for and harm to the people of God, make church discipline an unattractive feature to many.
4. It is interesting to speculate on what Dr. John L. Nevius, whose name has been so prominently associated with the Nevius Method of planting churches on the mission field and of making them self-governing, self-propagating, and self-supporting as soon as possible, might have said concerning these causes of the current lack of emphasis on church discipline. In his book, *The Planting and Development of Missionary Churches*, under the heading "Discipline", he wrote the following:
- 1. We regard the administration of discipline as indispensable to the growth and prosperity of our work, and attention to it claims a large portion of our time and thoughts.
  - 2. The proportion of those who have been excommunicated on account of scandalous offenses is comparatively small. The great majority of them, perhaps as many as eighty per cent., are cases of gradual and at last complete neglect of Christian duties, commencing with giving up Bible study, disregard of the Sabbath and neglect of public worship. It now appears that most of these persons entered the Church without a clear apprehension of what Christianity, theoretical and practical, is . . . .
  - 3. We administer discipline as directed by the Scriptures and generally practiced by Christian churches at home; first, by exhortation and admonition; followed if necessary by a formal trial and suspension; and after a period of suspension varying from a few months to one or two years, in failure of reformation, by excommunication.
  - 4. The whole number of adult baptisms in my own field during the last seven years has been about one thousand. The proportion of



excommunicated persons is about twenty per cent of the whole, and more than half of them have been from the one hsien, a Shiu-kuang, where there were for a time numerous accessions under a good deal of excitement. in the other four hsien the proportion of excommunicated persons as compared to the whole number of converts is about ten per cent. While there has been this falling away in individuals, there has been a comparatively slight loss of stations, nearly all having left in them a few earnest men; so that the places where there have been the most excommunications are really stronger and more promising than when they had more names on the roll.

5. Cases of discipline have diminished considerably during the last year, and we hope the number may be much curtailed in the future by avoiding some of the causes which have led to them. Very few excommunicated persons have returned to us. Very few have become enemies and open opposers. Most are indifferent, some soured and disappointed. Many of them retain strong sympathy with the Church and continue to attend services. In every case, so far as I know, the administration of discipline has been sustained by public opinion in the Church and outside of it, and the effect of discipline has been decidedly good. I believe the neglect of it would soon result in checking the growth and perhaps extinguishing the life of the Church.

#### C. The Basis for Church Discipline

Three major considerations form the basis for the exercise of church discipline:

1. The interrelationship and consequent obligation of believers to one another as members of the body of Christ.

This basis may be seen in I Corinthians 12:12-13, 24b-26a, 27. Paul says:

"For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit . . . . But God has so composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that member which lacked, that there should be no division in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; . . . Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it."

It is interesting to note that in Revelation 3:19 the great Head of the body says: "Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; be zealous therefore, and repent."

In Galatians 6:1-2, Paul exhorts the members of Christ's body: "Brethren, even if a man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ."

The implications of these (and other) Scriptures is clear. The members of Christ's body have an obligation to care for and to love each other. If love seeks the best interests, the highest well-being, of the loved one, then there is no conflict between the objective of love and the objective of discipline. Christ loves His people, yet He chastens them and reproves them for His glory and their highest well-being. And the members of Christ's body are grieved and exercised when they see their fellow members doing things that are detrimental to their best interests and well-being, that drag the honor of Christ in the dust, and that offend a gracious and loving God.

2. The first function of government as applied to the church -- protection from heretical teaching and harmful behavior -- and the duty of church officers to exercise this function.

The operation of this first function may be seen in a number of Scriptures:

I Timothy 1:18-20 -- "This command I entrust to you, Timothy, my son, in accordance with the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may fight the good fight, keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith. Among these are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have delivered over to Satan, so that they may be taught not to blaspheme."

II Timothy 2:16-18 -- "But avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness, and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, men who have gone astray from the truth saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and thus they upset the faith of some."

II Timothy 4:1-4 -- "I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths."

Titus 1:10-13 -- "For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach, for the sake of sordid gain. One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, 'Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.' This testimony is true. For this cause reprove them severely that they may be sound in the faith."

Acts 20:28-31 -- "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from

among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears."

3. The basis in specific scriptural command and example

The classic passage in procedure is Matthew 18:15-18:

"And if your brother sins, go and reprove him in private ('between you and him alone'); if he listens to you, you have won your brother. But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed. And if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a taxgatherer. Truly I say to you, whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

The sequence and procedure to be followed appears to be quite straightforward, with one or two problems to be resolved:

Step 1 -- A brother commits a sin. Is this a sin against the person who goes and reproves him, or is it a sin of which the person who reproves him has merely become aware? The words "against you" that appear in some versions are given a "C" rating in the United Bible Societies' text and placed in brackets (which means that the presence or position of the words is regarded as disputed). Does a brother have a responsibility to admonish or rebuke his brother only when that brother has sinned against him personally? Or does he have a responsibility, growing out of a loving concern for his brother's highest well-being, to admonish or rebuke his brother whenever he sees his brother sinning, whether or not the sin is against him personally? It would appear that the latter position is closer to the teaching of Scripture as a whole. In any case, the sin envisioned is a real one, not merely an action deemed sinful by a hypersensitive conscience, nor an action falsely judged sinful for ulterior reasons.

Step #2 -- You are to go and reprove your brother in private ("under four eyes"). Why this emphasis on private reproof? Taking the text of the passage into consideration, it would appear to make sense only if the sin were not known to the congregation at large. This stricture rules out grumbling, gossiping, complaining to a third party about the brother's sin. The one who reproves should keep his lips sealed to anyone other than the offender, and should open his lips to the offender alone (at this stage). If your brother listens to you (agrees with what you say and repents of his sin), you have won your brother. But if he does not listen to you, then you are to take step #3.

Step #3 -- You are to take with you one or two other witnesses to your brother's sin, and have them reprove him as well, as that corroboratory evidence may be secured. If he listens to them (agrees with what they say and repents of his sin), you have won your brother. But if he does not listen to them, then you are to take step #4.

Step #4 -- You are to tell the church of the brother's sin, and bring evidence against him. If he listens to the church, you have won your brother. But if he refuses to listen, then he is to be removed from the category of "member in good standing", excommunicated, and regarded as "a Gentile and a tax-gatherer".

I Corinthians 5 is a case of extreme judicial discipline; and as such is very important.

A case of immorality in the form of incest actually existing in the church at Corinth was reported to Paul in Ephesus. A man was sexually involved with his stepmother, apparently while his father was still living! The Corinthian church, puffed up and arrogant with its party spirit, showed no signs of sorrow or indignation over the scandalous situation.

Even though Paul was in Ephesus, he passed judgment on this immoral man, and decided that excommunication was the discipline called for. The concept of delivering a person to Satan fits with this extreme discipline; i.e., the removal of a person from the realm of the church, presided over by Christ, and the deliverance of that person to the realm of the evil world-system, presided over by Satan. It is not entirely clear how deliverance to Satan's realm involves the destruction of the flesh, unless flesh is taken in the ethical sense, and this refers to taking a person out from under the restraining influences he experiences in the church which hinder the development of native depravity, and delivering him to the evil world-system where his flesh can develop relatively unchecked. How this relates to the deliverance of the spirit in the day of the Lord Jesus is also not entirely clear, unless this is speaking of the purpose of the discipline, in terms of a hopeful seeking of the reclamation of the offender and his restoration to fellowship; or unless this is speaking of the way the unchecked flesh in a believer defeats itself by bringing him to bitterness and gall, and finally to an end of himself, as in the case of the Prodigal Son.

Paul uses the figure of leaven in a bad sense. Just as leaven eventually works its way through a whole lump of dough, so unjudged and tolerated sins eventually influence the whole church in a negative way. Paul tells the Corinthians to clean out the old leaven of sin in their midst, so that they may be an unleavened lump of dough, clean and fit for use.

The application of this figure to the situation of the church at Corinth is that the believers are to Judge and remove the wicked man from their midst. Paul has given his judgment; he calls upon the church to give its judgment and to excommunicate the immoral man!

II Thessalonians 3:6-15 is a case of moderate judicial discipline; and as such is both helpful and interesting.

Here at Thessalonica the situation was somewhat different from that in the Corinthian church, not in the fact that Paul was in Corinth, making a judgment on the situation at Thessalonica on the basis of reports from a distance, but in the fact that the reason for judgment was not gross immorality requiring the extreme form of discipline, but rather an unwillingness to work to earn a living, requiring a lesser form of discipline. Paul does not suggest that such persons be excommunicated, but rather commands and exhorts them to work and to eat their own bread. However, if they refuse to do so, Paul instructs the Thessalonians believers to note such persons, to keep aloof from them, and to refuse to associate with them. Paul also urges the believers not to encourage these persons in their malingering by feeding them. On the other hand Paul urges the Thessalonians not to view such persons as enemies, but to admonish them as brothers in Christ.

I Timothy 5:19-20 is important because it deals with the discipline of church officers. The passage states:

"Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses. Those who continue to sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest also may be fearful of sinning."

Five important features of discipline may be seen in this passage:

- (1) No member of the church is exempt from discipline, not even an elder.
- (2) Accusations of wrongdoing should not even be received unless they are supported by the evidence of two or three witnesses to the same sinful act. One witness is not enough!
- (3) Rebuke is here mentioned as a form of discipline.
- (4) Discipline is not to be exercised and executed by the church in secret but before the whole church.
- (5) Discipline has a salutary purpose, in creating fear of public exposure and rebuke of sin.

#### D. The Purpose of Discipline

As was mentioned earlier, discipline may either be administrative or judicial.

1. Administrative discipline is concerned with the maintenance of good order in the government of the church. its purpose is twofold:
  - a. To insure the preservation of all rights
  - b. To assure the faithful discharge of all obligations
2. Judicial discipline is concerned with the prevention and correction of offenses. its purpose is threefold:

- a. To vindicate the honor of Christ
- b. To promote the purity of the church
- c. To reclaim the offender

Administrative discipline is carried out by means of God-given agencies employing God-given principles or right conduct in the administrative work of the church. These include the election of scriptural administrative officers, and the adoption of scripturally-consonant administrative policies and procedures, to carry out the scripturally-ordained administrative functions of the church.

Judicial discipline is carried out by means of God-given agencies employing God-given principles of right conduct in the Judicial work of the church. These include the establishment of scriptural judicial bodies, and the adoption of scripturally-consonant judicial policies and procedures to carry out the scripturally-ordained judicial functions of the church.

#### E. The Recipients of Discipline

Who are to be the recipients of discipline? Any reply to this question other than one that includes all persons connected with the church suggests that certain individuals or classes are exempt from correction of offenses or free from offenses altogether! This question raises some relevant issues:

1. Are all members, associate members, and adherents subject to church discipline, or does discipline pertain to members only? Does church discipline pertain to persons outside the church, such as nonbelieving spouses or rebellious children of members?
2. Are members of all categories subject to church discipline, including founding members as well as new members, wealthy members as well as poor members, big givers as well as pew-sitters, socially prominent members as well as socially nondescript members, well-educated members as well as poorly-educated or uneducated members, active members as well as occasional members?
3. Are all officers, including elders, deacons, and extra-biblical officers, subject of discipline? Is the chairman or moderator of the Board subject to discipline?
4. Are pastors subject to church discipline? If so, who disciplines them? Are founding/planting pastors subject to discipline? Are pastors who are accused of heresy or immorality subject to discipline if they immediately resign and go elsewhere, or are they subject to discipline only if they attempt to found a new church nearby, using as a core that faction of the local church that leaves with them?
5. Are leaders and members of parachurch organizations subject to discipline if they commit public acts in doctrine or practice that are contrary to the Word of God but do so in the context of the organizations with which they serve? Or are such persons exempt from discipline?

6. Do Christian churches have any obligation to communicate with the home churches of persons who are away from home but need discipline? in the case of a person who attends a church away from his home church on a long-term temporary basis and is involved in an offense that requires church discipline, do the elders of the away church have any responsibility to discipline such a person? Do they have any responsibility to inform the elders of the person's home church of the offense and the details surrounding it? Or do the elders of the away church have a responsibility only to attempt to urge or persuade the offender to contact or return to his home church to confess the matter to his elders for their judgment? Are the elders of the away church then absolved of their responsibility, if the offender refuses or simply neglects to contact his home church?

F. The Executors of Discipline

Who is to exercise and execute discipline? in cases of extreme discipline, who is to make the judgment? Who is to execute it?

1. In a preliminary sense, the members of the church are responsible to follow the course of procedure prescribed in Matthew 18, so that possible cases of judicial discipline can, by God's grace, be resolved and turned to good use before they reach the stage of actual discipline. in such cases, the admonition of James 5:19-20 applies:

"My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth, and one turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death, and will cover a multitude of sins."

2. It would appear that, both by way of God's ordination of the pattern of local church government, and by way of the need for the maintenance of peace and good order in the church by means of the government that God has ordained, the elders of the church are charged with exercising and executing church discipline. This would appear to include pastors, who are teaching as well as ruling elders.
3. Nevertheless, it would appear that, in a cooperative and corroboratory sense, all of the members of the church are responsible to exercise and execute lawful discipline, both by cooperating with their elders by way of assistance in ascertaining the truth or falsity of accusations, and in terms of support of their elders' decisions and Judgments, once those decisions have been made and those Judgments executed.

### C. Degrees of Discipline

in several of the writings previously quoted, the term "censure" is used to refer to the act of discipline itself. in the *Book of Discipline* of the Presbyterian Church, LISA., four degrees of censure are specified for the church members, and six for church officers, as follows:

1. Degrees of censure for church members
  - a. Admonition  
"Admonition consists in tenderly and solemnly addressing the offender, placing his sin before him, warning him of his danger, and exhorting him to repentance and greater fidelity to the Lord Jesus Christ."
  - b. Rebuke  
"Rebuke is a form of censure more severe than admonition. It consists in setting forth the serious character of the offense, reproving the offender, and exhorting him to repentance and more perfect fidelity to the Lord Jesus Christ."
  - c. Suspension from Communion  
"Suspension is a form of censure by which one is deprived of the privileges of communicant membership in the church . . . It may be for a definite or an indefinite time."
  - d. Excommunication  
"Excommunication is the most severe form of censure and is resorted to only in cases of peculiar aggravation and persistent impenitence. It consists in solemnly excluding the offender from the communion of the visible church of Jesus Christ."
2. Degrees of censure for church officers
  - a. Admonition (same definition as above, under church members)
  - b. Rebuke (same definition as above, under church members)
  - c. Suspension from office  
"Suspension is a form of censure by which one is deprived of the privileges of office . . . . An office-bearer, while under suspension, shall be the object of deep solicitude and earnest dealing to the end that he may be restored. When the trial court which pronounces the censure is satisfied of the penitence of the offender, or when the time of suspension has expired and no new offense has arisen, the censure shall be removed, and the offender shall be restored. This restoration shall be accompanied with solemn admonition."
  - d. Suspension from communion (same definition as above, under church members)



- e. Deposition from office  
Deposition from office is a form of censure by which an office-bearer is deprived permanently of the exercise of his office, and "may follow upon conviction of heresy or gross immorality."
- f. Excommunication (same definition as above, under church members)

## V. THE ORDINANCES OF THE CHURCH

### A. The Ordinances in General

#### 1. Definition of Ordinances

##### a. Baptist Definition

"By the ordinances, we mean those outward rites which Christ has appointed to be administered in his church as visible signs of the saving truth of the gospel. They are signs, in that they vividly express this truth and confirm it to the believer.

"It will be well to distinguish from one another the three words: symbol, rite, and ordinance. 1. A symbol is the sign, or visible representation, of an invisible truth or idea; as for example, the lion is the symbol of strength and courage, the lamb in the symbol of gentleness, the olive branch the symbol of peace, the scepter of dominion, the wedding ring of marriage, and the flag of country. Symbols may teach great lessons; as Jesus' cursing the fig tree taught the doom of unfruitful Judaism, and Jesus' washing of the disciples' feet taught his own coming down from heaven to purify and save, and the humble service required of his followers. 2. A rite is a symbol which is employed with regularity and sacred intent. Symbols became rites when thus used. Examples of authorized rites in the Christian Church are the laying on of hands in ordination, and the giving of the right hand of fellowship. 3. An ordinance is a symbolic rite which sets forth the central truths of the Christian faith, and which is of universal and perpetual obligation. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are rites which have become ordinances by the specific command of Christ and by their inner relation to the essential truths of his kingdom. No ordinance is a sacrament in the Romanist sense of conferring grace; but, as the *sacramentum* was the oath taken by the Roman soldier to obey his commander even unto death, so Baptism and the Lord's Supper are sacraments, in the sense of vows of allegiance to Christ our Master.

-- Augustus Hopkins Strong, *Systematic Theology* Volume III  
(Philadelphia: The Judson Press, 1909), p. 930.

"The two symbols of primary significance in the Christian faith are baptism and the Lord's supper. It is difficult to set forth a term that will properly categorize these symbols because any word selected can be defined in various ways. To avoid the term "sacrament," we have used "ordinance" to specify baptism and the Lord's Supper. The word "ordinance" in the King James Version is a translation of the Greek word meaning "traditions" (I Cor. 11:2). However, Paul, in the use of the word "traditions" in this verse, had reference to all that Jesus said and taught, and the synonym for "ordinance" in the dictionary is "sacrament." We have avoided "sacrament" because of the magical implications of the word. However, the word, when originally used by the Romans, meant a pledge of allegiance of a Roman soldier to

the ideals of the Roman army. If 'sacrament' were used in the way it was originally used, it would be a good word to specify both baptism and the Lord's Supper. But to avoid being misunderstood as to our meaning of these symbols, it might be more appropriate to call baptism and the Lord's Supper 'symbols of our Christian faith.' "

-- *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists* Volume I (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1958), p. 106.

b. Reformed Definition

The following questions and answers are quoted from the Westminster *Larger Catechism*:

Q. 154. "What are the outward means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of his mediation?"

A. "The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicates to his church the benefits of his mediation, are all his ordinances; especially the word, sacraments, and prayer; all which are made effectual to the elect for their salvation."

Q. 161 "How do the sacraments become effectual means of salvation?"

A. "The sacraments become effectual means of salvation, not by any power in themselves, or any virtue derived from the piety or intention of him by whom they are administered, but only by the working of the Holy Ghost, and the blessing of Christ, by whom they are instituted."

Q. 162. "What is a sacrament?"

A. "A sacrament is an holy ordinance instituted by Christ in his church, to signify, seal, and exhibit unto those that are within the covenant of grace, the benefits of his mediation, to strengthen and increase their faith, and all other graces; to oblige them to obedience; to testify and cherish their love and communion one with another, and to distinguish them from those that are without."

Q. 163. "What are the parts of a sacrament?"

A. "The parts of a sacrament are two; the one an outward and sensible sign, used according to Christ's own appointment; the other an inward and spiritual grace thereby signified."

The *Second Helvetic Confession*, Chapter 19, states:

"Sacraments are mystical symbols, or holy rites, or sacred actions, ordained by God himself, consisting of his Word, of outward signs, and of things signified: whereby he keeps in continual memory, and recalls to mind, in his Church, his great benefits bestowed upon man; and whereby he seals up his promises, and outwardly represents, and, as it were, offers unto our sight those things which inwardly he

performs unto us, and therewithal strengthens and increases our faith through the working of God's Spirit in our hearts; lastly, whereby he does separate us from all other people and religions, and consecrates and binds us wholly unto himself, and gives us to understand what he requires of us."

The *Westminster Confession of Faith*, Chapter 27, states:

"I. Sacraments are holy signs and seals of the covenant of grace, immediately instituted by God, to represent Christ, and His benefits; and to confirm our interest in Him; as also, to put a visible difference between those that belong unto the Church, and the rest of the world; and solemnly to engage them to the service of God in Christ, according to His Word.

II. There is, in every sacrament, a spiritual relation, or sacramental union, between the sign and the thing signified; whence it comes to pass, that the names and effects of the one are attributed to the other.

III. The grace which is exhibited in or by the sacraments rightly used, is not conferred by any power in them; neither doth the efficacy of a sacrament depend upon the piety or intention of him that doth administer it; but upon the work of the Spirit, and the word of institution, which contains, together with a precept authorizing the use thereof, a promise of benefit to worthy receivers."

c. Lutheran Definition

"Saving grace is imparted to man not only through the Word, but also through the Sacraments; and, as in the case of the Word, so also in the case of the Sacraments, an external and visible element, which in the sacred rite is offered to man, becomes the vehicle of the Holy Ghost. A Sacrament is, therefore, a holy rite, appointed by God, through which, by means of an external and visible sign, saving grace is imparted to man, or, if he already possess it, is assured to him. The Evangelical Church (the Evangelical Lutheran Church) enumerates only two such rites, Baptism and the Lord's Supper; for only through these two rites, in accordance with the direction of Christ, is such saving grace imparted, and, among all the sacred ordinances prescribed in Scripture, it is only in these two that these two distinguishing characteristics of a sacrament are combined, via, (1) a special divine purpose, in accordance with which, in the sacred rite, an external element is to be thus employed; and (2) the promise given in the divine Word that by the application of this element evangelical saving grace shall be imparted. By these marks these two sacred rites are distinguished from all other religious services, and, hence, for the purpose of thus distinguishing them, are called Sacraments."

-- Heinrich Schmid, *The Doctrinal Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, Third Edition (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1899), pp. 520-521.

"Any ordinance that is to be properly regarded as a sacrament of the New Testament must have the following requisites: (1) It must have an external, or corporeal and visible, element or sign, which may be handled, exhibited, and used in a certain external rite. (2) The element or sign, and the rite in which it is employed, must have an express divine command to authorize and sanction it. (3) It must be commanded and instituted in the New Testament. (4) That promise must not only simply and by itself have the testimony of God's Word, but it must by the divine ordinance be annexed to the sign of the Sacrament, and as it were, clothed with that sign or element. (7) That promise must not relate to the general gifts of God, whether corporeal or spiritual, but it must be a promise of grace or justification, i.e., of gratuitous reconciliation, the remission of sins, and, in a word, all the benefits of redemption. (8) And that promise, in the Sacraments, is either signified or announced, not in general only, but on the authority of God is offered, presented, applied, and sealed to the individuals who use the Sacraments in faith."

-- Martin Chemnitz, *Examen Concilii Tridentini*, II, 14,  
quoted by Heinrich Schmid, pp. 525-526.

d. Roman Catholic Definition

The following material is quoted from the *Baltimore Catechism No. 3*, issued under the auspices of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine in 1949:

"304. What is a sacrament?

A sacrament is an outward sign instituted by Christ to give grace.

(a) Man, composed of body and soul, lives in the midst of visible things, deals with them constantly, and gains his knowledge from them. His knowledge of spiritual things depends on the use of his senses. It was fitting, therefore, that the sacraments, which were to bring man the supernatural, spiritual gifts of grace, be instituted by Christ as visible signs which could be perceived by man.

(b) In each of the sacraments there is an outward sign, that is, some external thing or action called the matter, and a set formula of words known as the form. The matter and the form together make up the sign of each sacrament. In the sacrament of Baptism, for example, the matter consists in the water and in its application to the person being baptized; the form is the sentence: 'I baptize thee in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost,' which is said while the water is being poured.

(c) When the sign is applied to the one who receives the sacrament, it signifies inward grace and has the power of producing it in the soul. The external action performed by the minister of the sacrament is called a sign of the inward grace because it signifies and represents outwardly which is produced inwardly and visibly in the soul. The sacramental signs actually effect what they represent. In Baptism, for example, the application of the water and the pronouncing of the words are a sign which both represents the cleansing of the soul from sin and actually effects that cleansing.

(d) The sacramental signs were instituted by Christ. Our Lord is the Author of all the sacraments. Only God can give to material things or to outward signs the power of producing grace in the soul.

2. The Number of Ordinances/Sacraments

a. The Protestant View

"Baptism and the Lord's Supper are admitted to be sacraments. They are (1) Ordinances instituted by Christ. (2) They are in their nature significant, baptism of cleansing; the Lord's Supper of spiritual nourishment. (3) They were designed to be perpetual. (4) They were appointed to signify, and to instruct; to seal, and to confirm and strengthen; and to convey or apply, and thus to sanctify, those who by faith receive them. On this principle the definition of a sacrament given in the standards of our Church is founded. 'A sacrament', it is said, 'is an holy ordinance instituted by Christ; wherein, by sensible signs, Christ and the benefits of the New Covenant are represented, sealed, and applied to believers.' . . . If the word sacrament be taken in the wide sense in which it was used in the early Church for any significant religious rite, it is obvious that no definite limit can be set to their number. If the word be confined to such divine ordinances as answer the conditions which characterize baptism and the Lord's Supper, then it is evident that they are the only sacraments under the Christian dispensation; and such is the view taken by all Protestants . . . The Romanists have seven sacraments, adding to baptism and the Lord's Supper, matrimony, orders, penance, confirmation, and extreme unction. Matrimony, however, although a divine institution, was not ordained for signifying, sealing, and applying to believers the benefits of redemption, and therefore, is not a sacrament. The same may be said of orders. And as to confirmation, penance, and extreme unction, in the sense in which Romanists use those terms, they are not divine institutions at all."

-- Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, Volume Three (New York: Scribner, Armstrong, and Company, 1872, reprinted by Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1952), p. 492.

"As for the number of them, if they should be considered according to the exact signification of a Sacrament, namely, for the visible signs, expressly commanded in the New Testament, whereunto is annexed the promise of free forgiveness of our sins, and of our holiness and joining in Christ, there be but two; namely, baptism, and the Supper of the Lord. For, although absolution hath the promise of forgiveness of sin; yet by the express word of the New Testament it hath not this promise annexed and tied to the visible sign, which is imposition of hands. For this visible sign (I mean laying on of hands) is not expressly commanded in the New Testament to be used in absolution, as the visible signs in baptism and the Lord's Supper are; and therefore absolution is no such Sacrament as Baptism and the Communion are. And though the ordering of ministers hath His visible sign and promise, yet it lacks the promise of remission of sins, as all other Sacraments

except the two above-named do. Therefore neither it, nor any other Sacrament else, be such Sacraments as Baptism and the Communion are."

-- Second book of Homilies, attributed in large part to Bishop John Jewel, in Queen Elizabeth's reign, quoted by Edward Harold Browne in An Exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles Twelfth Edition (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1882), p. 581.

The Heidelberg Catechism, Questions 66 and 68, speaks to this issue:

Question 66. "What are the Sacraments?"

Answer. "The Sacraments are visible, holy signs and seals, appointed of God for this end, that by the use thereof he may the more fully declare and seal to us the promise of the Gospel; namely, that he grants us out of free grace the forgiveness of sins and everlasting life, for the sake of the one sacrifice of Christ accomplished on the cross."

Question 68. "How many Sacraments has Christ appointed in the New Testament?"

Answer. "Two: holy Baptism and the holy Supper."

b. The Roman Catholic View

The following is quoted from the *Baltimore Catechism No 3*:

305. How many sacraments are there?

There are seven sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Holy Orders, and Matrimony.

(a) Christ instituted seven sacraments to supply the various needs of the spiritual life of man. Baptism is the sacrament of spiritual rebirth; Confirmation is the sacrament of spiritual strength and maturity; the Holy Eucharist gives us food for spiritual nourishment; Penance is the cure for the spiritual sickness of sin committed after Baptism; Extreme Unction strengthens us when dying; Holy Orders provides for the work of the Church; and Matrimony provides for the social needs of the Church.

315. What is Baptism?

Baptism is the sacrament that gives our souls the new life of sanctifying grace by which we become children of God and heirs of heaven.

330. What is Confirmation?

Confirmation is the sacrament through which the Holy Ghost comes to us in a special way and enables us to profess our faith as strong and perfect Christians and soldiers of Jesus Christ.

343. What is the Holy Eucharist?

The Holy Eucharist is a sacrament and a sacrifice. In the Holy Eucharist, under the appearance of bread and wine, the Lord Christ is contained, offered, and received.

379. What is the sacrament of Penance?

Penance is the sacrament by which sins committed after Baptism are forgiven through the absolution of the priest.

443. What is Extreme Unction?

Extreme Unction is the sacrament which, through the anointing with blessed oil by the priest, and through his prayer, gives health and strength to the soul and sometimes to the body when we are in danger of death from sickness, accident, or old age.

451. What is Holy Orders?

Holy Orders is the sacrament through which men receive the power and grace to perform the sacred duties of bishops, priests, and other ministers of the Church.

457. What is the sacrament of matrimony?

Matrimony is the sacrament by which a baptized man and baptized woman bind themselves for life in a lawful marriage and receive the grace to discharge their duties.

### 3. The Efficacy of the Ordinances/Sacraments

#### a. The Baptist View

In *The Sixty-Seven Articles* of Ulrich Zwingli, publicly declared in 1523, we find the following statement in Article XVIII (entitled Von der Messe, -- "Concerning the Mass"):

Dasz Christus, der sich selbst Ein Mal aufgeopfert hat, in Ewigkeit ein immerwährendes und bezahlendes Opfer ist für aller Glaubigen Sunden. Daraus ermessen wird, dasz die Messe nicht ein Opfer, sondern des Opfers Viedergedachtlnsz sei, und Versicherung der Erlosung, die Christus uns bewiesen hat.

"That Christ, who has offered Himself once, is forever a perpetual and propitiatory offering for the sins of all believers. From this it will be judged that the mass is not an offering, but a remembrance of an offering, and an assurance of redemption, that Christ has demonstrated for us." (translation by professor)

Louis Berkhof, in his *History of Christian Doctrine* comments on Zwingli's view as follows:

"Since the sacraments are administered only to believers, Zwingli conceives of them as being first of all signs and proofs of faith, and only secondarily means for the strengthening of faith as reminders of the



blessings appropriated by faith, and as directing our faith away from ourselves to the grace of God in Jesus Christ. For him the sacraments were memorials and badges of profession, though he also uses expressions which seem to point to a deeper significance."

-- L. Berkhof, *The History of Christian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1937), pp. 253-254.

"By the ordinances, we mean those outward rites which Christ has appointed to be administered in his church as visible signs of the saving truth of the gospel. They are signs, in that they vividly express this truth and confirm it to the believer.

In contrast with this characteristically Protestant view, the Romanist regards the ordinances as actually conferring grace and producing holiness."

-- Augustus Hopkins Strong, *Systematic Theology*, volume III, p. 930.

b. The Reformed View

"The first point clearly taught on this subject in the Symbols of the Reformed Church is that the sacraments are real means of grace, that is, means appointed and employed by Christ for conveying the benefits of his redemption to his people.

The second point in the Reformed doctrine on the sacraments concerns the source of their power. On this subject it is taught negatively that the virtue is not in them. . . The efficiency does not reside in the elements . . . It is not in the sacrament actions. Neither does the virtue of efficiency due to sacraments reside in, or flow from the person whom they are administered. It does not reside in his office . . . Nor does their efficiency depend on the character of the administrator in the sight of God; nor upon his intention; that, his purpose to render them effectual . . . The affirmative statement on this subject is, that the efficacy of the sacraments is due solely to the blessing of Christ and the working of his Spirit. . . The third point included in the Reformed doctrine is, that the sacraments are effectual as means of grace only, so far as adults are concerned, to those who by faith receive them.

-- Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, Volume Three, pp. 499-500.

III -- The grace which is exhibited in or by the sacraments, rightly used, is not conferred by any power in them; neither doth the efficacy of a sacrament depend upon the piety or intention of him that administer it, but upon the work of the Spirit, and the word of institution; which contains, together with a precept authorizing the use thereof, a promise of benefit to worthy receivers.

The efficacy of the sacraments is here described negatively and positively. (1) The power does not lie in the sacrament viewed *per se*, nor is it conditioned by the character of him who administers it. The Romish theory makes the sacrament efficacious in itself, *ex opere operato*, and thus gives what may be called a magical view of the

sacrament . . . . The notion that all, depends upon the intention of the officiating priest, *ex opere operantis*, led to great abuse in the Romish Church, and left it ordinarily uncertain whether one had at any time received the communion or not. (2) The Protestant doctrine places the efficacy in the observance of the acts prescribed in the institution, and in the fulfillment of the condition of faith on the part of the receiver as therein implied. 'All receive not the grace of God, which receive the sacraments of His grace. Neither is it ordinarily His will to bestow the grace of sacraments on any but by the sacraments; which grace also, they that receive by sacraments, or with sacraments, receive it from Him, and not from them.' (Hooker, Eccles Polity Bk. v. ch. lvii.)"

-- John MacPherson, *The Westminster confession of Faith* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1881), pp. 148-149.

c. The Lutheran View

"The Evangelical (the Evangelical Lutheran Church) Church herewith most distinctly opposes the Romish doctrine of the efficacy of the Sacrament *ex opere operato* (Ap. Conf., VII, 18): . . . We teach that faith is necessary to the proper use of the Sacraments; as faith which believes the promises and receives the things promised, which are here offered in the Sacrament. And the reason of this is plain and undeniable. A promise is useless to us unless it be embraced by faith. But the Sacraments are signs of the promises. Therefore faith is necessary to their proper use. . . .

Holl. (David Hollaz): 'The primary design of the Sacraments is the offering, conferring, applying, and sealing of the Gospel grace.' 'Gospel grace is offered to all who use the Sacraments; it is conferred on those who worthily use them; it is applied and sealed to adult believers.' Hence the Sacraments are not mere significant signs but such as also present and tender what they set forth; for this is included already in the idea of a Sacrament as a means of salvation.

Chmn. (Martin Chemnitz): 'The Ap. Conf. correctly declares that the effect, virtue or efficacy of the Word, and of the Sacraments, which are the seals of the promises, is the same . . . As, according to this, the Sacraments effect the same grace as the Word, the question may arise, Why has God employed a twofold means to this end? Chmn. (Ex. C. Trid., II, 29) answers: . . . And, indeed (as Chrysostom says) If we were angels, we would need no external sign; but our carnal infirmity hinders, disturbs, distracts, and weakens our faith. For it is hard to continue firmly persuaded of those things proposed in the Word which are not apparent to the senses. . . . Moreover faith, when it determines that the divine promise is in general a living one, is yet principally concerned about the question, Does this promise belong to me individually? . . . God, therefore, who is rich in mercy desires to present His grace to us not only in one way, that is, by His mere Word; but He desires also to help our infirmity by certain aids, namely, but Sacraments instituted and annexed to the promise of the Gospel, i.e., by certain signs, rites, or ceremonies obvious to

the senses, that by them He might admonish, instruct, and make us sure that what we see performed in a visible manner, externally, is effected internally in us by the power of God.'

'In this way the Sacraments are, in respect to us, signs confirming our faith in the promise of the Gospel; in respect to God, they are organs or instruments, through which God in the Word presents, applies, seals, confirms, increases, and preserves the grace of the Gospel promise in believers. The grace tendered in the Word is not different from that tendered in the Sacraments nor is the promise in the Gospel different from that in the Sacraments; but the grace is the same and the Word one and the same, except that in the Sacraments the Word is rendered visible, as it were, on account of our infirmity, by signs divinely appointed.' "

-- Heinrich Schmid, *The Doctrinal Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* pp. 532-535.

d. The Roman Catholic View

The Baltimore Catechism No 3 makes the following statements:

"304. What is a sacrament:

A sacrament is an outward sign instituted by Christ to give grace. . . (c) When the sign is applied to the one who receives the sacrament, it signifies inward grace and has the power of producing it in the soul. The external action performed by the minister of the sacrament is called a sign of the inward grace because it signifies and represents outwardly what is produced inwardly and invisibly in the soul. The sacramental signs actually effect what they represent. In Baptism, for example, the application of the water and the pronouncing of the words are a sign which both represents the cleansing of the soul from sin and actually effects that cleansing. . .

307. Do the sacraments give sanctifying grace?

The sacraments do give sanctifying grace.

309. Do the sacraments always give grace?

The sacraments always give grace if we receive them with the right dispositions.

(a) The sacraments, validly administered, always give grace to those who receive them with the right dispositions, because the power of the sacraments does not depend on anything human but solely on the will of God as expressed by Christ when He instituted them. The right dispositions do not produce the grace; they merely remove the obstacles which would present the reception of grace. The right dispositions, or the acts and habits required as conditions in order that the sacraments have their effect, vary with different sacraments.

(b) It is important to prepare fervently for the reception of the sacraments, because ordinarily they confer grace in proportion to our dispositions."

#### 4. The Necessity of the Ordinances/Sacraments

##### a. The Baptist View

A. H. Strong treats this question of necessity in connection with baptism. He writes:

- B. This external rite intended by Christ to be of universal and perpetual obligation.
- (a) Christ recognized John the Baptist's commission to baptize as derived immediately from heaven.
- (b) In his own submission to John's baptism, Christ gave testimony to the binding obligation of the ordinance.
- (c) In continuing the practice of baptism through his disciples and in enjoining it upon them as part of a work which was to last to the end of the world . . . Christ manifestly adopted and appointed baptism as the invariable law of his church.
- (d) The analogy of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper also leads to the conclusion that baptism is to be observed as an authoritative memorial of Christ and his truth, until his second coming.
- (e) There is no intimation whatever that the command of baptism is limited, or to be limited, in its application, -- that it has been or ever is to be repealed; and, until some evidence of such limitation or repeal is produced, the statute must be regarded as universally binding.

-- Augustus Hopkins Strong, *Systematic Theology*,  
Volume III, pp. 931-933.

##### b. The Reformed View

"The distinction between the necessity of precept and the necessity of means, is obvious and important. No one would be willing to say, without qualification, that it is unnecessary to obey an explicit command of Christ. And as He has commanded his disciples to baptize all who are received as members of his Church, in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and required his disciples statedly to commemorate his death by the celebration of the Lord's Supper, the strongest moral obligation rests upon his people to obey these commands.

By the necessity of means is usually understood an absolute necessity, a '*sine qua non*'. In this sense food is a necessity of life; light is necessary to the exercise of vision; the Word is necessary to the exercise of faith, for It is its object, the thing which is to be believed; and faith is, on the part of adults, necessary to salvation, for it is the act of receiving the grace of God offered in the Bible. . . .

The question between the Reformed on the one hand, and Lutherans and Romanists on the other, is in which of these senses are the sacraments necessary. According to the Reformed they have the necessity of precept. The use of them is enjoined as a duty; but they are not necessary means of salvation. Men may be saved without them.

The benefits which they signify and which they are the means of signifying, sealing, and applying to believers, are not so tied to their use that those benefits cannot be secured without them. . . . The Lutherans and Romanists, on the other hand, hold that the sacraments are necessary means of grace, in the sense that the grace which they signify is not received otherwise than in their use."

-- Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*,  
Volume Three, pp. 516-517.

c. The Lutheran View

"Saving grace is imparted to man not only through the Word, but also through the Sacraments . . . . A Sacrament is, therefore, a holy rite, appointed by God, through which, by means of an external and visible sign, saving grace is imparted to man, or, if he already possess it, is assured to him.

The question of the necessity of the Sacraments is thus decided by Chmn. (Ex. C. Trid., II 30): 'The Sacraments are necessary both by reason of the infirmity of our faith, which needs aids of this kind, and by reason of the divine institution . . . '

Holl. 'The Sacraments are necessary by the necessity of the precept and of the means. They have no absolute, but an ordinate or conditionate necessity.' Quen. (John Andrew Quenstedt): 'Baptism is necessary in infants not only by the necessity of the precept, but by the necessity of the means, because there is not other means by which they may be regenerated; but in adults it is necessary by reason of the precept, because in that case it requires faith. The Eucharist is necessary to all Christian adults by the necessity of the precept.' "

"3. The immediate design of Baptism is, finally, to work saving grace in man. But, as also the Word of God has the like effect, Baptism is intended to produce this result only in such cases in which it is applied at an earlier period than the Word; this is the case with infants who are not yet susceptible to the preaching of the Gospel. But in adults who, with their already developed reason, can understand the preaching of the Gospel, the Word has precedence, and produces its results before the Sacrament. But, in such instances, Baptism serves to seal and establish the gracious result already accomplished by the Word."

-- Heinrich Schmid, *The Doctrinal Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* pp. 520, 535, 537.

d. The Roman Catholic View

The necessity of the sacraments may be seen in the *Baltimore Catechism* No 3's discussion of baptism:

"315. What is Baptism?

Baptism is the sacrament that gives our souls the new life of sanctifying grace by which we become children of God and heirs of heaven.

320. Why is Baptism necessary for the salvation of all men?

Baptism is necessary for the salvation of all men because Christ has said, 'Unless a man be born again of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.'

324. When should children be baptized?

Children should be baptized as soon as possible after birth. (a) Children should be baptized as soon as possible because Baptism is necessary for salvation. Infants who die without baptism of any kind do not suffer the punishments of those who die in mortal sin. They may enjoy a certain natural happiness, but they will not enjoy the supernatural happiness of salvation."

5. The Validity of the Ordinances/Sacraments

Three considerations bear on the question: What constitutes a valid ordinance/sacrament?: (a) the form and manner of administration; (b) the intention of the administrators and recipients; (c) the official standing of the administrator.

a. The form and manner of administration

"(1) the words of the institution must be uttered during the administration of the ordinance, according to the direction of the Founder, . . . (2) it must be administered and received in the manner prescribed by the Founder; and (3) it must be administered only to those who already belong to the Church, or to those who desire to be received into it through the Sacrament. Finally, order requires that, except in extraordinary cases, it be administered only by regular ministers of the Church. When all these things are observed in this sacred act, according to the instruction of its Founder, then it is a Sacrament."

-- Heinrich Schmid, *The Doctrinal Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* p. 521.

b. The intention of administrators and recipients

Under question 306, the *Baltimore Catechism* No. 3 states:

"Although faith and sanctity of life should characterize the minister, they are not required for the valid administration of the sacraments. That the minister validly confer the sacraments it is necessary:

first, that he have the power of administering them;

second, that he perform all the essential ceremonies;

third, that he have jurisdiction for those sacraments which require it;

fourth, that he have the intention of at least 'doing what the Church does,' that is, of performing the sacred ceremony that is usual among Catholics."

The Westminster *Larger Catechism* refers to both administrators and recipients:

"Q. 161. How do the sacraments become effectual means of salvation?

A. The sacraments become effectual means of salvation, not by any power in themselves, or any virtue derived from the piety or intention of him by whom they are administered, but only by the working of the Holy Ghost, and the blessing of Christ, by whom they are instituted.

Q. 171. How are they that receive the sacrament of the Lord's supper to prepare themselves before they come unto it?

A. They that receive the sacrament of the Lord's supper are, before they come, to prepare themselves thereunto, by examining themselves of their being in Christ, of their sins and wants; of the truth and measure of their knowledge, faith, repentance; love to God and the brethren, charity to all men, forgiving those that have done them wrong; of their desires after Christ, and of their new obedience; and by renewing the exercise of these graces, by serious meditation, and fervent prayer."

Quenstedt is quoted by Schmid as saying:

The Sacraments do not belong to the man who dispenses them, but to God, in whose name they are dispensed, and therefore the gracious efficacy and operation of the Sacrament depend on God alone, I Cor. 3:5, and not on the character or quality of the minister. The dispute about the intention of the minister is more intricate. Propriety requires that he who administers the Sacraments should bring to the altar a good intention of performing what God has commanded and instituted; a mind not wandering but collected and fixed. It is absolutely necessary that the intention of Christ be observed in the external act. I say in the external act, for the intention of the minister to perform the internal act is not necessary; that is performed by the Church."

-- Heinrich Schmid, p. 531.

c. The official standing of the administrator

The *Westminster Confession of Faith* takes the following position:

Chapter 28, section 2 -- "The outward element to be used in this sacrament is water, wherewith the party is to be baptized, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, by a minister of the Gospel, lawfully called thereunto."

Chapter 29, section 3 -- "The Lord Jesus hath, in his ordinance, appointed His ministers to declare His word of institution to the

people; to pray, and bless the elements of bread and wine, and thereby to set them apart from a common to an holy use; and to take and break bread, to take the cup and (they communicating also to themselves) to give both to the communicants; but to none who are not then present in the congregation."

The *Baltimore Catechism No 3* states:

318. Who can administer Baptism?

"The priest is the usual minister of Baptism, but if there is danger that someone will die without Baptism, anyone else may and should baptize.

(a) in case of necessity even a heretic or an unbaptized person can validly and licitly baptize. He must, however, perform the ceremony correctly and have the intention of 'doing what the Church does,' namely, of performing the ceremony that is usual among Catholics."

And David Hollaz is quoted by Schmid as saying:

"God has instructed the right of dispensing the Sacraments to the Church, which commits the execution or exercise of this right, for the sake of order and propriety, to the called and ordained ministers of the Gospel. But in case of extreme necessity, where the Sacrament is necessary and could not be omitted without peril of salvation, any Christian, whether layman or woman, may validly administer the Sacrament of Baptism or initiation.

-- Heinrich Schmid, p. 531.



## B. The Ordinance of Baptism

### 1. The significance of baptism

The baptism with whose significance we are primarily concerned is not the Jewish ritual baptisms practiced by the Essenes (as witnessed to by the Dead Sea materials) or by the Pharisees (as witnessed to by the New Testament, Josephus, and the Mishnah). Nor are we primarily concerned with John's baptism of his disciples, or even with Christ's baptism of his disciples prior to His death, but rather with the New Testament ordinance of Christian baptism. And the question here is this: what is the spiritual significance, the meaning of this ordinance as God intended it? If it is a symbol, a sign, an emblem, a seal, a sacrament, a rite, a ceremony, then what does it symbolize, signify and seal spiritually?

Three lines of evidence are to be considered: (a) the significance as witnessed to by the New Testament; (b) the significance as witnessed to by various creeds and confessions; (c) the significance as witnessed to by various individuals.

#### a. The significance of baptism as witnessed to by the New Testament

Upon surveying the various instances of baptism in the New Testament, it appears that those that speak to the question of significance fall into five categories of meaning, four of which are outward signs of unseen spiritual realities, and one of which is an outward mark of profession.

##### (1) Baptism signifies union with Christ and with the benefits of His redemption

The ordinance of water baptism is so closely associated with that act of the Holy Spirit that savingly unites us, through faith, to Christ and to the benefits of His redemptive work, that both the outward baptism and the inward (i.e., Spirit) baptism are referred to by the same term BAPTIZO.

- (a) Romans 6:3-6 -- "Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through the baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin"

This passage speaks of the justified man's death to sin (depravity). Here the question must be asked: Does water baptism instrumentally bring about either positional or experiential death to sin? If not, then the passage cannot be speaking of the ordinance of baptism, but must be speaking of the Spirit baptism. in such a case,

the passage can be used rightly in connection with the subject of water baptism only if water baptism signifies Spirit baptism.

- (b) Galatians 3:26-29 -- "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise."

Verse 27 has been viewed as representing either the ordinance of baptism or Spirit baptism. However, if water baptism is opted for, some pointed questions must be asked. Does water baptism make us sons of God? Does it "clothe us with Christ"? Does water baptism make us all "one in Christ"? Does water baptism make us Christ's, Abraham's seed, and heirs of the promise? In an outward sense water baptism can "clothe us with Christ" and "make us Christ's", in terms of outward profession. But can professions of faith make us sons of God, and make us all one in Christ, Abraham's seed, and heirs of the promise? The answer quite definitely appears to be that only Spirit baptism can accomplish these spiritual realities. This passage can thus be used rightly in connection with the subject of water baptism only if the ordinance signifies Spirit baptism into union with Christ and with the benefits of His redemption.

- (c) Colossians 2:11-13 -- (the intricacy of this passage calls for a rather literal translation): "In whom (Christ) also ye were circumcised (1st Aor. Ind. Pass. of PERITEMNO) with a circumcision made without hands (or, not hand made) in (or, by) the putting off of the body of the flesh, in (or, by) the circumcision of Christ (or, by Christian circumcision -- a Genitive of characteristic), having been buried together with (2nd Aor. Pass. Part. Nom. Pl. Masc. of SUNTHAPTO) Him in (or, by) the baptism, in which also ye were raised up together (1st Aor. Ind. Pass. of SUNEGEIRO) through (or, by means of) the faith of the operation of God, the one raising (1st Aor. Act. Part. Gen. Sing. of EGEIRO) Him from the dead. And you (Acc.) being dead in the sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, you He made alive together (1st Aor. Ind. Act. of SUZOPOIEO) with Him, forgiving (1st Aor. Part. Nom. Sing. Masc. of CHARIZOMAI) us all the sins."

And with the mechanics removed we have the following:

"In whom also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by the putting off of the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, having been buried together with Him by baptism, by which also you were raised up together through faith in the operation of God, the one who raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made alive together with Him, forgiving us all the sins."

This is clearly not a physical circumcision of which the apostle is speaking (It is "made without hands"), but a spiritual cutting off of "the flesh", accomplished by the circumcision of Christ. This spiritual circumcision takes place through baptism. However, it is not the ordinance of baptism that is referred to, since the baptism spoken of actually buries believers with respect to sin and raises them to spiritual life. Thus baptism circumcises and buries and makes alive. It is not the external ordinance, but the spiritual baptism that accomplishes this effect. This baptism is called Spirit baptism, since it is the Holy Spirit who unites us to Christ through faith and circumcises us and makes us spiritually alive.

The teaching of this passage in an abbreviated form is thus: "you who were dead and uncircumcised were circumcised and made alive through union with Christ (as accomplished by the Holy Spirit)." Once again, this passage can be used rightly in connection with the subject of water baptism only if the ordinance signifies Spirit baptism.

(2) Baptism signifies cleansing from the pollution of sin

(a) Colossians 2:11-13 (previously quoted in (1) (c))

This passage, in addition to its emphasis on union with Christ, also speaks of spiritual circumcision -- a cutting off of "the flesh" by the circumcision of Christ. If "flesh" represents our sinful nature, then in some sense we are cleansed from depravity by Spirit baptism. Since in our union with Christ we die decisively to the ruling power of depravity, and are made alive decisively to the ruling power of righteousness, we can properly speak of this first phase of subjective sanctification (regeneration) in terms of cleansing from the pollution of sin. Water baptism signifies this cleansing from depravity.

(b) Titus 3:5 -- "He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit."

Although the word BAPTIZO is not used in this verse, nevertheless the "washing" spoken of can be and frequently is mentioned in discussions of baptism. Here it is regeneration that washes or cleanses us from the pollution of sin. Water baptism signifies cleansing from depravity.

(3) Baptism signifies cleansing from the guilt of sin

(a) Colossians 2:13 -- "And you, being dead in sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made alive together with Him, forgiving us all the sins."

In the act of Spirit baptism the believer is not only spiritually circumcised and buried to sin and raised to spiritual life; he is also forgiven all of his sins. Forgiveness speaks of being cleared of

guilt through the redemptive work of Christ, which clearing occurs at Justification. Water baptism thus signifies cleansing from guilt.

- (b) Acts 2:38 -- "And Peter said to them, "Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Peter tells his hearers to receive the ordinance of baptism (which they did, in verse 4) for (or, unto) forgiveness of their sins. When we are united, through faith, to Christ in Spirit baptism, our sins are forgiven. The ordinance of water baptism signifies this cleansing from guilt; it does not accomplish it. Only the application of the blood of Christ brings forgiveness of sins, but the ordinance of baptism signifies and seals to us this forgiveness. Those who repent and believe on Christ and then receive water baptism are assured, by the visible sign, of forgiveness of sins.

That which is invisible (the cleansing away of our sins by the blood of Christ), God represents to us by that which is visible (the rite of water baptism). The ordinance of baptism is thus God's visible sign and seal of forgiveness of sins to those who trust in Christ and are united to Him and to the benefits of His redemption.

- (c) Acts 22:16 -- Paul, in recounting his conversion experience, quotes the words of Ananias: "And now, why do you linger? Stand up and receive baptism, and cleanse away your sins, calling on His name."

Here the ordinance of baptism signifies a washing, a cleansing away of sins. This cleansing takes place the moment we trust in Christ and are justified, when our sins are forgiven on the ground of the blood of Christ. Thus the ordinance of baptism does not bring about the cleansing, but does signify it. And yet here the significance is so close between the sign and the reality signified that Ananias can say "receive baptism and cleanse away your sins."

- (d) I Peter 3:21 -- Peter makes reference to the eight persons who were saved from the great Flood by means of the ark, and then says: "whose antitype, baptism, now saves you also -- not the putting off of the filth of the flesh, but the answer to God of a good conscience -- through the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

The word translated "answer" is *EPEROTEMA*. This word is a *hapax*, but its cognate verb *EPEROTAO* is used 59 times in the New Testament, and means "to ask", or "to demand". How do we derive "answer" from the act of asking? The idea in the verse seen to be that God asks or interrogates the conscience, and the conscience answers back. If a man's sins have never been forgiven, then when God asks the conscience, it answers "Guilty". But if his sins have been cleansed by the blood of Christ, and if he has been declared righteous on the basis of Christ's imputed righteousness, then his conscience answer "Not guilty" and "Righteous". Thus Peter says that baptism saves -- not the ordinance of baptism that physically washes the body, but the spiritual reality that water baptism signifies, namely the spiritual

cleansing of the conscience that enables it to give a good response to God. And Christ's resurrection demonstrates and gives assurance that our sins have been fully expiated, and that God has accepted Christ's atonement as full payment for our sins! Water baptism therefore signifies a cleansing of the conscience from the guilty of sin.

- (e) Hebrews 10:22 -- "Let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water."

Here an internal cleansing of the conscience is coupled with an external cleansing of the body. If "the body having been washed with pure water" refers to the ordinance of baptism (what else could it refer to?), and if there is any connection between water baptism and internal cleansing of the conscience (1 Peter 3:21 certainly teaches that there is such a connection), then the ordinance of baptism signifies cleansing from the guilt of sin.

- (4) Baptism signifies entrance into the Body of Christ, the Church

I Corinthians 12:12-13 -- "For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit."

The Spirit of God, by uniting us to Christ through faith, has also united us to all the members of Christ's Body, the Church. Thus the ordinance of baptism signifies the spiritual reality of entrance into the Church through union with Christ.

- (5) Baptism signifies identification, through profession, as a disciple of Christ, and with the visible church.

- (a) Matthew 28:18-20 -- " And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.' "

Implied in the making of disciples (followers of Christ) is the credible profession of persons confessing Christ as Savior and Lord, on the basis of which profession the ordinance of baptism is administered.

- (b) Acts 2:37-38, 41 -- "Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Brethren, what shall we do?' And Peter said to them, 'Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit . . . .' So

then, those who had received his word were baptized; and there were added that day about three thousand souls."

No doubt these three thousand persons made profession of their repentance and trust in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of their sins, and on this basis they were baptized, and became identified as disciples of Christ.

- (c) Acts 8:1-13, 18-24 -- "But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike. And even Simon himself believed; and after being baptized, he continued on with Philip; and as he observed signs and great miracles taking place, he was constantly amazed . . . . Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was bestowed through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, saying, 'Give this authority to me as well, as that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.' But Peter said to him, 'May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! You have no part or portion in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. Therefore repent of this wickedness of yours, and pray the Lord that if possible, the intention of your heart may be forgiven you. For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bondage of iniquity.' But Simon answered and said, 'Pray to the Lord for me yourselves, so that nothing of what you have said may come upon me.' "

These people of Samara believed, i.e., made profession of their faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ; and they were baptized on the basis of that profession. They became identified as disciples of Christ. Simon the magician also believed, i.e., made profession of his faith in Christ; and was baptized. But his profession was an empty one, for he was not a true disciple of Christ.

- (d) Acts 8:36-38 -- "And as they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, 'Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?' ((And Philip said, 'If you believe with all your heart, you may.' And he answered and said, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God')) And he ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch; and he baptized him."

The Ethiopian eunuch professed faith in Christ and desired baptism; on the basis of his profession Philip baptized him, and he became a disciple of Christ.

- (e) Acts 18:8 -- ". . . and many of the Corinthians when they heard were believing and being baptized." On the basis of their profession the Corinthians were baptized and thus became identified with Christ as His disciples.

COMPARISON BETWEEN SPIRIT BAPTISM AND WATER BAPTISM

COMPARISON BETWEEN SPIRIT BAPTISM AND WATER BAPTISM

	Spirit Baptism	Water Baptism
Basis	Christ's redemptive work	Christ's institution and command
Condition	Faith in Christ's redemptive work	Profession of faith in Christ's redemptive work
Agent	God the Father	Human baptizer
Action	Spiritual baptism into union with Christ	Ritual baptism into identification with Christ
Element	The Holy Spirit	Water
Results	<p>Cleansing from the guilt of sin</p> <p>Cleansing from the depravity of sin</p> <p>Entrance into the invisible Church, the Body of Christ</p>	<p>Identification as a professing believer and a disciple of Christ</p> <p>Assurance (to one who believes) of cleansing from the guilt and depravity of sin</p> <p>Initiation into the visible church</p>

b. The significance of baptism as witnessed to by various creeds and confessions

(1) Luther's *Small Catechism* (1529)

Part IV. The Sacrament of Holy Baptism, as it should be clearly and simply explained to every household by the head of the family.

I. What is Baptism? Answer: Baptism is not simply common water, but it is the water comprehended in God's command, and connected with God's Word.

What is that Word of God? Answer: It is that which our Lord Christ speaks in the last chapter of Matthew (28:19): "Go ye into all the world, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

II. what does Baptism give, or of what use is it? Answer: It worketh forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and gives everlasting salvation to all who believe, as the Words and promises of God declare.

What are such words and promises of God? Answer: Those which our Lord Christ speaks in the last chapter of Mark: "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned."

III. How can water do such great things? Answer: It is not the water, indeed, that does it, but the Word of God which is with and in the water, and faith, which trusts in the Word of God in the water. For without the Word of God the water is nothing but water, and no baptism; but with the Word of God it is baptism -- that is, a gracious water of life and a washing of regeneration in the Holy Ghost, as St. Paul says, Titus, third chapter: "By the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior; that being Justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." This is certainly true.

IV. What does such baptizing with water signify? Answer: It signifies that the old Adam in us is to be drowned by daily sorrow and repentance, and perish with all sins and evil lusts; and that the new man should daily come forth again and rise, who shall live before God in righteousness and purity forever.

(2) The *Augsburg Confession* (1530), Article 9 -- Of Baptism

"Of Baptism they teach that it is necessary to salvation, and that by Baptism the grace of God is offered, and that children are to be baptized, who by Baptism, being offered to God, are received into God's favor. They condemn the Anabaptists who allow not the Baptism of children, and affirm that children are saved without Baptism."



(3) The *French Confession of Faith* (1559), Article 35

"We confess only two sacraments common to the whole Church, of which the first, baptism, is given as a pledge of our adoption; for by it we are grafted into the body of Christ, so as to be washed and cleansed by his blood, and then renewed in purity of life by his Holy Spirit. We hold, also, that although we are baptized only once, yet the gain that it symbolizes to us reaches over our whole lives and to our death, so that we have a lasting witness that Jesus Christ will always be our justification and sanctification."

(4) The *Belgic Confession* (1561), Article 34 -- Of Holy Baptism

"We believe and confess that Jesus Christ, who is the end of the law, hath made an end, by the shedding of his blood, of all other sheddings of blood which men could or would make as a propitiation of satisfaction for sin; and that he, having abolished circumcision, which was done with blood, hath instituted the Sacrament of Baptism instead thereof, by which we are received into the Church of God, and separated from all other people and strange religions, that we may wholly belong to him whose ensign and banner we bear, and which serves as a testimony unto us that he will forever be our gracious God and Father. Therefore he has commanded all those who are his to be baptized with pure water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; thereby signifying to us, that as water washeth away the filth of the body, when poured upon it, and is seen on the body of the baptized, when sprinkled upon him, so doth the blood of Christ, by the power of the Holy Ghost, internally sprinkle the soul, cleanse it from its sins, and regenerate us from children of wrath unto children of God. Not that this is effected by the external water, but by the sprinkling of the precious blood of the Son of God; who is our Red Sea, through which we must pass to escape the tyranny of Pharaoh, that is, the devil, and to enter into the spiritual land of Canaan. Therefore, the Ministers, on their part, administer the Sacrament, and that which is visible, but our Lord giveth that which is signified by the Sacrament, namely, the gifts and invisible grace; washing, cleansing, and purging our souls of all filth and unrighteousness; renewing our hearts and filling them with all comfort; giving unto us a true assurance of his fatherly goodness; putting on us the new man, and putting off the old man with all his deeds."

(5) The *Heidelberg Catechism* (1563)

Question 69. How is it signified and sealed unto thee in holy Baptism that thou hast part in the one sacrifice of Christ on the cross?

Answer. Thus: that Christ has appointed this outward washing with water, and has joined therewith this promise, that I am washed with his blood and Spirit from the pollution of my soul, that is, from all my sins, as certainly as I am washed outwardly with water whereby commonly the filthiness of the body is taken away.

Question 72. is, then, the outward washing of water itself the washing away of sins?

Answer. No; for only the blood of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit cleanse us from all sin.

Question 73. Why, then, doth the Holy Ghost call Baptism the washing of regeneration and the washing away of sins?

Answer. God speaks thus not without great cause: namely, not only to teach us thereby that like as the filthiness of the body is taken away by water, so our sins also are taken away by the blood and Spirit of Christ; but much more, that by this divine pledge and token he may assure us that we are as really washed from our sins spiritually as our bodies are washed with water.

(6) The *Dordrecht Confession of Faith* (1632), Article 7

"Concerning baptism we confess that all penitent believers, who, through faith, regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, are made one with God, and are written in heaven, must upon such scriptural confession of faith, and renewing of life, be baptized with water, in the most worthy name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, according to the command of Christ, and the teaching, example, and practice of the apostles, to the burying of their sins, and thus be incorporated into the communion of the saints; henceforth to learn to observe all things which the Son of God has taught, left, and commanded His disciples."

(7) The *Westminster Confession of Faith* (1647), Chapter 28, section 1

"Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, not only for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible Church, but also to be unto him a sign and seal of the covenant of grace, of his ingrafting into Christ, of regeneration, of remission of sins, and of his giving up unto God, through Jesus Christ, to walk in newness of life: which sacrament is, by Christ's own appointment, to be continued in his Church until the end of the world."

(8) The *Philadelphia Confession* (1688), Chapter 29, section 1

"Baptism is an ordinance of the New Testament ordained by Jesus Christ to be unto the party baptized a sign of his fellowship with him in his death and resurrection; of his being engrafted into him; of remission of sins; and of his giving up unto God, through Jesus Christ, to live and walk in newness of life."

(9) The *New Hampshire Baptist Confession* (1833), Article 14

"We believe that Christian Baptism is the immersion in water of a believer into the name of the Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost; to show forth, in a solemn and beautiful emblem, our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Saviour, with its effect in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life; that it is prerequisite to the privileges of a Church relation; and to the Lord's Supper. . . ."

(10) The *Baltimore Catechism No 3* (1949), Questions 315-317

315. What is Baptism?

Baptism is the sacrament that gives our souls the new life of sanctifying grace by which we become children of God and heirs of heaven.

(a) Our adoption as sons of God through the sanctifying grace is more perfect than human adoption whereby children are adopted by foster parents. In human adoption nothing is given to the foster son that makes him similar to the foster parent. Into the souls of the adopted sons of God, however, sanctifying grace is infused, which gives them supernaturally a likeness to God. In human adoption the foster son succeeds to his inheritance only after the death of the father; in God's adoption the eternally living Father lets us share in our inheritance at the time of the adoption, that is, when the sacrament of Baptism is administered. By means of sanctifying grace received in Baptism we are spiritually reborn; we become members of the family of God, who becomes our Father in the supernatural order.

(b) The Baptism preached by Saint John did not have the same power as the Baptism instituted by Christ. The Baptism instituted by Christ directly produces grace; the Baptism preached by Saint John was intended to arouse in souls sorrow for sin. The Baptism of St. John prepared the way for the Baptism of Christ.

(c) After His Resurrection, Christ commanded all to receive Baptism as a necessary condition for salvation.

316. What sins does Baptism take away?

Baptism takes away original sin; and also actual sins and all the punishment due to them, if the person baptized be guilty of any actual sins and truly sorry for them.

(a) Baptism takes away both the eternal punishment of hell due to unforgiven mortal sin, and the temporal punishment on earth or in purgatory due to venial sin or to forgiven mortal sin.

(b) Though Baptism takes away original sin and restores sanctifying grace to the soul, It does not take away all the consequences of original sin. For example, it does not take away death, suffering, ignorance, and a strong inclination to sin.

317. What are the effects of the character imprinted on the soul by Baptism?

The effects of the character imprinted on the soul by Baptism are that we become members of the Church, subject to its laws, and capable of receiving the other sacraments.

(a) Baptized persons remain members of the Church as long as they are united to It by profession of the same faith and have not broken the bonds of communion with It.

(b) All validly baptized persons are subjects of the Church, even if they are not members. Hence they are obliged to obey the laws of the Church unless exempted. If, however, they are invincibly ignorant of their

obligation to obey the laws of the Church, they do not sin by not obeying them.

(c) An unbaptized person cannot validly receive the other sacraments.

(d) A baptized person renounces Satan, his words, and his pomps, and has the obligation of leading a Christ life by following Christ and by obeying the legitimate pastors of the Church, especially the Roman Pontiff.

c. The significance of baptism as witnessed to by various individuals

(1) Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles Book Four*, Chapter 59, sections 1-3

"(1) In this way, then, one can discern in the individual sacraments the proper effect of each one and the becoming matter. Now, first: Regarding the spiritual generation which takes place in baptism, one must consider the generation of a living thing is a kind of change from non-living to life. But man in his origin was deprived of spiritual life by original sin, as was shown above; and still every single sin whatever which is added draws him away from life. Baptism, therefore, which is spiritual generation, had to have the power to take away both original sin and all the actual, committed sins.

(2) Now, because the sensible sign of a sacrament must be harmonious with the representation of its spiritual effect, and since washing away filth in bodily things is done more easily and more commonly by water, baptism is therefore, suitably conferred in water made holy by the Word of God.

(3) And since the generation of one is the corruption of another, and since what is generated loses both its previous form and the properties consequent on that form; necessarily through baptism, which is a spiritual generation, not only are sins taken away -- these are contrary to a spiritual life -- but also every guilt of sins. For this reason, too, baptism not only washes away the fault, but also absolves from all guilt. Hence, no satisfaction for their sins is enjoined on the baptized."

(2) John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* Book IV, Chapter 16, section 2

"Scripture declares that baptism first points to the cleansing of our sins, which we obtain from Christ's blood; then to the mortification of our flesh, which rests upon participation in his death and through which believers are reborn into newness of life and into the fellowship of Christ. All that is taught in the Scriptures concerning baptism can be referred to this summary, except that baptism is also a symbol for bearing witness to our religion before men."

(3) John William Baier, *Compendium Theologiae Positivae* (1685), p. 683, quoted by Heinrich Schmid, *The Doctrinal Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, p. 541

\*When it is acknowledged (1) that the words of the institution, besides the water, belong to the substance of Baptism; and (2) from the force of these words it is further acknowledged that the Holy Spirit and the whole Trinity are the author of this Sacrament as a means of grace; and when (3)

It is acknowledged that the Holy Spirit and the triune God, wherever and whenever Baptism is rightly administered, is present in the same way, by virtue of His measureless essence; and (4) is present by His grace in such a manner that, being present, He not only seriously offers spiritual benefits through this Sacrament, and (5) enters into the covenant of grace, with the person baptized, never to be broken on His part, and seals it through Baptism; but also (6) in the person baptized who does not resist the divine grace accomplishes, in this act itself, the work of regeneration and renovation through this Sacrament in such a manner that, (7) not by a separate and peculiar action, but jointly with the water of Baptism, through it by one undivided action, He enkindles and confirms faith; and that (8) on account of the merit of the God-man, Christ, truly present as to both natures, and on account of His blood shed for our sins (for, (9) since faith is conferred by baptism, by this also the blood of Christ is sprinkled, as far as His merit it applied by faith), when, I say, these things are acknowledged and maintained, we may well, as far as the rest is concerned, with the more ancient theologians, be silent about the name, heavenly object, and its almost inexplicable nature, and rather confess a cautious ignorance than profess false knowledge."

- (4) Augustus Hopkins Strong, *Systematic Theology*, Volume III, pp. 940-942, 964

"Baptism symbolizes the previous entrance of the believer into the communion of Christ's death and resurrection, -- or, in other words, regeneration through union with Christ . . . . Baptism, more particularly, is a symbol:

- (a) Of the death and resurrection of Christ. . . .
- (b) Of the purpose of that death and the resurrection, -- namely, to atone for sin, and to deliver sinners from its penalty and power. . . .
- (c) Of the accomplishment of that purpose in the person baptized, -- who thus professes his death to sin and resurrection to spiritual life. . . .
- (d) Of the method in which that purpose is accomplished, -- by union with Christ, receiving him and giving one's self to him by faith. . . .
- (e) Of the consequent union of all believers in Christ. . . .
- (f) Of the death and resurrection of the body, -- which will complete the work of Christ in us, and which Christ's death and resurrection assure to all his members."

- (5) P. B. Fitzwater, *Christian Theology*, pp. 489-491

"its significance. Baptism is an external and visible rite symbolizing an internal and invisible experience as authorized by Christ and practiced in the Church from its beginning. It signifies the inner experiences of the believer in relation to Jesus Christ the Redeemer and Saviour made effective by the Holy Spirit. This inner experience includes:

- (1) Union with Christ. . .
- (2) The removal of the believer's sins through Christ's death. . .
- (3) Identification with Christ in the reality and power of His resurrection life . . . .
- (4) The Lordship of Jesus Christ. . .

(6) John Murray, *Christian Baptism*

"Baptism signifies union with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection. It is because believers are united to Christ in the efficacy of his death, in the power of his resurrection, and in the fellowship of his grace that they are one body. They are united to Christ and therefore to one another. Of this union baptism is the sign and seal. The relationship which baptism signifies is therefore that of union, and union with Christ is its basic and central import. . . .

As was indicated above, we may not, however, exclude from the import of baptism the notion of purification. Baptism is dispensed by the application of water in a way that is expressive of cleansing. And it would be unreasonable to suppose that this action bears no analogy to that which is signified by it. There are two respects in which cleansing or purification takes place at the inception of the relationship which is signified and sealed by baptism, namely, purification from the defilement and purification from the guilt of sin. . . .

We may say then that baptism signifies union with Christ in virtue of his death and the power of his resurrection, purification from the defilement of sin by the renewing grace of the Holy Spirit, and purification from the guilt of sin by the sprinkling of the blood of Christ. It is this that is central, and it is this notion that appears more explicitly and pervasively than any other."

-- John Murray, *Christian Baptism* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, n.d.), pp. 6-8.

(7) Reginald E. O. White, *The Biblical Doctrine of Initiation*

"So rich, and many-sided, is the complex of ideas that comprises the biblical doctrine of initiation. Assuming that what persists through all developments and in all schools of biblical thought, and what is traceable directly to the words and deeds of Jesus, must be accepted as central and determinative, we may venture perhaps to distil the elements essential to any scripturally sound initiation teaching and practice. It must preserve undimmed the two-sidedness of covenant relationship with God. It must express the assurance that for the initiate the promise is fulfilled and the Saviour has been found. It must be fully confessional, neither ignoring the necessity for the initiate's personal faith, nor accepting some substitute for it. It must manifestly carry the authority of Jesus, and identify the initiate directly with Him. Its mode must provide an unambiguous vehicle by which the initiate on his part shall give expression to his repentant renunciation of all Christless things, and by which the church on God's part, shall express the divine cleansing of remission and signify the Father's welcome to the sinner. It must clearly impose, and imply the initiate's clear acceptance of, the ethical and social obligations inherent in the spiritual life now entered upon. And above all it must unite the convert, by the regenerating Spirit, with the living Christ; for whatever else is implied in or associated with baptism, it is essentially, in the New Testament thought, baptism into Christ."

-- Reginald E. O. White, *The Biblical Doctrine of Initiation* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Win. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1960), pp. 277-278.

(8) G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament*

"If then baptism was practiced in the earliest church, what significance was assigned to it?

- (i) As has been mentioned, baptism in Acts is always administered 'in the name of Jesus Christ' or 'in the name of the Lord Jesus'.
- (ii) That the Name was on the lips of the candidate baptized as well as uttered by the baptizer is harmonious with the dual nature of baptism as an act of man and an act of God. . . .
- (iii) The name of the Lord Jesus is called over the baptized. He therefore dedicates himself to the Lord is appropriated for Him; since this is done by the command of the Lord, an act performed on His behalf, we must view it as an appropriation by Him.
- (a) In the passage already cited, Acts 22:16, the exhortation to Paul, 'Rise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name,' implies that his sins will be washed away in his baptism accompanied by prayer. . . .
- (b) The outward act of confession and dedication to Jesus as Lord has as its corollary identification with the people who acknowledge Him as Messiah.
- (c) The third and perhaps most impressive gift of God in baptism is the Spirit, the possession of which was frequently accompanied in the earliest Church by spectacular charismatic gifts and signs."

-- G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament*  
(Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans  
Publishing Company, 1962), pp. 99-104.

## 2. The Mode of Baptism

In the history of Christian doctrine, three major modes of administration of the ordinance of Christian baptism have been practiced: aspersion (sprinkling), affusion (pouring), and immersion (submerging).

Some Christians have believed that mode is not of the essence or substance of the ordinance, and have accepted any mode as valid. Usually they have clearly preferred and practiced one mode to the exclusion of the others (with some exceptions). Other Christians have believed that mode is of the essence or substance of the ordinance, and have therefore accepted and practiced only one mode, asserting that, unless the proper mode is observed, the ordinance is not valid.

These positions may be seen in the following quotations:

" 'Baptism is a sacrament, wherein the washing with water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, doth signify and seal our engrafting into Christ and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace, and our engagement to be the Lord's.' . . .

According to the definition given above, baptism is a washing with water. By washing is meant any such application of water to the body as effects its purification. This may be done by immersion, affusion, or sprinkling. The command, therefore, to baptize is simply a command to wash with water. It is not specifically a command to immerse, to affuse, or to sprinkle. The mode of applying water as the purifying medium is unessential. The only necessary thing is to make such an application of water to the person, as shall render the act significant of the purification of the soul."

-- Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, Volume II (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1952), p. 526.

"Baptism is the immersion in water, by a proper administrator, of a believer in Christ, into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Immersion is so exclusively the baptismal act that without it there is no baptism; and a believer in Christ is so exclusively the subject of baptism that without such a subject there is no baptism . . .

Now if these views of the symbolic import of baptism are correct, it follows inevitably that the immersion in water of a believer in Christ is essential to baptism -- so essential that there can be no baptism without it. If baptism represents the burial and resurrection of Christ, it must be immersion. If it sets forth in emblem the believer's death to sin and resurrection to a new life, it must be immersion. If it in symbol remits and washes away the sins which Christ has really washed away in his blood, still it must be immersion. If it anticipates the resurrection, nothing but immersion justifies the anticipation. We are 'buried by baptism' -- that is, by means of baptism. When the baptismal process takes place there is certainly a burial. The two are inseparable, and therefore where there is no burial there is no baptism."

-- James Madison Pendleton, *Christian Doctrines* (American Baptist Publication Society, 1878, reprinted by The Judson Press, 1954), pp. 340, 350-351.

"We must distinguish between the thing itself and its mode . . . The administration, dispensation, presentation, and reception of the Sacraments are essential, nor do they allow of any exception; but the mode of the administration and reception admits of some liberty and variation. A few examples will render it more plain. In Baptism, it is absolutely necessary that a person should be baptized with water, i.e., washed in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; but it is no matter whether this ablution be performed by immersion into water or by affusion with water."

-- John Gerhard, *Loci Theologici* Volume VIII, p. 240, quoted by Heinrich Schmid, p. 531.



"319. How would you give Baptism? (i.e., in cases of necessity when there is no priest)

I would give Baptism by pouring ordinary water on the forehead of the person to be baptized, saying while pouring it: "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." . . .

- (d) The sacrament of Baptism may be validly administered:  
first, by immersion;  
second, by pouring;  
third, by sprinkling

Christ commanded Baptism by water; He did not prescribe the manner of applying the water."

-- *Baltimore Catechism No. 3*

This question of which mode(s) Christians have accepted, affirmed, preferred, and practiced is important. However, the question of which mode(s) Scripture teaches is even more important.

We will examine four lines of consideration relevant to the questions of the scriptural mode of Christian baptism: (a) grammatical considerations; (b) historical considerations; (c) practical considerations; (d) theological considerations.

a. Grammatical Considerations as to Mode

(1) Usage of relevant words in the classical Greek

Edmund B. Fairfield calls attention to the general usage of the word BAPTIZO in the classical Greek. He writes:

"I have before me a volume published by the American Bible Union. . . a volume in which they profess to give all the passages in Greek literature in which the word occurs; and so far as I know it is complete and exact.

Now what do I find in the examination of these passages, numbering in all a little more than one hundred and fifty? I find that twenty times it was used of a ship that was going to the bottom of the sea; eighteen times of one sinking or drowned as the result of his immersion; nineteen times of dipping into oil; six times of plunging something, as a sword, into the human body; of land overflowed by water twice; of the difficulty of sinking things into very salt water, four times; of dipping into milk, vinegar, vine, honey wax, fire, ointment, etc., twenty times.

Besides these, about seventy examples are given of its figurative use of being sunken, or overwhelmed in cares, debts, ignorance, sleep, passion, drunkenness, taxes, crimes, vices, sorrows, affliction, calamities, punishments, difficulties, etc.; every time in a bad sense.

-- Edmund B. Fairfield, *Letters on Baptism*  
(printed privately, n.d.), pp. 21-22.

*Grimm's Wilke's Clavis Novi Testamenti*, translated, revised, and enlarged by Joseph Henry Thayer, Fourth Edition (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1901), states, under the heading BAPTO and BAPTIZO, the following:

"BAPTO: a. to dip, dip in, immerse . . . b. to dip into dye, to dye, color"

"BAPTIZO: 1. prop. to dip repeatedly, to immerge, submerge . . . 2. to cleanse by dipping or submerging, to wash, to make clean with water; in the mid. and the 1 aor. pass. to wash one's self, bathe . . . 3. metaph. to overwhelm"

NOTE: in using Thayer's Lexicon it is important to recognize the fact that the first meaning given by Thayer (where there is a notable usage in the literature) is usually the word's meaning in the classical Greek; then follow its meanings in the Septuagint (if any) and the New Testament. In his Preface (page vii) Thayer himself states that "the exposition of classic usage is often intended merely to serve as a standard of comparison by which the direction and degree of a word's change in meaning can be measured." Thus, instead of using Thayer's Lexicon in the way we often use English dictionaries that is, by taking the first meaning given as the preferred or most important one we should take the first meaning as that employed in the Greek classics, as is usually obvious from the authors cited. It is also important to note that when lexicographers use the adjectives "primary" and "secondary", as modifying meaning, they intend us to understand original and subsequent meanings, or earlier and later meanings, rather than "of primary importance" and "of secondary importance". This distinction cannot be stressed too strongly.

Bauer, Arndt, and Gingrich's *Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament* states the following:

"BAPTO -- 1. dip, dip in . . . 2. dip into, dye . . ."

"BAPTIZO -- dip, immerse, mid, dip oneself, wash"

The *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* Volume 1, under the heading BAPTO, BAPTIZO, states:

"BAPTO, 'to dip in or under' . . . 'to dye' . . . . The intens. BAPTIZO occurs in the sense of 'to immerse' (trans.) from the time of Hippocrates, in Plato and esp. in later writers . . . The sense of 'to bathe' or 'to wash' is only occasionally found in Hellenism, . . . usually in sacral contexts, . . . The idea of going under or perishing is nearer the general usage."

(2) Usage of relevant words in the LXX

BAPTO is used in the following 18 references in the LXX:

Exodus 12:22 (dip hyssop in blood)  
Leviticus 4:6, 17 (dip finger in blood)  
Leviticus 9:9 (dipped finger in blood)  
Leviticus 11:32 (vessel must be put into water)  
Leviticus 14:6 (dip cedar wood, scarlet, hyssop, and bird in blood)  
Leviticus 14:16 (dip right finger in oil)  
Leviticus 14:51 (dip cedar wood, hyssop, scarlet, and bird in blood)  
Numbers 19:18 (dip hyssop in the water)  
Deuteronomy 33:24 (let him dip his foot in oil)

Joshua 3:15 (feet of the priests were dipped in the brim of Jordan)  
Ruth 2:4 (dip thy morsel in vinegar)  
I Samuel 14:27 (Jonathan dipped the end of his rod in honeycomb)  
II Kings 8:15 (Hazeal dipped a thick cloth in water)  
Job 9:31 (thou shalt plunge me in the ditch)  
Psalm 67 (68): 23 (foot, tongue of dogs dipped in blood)  
Daniel 4:33, 5:21 (Nebuchadnezzar's body was wet with dew)

BAPTIZO is used 4 times in the LXX:

In II Kings 5:10, Elisha sends a messenger to Naaman, who is ill with leprosy, and tells him, "Go and wash (LOUO) in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored to you and you shall be clean." After some temporizing, Naaman obeys: "So he went down and dipped (BAPTIZO) himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God; and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean." (verse 14)

In the Hebrew of this passage Elisha tells Naaman in verse 10 to wash (RACHATS) in the Jordan. He does not specify the mode of washing. Naaman, in reluctant obedience, goes and washes (TABAL) and comes back clean.

The Hebrew word TABAL is used 16 times in the Old Testament. The LXX translates TABAL 14 times by BAPTO, once by MOLUNO (Genesis 37:31), and once by BAPTIZO (II Kings 5:14). Both BDB and K & B say that TABAL means "dip in" or "dip into". BDB says that TABAL with MIN means "moisten with".

The Hebrew of Genesis 37:31 is quite clear: "And they dipped the coat (Joseph's coat) in the blood." But the LXX did not use BAPTO to translate TABAL, but MOLUNO, which means "to defile". It would appear that the LXX translators wished to add an idea, and therefore used MOLUNO instead of BAPTO to translate TABAL. To the LXX translator this act was not merely a dipping, but a defiling by dipping. Defiling the coat could have been done in a number of ways, but in this case it was done by dipping.

The Hebrew of II Kings 5:14 is also quite clear: "And he went down and he dipped in the Jordan seven times according to the word of the man of God;". But the LXX did not use BAPTO to translate TABAL, but BAPTIZO. Unless BAPTO and BAPTIZO mean exactly the same thing, it would appear that the LXX translators wished to add an idea, and therefore used BAPTIZO instead of BAPTO to translate TABAL. Since Elisha told Naaman to wash in the Jordan; and since Naaman went and washed in the Jordan; could it be that to the LXX translators this act was not merely a dipping (BAPTO), but a washing by dipping, and so they used BAPTIZO instead of BAPTO to express a washing by dipping? Washing could have been done in a number of ways, but in this case it was done by dipping.

In Judith 12:7 the heroine of this Apocryphal book risked her life by going down from her city, Bethulia, to the camp of the Assyrian army and to the tent of its general, Holofernes, allegedly as a defector from Israel. "And she remained in the camp three days, and at night she went out into the valley of Bethulia and washed herself (BAPTIZO) at the spring in the camp." In Judith 7:3 we discover that 182,000 infantry and cavalry made their encampment in the valley near Bethulia by the spring. Since

this spring was a major water supply for the army, and since the spring was in the camp, and since Judith was a devout and scrupulous Jewess, It is highly unlikely that she immersed each night in the spring or undressing to bathe in the spring. It is probable that Judith washed her hands and feet and perhaps her face each night at the spring, both to cleanse herself ceremonially in running water and to establish the pattern of going out of Holofernes' tent each night without arousing suspicion. Thus on the fourth night when Holofernes gave a banquet and sent everyone out of his tent in order to seduce Judith, it was relatively easy for Judith, after she had cut off the head of the drunken general, to make her way out of the camp and back to her besieged city carrying his head in her food bag! Now although the Apocryphal books are not part of Scripture, and although the LXX is not an inspired translation, nevertheless it provides us with an important witness to Greek word usage at about 250 B.C. As such, this use of BAPTIZO is important, as far as meaning is concerned.

In the Apocryphal book of Ecclesiasticus (or The Wisdom of Sirach) 34:25, we are told that "If a man washes himself (BAPTIZO) after touching a corpse and then touches it again, What good has his bath (LOUTRON) done him?" This "baptism", according to Numbers 19:11-22, is a ceremonial washing from uncleanness, accomplished by the sprinkling upon the unclean person of the ashes of a burnt heifer mixed with water on the third day and on the seventh day, and by the unclean person's washing of his body and his clothing on the seventh day. No mode is prescribed for the washing of the body.

In Isaiah 21:4 the usage of BAPTIZO is admittedly figurative: "My mind reels, horror overwhelms (BAPTIZO) me." Actually the LXX says: "transgression (ANOMIA) overwhelms me." But the meaning is that mentioned by Fairfield, of being overwhelmed in a bad sense (the figurative use of BAPTIZO).

### (3) Usage of relevant words in the New Testament

BAPTO is used four times in the New Testament:

Luke 16:24 (that he may dip the tip of his finger)

John 13:26 (the one for whom I shall dip the morsel . . . when He had dipped the morsel)

Revelation 19:13 (He is clothed with a robe dyed with blood)

Note: BAPTO in Rev. 19:13 should be translated "dyed". When we compare verse 15 ("He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty") with Isaiah 63:3, we see how Christ's robe is dyed. There our Lord is quoted as saying:

"I have trodden the wine trough alone, And from the peoples there was no man with Me. I also trod them in My anger, And trampled them in My wrath; And their life blood is sprinkled on My garments, And I stained all My raiment."

Here is an interesting case! Christ's robe is dyed (BAPTO) with blood, yet the dyeing was not accomplished by dipping, but by sprinkling!

BAPTISMA is used 22 times in the New Testament. It is used only by Christians writers, and is simply transliterated as "baptism". It is used to refer to John's baptism, to Christian baptism (both ritual and Spirit), and to the experience of martyrdom (in a figurative sense).

BAPTISTES is used 14 times in the New Testament. It is used only by Christian writers (except for a reference in Josephus' *Antiquities of the Jews* to refer to John the Baptizer).

BAPTISMOS is used 4 times in the New Testament. It is used in Mark 7:4 and 7:7 to refer to the ritual washing of cups and pots by the Jews; in Hebrews 6:2 to refer to Christian Baptism; and in Hebrews 9:10 of the various ceremonial cleansings of the Old Testament.

With regard to the use of BAPTISMOS in Hebrews 9:10, it is important to note that no ceremonial cleansings specifically by the mode of immersion are prescribed in the Old Testament. In addition, it should be noted that the context of Hebrews 9:10 (particularly verses 11-23) describes some of the Old Testament ceremonial cleansings -- of the book, of the people, of the tabernacle, and of the vessels of the tabernacle -- all of which were accomplished by sprinkling. It does not follow that the different cleansings (BAPTISMOIS) of Hebrews 9:10 should be translated "different sprinklings". Rather, it should be translated "different baptisms" or "different cleansings", since not all of the Old Testament cleansings were accomplished by "sprinkling". But even if they had been, BAPTISMOS should not be translated "sprinkling". BAPTISMOS is a washing, a cleansing, a baptism.

BAPTIZO is used 77 times in the New Testament. All of its uses follow.

Matthew 3:6 -- "they were being baptized by him (John the Baptizer) in (EN) the Jordan River"

Matthew 3:11 -- "I baptize you with (EN) water for repentance; but He who is coming after me . . . will baptize you with (EN) the Holy Spirit and fire"

Matthew 3:13 -- "Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan coming to John, to be baptized by him."

Matthew 3:14 -- "I have need to be baptized by you"

Matthew 3:16 -- "And after being baptized Jesus went up (ANABAINO) immediately from (APO) the water"

Matthew 28:19 -- "baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit"

Mark 1:4 -- "John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance"

Mark 1:5 -- "they were being baptized by him in (EN) the Jordan River"

Mark 1:8 -- "I baptized you with water (instrumental use of HUDOR), but He will baptize you with (EN) the Holy Spirit"

Mark 1:9 -- "Jesus came and . . . was baptized by John in (EIS) the Jordan"

Mark 6:14 -- "people were saying, 'John, the one baptizing has risen from the dead' "

Mark 6:24 -- "And she said, 'The head of John the baptizer' "

Mark 7:4 -- "and when they (the Pharisees and all the Jews) come from the market place, they do not eat unless they cleanse themselves"

Mark 10:38 -- "Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism (BAPTISMA) with which I am baptized?"

Mark 10:39 -- "you shall be baptized with the baptism (BAPTISMA) with which I am baptized"

Mark 16:16 -- "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned"

Luke 3:7 -- "He therefore began saying to the multitudes who were going out to be baptized by him, 'You brood of vipers' "

Luke 3:12 -- "And some tax-gathers also came to be baptized"

Luke 3:16 -- "I baptize you with water (instrumental use of HUDOR) . . . He Himself will baptize you with (EN) the Holy Spirit and fire"

Luke 3:21 -- "when all the people were baptized, . . . that Jesus also was baptized"

Luke 7:29 -- "they acknowledged God's justice, having been baptized with the baptism (BAPTISMA) of John"

Luke 7:30 -- "not having been baptized by John"

Luke 11:38 -- "And when the Pharisee saw it, he was surprised that He had not first washed before the meal"

Note: Matthew 15:2 seems to be relevant: "Why do your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash (NIPTO) their hands when they eat bread"

Luke 12:50 -- "But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how distressed I am until it is accomplished!"

John 1:25 -- "Why then are you (John) baptizing, if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?"

John 1:26 -- "John answered them saying, "I baptize with (EN) water, but among you stands One whom you do not know"

John 1:28 -- "in Bethany beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing

John 1:31 -- "I came baptizing with (EN) water"

John 1:33 -- "He who sent me to baptize with (EN) water . . . this is the one who baptizes with (EN) the Holy Spirit"

John 3:22 -- "there He (Jesus) was spending time with them, and baptizing"

John 3:23 -- "And John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water ("many waters") there; and they were coming, and were being baptized."

John 3:26 -- "behold, He (Jesus) is baptizing and all are coming to Him."

John 4:1 -- "the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John"

John 4:2 -- "(although Jesus Himself was not baptizing but His disciples were)"

John 10:40 -- "And He went away again beyond the Jordan to the place where John was first baptizing

Acts 1:5 -- "for John baptized with water (instrumental use of HUDOR), but you shall be baptized with (EN) the Holy Spirit not many days from now"

Acts 2:38 -- "Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins."

Acts 2:41 -- "So then, those who had received his word were baptized and there were added that day about three thousand souls"

Acts 8:12 -- "they were being baptized men and women alike"

Acts 8:13 -- "And even Simon himself believed, and after being baptized he continued on with Philip"

Acts 8:16 -- "For He had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus."

Acts 8:36 -- "And as they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, "Look! Water! what prevents me from being baptized?"

Acts 8:38 -- "And he ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down/descended (KATABAINO) into/unto/to (EIS) the water, Philip as well as the eunuch, and he baptized him."

Acts 9:18 -- "and he (Paul) arose and was baptized"

Acts 10:47 -- "Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we did, can he?"

Acts 10:48 -- "And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ."

Acts 11:16 -- "And I remembered the word of the Lord, how He used to say, 'John baptized with water (instrumental use of HUDOR), but you shall be baptized with (EN) the Holy Spirit'

Acts 16:15 -- "And when she and her household had been baptized "

Acts 16:33 -- "And he (the jailer at Philippt) took them that very hour of the night and washed their wounds, and immediately he was baptized he and all his household"

Acts 18:8 -- "many of the Corinthians when they heard were believing and being baptized

Acts 19:3 -- "And he said, "Into/Unto (EIS) what then were you baptized?

And they said, "Into/Unto (EIS) John's baptism."

Acts 19:4 -- "John baptized with the baptism of repentance"

Acts 19:5 -- "And when they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus"

Acts 22:16 -- "And now why do you delay? Arise, and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on His name"

Romans 6:3 -- "Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into (EIS) Christ Jesus have been baptized into (EIS) His death?"

I Corinthians 1:13 -- "Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?"

I Corinthians 1:14 -- "I thank God that I baptized none of you, except Crispus and Gaius"

I Corinthians 1:15 -- "that no man should say you were baptized in my name"

I Corinthians 1:16 -- "Now I did baptize also the household of Stephanus; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized any other"

I Corinthians 1:17 -- "For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel"

I Corinthians 10:2 -- "and all were baptized into/unto/to (EIS) Moses by (EN) the cloud and by (EN) the sea"



I Corinthians 12:13 -- "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into (EIS) one body"

I Corinthians 15:29 -- "Otherwise, what will those do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why then are they baptized for them?"

Galatians 3:3 -- "For all of you who were baptized into (EIS) Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ"

Of these 77 uses of BAPTIZO in the New Testament, 17 appear to hold promise of relevance for the mode of baptism:

Matthew 3:6	Mark 7:4	John 3:23
Matthew 3:11	Luke 3:16	Acts 1:5
Matthew 3:16	Luke 11:38	Acts 8:38
Mark 1:5	John 1:26	Acts 11:16
Mark 1:8	John 1:31	I Corinthians 10:2
Mark 1:9	John 1:33	

An analysis of these 17 uses to detect recurring ideas yields the following:

(1) Eight uses refer to being baptized with water (an instrumental use, either with EN or without it):

Matthew 3:11	John 1:26	Acts 1:5
Mark 1:8	John 1:31	Acts 11:16
Luke 3:16	John 1:33	

(2) Three uses refer to being baptized in (EN) the Jordan River:

Matthew 3:6	Mark 1:5	Mark 1:9 (EIS)
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(3) Six uses are special cases, and need to be dealt with individually:

Matthew 3:16	Luke 11:38	Acts 8:38
Mark 7:4	John 3:23	I Corinthians 10:2

#### Summary of the New Testament Meaning of BAPTIZO, Based on Usage Alone

Of the eight uses of BAPTIZO that refer to being baptized with water, we recognize that water is the element used in the ordinance of baptism, whether we are speaking of John's baptism, of Jesus' baptism prior to His death, or of Christian baptism. In each of the eight uses mentioned in the list of 77 the relevant words have been translated "with water".

If it is objected that it would be more accurate to translate the prepositional phrase "EN water" as "in water" rather than "with water", then certain facts should be noted.

First, it should be noted that of the eight references translated "baptize with water," four (Matthew 3:11; John 1:26; John 1:31; John 1:33) employ the preposition EN, and four (Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; Acts 1:5; Acts 11:16) use no preposition, but all use the instrumental Case (or Dative of instrument).

Second, it should be noted that six of these eight references (Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5; Acts 11:16) include the parallel expression, "baptize with the Holy Spirit"; and all six of these use the preposition EN. To insist that EN be translated "in" would force the parallel to be translated, "baptize in the Holy Spirit," which would convey no clear meaning, except the implication of unreasonableness and dogmatic bias of the translator!

Third, of the six references that include the parallels, "baptize with water" and "baptize with the Holy Spirit," only two (Matthew 3:11; John 1:33) use EN with water; the other four (Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; Acts 1:5; Acts 11:16) do not use EN, but simply use the instrumental Case of HUDOR.

Thus the translation, "I baptize you with water, . . . He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit," stresses the element in each of the baptisms (water, Spirit); and would appear to be both reasonable and accurate.

What about the three references (Matthew 3:6; Mark 1:5; Mark 1:9) that speak of being baptized in (EN) the Jordan River? These indicate the place where the baptisms were performed. All three of them relate to John's baptism. From usage in context alone, we cannot ascertain how the ritual was performed, but only that it was performed in the Jordan. Of course, the objection could be made that the preposition EN can be translated by the words "by" or "at," so that John could have baptized by the Jordan or at the Jordan, but this would appear to go against the grain of Matthew 3:16, where Jesus is said to have gone up or ascended from the water after His baptism, and of Mark 1:9, which uses EIS instead of EN.

What about the six special cases (Matthew 3:16; Mark 7:4, Luke 11:38; John 3:23; Acts 8:38; I Corinthians 10:2)?

Matthew 3:16 tells us that "after being baptized, Jesus went up (ANABAINO) immediately from (APO) the water." The word ANABAINO clearly means "to go up, to ascend." Some have inferred from this a picture of Jesus coming up from beneath the surface of the water, or rising out of the water in which He had been submerged. However, the text simply says that Jesus was baptized in the Jordan, and that He immediately went up from (APO) the water. It does not tell us how He was baptized in the Jordan, but only that following His baptism He came up from the water. After He was baptized (by whatever mode John used), He came up from the Jordan River.

Mark 7:4 tells us that "when they (the Pharisees and all the Jews) come from the market place, they do not eat unless they cleanse themselves (BAPTIZO)"

in the Sixth Division of the Mishnah (Tohoreth) Tractate Yadaim 2(3), we find the following:

"The hands are susceptible to uncleanness, and they are rendered clean by the pouring over them of water up to the wrist. Thus if a man had poured the first water up to the wrist and the second water beyond the wrist, and the water flowed back to the hand, the hand became clean; but if he poured both the first water and the second beyond the wrist, and the water flowed back to the hand, the hand remains unclean . . . . The water may be poured over the hands of four or five persons side by side or one above the other, provided that they lie but loosely together so that the water may flow between them."

And in Yadaim 1(1) we find the following:

"To render the hands clean a quarter-log or more of water must be poured over the hands to suffice for one person or even two; a half-log or more suffices for three persons or for four; one log or more suffices for five or for ten or for a hundred" (a quarter-log is equal in bulk to an egg and a half; thus a log would be equal to the contents of six eggs)

It is likely that this ceremonial cleansing was the kind employed to purify scrupulous Jews from the uncleanness they were likely to contract in the market place.

Luke 11:38 tells us that "when the Pharisee saw it (Jesus going into the Pharisee's house and reclining at the table for lunch), he was surprised that He had not first washed (BAPTIZO) before the meal." (We have already noted Matthew 15:2, in which the Jews asked Jesus, "Why do your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread.")

These washings of the hands do not refer to hygienic cleansing, but to ceremonial cleansing. It was not physical dirt about which the Pharisees were concerned, but ceremonial defilement. Thus the quotations from the Mishnah above (in connection with Mark 7:4) again come into play.

John 3:23 tells us that "John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there were many waters there." The "much water" or "many waters" are often urged in favor of the mode of immersion, since it would seem to make little sense to say that John was baptizing by sprinkling or pouring in Aenon because there was much water there.

This contention appears very strong until we place ourselves in a Jewish context and recall the emphasis on the need of "living" or running water for ceremonial cleansings. The ritual cleansings and bathings among the Essenes and Pharisees could not be accomplished by means of stagnant water, but only by flowing, moving water (so that uncleanness could be carried away and a clean supply be available). Rivers and springs and fountains fulfilled this requirement, as did water poured over the hands or the feet or the head.

Acts 8:26-39 tells us that an Ethiopian eunuch who had travelled to Jerusalem to worship the God of Israel was now returning to his own country via the desert road to Gaza, met Philip, who volunteered to help the eunuch understand a portion of Isaiah. In verse 31 we discover that the eunuch invited Philip

to come up (ANABMNO) into the chariot to sit with him. After some time they came to some water, and the eunuch requested baptism. Philip having agreed to perform the rite, the eunuch ordered the chariot stopped; and both the eunuch and Philip got down or descended (KATABAINO) from the chariot and went to or into (EIS) the water, where Philip baptized him (verse 38). When they came up or ascended (ANABAINO) from or out of (EK) the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away (verse 39).

It should frankly be recognized that the act of descending into the water and the act of ascending out of the water tell us nothing about the mode in which baptism itself was performed, since both men descended into the water and ascended out of the water, and they surely did not immerse each other! The text simply tells us that they both descended into the water before the baptism, and they both ascended out of the water after the baptism. But how the baptism was actually performed is not described. One may with propriety ask what they were doing in the water if immersion was not intended, or one may attempt to argue from the meaning of BAPTIZO as it was used in the classical Greek, but speculations and arguments from etymology do not constitute evidence as to the mode employed.

I Corinthians 10:2 tells us that all of the Israelites who participated in the Exodus "were baptized into/unto/to (EIS) Moses by (EN) the cloud and by (EN) the sea."

Rather than putting a strain on this passage (and on our own credulity) by attempting to find some way in which the Israelites were immersed in or poured upon or sprinkled by the cloud and the sea, it would probably be better to find in this use of BAPTIZO the idea of God identifying the Israelites with Moses (as disciples with their master) by means of the cloud and the sea (the pillar of cloud and the Red Sea), which were symbols of that identification. What then can we conclude from the New Testament usage of BAPTIZO?

Of the original 77 uses of BAPTIZO in the books of the New Testament, the list of 17 uses that at first glance appeared to hold promise of relevance for the mode of baptism must be cut to 9, since 8 of the 17 merely specify the element used in ritual baptism, namely water.

Of these 9 uses, 3 (Matthew 3:6, Mark 1:5, Mark 1:9) speak of baptism as taking place in the Jordan River, but do not tell us anything definite about the mode of baptism.

Of the remaining 6 uses, the following may be said:

One (Matthew 3:16) speaks of Jesus going up from the water of the Jordan River after His baptism by John, and thus tells us nothing definitive about mode.

One (Acts 8:38-39) speaks of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch both descending into the water and both ascending out of the water, and thus tells us nothing definitive about the mode.

One (John 3:23) speaks of John baptizing in a place where there were "many waters," but tells us nothing specific about mode.

One (I Corinthians 10:2) is a symbolic usage of BAPTIZO, and tells us nothing about mode.

Two (Mark 7:14, Luke 11:38) speak of Jewish ceremonial cleansings, and therefore tell us nothing about the mode of Christian baptism. However, since according to Jewish tradition these ceremonial cleansings were probably performed by pouring, there two uses place at least a question mark beside the claim that BAPTIZO categorically means immersion.

Thus we conclude that, as far as discovering the mode of baptism from the meaning of BAPTIZO as ascertained by usage in context alone, no definitive conclusion can be reached! This is no doubt a disturbing inference to proponents of each of the three major modes of baptism, but it has a twofold advantage: (1) It is based on a complete induction of all cases; and (2) it takes into account both the grammatical and historical aspects of each relevant Scripture.

b. Historical Considerations as to Mode

(1) Mode of old Testament ceremonial cleansings

Most of the Old Testament ceremonies of purification were accomplished by applying the purifying element to the object to be purified. Sprinkling was the prevailing mode. There are some cases in which clothes were to be washed as part of the ceremony; in such instances the mode was probably immersion. There are some cases in which a person's body was to be washed as part of the ceremony. This washing was accomplished by dipping (TABAL) in one instance (II Kings 5:14), and could have been accomplished by this mode in other instances. This washing of the body was not accomplished by dipping in one ceremony; that of the washing of the body of the high priest in the tabernacle during the ceremonies of atonement, as recorded in Leviticus 16:24. in a few cases pouring was used as part of certain cleansings (e.g., Leviticus 9:9; 14:15, 26).

(2) Mode of Jewish proselyte baptism

Baptism as a ceremony of cleansing was not new to John the Baptizer. Gentiles who desired to become Jews were called proselytes; and were required to be circumcised, to be baptized, and to offer a sacrifice. The practice of proselytizing Gentiles was witnesses to by Christ in Matthew 23:15:

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel about on sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves."

Alfred Edersheim, a noted authority on Jewish life and customs, describes proselyte baptism:

"The baptism was to be performed in the presence of three witnesses, ordinarily Sanhedrists, but in case of necessity others might act. The person to be baptized, having cut his hair and

nails, undressed completely, made fresh profession of his faith before what were designated "the fathers of baptism", and then immersed completely, so that every part of the body was touched by the water."

-- Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, New American Edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1953), Volume Two, pp. 746-747.

(3) Mode of ritual baths of the Sect of Qumran

From 100 B.C. until about 67 A.D. a small group of Essene monks lived in a monastery in the Judean wilderness as Khirbet Qumran. They wrote, studied, sang hymns, prayed, and copied the Scriptures. At the time of the great Jewish War, they dispersed, after hiding their precious scrolls in nearby caves.

In 1947 their scrolls were found, and subsequently their monastery was uncovered. The monks who were full members of this order were required to take ceremonial baths. At the northwest corner of the ruins of the monastery is an open cistern with steps leading down into it, quite large enough for immersion.

In the *Zadokite Work* (also called the *Damascus Document*) closely related to the Dead Sea Scrolls and coming from the same group, the following rule is recorded:

"On cleansing in water. No man shall wash in dirty water or not sufficient for immersion of a man. None shall cleanse himself in water from a vessel. And every pool in a rock in which there is not sufficient water for immersion, or which has touched some unclean thing, its waters shall be contaminated like the water from a vessel."

However, the picture is complicated somewhat by a statement in the Qumran Sect's own *Manual of Discipline*:

"And it is by the Holy Spirit of the Community, in His truth, That he shall be cleansed of all his iniquities. And by the spirit of uprightness and humility His sins shall be atoned. And by the submission of his soul toward all God's ordinances When he sprinkles himself with lustral water, And he shall sanctify himself with running water."

From these testimonies it would seem difficult to know whether the monks entered the waters of the cistern to sprinkle themselves while standing in running water, or to sprinkle and immerse themselves.

(4) Mode of ceremonial cleansings in the Oral Law of Judaism

The Mishnah is a compilation of Oral Law developed in Judaism from about 200 B.C. to 200 A.D. its editor was Rabbi Judah the Patriarch. In the New Testament the material contained in it is referred to as "the

traditions of the elders". It is divided into six orders (or divisions) which, taken together, contain 63 tractates (or sections).

The sixth order, entitled TOHAROTH ("cleannesses") includes a tractate entitled MIKVOAT ("pools of water") in which regulations are found relating to the ceremonial cleansing of unclean vessels, utensils, beds, and persons. All of the pools referred to in this tractate are immersion pools.

(5) Mode in the writings of the Church Fathers

(a) The Apostolic Father

In the epistles of Clement of Rome, the epistles of Ignatius, and the epistle of Polycarp, no mention of water baptism is made.

In *The Didache* or *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, Chapter 7, the following statement is found:

"*Concerning Baptism.* And concerning baptism, thus baptize ye; Having first said all these things, baptize into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, in living water. But if thou have not living water, baptize into other water; and if thou canst not in cold, in warm. But if thou have not either, pour out water thrice upon the head into the name of Father and Son and Holy Spirit. But before the baptism let the baptizer fast, and the baptized, and whatever others can; but thou shalt order the baptized to fast one or two days before."

--The Ante-Nicene Fathers ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, American Reprint of the Edinburgh Edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1957), Volume 7, p. 379.

In The Epistle of Barnabas paragraph 11, the following is found:

"And again He saith in another prophet; And He that doeth these things shall be as the tree that is planted by the parting streams of waters, which shall yield his fruit at his proper season, . . . this is the meaning; Blessed are they that set their hope on the cross, and go down into the water; for He speaketh of the reward at his proper season; . . . Next what saith He? And there was a river streaming from the right hand, and beautiful trees rose up from it; and whosoever shall eat of them shall live for ever. This He saith, because we go down into the water laden with sins and filth, and rise up from it bearing fruit in the heart, resting our fear and hope on Jesus in the spirit."

--J. B. Lightfoot, The Apostolic Fathers ed. J. R. Harmer (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1956), p. 148.

In *The Shepherd of Hermas*, the Ninth Parable, paragraph 16, we read:

"Show me still further, Sir," say I. "What desirest thou to know besides?" saith he. "Wherefore, Sir," say I, "did the stones come up from the deep, and wherefore were they placed into the building, though they bore these spirits?" "It was necessary for them," saith he, "to rise up through the water, that they might be made alive; for otherwise they could not enter into the kingdom of God, except they had put aside the deadness of their former life. So there likewise that had fallen asleep received the seal of the Son of God and entered into the kingdom of God. For before a man," saith he, "has borne the name of the Son of God, he is dead; but when he has received the seal, he layeth aside his deadness; and resumeth life. The seal then is the water; so they go down into the water dead, and they come up alive. Thus to them also this seal was preached, and they availed themselves of it that they might enter into the kingdom of God."

--ibid., p. 232.

The *Epistle to Dionetus* makes no reference to baptism.

(b) The Ante-Nicene Fathers

In the *First Apology* of Justin the Martyr, Chapters 61 and 62, we find the following:

"Chapter 61 -- Christian Baptism. . . they are brought by us where there is water, and are regenerated in the same manner in which we were ourselves regenerated . . . they then receive the washing with water. For Christ also said, 'Except ye be born again, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.' . . And how those who have sinned and repent shall escape their sins, is declared by Esaias the prophet, as I wrote above; he thus speaks: 'Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from your souls; . . And though your sins be as scarlet, I will make them white like wool; and though they be as crimson, I will make them white as snow.' . . in order that we may obtain in the water the remission of sins formerly committed, there is pronounced over him who chooses to be born again, and has repented of his sins, the name of God the Father and Lord of the universe; he who leads to the laver the person that is to be washed called him by this name alone. . . .

"Chapter 62 -- its imitation by Demons. And the devils, indeed, having heard this washing published by the prophets, instigated those who enter their temples, and are about to approach them with libations and burnt-offerings, also to sprinkle themselves; and they cause them also to wash themselves entirely, as they depart from the sacrifice, before they enter into the shrines in which their images are set."

--*The Ante-Nicene Fathers* Volume 1, pp. 183-184.

In Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho*, Chapter 14, he says:

"By reason, therefore, of this layer of repentance and knowledge of God, which has been ordained on account of the transgression of God's



people, as Isaiah cries, we have believed, and testify that that very baptism which he announced is alone able to purify those who have repented; and this is the water of life. But the cisterns which you have dug for yourselves are broken and profitless to you. For what is the use of that baptism which cleanses the flesh and body alone? Baptize the soul from wrath and covetousness, from envy, and from hatred; and, lo! the body is pure."

-- *ibid.*, p. 201

In Book I of Tertullian's *Five Books Against Marcion*, Chapter 29, we read:

"The flesh is not, according to Marcion, immersed in the water of the sacrament, unless it be in virginity, widowhood, or celibacy, or has purchased by divorce a title to baptism, . . ."

-- *The Ante-Nicene Fathers Volume 3*, p. 293.

In Tertullian's *The Chaplet*, or *De Corona*, Chapter 3, he writes:

"I shall begin with baptism. When we are going to enter the water, but a little before, in the presence of the congregation and under the hand of the president, we solemnly profess that we disown the devil, and his pomp, and his angels. Hereupon we are thrice immersed, making a somewhat ampler pledge than the Lord has appointed in the Gospel. Then, when we are taken up (as new-born children), we taste first of all a mixture of milk and honey, and from that day we refrain from the daily bath for a whole week."

-- *ibid.*, p. 94.

In Tertullian's tract *On Repentance*, Chapter 6, he writes:

"A sinner is bound to bemoan himself before receiving pardon, because the time of repentance is coincident with that of peril and of fear. Not that I deny that the divine benefit -- the putting away of sins, I mean -- is in every way sure to such as are on the point of entering the baptismal water; but what we have to labour for is, that it may be granted to us to attain that blessing. For who will grant to you, a man of so faithless repentance, one single sprinkling of any water whatever?"

-- *ibid.*, p. 661.

In Tertullian's treatise, *On Baptism*, he states the following:

"Chapter 1 . . . . But we, little fishes, after the example of our ICHTHUS Jesus Christ, are born in water, nor have we safety in any other way than by permanently abiding in water; . . ."

"Chapter 2 . . . . a man is dipped in water, and amid the utterance of some few words, is sprinkled, and then rises again, . . ."

"Chapter 7. After this, when we have issued from the font, we are thoroughly anointed with a blessed unction, . . . in our case, the unctions run carnally (i.e., on the body), but profits spiritually; in the same way as the act of baptism itself too is carnal, in that we are plunged in water, but the effect spiritual, in that we are freed from sins."

"Chapter 15 . . . . we enter, then the font once; once are sins washed away, because they ought never to be repeated. But the Jewish Israel bathes daily, because he is daily being defiled. . ."

-- *ibid.*, pp. 669-679.

In Epistle I of the *Epistles of Cyprian*, paragraph 3, Cyprian writes:

"I used to regard it as a difficult matter, . . . that a man quickened to a new life in the layer of saving water should be able to put off what he had previously been; and, although retaining all his bodily structure, should be himself changed in heart and soul."

-- The Ante-Nicene Fathers Volume 5, p. 275.

In Epistle 75 of the *Epistles of Cyprian*, paragraphs 23 and 13, he says:

"You have asked also, dearest son, what I thought of those who obtain God's grace in sickness and weakness, whether they are to be accounted legitimate Christians, for that they are not to be washed, but sprinkled, with the saving water . . . . In the sacraments of salvation, when necessity compels, and God bestows His mercy the divine methods confer the whole benefit on believers; nor ought it to trouble any one that sick people seem to be sprinkled or affused, when they obtain the Lord's grace, when Holy Scripture speaks by the mouth of the prophet Ezekiel, and says, 'Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit will I put within you.' " . . .

" . . . Or if any one think that those have gained nothing by having only been sprinkled with the saving water, but that they are still empty and void, let them not be deceived, so as if they escape the evil of their sickness, and get well, they should seek to be baptized. But if they cannot be baptized who have already been sanctified by ecclesiastical baptism, why are they offended in respect of their faith and the mercy of the Lord? Or have they obtained indeed the divine favor, but in a shorter and more limited measure of the divine gift and of the Holy Spirit, so as indeed to be esteemed Christians, but yet not to be counted equal with others?

"Nay, verily, the Holy Spirit is not given by measure, but is poured out altogether on the believer. . ."

-- *ibid.*, pp. 400-401.

In Hippolytus' *Discourse on the Holy Theophany*, paragraph 10, he says:

"Do you see, beloved, how the prophet spake beforetime of the purifying power of baptism? For he who comes down in faith to the laver of regeneration, and renounces the devil, and joins himself to Christ; who denies the enemy, and makes the confession that Christ is God; who puts off the bondage, and puts on the adoption, -- he comes up from baptism brilliant as the sun, flashing forth the beams of righteousness, and, which is indeed the chief thing, he returns a son of God and joint-heir with Christ."

-- *ibid.*, p. 237.

In Clement of Alexandria's work, *The Instructor*, Chapter 6, he says:

"Being baptized, we are illuminated; illuminated, we become sons; being made sons, we are made perfect; being made perfect, we are made immortal . . . . This work is variously called grace, and illumination, and perfection, and washing: washing, by which we cleanse away our sins; grace, by which the penalties accruing to transgressions are remitted; and illumination, by which that holy light of salvation is beheld, that is, by which we see God clearly."

-- The Ante-Nicene Fathers Volume 2, p. 215.

In the pseudo-Clementine work, *Recognitions of Clement*, Book III, Chapter 67, we read the following:

"But every one of you shall be baptized in every flowing waters, the name of the Triune Beatitude being invoked over him; . . ."

-- The Ante-Nicene Fathers Volume 8, p. 132.

In Book VI of the *Recognitions of Clement*, Chapter 9, we read:

". . . when you are regenerated and born again of water and of God, the frailty of your former birth, which you have through men, is cut off, and so at length you shall be able to attain salvation; but otherwise it is impossible. For thus hath the true prophet testified to us with an oath: 'Verily I say to you, That unless a man is born again of water, he shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.' Therefore make haste; for there is in these waters a certain power of mercy which was borne upon them at the beginning, and acknowledges those who are baptized under the name of the threefold sacrament, and rescues them from future punishments, presenting as a gift to God the souls that are consecrated by baptism. Betake yourselves therefore to these waters, for they alone can quench the violence of the future fire; . . ."

-- *ibid.*, p. 155.

In the *Fourth Homily* of Gregory Thaumaturgus, we read the following:

"Come, and with the feet of thought let us make for the Jordan, and see John the Baptist as he baptizes One who needs no baptism, . . . Come, let us view the image of our regeneration, as it is emblematically presented in these waters . . . . And Jesus. . . said to him: Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness . . . . Immerse me in the streams of Jordan, even as she who bore me wrapped me in children's swaddling-clothes . . . . With thy right hand lay hold of this head, . . . Baptize me, who am destined to baptize those who believe on me with water, and with the Spirit, and with fire: . . . On hearing these words, the Baptist directed his mind to the object of the salvation, . . . And stretching forth slowly his right hand, which seemed both to tremble and to rejoice, he baptized the Lord."

-- *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* volume 6, pp. 68, 70.

(c) The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers

In The Great Catechism of Gregory of Nyssa, Chapter 35, we read:

"But the descent into the water, and the trine immersion of the person in it, involves another mystery . . . .

-- *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second Series, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Erdmans Publishing Company, 1955), Volume 5, p. 502.

In Ambrose's work, *Concerning the Mysteries*, Chapters III-IV, we read:

"Chapter III. 11. The water, then, is that in which the flesh is dipped, that all carnal sin may be washed away. All wickedness is there buried.

"Chapter IV. 21. . . . And as though buried to the world in that element, being dead to sin, you rose again to eternal life. Believe, therefore, that these waters are not void of power.

"Chapter V. 28. You went down, then into the water, . . .

"Chapter VI. 29. After this, you went up to the priest, . . .  
31. You went up from the font; . . ."

-- *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Volume 10, pp. 318-322.

In Chrysostom's *Instructions to Catechumens*, First instruction, paragraph 3, we find the following:

"Such is the defilement from which the laver of the Jews cleansed. But the layer of grace, not such, but the real uncleanness which has introduced defilement into the soul as well as into the body. For it does not make those who have touched dead bodies clean, but those who have set their hand to dead works: and if any man be effeminate, or a

fornicator, or an idolater, or a doer of whatever ill you please, or if he be full of all the wickedness there is among men: should he fall into this pool of waters, he comes up again from the divine fountain purer than the sun's rays."

-- The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, p. 161.

In the *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*, Book III, Section II, paragraphs 16 and 17, we find the following:

"Thou therefore, O bishop, according to that type, shalt anoint the head of those that are to be baptized, whether they be men or women, with the holy oil, for a type of a spiritual baptism. After that, either thou, O bishop, or a presbyter that is under thee, shall in the solemn form name over them the Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit, and shall dip them in the water; "This baptism, therefore, is given into the death of Jesus; . . . the descent into the water the dying together with Christ; the ascent out of the water the rising again with Him."

-- The Ante-Nicene Fathers Volume 7, p. 431.

In the Ecclesiastical Canons of the *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*, paragraph 50, we find:

"If any bishop or presbyter does not perform the three immersions of the one admission, but one immersion, which is given into the death of Christ, let him be deprived; for the Lord did not say, "Baptize into my death," but, "Go ye and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Do ye, therefore, O bishops, baptize thrice into one Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost, according to the will of Christ, and our constitution by the Spirit."

-- *ibid.*, p. 503.

In Jerome's *Dialogue against the Luciferians*, section 8, Jerome represents the Luciferians as saying:

" . . . many other observances of the Churches, which are due to tradition, have acquired the authority of the written law, as for instance the practice of dipping the head three times in the laver, and then, after leaving the water, of tasting mingled milk and honey in representation of infancy; . . . and there are many other unwritten practices which have won their place through reason and custom."

Note: Jerome does not dispute that this is the practice of the Churches.

-- *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Volume 6, p. 324.

In Tractate VI of Augustine's *Homilies on the Gospel of John*, section 19, we find the following:

"Now the ark is the Church, it is there the dove baptizeth; for the ark was borne on the water, the incorruptible timbers were baptized within. We find that certain timbers were baptized without, such as all the trees that were in the world . . . . It was the same water in which the incorruptible timbers which were in the ark were baptized, and in which the timbers that were without were baptized. The dove was sent forth, and at first found no rest for its feet; it returned to the ark, for all was full of water, and it preferred to return rather than be rebaptized. But the raven was sent out before the water was dried up. Rebaptized, it desired not to return, and died in those waters . . . . But on the other hand, the dove not finding rest for its feet, whilst the water was crying to it on every side, 'Come, come, dip thyself here;' just as these heretics cry, 'Come, come, here thou hast it;' the dove, finding no rest for its feet, returned to the ark."

-- *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Volume 7, p. 46.

(6) Mode as related to the physical characteristics of early baptismal fonts

in an important work entitled *Baptism and Christian Archaeology* published by Oxford Press in 1903, Clement F. Rogers provides us with data as to the shape and size of 38 baptismal fonts, dating from the second to the tenth century, and located in Rome, Alexandria, Palestine, Tyre, Egypt, Asia Minor, Persia, Byzantium, Dalmatia, Naples, Africa, the Lombard and Merovingian kingdoms, and the Frankish Empire.

As to shape, these fonts appear to divide into two types: the Eastern, which was square, circular, or the shape of a Greek cross (cruciform); and the Western, which was octagonal or circular. There are usually two steps leading down into the font (and sometimes up out of the font), and a drain hole at the bottom, which has assisted excavators to ascertain the depth of the font.

As to size, the fonts range in depth from 8.27 inches (at Poitiers) to 4 feet 6 inches (at S. Sophia); and in dimension from 24 inches (at Abu Sargah, Egypt) to 62 feet diameter (the Lateran font at Rome) in the case of circular fonts, from 27 inches (at Belt Auwa, Syria) to 5 feet (at Gui Bagtische) in the case of square fonts, and from 3 feet 3 inches by 6 feet 7 inches (in the cemetery of Pontianus) to 11 feet 6 inches by 29 feet 7 inches (in the cemetery of Priscilla) in the case of oblong fonts.

Rogers concludes that in a number of these fonts immersion would have been either difficult or impossible. Twenty inches of water would certainly have been sufficient to cover the whole body, but not in a font twenty-seven inches square. And if it be objected that the Lateran font, three feet deep and sixty-two feet in diameter, could scarcely have been used for baptism by any

mode other than immersion, it should be noted that at this font there are two sarcophagi with representations of baptism in which Christ is depicted standing in water, with a stream of water descending upon his head.

In a more recent work entitled *The Architectural Setting of Baptism*, by J. G. Davies (London: Barrie and Rockcliff, 1962), we find the following:

"From the early Christian understanding of the meaning of baptism, we must now turn to consider the evidence of the fonts as to the actual performance of the rite. There are four principal methods of baptizing: (1) submersion (or total immersion); (2) immersion, when the head is dipped with or without the candidate standing in the water; (3) affusion, when water is poured over the head; and (4) aspersion, when water is sprinkled on the head. Whether one or all of these methods were current in the early Church is a question of continuing debate, and the failure of some excavators to record in their reports the dimensions of the fonts they have uncovered means that evidence required to resolve this question is not as plentiful as it might be. Nevertheless, it is possible to arrive at certain tentative conclusions.

In Greece, according to P. Lemerle, 'there does not exist a single baptistery of which the font was deep enough to allow the submersion of the candidate.' He cites as an example the font in basilica A at Thebes, which is only 35 centimetres deep. When it is recalled that 50 centimetres is approximately 20 inches, which is the knee height of the average man, it is apparent that in such a font it would have been impossible for the candidate to go beneath the surface of the water. Lemerle's verdict is borne out by the fonts of the Aegean islands, which reflect Greek influence and therefore usage. On Rhodes at Mesanagros the depth is 42 centimetres, at Lacharia 48 centimetres, at Arnitha 65 centimetres and at Ialysos 87 centimetres. In St. Gabriel, Cos, it is 80 centimetres, but reaches 1 metre in the Baths basilica, while on the island of Carpathos it reaches 1 metre 15 centimetres. Only in the last two instances would submersion have been really feasible.

The verdict of J. Lassus upon baptismal practice in Syria is somewhat hesitant. He points out that in a few baptisteries submersion would just be possible, e.g. at Hosn Niha (1 metre) and Der Solaib. The font at Dar Kita is so arranged in a diminutive apse that it would require a considerable feat of gymnastics either to enter or leave it, and the same may be said of the font at Antioch attached to the martyrion of Babylas, which only descends 60 centimetres below floor-level. The circular basin at Takle is only 40 centimetres high, and submersion would therefore have been impossible, and similarly at Khirblt il-Khatlb, where the font is a shallow basin in a wall niche.

The Palestinian baptisteries, so fully described by Bagatti, reproduce the same phenomena. Some fonts are completely below the level of the floor, e.g. at kin Hamudieh, where it is 1 metre 30 centimetres, and at St. John's Gerasa, where it is only 49 centimetres. Others are sunken, but rise a little above the pavement, e.g. Eleona, 24 centimetres and Garizln, 40 centimetres. The majority stand on the floor as monolithic constructions, e.g. Bersabea, 35 centimetres; Khirbet Malehat'ha 50 centimetres; el-Merd, 57 centimetres, Beth Arwa, 71 centimetres; S'baita and Bethlehem, each 90 centimetres and Emmaus, 1 metre 35 centimetres.

Bagatti tends to assume that submersion was the norm, but he does not discuss this in terms of the measurements he provides and these do indicate that in many instances it was impossible. At Eleona the water could scarcely have reached above the ankles, at Bersabea just above the calf and at Garisim, el-Merd and Khirbet Malehat'ha close to the knee.

A parallel situation is to be seen in Egypt and North Africa. At el-Flousiyeh the font of the North Church is, as in Syria, a shallow basin in a small apse; while in the South Church it is only 50 centimetres deep, but in the basilica of Arcadius at St. Menas it descends to 1 metre 55 centimetres. At Belezma the font is 42 centimetres; at Tlgzirt approximately 60 centimetres; at Carthage, in the subterranean baptistery, 75 centimetres, and at Hippo and el-Gouea 1 metre; at Eued Ramel it is 1 metre 10 centimetres and at Sabratha I it is 2 metres. Even amongst these last examples in which submersion, according to the figures, might seem to have been practicable, it did not certainly take place; so, the example, the diameter of the circular font at el-Gouea is only 80 centimetres, which allows insufficient room for movement, while the font at Carthage is placed over a well with a loose-fitting cover closing the mouth; this was not water-tight, and affusion must therefore have been the only feasible method.

in France at Civray-sur-Cher the font is 35 centimetres deep, at Melas, 40 centimetres, at Port-Ball, 60 centimetres, at Marseilles 70 centimetres and at Frejus 82 centimetres.

The evidence thus passed in rapid review indicates that in all areas there was a majority of fonts in which submersion was impossible. There still were some in which it could have taken place, and there would seem to be two possible explanations of this difference. The actual practice of baptism may not have been everywhere the same; it is a priori possible that the ritual was more complex in certain large centres than in remote country districts or that it differed, for example, in Italy from that in Greece. Alternatively, the practice may have been more or less uniform: what can hold a lot can hold a little, and there is no reason to suppose that the more spacious fonts were ever completely filled; indeed, many of them have no evacuation ducts, and in the dry lands of the Middle East water was by no means plentiful. The candidate could have stood in the font in the water to the knee or waist and have been baptized by having his head immersed, without plunging his whole body beneath the surface -- and, indeed, unless some such practice was observed, we must deny the prevalence of any uniformity. And, moreover, such a practice would seem to underlie the statement of Chrysostom: 'It is as in a tomb that we immerse our heads in the water . . . then when we lift our heads back the new man comes forth.' Indeed, modern research has by no means invalidated C. F. Roger's thesis that submersion was not widely practiced, if at all. Even in the Lateran baptistery, of which the font was certainly large enough for submersion, it is probable that affusion was practiced. From the mouth of the golden lamb, given by Constantine, there issued a stream of water, and it seems likely that the officiant either guided the candidate's head under the flow or directed the flow on to his head with a vessel. This latter practice is evidenced by the design on a spoon from Aquileia of the fourth or fifth century which shows a figure holding a patera in the stream of water over the head of the catechumen.



To sum up: while submersion cannot be entirely ruled out in a restricted number of fonts, the general practice would seem to have been either for the candidate to stand in the font and have his head dipped in the water or for the water to be poured over his head. in the latter case, where the font was large enough for him to stand in it and sufficiently commodious for him to be able to enter it the water would flow down over the whole body and where, as, for example, in Greece and in many of the Syrian baptisteries, he could not enter the font it would pour only over the head bent forward over it." (pp. 23-26)

In the second of a series of three articles on "Modes of Water Baptism in the Church," appearing in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, William A. BeVier states:

"One more bit of evidence that has bearing upon this subject is here presented. It was customary in the Roman and Greek public baths to have either the water enter through the spouts up on the walls, as through the mouths of figurines of animals, or have a servant pour the water over the head of the bather. It is to be remembered that these baths were the first indoor Christian baptisteries. The spouts would fulfill the precept of the Didache (A.D. 150) that calls for running water to be used in the baptismal service."

-- *Bibliotheca sacra*, Volume 116, Number 463 (July 1959),  
published by Dallas Theological Seminary, p. 236.

(7) Mode as illustrated in ancient pictorial representations

In *Baptism and Christian Archaeology*, Clement F. Rogers presents sixty examples of Christian art, dating from the first to the tenth century, and coming from Rome, Gaul, Spain, Milan, Ravenna, Armenia, Syria, Egypt, Byzantium, Sicily, Ireland, Lombardy, and Germany. In all of these cases, the person being baptized is standing in the water, usually naked, and water is pouring or being poured over his head. Frequently a dove is found in the pictures, representative of the Holy Spirit. in the earliest representations, the water is only ankle deep; but as the centuries pass, the water reaches the knees, then the thighs, then the waist, and finally the neck. There is usually another person in the pictures (frequently John the Baptizer) who stands on a higher level (the bank?), is clothed, and either guides the head of the candidate under the descending stream of water or places his hand upon him. There are no pictorial representations of immersion until the ninth century (although there are representations of the Egyptians being drowned in the Red Sea), at which time three pictures of infants being immersed appear.

William A. BeVier, in the article quoted above, states the following detailed information:

"Rogers submits three clear representations taken from the walls of ancient Roman buildings depicting water baptism in such baths (Roman baths) and the catechumen is either standing under the spout or is being poured upon by water from a pitcherlike container . . .

The catacombs offer us evidence in pictorial form of water baptism. One such picture assigned by De Rossi to the second century which is found in the cemetery of Calixtus depicts the candidate standing with the feet in the water, and is undressed.

C. F. Rogers seems to present the most complete evidence on archaeological findings in respect to water baptism in writing on the subject in *Studia Biblica et Ecclesiastica*. This work is significant because most of the evidence he presents is in early Christian drawings and paintings as found in such places as the catacombs. These pictures are presented in his work so that they may be studied almost as if one were on the site of occurrence.

The earliest such representation of water baptism is in the catacomb of S. Callistus on the Appian Way, the same one as referred to by Schaff, and is dated about A.D. 100. Two figures are seen, one naked, and they are standing in or near the water (blue colored paint beneath the feet). One is in somewhat a kneeling position and the two are clasping hands. A dove flies overhead. The scene is clearly a baptism, but it is evident that one figure is fully clothed from the knees up, hardly the attire of one administering immersion, since he is standing in water only ankle deep.

In the same cemetery, in the galleries is another picture, this from the second or early third century. The baptizer stands on dry ground, clothed in a white toga, with bare feet, his hand on the catechuman's head. The catechuman is a nude boy, standing in water up to his ankles. In the same gallery is a representation showing a man with bare feet and a cloth around his loins, and a nude boy, both standing in water up to their ankles. The baptizer is in the act of pouring water over the boy's head. 'The falling water is represented by six large strokes of dark blue paint,' A dove flies at the right.

In the cemetery of S.S. Petrus and Marcellinus, dating about A.D. 250, is a painting of John baptizing Christ. John is dressed in a cloak of skins. Here too it is not immersion that is depicted.

A tombstone from the fifth century is striking. It was found at Aquileia, near modern Venice. Depicted is a young girl being baptized. She is unclad, standing in a large basin, with water pouring over her from a circular window above her head. A fully clothed man stands to the right with his hand on the girl's head. The dove appears in the window above the stream of water. A spoon found in the same place dating from the same era has engraved in its bowl the scene of a baptism, with the one being baptized standing nude in a large small shallow basin with the water coming down from above out of a dove's mouth." (pp. 236-239)

c. Practical Considerations as to Mode

(1) Mode and the availability of water supplies

It is recognized that in some areas of the world (including the Middle East) water is a very scarce and precious commodity. However, there is evidence that in many early churches large cisterns were used to store water; and it is quite possible that the Ethiopian eunuch found a body of water on the desert road to Gaza large enough to allow immersion. Thus

this consideration does not of itself indicate a particular mode of baptism.

(2) Mode and convenience of facilities

In our modern era, when every church can own its own facilities for baptism, this consideration seems hardly worth mentioning, unless one is ministering in a remote area where facilities are not readily available. This may be graphically illustrated by a quotation from a news letter sent to me by a Baptist missionary working in Hokkaido, Japan:

"On March 8th, some of these people who have turned to Christ from idols to serve the living and true God, brought their idols and burned them publicly, despite a drenching downpour. Godshelves, idols, incense coffers, and incense- -- versus tons of water from the sky. One of the new babes in Christ struck a match, and victory was declared on the side of the fire!

Then eight of the new believers went a step further to declare themselves Christian. These eight (4 men, 4 women) followed the Lord in baptism in the afternoon. (The indoor Japanese bath used for this purpose was so small that it was impossible to submerge each candidate completely, necessitating a novel manipulation: One poor lad was made to double up as a ball, fall into the tub face downward, and still half of his torso was protruding above the water. Pressure had to be applied in order to try and flatten him out, but this still didn't get him all under. And for lack of time -- he was extremely patient, holding his breath down there -- the method resorted to was affusion!)"

(3) Mode and climate

In the frozen regions of the world the question of mode becomes very insistent. In some cases it would not only be impracticable, but perhaps dangerous to practice immersion. However, this objection is not insuperable, especially if baptism is postponed until a milder season of the year, or if the candidate for baptism can travel to an indoor facility.

(4) Mode and clinical baptism

In the early church, sprinkling and pouring were employed in cases of infirm persons too weak to be submitted to baptism in a font in a church. In cases of persons today who are invalid or very ill, it would appear that immersion is almost ruled out. The question in such cases is whether one who holds categorically to immersion as the only valid mode can use an alternate mode when emergency conditions prevail.

d. Theological Considerations as to Mode

(1) Ritual baptism and Spirit baptism

It would appear that there is an important relationship between the external rite of baptism and the Holy Spirit's act of baptizing believers

into union with Christ and with the benefits of His redemption. The same term (BAPTIZO) is used to express both ideas. Sometimes the external rite is spoken of as if it actually accomplished the effects of the inner baptism (even though other Scriptures negate such an idea). A good example of this is found in Acts 22:16, where Ananias says, "And now, why are you lingering? Stand up and receive baptism for yourself, and cleanse away your sins, calling upon His name."

(2) The Significance of Ritual Baptism

Ritual baptism is viewed as a sign and a seal; i.e., as signifying and certifying spiritual realities. The central spiritual reality signified by water baptism is that of union with Christ.

This union into which we have been brought by the Holy Spirit results in certain benefits. Union with Christ means union with His death and resurrection; thus regeneration. Union with Christ means the application of His blood to our sins; thus cleansing from guilt. And union with Christ means being brought into vital relationship with Christ's Body; thus entrance into the Church. All of these significances are witnessed to by the Scriptures.

(3) Mode of Ritual Baptism as related to Significance

Of the four significances of water baptism mentioned above, which mode best symbolizes these significances?

(a) Mode and Union with Christ

The Holy Spirit is the one who unites us to Christ. In Scripture He is spoken of as "coming upon", "falling upon", "being given", "being poured out upon". The mode of pouring could represent the Spirit's act of baptizing us into Christ.

(b) Mode and regeneration (cleansing from the pollution of sin)

Regeneration is spoken of as a spiritual circumcision, a spiritual resurrection, a spiritual washing. The mode of immersion could represent the putting off of the old life and the putting on of a new life. It could also represent a resurrection and a washing. The mode of pouring could represent washing from the pollution of sin.

(c) Mode and cleansing from guilt

Pouring could represent cleansing from guilt. The mode of immersion could represent a complete cleansing from the guilt of sin. The mode of sprinkling could represent cleansing from the guilt of sin and cleansing of the conscience, especially in connection with the symbolism of the sprinkling of the blood of Christ.

(d) Mode and entrance into Christ's Body, the Church

The mode of pouring links us with the symbolism of the language used to describe the action of the Holy Spirit upon men and His distinctive work of baptizing believers into the Body of Christ.

(e) Mode and outward identification with Christ and His Church

Although any mode of any rite or ceremony may be used as an initiatory rite, the question of whether any symbolism is intended should be considered.

If the idea of identification with Christ's baptism by John is stressed, then the question of the mode of that baptism becomes crucial. What hard information as to the mode of John's baptism do we possess?

If the idea of the identification with Christ is linked with Christ's own death burial and resurrection and stressed, then the question of which mode portrays or pictures or symbolizes those events becomes crucial. What mode portrays Christ's crucifixion on a cross? What mode portrays Christ's burial in a rock-hewn cave in the side of a hill? What mode portrays Christ's resurrection out of that cave?

If the idea of identification with Christ is linked with the abstract idea of death burial, and resurrection and stressed, then the mode of immersion could represent that idea; if a second-level identification of the idea of our death to sin and resurrection to life can be made with the idea of Christ's death to sin and resurrection to life, then the mode of immersion could represent both ideas.

3. The Subjects of Baptism

a. Considerations relative to continuity and discontinuity between the previous dispensations and the present dispensation

(1) The continuity of the comprehensive Plan of God for all dispensations

With respect to creation, providence, the Fall and its effects, redemption, and judgment, God has one great overriding Plan, which is spoken of as His decrees.

"God's decrees are the wise, free, and holy acts of the counsel of his will, whereby, from all eternity, he hath, for his own glory, unchangeably foreordained whatsoever comes to pass in time, especially concerning angels and men."

-- The Westminster *Larger Catechism*, Question 12

(2) The continuity of the Plan of Salvation (or Covenant of Grace) throughout human history

In Chapter VII of the Westminster Confession of Faith we read the following statements:

"II. The first covenant made with man was a covenant of works, wherein life was promised to Adam; and in him to his prosperity, upon condition of perfect and personal obedience.

"III. Man, by his fall, having made himself incapable of life by that covenant, the Lord was pleased to make a second, commonly called the covenant of grace; wherein He freely offereth unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ; requiring of them faith in Him, that they may be saved, and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto eternal life His Holy Spirit, to make them willing, and able to believe.

"VI . . . There are not therefore two covenants of grace, differing in substance, but one and the same, under various dispensations."

And in Article V of the Doctrinal Statement of Dallas Theological Seminary, we find the following:

"We believe that according to the "eternal purpose" of God (Eph. 3:11) salvation in the divine reckoning is always 'by grace, through faith', and rests upon the basis of the shed blood of Christ."

(3) The continuity of the spiritual children of God throughout human history

All of the spiritual children of God in all dispensations have begun earthly existence as spiritually dead and morally corrupt, and have been made spiritually alive by God's grace through faith. They have all been born again into God's spiritual family; and whether they have looked forward to the coming of the Messiah or back to Christ and His finished work, they have all been part of the one redeemed people of God of all ages. This distinction between those who are spiritually alive and those who are spiritually dead is more basic than any other distinction, including those between Jew and Gentile, male and female, and free and slave, and ancient and modern.

(4) The continuity of the spiritual significances of the central ordinances of the Old and New Dispensations

(a) The spiritual significances of Circumcision and Baptism share certain similarities

Circumcision signified union with God and with His gracious blessings

-- Genesis 12:3b -- "And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

-- Genesis 17:7, 11 -- "And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you. . . And you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you."

Baptism signifies union with Christ and with the benefits of His redemption

(see pp. 156-158)

Circumcision signified cleansing from sin

- Deuteronomy 10:12-16 -- "And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require from you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the Lord's commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you today for your good? Behold, to the Lord your God belong heaven and the highest heavens, the earth and all that is in it. Yet on your fathers did the Lord set his affection to love them, and He chose their descendants after them, even you above all peoples, as it is this day. Circumcise then your heart, and stiffen no more."
- Jeremiah 4:3-4, 14 -- "For thus says the Lord to the men of Judah and to Jerusalem, 'Break up your fallow ground, And do not sow among thorns. Circumcise yourselves to the Lord And remove the foreskins of your heart, Men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, lest my wrath go out like fire And burn with none to quench it Because of the evil of your deeds. . . . Wash your heart from evil, O Jerusalem, That you may be saved. How long will your wicked thoughts Lodge within you?' "
- Jeremiah 9:2, 25-26 -- "O that I had in the desert A wayfarers' lodging place; That I might leave my people, And go from them! For all of them are adulterers, An assembly of treacherous men . . . . ;Behold, the days are coming,' declares the Lord, 'that I will punish all who are circumcised and yet uncircumcised -- Egypt, and Judah, and Edom, and the sons of Ammon, and Moab, and all those inhabiting the desert who clip the hair on their temples; for all the nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised of heart.' "
- Deuteronomy 30:1-3, 6 -- "So it shall become when all of these things have come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind in all nations where the Lord your God has banished you, and you return to the Lord your God and obey Him with all your heart and soul according to all that I command you today, you and your sons, then the Lord your God will restore you from captivity, and have compassion on you, and will gather you again from all peoples where the Lord your God has scattered you . . . Moreover the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, in order that you may live."
- Ezekiel 44:6-7, 9 -- "And you shall say to the rebellious ones, to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord God, "Enough of all your abominations, O house of Israel, when you brought in foreigners, uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in My sanctuary to profane it, even My house, when you offered My food, the fat and the

blood; for they made My covenant void -- the addition to all your abominations . . . " Thus says the Lord God, "No foreigner, uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh, of all the foreigners who are among the sons of Israel, shall enter my sanctuary." ' ' "

-- Acts 7:51-53 -- "You men who are stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did. Which one of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who had previously announced the coming of the Righteous One, whose betrayers and murderers you have now become; you who received the law as ordained by angels, and yet did not keep it."

-- Romans 2:28-29 -- "For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly; neither is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God."

Baptism signifies cleansing from sin

(see pp. 156-158, The Ordinance of Baptism)

Circumcision signified entrance into the true people of God

-- Genesis 17:9-14 -- "God said further to Abraham, 'Now as for you, you shall keep My covenant, and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: every male among you shall be circumcised. And you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you. And every male among you who is eight days old shall be circumcised throughout your generations, a servant who is born in the house or who is bought with money from any foreigner, who is not of your descendants. A servant who is born in your house or who is bought with your money shall surely be circumcised; thus shall My covenant be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. But an uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant.' "

-- Romans 4:9-12 -- "Is this blessing then upon the circumcised, or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say, 'Faith was reckoned to Abraham as righteousness.' How then was it reckoned? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised; and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be reckoned to them, and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also follow in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham which he had while uncircumcised.' "

Baptism signifies entrance into the true people of God

(See p. 156-158, The Ordinance of Baptism)



- (b) The spiritual significances of Passover and the Lord's Supper share certain similarities

Passover signified God's deliverance from bondage and oppression in Egypt by means of faith in and obedience to God's command to sacrifice and apply the blood of an unblemished lamb.

The Lord's Supper signifies God's deliverance from bondage and oppression in sin by means of faith in and obedience to God's command to receive the sacrifice and apply the blood of the Lamb slain once for all.

Passover signified deliverance from judgment and destruction, by the passing over of God's destroying angel, of those who were protected by sacrificial blood.

The Lord's Supper signifies deliverance from judgment and destruction, by the passing over of God's wrath, of those who are protected by Christ's sacrificial blood.

- (5) The discontinuities between the external administration and outward significance of the central ordinances of the Old and New Dispensations

- (a) The external administration and outward significance of Circumcision and of Baptism differ in certain respects

Circumcision involved the physical cutting off of the flesh of the foreskin

Baptism involves the physical washing of the flesh of the body

Circumcision pertained to males only

Baptism pertains to males and females alike

Circumcision signified initiation into membership of both the national and the religious communities of Israel, the Old Testament people of God

Baptism signifies initiation into membership of the religious community of the New Testament church, the New Testament people of God

- (b) The external administration and outward significance of Passover and the Lord's Supper differ in certain respects

Passover involved the eating of a simple meal, including roast lamb, unleavened bread, bitter herbs, and (later in its history) the drinking of cups or juice of the grape mingled with water

The Lord's Supper involves the eating of bread and the drinking of a cup of the juice of the grape

Passover signified continuance in the membership of both the national and the religious communities of Israel, the Old Testament people of God

The Lord's Supper signifies continuance in the membership of the religious community of the New Testament church, the New Testament people of God

Chapter VII of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* witnesses to these discontinuities between the external administration and outward significance of the central ordinances of the Old and New Dispensations:

"V. This covenant was differently administered in the time of the law, and in the time of the gospel: under the law, it was administered by promises, prophecies, sacrifices, circumcision, the paschal lamb, and other types and ordinances delivered to the people of the Jews, all foreshadowing Christ to come; which were for that time, sufficient and efficacious, through the operation of the Spirit, to instruct and build up the elect in faith in the promised Messiah, by whom they had full remission of sins, and eternal salvation; and is called the old Testament.

"VI. Under the gospel, when Christ, the substance was exhibited, the ordinances in which this covenant is dispensed are the preaching of the Word, and the administration of the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper: which, though fewer in number, and administered with more simplicity, and less outward glory, yet, in them, it is held forth in more fullness, evidence and spiritual efficacy, to all nations, both Jews and Gentiles; and is called the New Testament. There are not therefore two covenants of grace, differing in substance, but one and the same, under various dispensations."

- (6) The issue whether the continuities between the Old and New Dispensations or the discontinuities should be emphasized

This issue would appear to underlie much of the debate between adherents of believer's baptism and adherents of paedobaptism.

But what does the Bible stress? Does it stress unity or disunity between the Testaments, likeness or unlikeness, similarity or dissimilarity, favorable comparison or contrast, continuity or discontinuity?

Roy L. Aldrich, in the April 1961 issue of *Bibliotheca Sacra* states:

"Critics of dispensationalism usually fail to recognize that most dispensationalists would approve of the following: (1) That there is only one plan of salvation for all dispensations. (2) That the new birth is characteristic of all dispensations. (3) That the eternal moral law of God (not the Mosaic law) applies to all dispensations.

(4) That the saints of all dispensations have far more in common than they have in difference."

-- Roy L. Aldrich, "An Outline Study on Dispensationalism" in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol. 118, No. 470 (April 1961), p. 134.

Earl O. Radmacher, writing in *Perspectives on Evangelical Theology*, speaks of "The growing rapprochement that has been taking place between covenant and dispensational theologians of orthodox persuasion over the last decade or so"

-- Earl D. Radmacher, "The Current Status of Dispensationalism and its Eschatology" in *Perspectives on Evangelical Theology*, ed. Kenneth S. Kantzer and Stanley N. Gundry (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1979), p. 163.

And Kenneth L. Barker, in his presidential address to the 33rd annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society in December 1981, discussed four false dichotomies between the Testaments. He stated them as follows:

- "1. The first false dichotomy is that the OT only knows of the circumcision of the flesh while the NT speaks of the circumcision of the heart. . . .
- "2. The second false dichotomy is that the CT presents the letter of the Law while the NT reveals the spirit of the Law. . . .
- "3. The third false dichotomy (actually the first major one) is that the OT is the Testament of the law while the NT is the Testament of grace. . . .
- "4. The fourth false dichotomy is that the OT is concerned with Israel while the NT is concerned with the Church."

-- Kenneth L. Barker, "False Dichotomies Between the Testaments" in *JETS* 25/1 (March 1982), pp. 4-10.

As applied to the question of the subjects of baptism, this issue concerns the practical problem of whether only believers are to be baptized, or whether believers and their infant children are to be baptized. This question leads us into the arguments put forward in favor of infant as well as believer's baptism, and the arguments put forward in opposition to infant baptism and in favor of believer's baptism only.

b. Arguments put forward in favor of infant as well as believer's baptism

(1) First argument: New Testament ritual baptism has superceded Old Testament ritual circumcision as a sign and seal of the Covenant of Grace

(a) External circumcision was intended to signify and seal heart circumcision.

(b) External baptism was intended to signify and seal Spirit baptism

- (c) Testament heart circumcision is accomplished when an individual is spiritually baptized into union with Christ. These two figures of speech refer to the same spiritual reality, i.e., the initial subjective application of salvation.
  - (d) The term "heart circumcision" as used in the Old Testament is a figure of speech for the same spiritual reality as is represented by the term "heart circumcision" as used in the New Testament.
  - (e) Thus Old Testament external circumcision and New Testament external baptism were intended to signify and seal the same spiritual reality.
  - (f) Thus New Testament ritual baptism, as a sign and seal of the Covenant of Grace, has superseded Old Testament ritual circumcision.
  - (g) Under the Old Testament dispensation both adults and children were circumcised. Then under the New Testament dispensation should not both adults and children be baptized?
- (2) Second argument: Where in Scripture is there evidence to the effect that the infant children of believers under the New Testament dispensation were excluded from the Abrahamic Covenant of Promise?
- (a) The covenant which God imposed upon Abraham was a grace covenant

Romans 4:13, 16 -- "For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith . . . . For this reason it is by faith, that it might be in accordance with grace, in order that the promise may be certain to all descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the faith of us all."
  - (b) This covenant was an everlasting covenant

Genesis 17:7 -- "And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you."

Galatians 3:29 -- "And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise."
  - (c) This covenant was primarily a spiritual covenant

Galatians 3:7, 16, 29 -- "Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith that are sons of Abraham . . . . Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, 'And to seeds,' as referring to many, but rather to one, 'And to your seed,' that is, Christ . . . . And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise."

- (d) This covenant included the infant seed of believers

Genesis 17:9-12 -- "God said further to Abraham, "Now as for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your seed after you throughout their generations. This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your seed after you: every male among you shall be circumcised. And you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you. And every male among you who is eight days old shall be circumcised throughout your generations, a servant who is born in the house or who is bought with money from any foreigner, who is not of your seed."

- (e) This covenant was signified and sealed by the external rite of circumcision

- (f) This covenant was not annulled by the imposition of the Mosaic Covenant

Galatians 3:17-18 -- "What I am saying is this: the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise. For if the inheritance is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise; but God has granted it to Abraham by means of a promise."

- (g) This Covenant of Promise, a grace covenant, made by God with Abraham and with his seed, remains, in its spiritual aspects, in full force today

Romans 4:16 -- "For this reason it is by faith, that it might be in accordance with grace, in order that the promise may be certain to all the seed, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all."

- (h) Where and when were infants excluded from this grace covenant?

God's pattern of working throughout the Old Testament dispensation was through families; i.e., it included the infants of believers. Where and when did God change His pattern?

The sign and seal of the covenant was changed (ritual circumcision to ritual baptism), but where is there evidence that the subjects were changed, in that the infant seed of believers were excluded?

It is sometimes objected that this is an argument from silence. However, it is not an argument from complete silence, since the pattern was already established during the Old Testament dispensation. The question is, Where and when was this already-accomplished pattern changed

It would seem reasonable, when a change is to be made in an existing pattern, to expect that some directive stipulating that

change should be forthcoming. But in the absence of any such directive, how can one even know that a change is to be made? To imply a change without a directive to that effect would seem to be an argument from complete silence! Thus the charge of arguing from silence falls back on the objector!

If any change in subjects was made, it was a widening, not a narrowing of the applicability of the sign and seal of the covenant, as is evidenced by the inclusion of females as well as males as subjects of baptism. Such widening is in keeping with the genius of the New Dispensation.

- (3) Third argument: The proportion of household baptisms to the total number of instances of water baptism recorded in the post-resurrection portions of the New Testament is unusually high
- (a) Eleven instances of Christian Baptism are recorded in the New Testament, as follows:

- 1. Acts 2:41 -- 3,000 on the Day of Pentecost

It cannot be proven that children were present or absent in this baptism. The promise in verse 39 ("for you and your children, and for all who are far off") includes children, but the account does not mention children being present. The record stresses men (2:5, 22, 29), but does not mention whether woman and/or children were also present.

- 2. Acts 8:12-13 -- people of the city of Samaria and Simon the magician

It mentions men and women being baptized, and thus it is probable that these were all adults.

- 3. Acts 8:38 -- the Ethiopian eunuch

It can be categorically said that no children were baptized here, simply because no children were involved!

- 4. Acts 9:18 -- Paul (cp. also Acts 22:16, which refers to the same event)

No children were involved; thus no children were baptized!

- 5. Acts 10:47-48 -- Cornelius, his household, his kinsmen, and his close friends

There is no evidence that there were any children present on this occasion. Verses 24, 27, 44-46 all seem to stress adults.

6. Acts 16:15 -- Lydia and her household

In this instance we do not know whether or not there were any infant children in Lydia's household. We know she had a business selling purple fabrics. Did she have a husband, or was she a widow? Did her household include children, infants, slaves, servants? We do not know.

All we are told is: (a) she listened to Paul sharing the gospel; (b) the Lord opened her heart; (c) she responded favorably to the message; (d) she and her household were baptized.

Were the members of her household baptized on their own profession (except, of course, for infants, if any were present), or were they baptized on the profession of Lydia? We are not told.

7. Acts 16:33 the Philippian Jailor and his household

Verses 31-34 tell us: "And they said, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your household.' And they spoke the word of the Lord to him together with all who were in his house. And he took them that very hour of the night and washed their wounds, and immediately he was baptized, he and all his household. And he brought them into his house and set food before them, and rejoiced greatly, having believed in God with his whole household."

Actually, the second half of verse 34 can be translated either as "he rejoiced with all his house, he having believed in God," or as "he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his house."

In this instance we are not told whether there were infant children in this household. The exhortation to "Believe in the Lord Jesus" would of course be addressed to those capable of saving faith, and not to infants.

Notice what this passage specifically teaches:

- (a) All members of the household were to believe in order to be saved.
- (b) All members capable of understanding heard the Word of God
- (c) Either the jailor and his house rejoiced that he believed in God, or the jailor rejoiced and he and his house believed in God.
- (d) All members of the household were baptized immediately.

8. Acts 18:8 -- Crispus and all his household (cp. also I Cor. 1:14)

No infants are mentioned here. However, since Crispus is said to have believed in the Lord with all his household, the strong implication is that those who were baptized were all adults.

This is further confirmed by the statement that many of the Corinthians were believing and being baptized.

9. Acts 19:5 -- the twelve men of Ephesus who had been disciples of John  
No infants are mentioned. These were all men.

10. I Corinthians 1:14 -- Gaius  
No infants are mentioned, but only Gaius.

11. I Corinthians 1:16 -- Stephanas and his household  
We do not know whether or not there were infant children in his household.

(b) Of these eleven instances of Christian baptism in the New Testament, we discover that the following summary-conclusions can be drawn:

In three cases (#3, #4, #9), there were clearly no children present.

In five cases (#1, #2, #5, #8, #10), we do not know if children were present, but it is highly probable that no children were involved in the baptism.

In three cases (#6, #7, #11), households are mentioned. However, we do not know whether or not there were infant children in these households.

(4) Fourth argument: The New Testament assumes the continuing relevance of the Abrahamic covenant, with its inclusion of believing parents and their children in covenant promises and obligations

(a) Outline of the covenant

In the Old Testament dispensation:

Parties: God and Abraham and his seed

Condition: Faith in Abraham, which issues in obedience, both in regard to himself, and in regard to the nurturing and admonishing of his seed after him

Promise: God will be his God, and the God of his seed after him

Sign and Seal: Circumcision upon himself and upon their seed

(b) Does the New Testament state this covenant anywhere?

The New Testament simply affirms the continuing relevance of the spiritual aspects of the Abrahamic covenant (Galatians 3:16-18, 26-29). It nowhere annuls this covenant, and nowhere excludes the seed of believing parents from that covenant. In fact, children of believing parents are viewed as holy, set apart, standing in a special relationship to God, by virtue of the simple fact that they are the seed of believing parents.



I Corinthians 7:14 -- "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified through her believing husband; for otherwise your children are unclean, but now they are holy."

(c) Thus It follows that:

If the Abrahamic covenant included the children; and if the Abrahamic covenant, in its spiritual aspects, still remains in full force today; then either the children are still included in the covenant or the children have somewhere along the line been excluded from the covenant.

If the children are still included in the covenant, then it could be expected that:

The New Testament would assume that inclusion, without necessity of commanding it.

A general command to baptize, as the New Testament sign and seal of that covenant, would be assumed to include children, without specifically singling them out.

The children of believing parents would, in a special sense, be viewed as set apart to the Lord, as children of the covenant.

The baptism of households, on the faith of the head(s) could be expected to be practiced.

If the children have been excluded from the covenant, then it could be expected that:

The New Testament, either by command, exhortation, teaching, or example, would make such exclusion clear.

The Abrahamic covenant would be discriminately applied to New Testament adult believers, rather than to the "seed of Abraham."

The children of believing parents, before they reached the point of their personal decision to trust in Christ, would be viewed no differently from the children of unbelieving parents.

(d) If infants are included in the Abrahamic covenant, then what is the condition upon which they are baptized?

The condition is twofold:

Faith in God's covenant promises on the part of the parent(s)

A determined purpose, on the part of the parent(s) to bring up their children in the way of the Lord, both by precept and example.

Nothing is required on the part of the infant. He or she is passive in the transaction. The infants of believers are

already set apart to God by virtue of the covenant. The application of the sign and seal of the covenant is an act of faith and obedience on the part of the parent(s).

- (e) To the infant child of a believer, baptism is a sign and seal of his potential interest in the covenant. In the course of time, that child must ratify the covenant by faith for himself, at which time the ordinance becomes the sign and seal of his actual, real, personal interest in the covenant blessings.
- c. Arguments put forward in favor of believer's baptism only and in opposition to infant baptism

(1) Arguments in favor of believer's baptism only

- (a) Baptism requires a credible profession of faith on the part of the candidate. This requires the ability to make an intelligent confession of the saving truths of Christ's Person and saving work.
- (b) Baptism symbolizes entrance into Christ's discipleship. Only a person capable of grasping something of the implications of discipleship is a fit candidate for baptism.
- (c) Baptism presupposes regeneration in the candidate. Regeneration must precede, not follow baptism! Since regeneration is conditioned on the exercise of saving faith, then only a person capable of exercising faith is a fit subject for baptism.
- (d) Baptism symbolizes identification with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. Such identification is possible only for a person capable of exercising faith in Christ's saving work.

(2) Arguments in opposition to infant baptism

- (a) The New Testament says "believe and be baptized." How can an infant believe?

Note: This command is manifestly addressed to adults, or at least those capable of grasping and responding to it. Abraham believed and was circumcised as a sign and seal of his portion in God's gracious covenant. But his seed were also circumcised. Could they believe? What can an eight-day old infant understand and believe? Yet the sign of God's covenant was to be applied to him as well!

- (b) Why do Presbyterians baptize girl babies, when only males were circumcised in the Old Testament?

Note: Galatians 3:28 tells us that "there is neither male nor female." The New Dispensation brings a widening of the applicability of the sign and seal of the covenant of grace, just as it does in many other respects. This represents a genuine change of dispensation.

- (c) If baptism took the place of circumcision, then why did both exist side by side in the New Testament?

Note: The transition to the New Dispensation was gradual among many Jews. Many still retained some of the ceremonies. As long as circumcision and some of the other ceremonies were not considered as essential to salvation, they were permitted. The book of Hebrews gives ground for the passing away of the ceremonies, as being shadows now fulfilled. Paul circumcised Timothy (Acts 16:3) for the sake of the Jews, not out of necessity.

- (d) Where in the New Testament do we find a command to baptize infants?

Note: This question could be countered by asking, Where is there a command to exclude them from baptism? They were always included in the application of the Old Testament sign and seal of the covenant; when and where were they excluded?

- (e) Is not infant baptism a product of the Roman Catholic Church?

Note: Origen was baptized as an infant. Tertullian argues against the practice of baptizing infants. Augustine pointed out that this doctrine was held by the whole church. These fathers certainly antedated the Roman Catholic Church as we know it today.

- (f) Is not infant baptism "responsible for sending more people to hell than any other cause"?

Note: What about church membership? What about adult baptism? Do persons trust in these things for their salvation? And are they therefore also responsible for sending millions to hell? The truth of the matter is that any human work or ceremony in which men trust for their salvation can be the occasion of their eternal damnation. The principle that must be applied to this question is this: The abuse of a thing never proves it to be harmful, false, or evil.

C. The Ordinance of the Lord's Supper

Chapter 29 of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* states:

- I. Our Lord Jesus, in the night wherein he was betrayed, instituted the sacrament of his body and blood, called the Lord's Supper, to be observed in his Church, unto the end of the world; for the perpetual remembrance of the sacrifice of himself in his death, the sealing all benefits thereof unto true believers, their spiritual nourishment and growth in him, their further engagement in, and to all duties which they owe unto him; and to be a bond and pledge of their communion with him, and with each other, as members of his mystical body.
- II. In this sacrament Christ is not offered up to his Father, nor any real sacrifice is made at all for remission of sins of the quick or dead, but only a commemoration of that one offering up of himself, by himself, upon the cross, once for all, and a spiritual oblation of all possible praise unto God for the same; so that the Popish sacrifice of the mass, as they call it, is most abominably injurious to Christ's one only sacrifice, the alone propitiation for all the sins of the elect.
- III. The Lord Jesus hath, in this ordinance, appointed his ministers to declare his word of institution to the people, to pray, and bless the elements of bread and wine, and thereby to set them apart from a common to an holy use; and to take and break the bread, to take the cup, and (they communicating also themselves) to give both to the communicants; but to none who are not then present in the congregation.
- IV. Private masses, or receiving this sacrament by a priest, or any other, alone; as likewise the denial of the cup to the people; worshipping the elements, the lifting them up, or carrying them about for adoration, and the reserving them for any pretended religious use, are all contrary to the nature of this sacrament, and to the institution of Christ.
- V. The outward elements in this sacrament, duly set apart to the uses ordained by Christ, have such relation to him crucified, as that truly, yet sacramentally only, they are sometimes called by the name of the things they represent, to wit, the body and blood of Christ; albeit, in substance and nature, they still remain truly, and only, bread and wine, as they were before.
- VI. That doctrine which maintains a change of the substance of bread and wine, into the substance of Christ's body and blood (commonly called transubstantiation) by consecration of a priest, or by any other way, is repugnant, not to Scripture alone, but even to common-sense and reason; overthroweth the nature of the sacrament; and hath been, and is the cause of manifold superstitions, yea, of gross idolatries.
- VII. Worthy receivers, outwardly partaking of the visible elements in this sacrament, do then also inwardly by faith, really and indeed, yet not carnally and corporally, but spiritually, receive and feed upon Christ crucified, and all benefits of his death; the body and blood of Christ being then not corporally or carnally in, with, or under the bread and wine; yet as really, but spiritually, present to the faith of believers in that ordinance, as the elements themselves are, to their outward senses.
- VIII. Although ignorant and wicked men receive the outward elements in this sacrament, yet they receive not the thing signified thereby; but by their unworthy coming thereunto are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, to

their own damnation. Wherefore all ignorant and ungodly persons, as they are unfit to enjoy communion with him, so are they unworthy of the Lord's table, and can not, without great sin against Christ, while they remain such, partake of these holy mysteries, or be admitted thereunto.

The *Heidelberg Catechism*, in the section "Of the Holy Supper of the Lord" asks:

Question 75. How is it signified and sealed unto thee in the Holy Supper that thou dost partake of the one sacrifice of Christ on the cross and all his benefits?

Answer. Thus, that Christ has commanded me and all believers to eat of this broken bread, and to drink of this cup, and has joined therewith these promises: First, that his body was offered and broken on the cross for me, and his blood shed for me, as certainly as I see with my eyes the bread of the Lord broken for me, and the cup communicated to me; and, further, that with his crucified body and shed blood he himself feeds and nourishes my soul to everlasting life, as certainly as I receive from the hand of the minister, and taste with my mouth, the bread and cup of the Lord which are given me as certain tokens of the body and blood of Christ.

Question 76. what is it to eat the crucified body and drink the shed blood of Christ?

Answer. It is not only to embrace with a believing heart all the suffering and death of Christ, and thereby to obtain the forgiveness of sins and life eternal, but moreover, also, to be so united more and more to his sacred body by the Holy Ghost, who dwells both in Christ and in us, that although he is in heaven, and we on the earth, we are nevertheless flesh of his flesh and bone of his bones, and live and are governed forever by one Spirit, as members of the same body are by one soul.

#### 1. Scriptural data

The passages of Scripture that directly relate to this ordinance are as follows:

Matthew 26:26-28 -- "And while they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and after a blessing, He broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body.' And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you; for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.'"

Mark 14:22-24 -- "And while they were eating, He took some bread, and after a blessing He broke it; and gave it to them, and said, 'Take it; this is My body.' And when He had taken a cup, and given thanks, He gave it to them; and they all drank from it. And He said to them, 'This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.' "

Luke 22:19-20 -- "And when He had taken some bread and given thanks, He broke it, and gave it to them, saying, 'This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.' And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, 'This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood.' "

I Corinthians 10:15-21 -- "I speak as to wise men; you judge what I say. Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a sharing in the blood of Christ? Is not the bread which we break a sharing in the body of Christ? Since there is one bread, we who are many are one body; for we all partake of the one bread. Look at the nation Israel; are not those who eat the sacrifices sharers in the altar? What do I mean then? That a thing sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? No, but I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, and not to God; and I do not want you to become sharers in demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons."

I Corinthians 11:17-34 -- "But in giving this instruction, I do not praise you, because you come together not for the better but for the worse. For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that divisions exist among you; and in part, I believe it. For there must also be factions among you, in order that those who are approved may have become evident among you. Therefore when you meet together, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper, for in your eating each one takes his own supper first; and one is hungry and another is drunk. What! Do you not have houses in which to eat and drink? Or do you despise the church of God, and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you? In this I will not praise you. For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, 'This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me.' in the same way He took the cup also, after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes. Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cups of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself, if he does not judge the body rightly. For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep. But if we judged ourself rightly, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord in order that we may not be condemned along with the world. So then, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. If anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, so that you may not come together for judgment. And the remaining matters I shall arrange when I come."

## 2. The significance of the Lord's Supper

Two important questions arise in connection with the meaning of the Supper: what does it mean to "discern the body rightly"? and is there a special blessing connected with the Lord's Supper; and if so, how is it communicated?

In connection with the question of discernment of the body, we must look at I Corinthians 11:17-34. In verse 20 Paul says that when the Corinthian believers came together as a church to eat the Lord's Supper, it was not a true Lord's Supper! This shows that it is possible to go through the motions and yet miss God's intended meaning in the Supper. In verses 21-22 we learn that a custom had developed of people bringing their own supper to the meeting of the church, and of eating it prior to the service in which they observed the Lord's Supper (is this evidence of the Agape or Love-Feast?) Some brought a large amount of food and drink; others brought little. Those who brought much ate much; those who brought little ate little. Those who brought much appear to have come early and to have begun to eat and drink early, without bothering to wait for those who had little, brought little, and came at the regular time. Of course, by the time those who had little came, those who had much had eaten and drunk much (note verses 21 and 33). Those who came early and brought much and ate much showed that they thought only of their own appetites, despised the other members of Christ's church, and shamed those who had little. Paul says that their actions were not praiseworthy, but rather blameworthy (note verse 22).

Under these conditions it simply was not possible to eat "the Lord's Supper" (verse 20). By the time the believers got to the observance of the Lord's Supper, some were drunk and some were still hungry (verse 21). Those who were drunk obviously could not partake of the Lord's Supper in a worthy manner (verse 27); those who were hungry probably thought more of satisfying their hunger with the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper than of remembering the Lord's broken body and shed blood!

Therefore the exhortation to the Corinthians in verse 28 to examine themselves should, in context, be understood to be, not an exhortation to a general self-examination of sinfulness, but an exhortation to judge whether they were able to partake of the Lord's Supper in a worthy manner. And the test of worthiness or unworthiness to partake depended on their ability to discern the spiritual meaning of the Lord's Supper, as opposed to viewing it as a common meal, to profaning it by using it simply to fill their belly, or by recognizing no spiritual symbolism beyond the elements themselves.

Partaking in a worthy manner is connected with "discerning the body" (verses 27 and 29). But what does "discerning the body" mean? It appears to have a twofold reference. On the one hand it means to recognize with the eyes of faith the true spiritual significance of the bread and cup, as emblems of the broken body and shed blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, instead of viewing them as mere bread and wine. On the other hand it has a horizontal reference, and means to recognize with the eyes of faith the true spiritual union which exists between all members of Christ's Body, the Church, and the true Christian love which draws all members of Christ's Body together in one holy bond, instead of viewing them as separate individuals with all of their natural dislikes and sinful attitudes. In the Supper believers are called upon to "discern the body" in both senses, the vertical and the horizontal.

In the Supper the elements of bread and wine are not transformed into the physical body and blood of Christ (transubstantiation), nor do we eat the physical body and blood of Christ when we eat the bread and wine (consubstantiation); nevertheless the physical elements truly signify,

symbolize, and represent the body and blood of our Lord. Also in the Supper when the participants commune together in the body and blood of Christ, they show that in their union with Christ they are united with each other. Although they are many members of the body, they all have one Head; and when they commune with Him in the Lord's Supper they also commune with one another. Believers need to see this and thus "discern the body". The believers in Corinth were not recognizing the true spiritual significance of the bread and the cup, and they were not manifesting the true spiritual unity of the body of Christ. As a result, their supper was not the Lord's Supper.

In connection with the question of a special blessing connected with the Lord's Supper, we must make a basic distinction between a Sacerdotal and an Evangelical conception of what happens in the Lord's Supper.

In a Sacerdotal conception the person officiating is a priest. God's blessing comes through him as a mediator, as a channel. God's grace comes down from heaven, flows through him, flows into the elements, and through the elements into the souls of the recipients. The participants are passive, and God's grace accompanies the elements as they partake of them.

In an Evangelical conception the person officiating is a leader and a minister. He leads the people as they participate together, and he ministers, i.e., declares the Word of God to them. The only mediator between each participant and God is Jesus Christ. There is no human being through whom the participant comes to Christ. Each individual has direct access to Christ Himself. The participants are active, and God's blessing comes to them only as they exercise active faith in the spiritual realities which the elements signify to them.

In the Sacerdotal conception the priest is all-important, and the focus is on him and on his actions. In the Evangelical conception Christ is all-important, and the focus is on Him and His atoning work.

In the Evangelical conception the presence of active faith is important. God gives us a word, a promise, a pledge, a seal in the Supper. By a visible word, a physical word, a word which is addressed to our eyes, He assures us of the forgiveness of sins. But exactly how does this work?

When we receive Christ as our Savior and receive His broken body and shed blood for our salvation, we receive the forgiveness of sins. If we have received forgiveness of sins through Christ's body and blood, then when we receive God's written Word to us we receive assurance of the forgiveness of sins. Likewise, if we have received forgiveness of sins through Christ's body and blood, then when we have received God's visible Word to us in the elements of the Supper, we receive additional assurance of the forgiveness of sins. Just as we receive God's written Word and are assured of the forgiveness of our sins, so we receive God's visible Word and are assured again of the forgiveness of our sins. As we receive the elements of bread and wine as symbols of Christ's body and blood, we receive God's assurance that our sins are forgiven. God in His grace condescends to our present physical existence in flesh and blood bodies and gives us a physical word: "This is my body . . . This is my blood." But this additional assurance comes only to those who believe His promise of forgiveness of sins through His broken body and shed blood!



It is this additional assurance (not different from that of the written Word, just additional) that may be seen as a special blessing connected with the Lord's Supper.

### 3. The mode of the Lord's Supper

Although there are many minor questions related to mode (e.g., Should recipients partake at the altar rail or remain in their seats? Should the bread be wafers or crackers or loaf bread? Should loaf bread be left whole until broken by the recipients or broken or cut beforehand? Should grape juice or wine be used? Should there be one large cup or many small cups? May substitutes for bread and wine be used when these are not available?), there are really no major differences in mode among the various churches.

### 4. The subjects of the Lord's Supper

The first condition for acceptable participation in the Lord's Supper is saving faith in Jesus Christ. It would seem obvious that one who has never stood at the foot of the cross and gazed at those bleeding wounds, has never cried, "Lord Jesus, I am lost; save me!" and has never by faith received the forgiveness of sins, has no place or right at this memorial of His death.

The second condition for acceptable participation in the Lord's Supper is discernment of the spiritual significance of the Lord's Supper. One who comes to the table of the Lord must recognize the true spiritual significance of the bread and the cup, and must recognize and seek to manifest the true spiritual unity of the body of Christ.

The third condition for acceptable participation is confession of sin. In the very broad sense, confession of sin includes six elements:

- (1) Conviction of sin, objectively by the Word, subjectively by the Spirit
- (2) Confession of sin, which means that I say the same thing about my sin that God says about it.
- (3) Godly sorrow for sin, as I get a biblical view of my sin, and see what salvation from my sin cost the Son of God
- (4) Turning from, abhorrence of, and (by God's grace) forsaking of the sin that I have confessed
- (5) Asking God for forgiveness, cleansing, and deliverance from my sin, on the basis of Christ's shed blood and according to God's faithful and gracious promise
- (6) Trusting God to forgive, cleanse, and deliver me from the sin that I have confessed. This includes telling Him that I trust Him to do it, and believing that He does it.

The fourth condition for acceptable participation is faith in God's promise in the Supper. Christ says, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins." As we trust in Christ's atoning work we have God's assurance that our sins are forgiven. We have in this ordinance God's visible Word that it is so.

Those who have never received Christ as Savior and Lord, those who view this ordinance as an empty, meaningless ritual, those who are engaged in open sin or indulge themselves in secret sin, and those who withhold faith in God's Word in the Supper do not meet the conditions for acceptable participation in this ordinance. But those who are trusting Christ, those who have a competent knowledge to discern the body, those who earnestly desire to renounce their sins and lead a holy and godly life, and those who believe God's Word are invited, yes even commanded to partake. Christ says, "Take, eat." He commands, "This do." Refusal to come and partake is disobedience!

But there are some who hold back, who feel unworthy, and who feel that if they partake, they will be doing so unworthily. They need to discern where their unworthiness lies. If they feel unworthy because their sins have never been forgiven, they need to come to Christ and receive His forgiveness. If they feel unworthy because they have experienced sin and failure and defeat in their lives, they need to come confessing their sins, remembering that the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin. If they feel unworthy because of lukewarmness of spirit or coldness of heart, they need to return to the foot of the cross, and see His love flowing down in His own life-blood. Let all who come to the table confess that they are entirely unworthy in themselves, and let them find all of their worthiness in Him who is infinitely worthy! Let Christ, not self, be the focus of this ordinance of the Lord's Supper.

## FUTURE THINGS (ESCHATOLOGY)

### I. The States of Persons After Death

#### A. The Nature of Death

William Cohen Bryant (1794-1878) in his poem *Thanatopsis* wrote:

So live, that when thy summons come to join  
To the innumerable caravan, which moves  
To that mysterious realm, where each shall take  
His chamber in the silent halls of death,  
Thou go not, like the quarry-slave at night,  
Scourged to his dungeon, but, sustained and soothed  
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave  
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch  
About him, and lies down to pleasant dream.

What is death? What is it like? What does it mean to die? What do we know about death?

#### 1. Scriptural data

Genesis 2:16-17 -- "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying 'From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die.' "

Genesis 3:17-19 -- "Then to Adam He said, 'Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, "You shall not eat from it"; cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.' "

Romans 5:12 -- "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned --"

I Corinthians 15:21-22 -- "For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive."

Matthew 10:28 -- "And do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

Luke 23:43, 46, 52-53 -- "And he was saying, 'Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom!'. . . And Jesus, crying out with a loud

voice, said, 'Father, into Thy hands I commit My spirit.' And having said this, He breathed His last . . . . This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. And he took it down and wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid Him in a tomb cut into the rock, where no one had ever lain."

James 2:26 -- "For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead."

Luke 16:22-23 -- "Now it came about that the poor man died and he was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried. And in Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away, and Lazarus in his bosom."

II Corinthians 5:6-8 -- "Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord--for we walk by faith, not by sight--we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord."

Philippians 1:21-24 -- "For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I am to live on in the flesh, this will mean fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which to choose. But I am hard pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better; yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake."

John 5:26-29 -- "For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; those who did the good deeds, to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment."

I Corinthians 15:26 -- "The last enemy that will be abolished is death."

Revelation 21:4 -- "And He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain: the first things have passed away."

## 2. Development of the doctrine

### a. Death is the cessation of life

- (1) Physical death is the cessation of physical life, the cessation of physical activity and processes in the body. This includes cessation of movement, of respiration (breathing), of blood circulation (heartbeat), of metabolism (building up and destruction of protoplasm), and of brain wave activity (as traced by an EKG). This cessation of vital processes results in physical decomposition and decay of the body.

Medically, death is defined in three ways: (a) the absence of clinically detectable vital signs; (b) the absence of brain wave activity; (c) the irreversible loss of vital functions (the setting in of rigor mortis). The current definition of legal death is the absence, for either 24 or 48 hours, of any brain wave activity. The third sense is the one being used here (the irreversible loss of vital functions).

- (2) Spiritual death is the cessation of spiritual life, the cessation of godly activity in the soul/spirit. This includes cessation of vital relationship to God, and cessation of activity characterized by holiness and righteousness. Spiritual death does not mean the cessation of all activity in the soul/spirit, for the spiritually dead soul/spirit is involved in ungodly activity and is active in trespasses and sins.

Activity of the soul/spirit in sin is not called spiritual life in Scripture; it is called spiritual death. Spiritual life involves activity in righteousness; spiritual death involves, not cessation of all activity, but activity in unrighteousness. In this sense, spiritual death is unlike physical death.

- b. Physical death is the dissolution of the union of the material body and the non-material soul/spirit

- (1) This dissolution is unnatural and abnormal, alien to human beings. It is a rending apart of components which belong together. It is a result of mankind's fall into sin.
- (2) This dissolution does not necessarily involve a spatial separation of the body and the soul/spirit; it requires only a dissolution of the union.
- (3) This dissolution does involve the passing of the soul/spirit from one state or condition or dimension or realm into another.

- c. Physical death does not mean the cessation of the soul/spirit's existence

Following physical death, the soul/spirit does not cease to exist; it is not absorbed into a larger or more ultimate reality; does not fall into a deep, unconscious slumber; does not pass into a state of absolute inactivity; does not pass to an astral plane; does not enter another body in order to begin a new existence; does not wander about the world making unexpected appearances, frightening bad people, encouraging good persons, throwing dishes or moving furniture, or haunting houses and old castles; and does not act as a familiar spirit to witches or medium, revealing the future, comforting the bereaved, convincing the scoffers, and helping the mediums to make a living and to write books about their success in contacting the dear departed spirits. Rather, the Bible teaches that the soul/spirit, following physical death, continues in a conscious,

disembodied existence and a particular place or state or dimension or realm until the resurrection and the judgment.

- d. Following physical death, human beings continue to exist, first in an intermediate State, and then in a Final or Eternal State.

In recent years a number of books on the death experience have appeared, including the following: Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, *On Death and Dying*, and *Questions and Answers on Death and Dying*; Raymond A. Moody, *Life After Life*; Jess E. Weiss, *The Vestibule*; Martin Ebon, *The Evidence for Life After Death*; and Joel Martin and Patricia Romanowski, *We Don't Die -- George Anderson's Conversations with the Other Side*. All of these suffer by comparison with the biblical conception of death and its aftermath.

- (1) From *Life After Life*, by Raymond A. Moody, Jr. (New York: Bantam Books, 1976)

"At the present time, I know of approximately 150 cases of this phenomenon" (near-death experiences)" (p. 16)

"Despite the wide variation in the circumstances surrounding close calls with death and in the types of persons undergoing them, it remains true that there is a striking similarity among the accounts of the experiences themselves. In fact, the similarities among various reports are so great that one can easily pick out about fifteen separate elements which recur again and again in the mass of narratives that I have collected. On the basis of these points of likeness, let me now construct a brief, theoretically 'ideal' or 'complete' experience which embodies all of the common elements, in the order in which it is typical for them to occur.

A man is dying and, as he reaches the point of greatest physical distress, he hears himself pronounced dead by his doctor. He begins to hear an uncomfortable noise, a loud ringing or buzzing, and at the same time feels himself moving very rapidly through a long dark tunnel. After this, he suddenly finds himself outside of his own physical body, but still in the immediate physical environment, and he sees his own body from a distance, as though he is a spectator. He watches the resuscitation attempt from this unusual vantage point and is in a state of emotional upheaval.

After a while, he collects himself and becomes more accustomed to his odd condition. He notices that he still has a 'body', but one of a very different nature and with very different powers from the physical body he has left behind. Soon other things begin to happen. Others come to meet and to help him. He glimpses the spirits of relatives and friends who have already died, and a loving, warm spirit of a kind he has never encountered before -- a being of light -- appears before him. This being asks him a question, nonverbally, to make him evaluate his life and helps him along by showing him a panoramic, instantaneous playback of the major events of his life. At some point he finds himself approaching some sort of barrier or border, apparently representing the limit between earthly life and the next life. Yet, he finds that he must go back to earth, that the time for his death has not yet come. At this point he resists, for by now he is taken up with his experiences in the afterlife and does not want to return. He is overwhelmed by intense

feelings of joy, love, and peace. Despite his attitude, though, he somehow reunites with his physical body and lives.

Later he tries to tell others, but he has trouble doing so. In the first place, he can find no human words adequate to describe these unearthly episodes. He also finds that others scoff, so he stops telling other people. Still, the experience affects his life profoundly, especially his views about death and its relationship to life.

It is important to bear in mind that the above narrative is not meant to be a representation of any one person's experience. Rather, it is a 'model', a composite of the common elements found in the very many stories. I introduce it here only to give a preliminary, general idea of what a person who is dying may experience." (pp. 21-23)

"Even those who previously had some traditional conviction about the nature of the afterlife world seem to have moved away from it to some degree following their own brushes with death. In fact, in all the reports I have gathered, not one person has painted the mythological picture of what lies hereafter. No one has described the cartoonist's heaven of pearly gates, golden streets, and winged, harp-playing angels, nor a hell of flames and demons with pitchforks.

So, in most cases, the reward-punishment model of the afterlife is abandoned and disavowed, even by many who had been accustomed to thinking in those terms. They found, much to their amazement, that even when their most apparently awful and sinful deeds were made manifest before the being of light, the being responded not with anger and rage, but rather only with understanding, and even with humor . . . . In place of this old model, many seemed to have returned with a new model and a new understanding of the world beyond -- a vision which features not unilateral judgment, but rather cooperative development towards the ultimate end of self-realization." (pp. 97-98)

"Through all of my research, however, I have not heard a single reference to a heaven or hell anything like the customary picture to which we are exposed in this society." (p. 140)

"Rarely, someone in one of my audiences has proposed demonic explanations of near-death experiences, suggesting that the experiences were doubtless directed by inimical forces. As a response to such explanations, I can only say this: It seem to me that the best way of distinguishing between God-directed and Satan-directed experiences would be to see what the person involved does and says after his experience. God, I suppose, would try to get those to whom he appears to be loving and forgiving. Satan would presumably tell his servants to follow a course of hate and destruction. Manifestly, my subjects have come back with a renewed commitment to follow the former course and disavow the latter. In the light of all the machinations which a hypothetical demon would have to have carried out in order to delude his hapless victim (and to what purpose?), he certainly has failed miserably -- as far as I can tell -- to make persuasive emissaries for his program!"(p. 156)

(PROFESSOR'S NOTE: Could Satan's purpose be to convince these persons that the Bible is not true when it speaks of judgment, heaven, hell, and the need of salvation from sin and hell through Christ? Would this not be a

sufficient reason for the machinations that a demon would have to have carried out in order to delude his hapless victim?)

- (2) In 1969 Elisabeth Kubler-Ross came to national and eventually world attention through the publication of her book, *On Death and Dying* (New York: Macmillan, 1969). This work is filled with interviews with terminally-ill patients who express their reactions to and anticipations of dying. Her delineation of the five stages through which dying persons pass has become classic (denial, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance).

In a subsequent book, *Questions and Answers on Death and Dying* (New York: Macmillan, 1974), Kubler-Ross includes the following:

- Q. "On Sunday I was talking to a returned missionary and mentioned to her that I was going to attend a seminar on death and dying. She immediately asked if you were a 'Christian' and then went on to elaborate and say the only important thing was to know if the patient was 'ready' and knew the 'Lord'. I knew what she believes but I could only conjure a mental picture of someone running into each patient's room asking if they were 'ready to die'. How do you break through to these deeply religious people to make them see that there are more facets to dying than the one mentioned above?
- A. I do not regard these people as truly religious, because if they were really such good Christians, they would accept every human being as 'thy neighbor' and not judge them as good or bad depending on whether they were Christians or non-Christians.' (p. 161)
- Q. "In your work with the dying patient, have you noticed a difference between the Christian dying patient and the non-Christian as to how they accept death?
- A. We have worked with many more Christian patients than non-Christians. The significant variable is not what you believe, but how truly and genuinely you believe. People who have believed in reincarnation, or people from Eastern cultures and religions have often accepted death with unbelievable peace and equanimity even at a young age; whereas many of our Christian patients have had difficulties in their acceptance of death. Only the few true genuine religious people have accepted death with great peace and equanimity; but in our counseling we have seen very few of these people, because we are usually called for consultations to those patients who are troubled. I would say that about 95 percent of our patients that we have studied have been a little bit religious, but not genuine and authentic. They then have the additional concern about punishment after death, regrets and guilt about missed opportunities." (p. 162)
- Q. "In all your research on death, what is your personal belief of what happens after death?
- A. Before I started working with dying patients, I did not believe in a life after death. I now do believe in a life after death, beyond a shadow of a doubt." (pp. 166-167)
- Q. "Deep down do you believe that you are immortal?
- A. I believe that our bodies die but the spirit or soul is immortal." (p. 170)



- (3) From Martin Ebon's book, *The Evidence for Life After Death* (New York: New American Library, 1977), Ebon summarizes Kubler-Ross's findings concerning death. He writes:

"Among Ross' findings concerning death are:

1. Everyone knows the time of his or her own death.
2. We usually do not hear when someone very emotionally close to us is clearly telling us that he is going to die, and we miss an irreplaceable opportunity for a close communication with that person.
3. Most people who have died have not wanted to return here.
4. A person who has died once does not fear death anymore.
5. Everyone who dies is met by a loved one who has predeceased him.
6. Dying does not have to be a lonely, isolated experience, but can be deeply shared by others.
7. Dying is probably the high point and most beautiful experience of this life.
8. There are unseen, loving guides within two feet of us at all times so we never have to feel alone.
9. In the next dimension there are different concepts of time.
10. In the next life, no one judges us, but we judge ourselves." (pp. 41-42)

"In another interview, which Kubler-Ross gave to Kenneth L. Woodward for McCall's magazine (August, 1976), she told of a woman who for years had suffered from Hodgkin's disease and had several times been near death. Toward the end of their talk, this woman told Ross that, in the intensive care unit of a hospital, 'One afternoon a nurse saw that she was dying and rushed out of the room to summon help.' As Dr. Ross recites the case, this is what happened:

'Meanwhile, this woman felt herself float out of her body. In fact, she said she could look down and see how pale her face looked. Yet at the same time she felt absolutely wonderful. She had a great sense of peace and relief. The remarkable thing about this experience was that she was able to observe the doctors at work on her body. She heard what they said, which members of the team wanted to give up trying to revive her and which did not. Her recall of details was so acute that she was even able to repeat one of the jokes an attendant had cracked to relieve the tension. She wanted to tell them to relax, that it was okay. But her body showed no vital signs -- no respiration, no blood pressure, no brain wave activity. Finally, she was declared dead. Then, more than three hours later, she returned to her body and recovered. She managed to live eighteen months longer with no brain damage.'

"In the same interview, Dr. Ross told of the case of a young man in his twenties who was thrown out of the car, so that when the police arrive at the scene, they found him sprawled in the middle of the street. His right leg was severed, and he showed no vital signs whatever. He was pronounced dead on the way to the hospital. As the man recovered, nevertheless, Dr. Ross was able to discover from him that he had floated out of his body over the accident scene, had observed his own body 'minus one leg'. She added, 'You'd think he would have felt miserable, but he reports that he felt peaceful. He had the sense that his whole body was intact, including his missing leg.'

" . . . Ross told Woodward: 'What these near-death reports tells us about is only the first stage of life after death. I believe there are other stages . . . '

" . . . Eyebrows were raised at a San Diego seminary on holistic medicine when Ross confessed that she had asked three visiting 'spirit creatures' the night before what she should talk about. The visiting spirits had said, 'Tell then about us.' " (pp. 14-47)

Although Martin Ebon does not know whether we survive death, and does not much care for the varied descriptions of life after death, he encourages his readers to live and die as if they were immortal, since "the hypothesis of immortality remains the very best there is." (p. 173)

## B. The Nature of the Intermediate State

By the Intermediate state is meant the state or condition of human beings from the moment of their physical death until their resurrection and judgment.

### 1. The intermediate state of the unrighteous

In connection with the intermediate state of the unrighteous, there are two scriptural words that are relevant. They are *sheol*, שְׁאוֹל, and *hades*, ᾍδης.

The Hebrew word שְׁאוֹל is used 65 times in the Old Testament. It does not occur outside the OT, except once in the Jewish Elephantine papyri, where it means "grave". The A.V. translates it 31 times as "grave", 31 times as "hell", and three times as "pit".

When examined in context, שְׁאוֹל appears to have three basic meanings: (a) the grave, the state of physical death; (b) the place or state or realm to which wicked persons pass at physical death; (c) a great depth, as contrasted with a great height.

Most of the uses appear to fall into the first category of meaning -- the grave, the state of physical death. Three instances of this usage include:

Genesis 42:38 -- "But Jacob said, 'My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he alone is left. If harm shall befall him on the journey you are taking, then you will bring my gray hair down to שְׁאוֹל in sorrow.' "

Psalms 49:13-15 -- "This is the way of those who are foolish,  
And of those after them who approve their words. Selah.  
As sheep they are appointed for שְׁאוֹל ;  
Death shall be their shepherd;  
And the upright shall rule over them in the morning;  
And their form shall be for שְׁאוֹל to consume,  
So that they have no habitation.  
But God will redeem my soul from the power of שְׁאוֹל ;  
For He will receive me. Selah."

Hosea 13:14 -- "I will ransom them from the power of שְׁאוֹל ;  
I will redeem them from death.  
O Death, where are your thorns?  
O שְׁאוֹל where is your sting?  
Compassion will be hidden from My sight."

A few uses fall into the second category of meaning -- the place or state or realm to which wicked persons pass at physical death:

Psalms 9:17 -- "The wicked will turn to שְׁאוֹל ,  
Even all the nations who forget God."

Albert Barnes, commenting on this verse in his *Notes of the Old Testament* says:

"It is clear (a) that this cannot be understood here as referring to the grave in its ordinary sense, for the righteous will be as certainly consigned to the grave, or will as certainly die, as the wicked; (b) that it cannot refer to the invisible world, the abodes of the dead, in the ordinary sense of the term -- for it is as true that the righteous will enter that world as that sinners will. There must be some sense, in which the word is used here, different from that of the grave, or differently merely from death as such. This sense can

be only one of two -- either (1) that the author means that they will be cut off by a sudden and violent death, considered as a calamity or as a punishment; or (2) that he regarded the Sheol mentioned here as a place of punishment . . . the spirit of the passage seem to demand to idea that the wicked referred to here would be consigned to a place of punishment, that they would be cut off wicked persons, and treated accordingly. This interpretation is strengthened by the other member of the parallelism, where it is said, 'and all the nations that forget God;' since it is no more true that the nations 'that forgot God' will be 'turned into the grave or the world of departed spirits,' than it is that the nations that serve and obey him will. It seem to me, therefore, that this is one of the passages in which it is clear that the word Sheol had connected with it the idea of punishment beyond the grave -- of a region where the wicked would be treated according to their deserts, and in a manner different from the treatment of the righteous."

Proverbs 23:13-14 -- "Do not hold back discipline from the child,  
Although you beat him with the rod, he will not die.  
You shall beat him with the rod,  
And deliver his soul from **שְׁאוֹל**."

The *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* in its article on **שְׁאוֹל** says that the word as it is used here could refer either to deliverance from future punishment or to deliverance from untimely death.

The third category of meaning -- a great depth, as contrasted with a great height -- is represented by three instances:

Psalms 139:8 -- "If I ascend to the heaven, Thou art there;  
If I make my bed in **שְׁאוֹל**, behold, Thou art there."  
Job 11:7-8 -- "Can you discover the depths of God?  
Can you discover the limits of the Almighty?  
They are high as the heavens, what can you do?  
Deeper than **שְׁאוֹל**, what can you know?"  
Amos 9:2-3 -- "Though they (the wicked Israelites) dig into **שְׁאוֹל**  
From there shall My hand take them;  
And though they ascend to heaven,  
From there will I bring them down.  
And though they hide on the summit of Carmel,  
I will search them out and take them from there;  
And though they conceal themselves from My sight on the  
floor of the sea,  
From there I will command the serpent and it will bite them."

There are three uses of **שְׁאוֹל** that have been suggested as problematic:

Psalms 6:5 -- "For there is no mention of Thee in death;  
In **שְׁאוֹל** who will give Thee thanks?"  
Ecclesiastes 9:10 -- "Whatever your hand finds to do, verily, do it with all your might; for  
there is no activity or planning or wisdom In **שְׁאוֹל** where you are  
going."

Isaiah 38:18-19 -- "For לֹאֵשׁ cannot thank Thee,  
Death cannot praise Thee;  
Those who go down to the pit (בֹּרַיִם) cannot hope for Thy faithfulness.  
It is the living who give thanks to Thee, as I do today;  
A father tells his Sons about Thy faithfulness."

Of course, if לֹאֵשׁ is being used in the first sense -- the grave, the state of physical death -- the problem in all three of these uses disappears. Physically-dead bodies cannot mention God, or carry on any activity, or give praise to God.

The Greek word ἄδης is used 10 times in the New Testament. The A.V. translates it all ten times as "hell". In the interests of thoroughness, all ten of these uses follow.

Matthew 11:23-24 -- "And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You shall descend to ἄδης ; for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day. Nevertheless I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for you." (The parallel is found in Luke 10:15 -- "And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will be brought down ἄδης!")

Here we find two ideas: Capernaum is to be humiliated and brought down to destruction, and its inhabitants are to be left in a miserable state of anticipation of coming judgment for their continuance in sin and unbelief in the face of Christ's teachings and miracles. In this usage ἄδης could refer simply to destruction, or to a place or condition to which wicked men are brought.

Matthew 16:18 -- "And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of ἄδης shall not overpower it."

This could mean that ἄδης cannot hold the Church in the state of physical death. Because Christ has gained the victory over death the Church will one day burst the bonds of death and break out through the gates of ἄδης. Or it could mean that ἄδης cannot swallow up the Church. Because of Christ's redemption, the members of Christ's Church are assured that they will never be swallowed up by ἄδης (seen as the place to which wicked persons pass at death).

Acts 2:22-32 -- "Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know -- this Man, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. And God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power. For David says of Him,

'I was always beholding the Lord in my presence;  
For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken.  
Therefore my heart was glad and my tongue exulted;  
Moreover my flesh also will abide in hope;  
Because Thou wilt not abandon my soul to ἄδης,  
Nor allow Thy Holy One to undergo decay.  
Thou hast made known to me the ways of life;  
Thou wilt make me full of gladness with Thy presence.'

Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. And so, because he was a prophet, and knew that God had sworn to him with an oath to seat one of his descendants upon his throne, he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that He was neither abandoned to c6fl5 , nor did His flesh suffer decay. This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses.'

The A.V. translates verses 27 and 31 slightly differently. Verse 27 reads: 'Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.' And verse 31 reads: 'He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.' As mentioned above, the NASB translates these verses, 'Because Thou wilt not abandon my soul Hades, Nor allow Thy Holy One to undergo decay'; and 'He was neither abandoned to Hades, nor did His flesh suffer decay.'

Now although the difference in wording is only slight, the difference in meaning is significant. To leave Christ's soul in ᾠδης is quite different from abandoning Christ's soul to ᾠδης. In the former, Christ's soul is in ᾠδης and He is assured that He will not be left there; in the latter, Christ's soul is not in ᾠδης, and He is assured that He will not be abandoned to ᾠδης. The NASB translation fits the parallelism of verses 27 and 31 much more satisfactorily than the A.V. translation, and also accords with the Hebrew of Psalm 16:10 (of which verse 27 is a quotation).

The Hebrew text of Psalm 16:10 reads as follows: 'Because you will not abandon my soul to SHEOL'. This rendering (the NASB) makes the two clauses parallel in force: Christ's soul was not permitted to experience ᾠδης; Christ's body was not permitted to experience corruption. In this usage, ᾠδης does not mean death or the grave, for Christ certainly died and was buried; it does not mean a general place or state to which disembodied spirits go at death, for Christ certainly became disembodied at death; it must mean the place to which wicked disembodied spirits go at death. Christ is assured that He will not be abandoned to ᾠδης, the place of wicked disembodied spirits, and that He will not experience physical corruption.

Revelation 1:18 -- "and the living one; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of ᾠδης."

If ᾠδης and death are understood to refer to two realms (one pertaining to the disembodied souls/spirits of the (wicked) dead, and the other pertaining to the bodies of the dead), then the keys that Christ holds could be understood to refer to Christ's authority to open these two realms at the resurrection (in this case, of the unjust).

Revelation 6:8 -- "And I looked, and behold, an ashen horse; and he who sat on it had the name Death; and ᾠδης was following with him. And authority was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence by the wild beasts of the earth."

Death is personified here, and ᾠδης also seems to be personified. During the period represented, when a temporal expression of the wrath of God is poured out on the inhabitants of the world, Death and ᾠδης are able to

kill one-fourth of the earth's inhabitants. Are these all wicked persons? If this Scripture is placed beside Matthew 16:18, so that it is seen that the gates of ἅδης cannot prevail over the members of Christ's Church, then Death and ἅδης could here be seen as swallowing up only wicked persons.

Revelation 20:13-14 -- "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and ἅδης gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. And death and ἅδης were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire."

It is important to note that those who are judged at this "white throne" judgment are unsaved. They are the wicked dead, whose names are not written in the book of life. The combination of the sea, death, and ἅδης delivering up their dead would appear to be a reference to the reuniting of bodies and disembodied spirits at the resurrection. Out of the sea and the graves on land the bodies of the wicked dead are reconstituted and made alive, and out of ἅδης come the disembodied souls/spirits of the wicked dead; their reunited bodies and souls/spirits are judged and cast into the lake of fire.

Luke 16:19-31 -- "Now there was a certain rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, gaily living in splendor every day. And a certain poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores, and longing to be fed with the crumbs which were falling from the rich man's table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores. Now it came about that the poor man died and he was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried. And in ἅδης he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried out and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue; for I am in agony in this flame.' But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great chasm fixed, in order that those who wish to come over from here to you may not be able, and that none may cross over from there to us.' And he said, 'Then I beg you, Father, that you send him to my father's house -- for I have five brothers -- that he may warn them, lest they also come to this place of torment.' But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.' But he said, 'No, Father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!'" But he said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone rises from the dead.'"

Since this is the classic passage on the intermediate state, it deserves extended treatment.

#### Analysis of Luke 16:19-31

- (a) What is the genre of this discourse? Is it fiction? If fiction, is it a parable, an allegory, or an illustrative story? Or is it non-fiction?

It appears to have some characteristic elements of parabolic teaching, in that the characters could be representative and the truth clearly illustrated. And yet if it is parabolic, it is the only such instance in the Gospels in which a character is given a proper name. It therefore seems to have both parabolic and non-fictional elements.

- (b) What in the truth-value of this discourse for knowledge concerning the intermediate state?

Part of the answer depends on our answer to the first question, that regarding genre. And yet we must ask a rather pointed question: Since very little is revealed elsewhere about the nature of the intermediate state, and since this discourse provides many details about human experience after physical death (something we could not know about except by divine revelation), we must ask whether Jesus would knowingly have misled His hearers about the intermediate state if He knew that what He was saying was not true. Thus the important question is not what is the genre of this discourse, but rather was Jesus communicating correct or erroneous ideas about the nature of the intermediate state (whether by parable, allegory, illustration, or nonfictional account). And it does not answer this question to say that any error of interpretation springs from the mind of the one who wishes to import into the discussion what Jesus never intended to teach, since the only information as to Jesus' intention is found in the discourse itself, and it is a straightforward account of what happened to two men at death.

- (c) What is the character of the two men?

We are told that one man was rich, dressed splendidly, and lived gaily and splendidly every day. Although he was a Jew and had Moses and the Prophets, he apparently did not listen to them, so far as repentance of sin and obedience in righteousness was concerned; and he was not a righteous man, as witnessed by the fact that he went to ᾠδης. The other man, Lazarus, was poor, apparently a cripple, covered with sores, and reduced to beggary. He apparently was also a Jew and a righteous man, as witnessed by the fact that he went to heaven.

- (d) What is the nature of physical death?

We are told that the poor man, Lazarus, died and was carried away by the angels to heaven, to Abraham's side or bosom. His body was probably buried in a pauper's grave, or burned in the Valley of Hinnom with the trash. The rich man died, his body was buried, probably in a richly ornamented tomb hewn out of stone, and his soul/spirit went into ᾠδης. Thus both men became disembodied in the experience of physical death.

In their disembodied state both men were conscious of their condition and their surroundings, could feel, think, and speak.

- (e) What is the nature of the two places or states or realm into which the two men went?

Lazarus went to heaven, where Abraham was. He was carried there by angels and comforted, especially in view of his previous sufferings during his earthly life. The rich man went to ᾠδης. In this passage we are told that in ᾠδης he was in torment (verse 23), in agony in "this flame" (verse 24), in agony (verse 25), and in a place of torment (verse 28).

- (f) Since these two men were in a disembodied state, how are we to interpret the physical term used in the account?

The rich man had no physical body (he was disembodied); yet he lifted up his eyes, was in torment, saw Abraham and Lazarus, cried out, asked that Lazarus be sent, so that "he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool



off my tongue", was "in agony in this flame", and was in agony. These were not physical eyes, finger, tongue or flame Remember, he was disembodied!

Perhaps it would help to draw a parallel from the figure of speech called anthropomorphism as applied to God. When we read of God as having an outstretched arm and a mighty hand, as having eyes that run to and fro throughout the earth, as being seated in heaven, or as using the earth as His footstool, we understand that since God is incorporeal (i.e., He does not have a physical body), these expressions are speaking of functions performed by human beings through physical organs, but by God through non-physical powers. By way of analogy, the language employed in this passage can be understood to be speaking of functions that disembodied souls/spirits perform in the spirit world which are spoken of in term appropriate to the physical world.

Another possible explanation is that those who have recently experienced physical death may persist (for a time) thinking in and using physical term to express non-physical functions in their disembodied existence.

- (g) How do we know that these are intermediate and not final states?

If Jesus was speaking of final states, wouldn't this clear up all the problem of physical language, since souls/spirits are re-embodied in these states?

Since the final states begin following resurrection and final judgment, there is no more opportunity for the unrighteous to repent, once the final state has begun. In this account, however, we find the rich man begging Abraham to send Lazarus to his father's house in order to persuade his five living brothers to repent and avoid ᾠδης. Since in this account repentance is still envisioned as a possibility, we know that our Lord must have been speaking of the intermediate state and not of the final state.

- (h) Is human destiny fixed at the final Judgment or at death?

In this passage we are told that there is a great chasm fixed between heaven and ᾠδης, and that those who may wish to cross over are not able to do so. Although the rich man suggests that human beings who have passed from earth to heaven in the experience of physical death may be able to return to earth, there is no record (except in the case of Christ) of anyone every having done this. (This assertion is not contradicted by the appearance in a vision of Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration, as recorded in Matthew 17, Mark 9, and Luke 9, since appearance in a vision is not the same as coming from heaven to earth).

As far as human beings who have passed from earth to ᾠδης being able to cross over from ᾠδης to heaven, this passage places an unbridgeable chasm between these two places, and thus fixes human destiny at physical death. And since those who are in ᾠδης will be cast into the lake of fire, the eternal destiny of the wicked is fixed at physical death. The accepted time of salvation is now, during this present life!

Summary: One meaning of <sup>לשוא</sup> is that of the place or condition to which the wicked dead, in their disembodied state, pass at physical death. In the New Testament, ᾠδης is the place or state in which the wicked dead remain in a disembodied state in torment until the resurrection of the unjust and the final judgment, at which time they come forth from ᾠδης to be reunited with their bodies, judged, and cast into the lake of fire.

## APPENDIX 1: SHEOL/HADES DURING THE OLD TESTAMENT PERIOD

For a number of years the view has been widely disseminated that during the Old Testament period SHEOL/HADES was comprised of two compartments: one a Paradise of bliss and the other a Hell of misery; and that SHEOL/HADES was a rather dark and dismal place in the depths of the earth in which disembodied spirits were imprisoned.

Since this view conflicts with what has been represented as the scriptural conception of ᾗδης, we must ask how such a view of ᾗδης arose. Let us note two representative authorities on the question.

In the article on HADES in M'CIntock and Strong's *Cyclopaedia of Biblical Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature* the following statement appears:

The Greeks, however, in process of time abandoned this use of Hades (as the personal designation of Pluto, the invisible-making deity), and when the Greek Scriptures were written the word was scarcely ever applied except to the place of the departed. In the classical writers, therefore, it is used to denote Orcus, of the Infernal regions. . . .

Two or three points stand out prominently in the views entertained by the ancients respecting Hades: first, that it was the common receptacle of departed spirits, of good as well as bad; second, that it was divided into two compartments, the one containing an Elysium of bliss for the good, the other a Tartarus of sorrow and punishment for the wicked; and thirdly, that in respect to its locality, it lay under ground, in the mid-regions of the earth.

This statement gives the meaning of ᾗδης as it was employed by classical Greek writers. As such, it reflects their pagan religious beliefs as well as their speculative thought concerning death.

In the entry under ᾗδης in Grimm's *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, translated, revised, and enlarged by Joseph Henry Thayer (a widely used lexicon of New Testament Greek), the following appears:

1. a proper name, Hades, Pluto, the god of the lower regions; so in Homer always. 2. an appellative, Orcus, the nether world, the realm of the dead. In the Septuagint the Hebrew SHEOL is almost always rendered by this word (once by THANATOS, II Samuel 22:6); it denotes, therefore, in biblical Greek Orcus, the infernal regions, a dark. . . and dismal place . . . in the very depths of the earth . . . the common receptacle of disembodied spirits . . . Metaphorically, . . . to go or be thrust down into the depth of misery and disgrace.

The reasoning this lexicon employs in the phrase "it denotes, therefore, in biblical Greek . . ." is astounding! Think of the logic: Because HADES meant such and such a thing in the classical pagan Greek writers, and because HADES is used by the New Testament writers, therefore HADES has the same meaning in the New Testament as it had in pagan Greek mythology! If such an assertion were not in print, it would be incredible!!

It is admittedly disconcerting for a person who has been brought up to accept uncritically a particular view as scriptural truth, only to discover later that that view is nothing less than a wholesale acceptance of pagan Greek mythology and an imposition of that mythology upon the teaching of Scripture. However, once that person discovers that such is indeed the case,

he or she must be willing to reconsider and modify or change his or her view, no matter how difficult the adjustment.

## APPENDIX 2: CHRIST'S ALLEGED DESCENT INTO HADES

For some time the view has been disseminated that during the time between His death and resurrection, Christ descended to the Paradise compartment of HADES, unlocked its gates, brought out with Him all of the souls/spirits of the righteous dead imprisoned there, and placed them in the Paradise of the third heaven.

Since the view is often based on a few passages in the New Testament, we should note these passages.

Matthew 27:52-53 -- "and the tombs were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the tombs after His resurrection they entered the holy city and appeared to many."

It should be noted that there is nothing in this reference to indicate that this was a general resurrection of Old Testament saints, but only a local phenomenon, in the vicinity of Jerusalem. In addition, it does not say that all of the saints in the vicinity of Jerusalem were raised, but "many" of them. Further, there is no hint here that these saints were raised because of an alleged descent into ᾠδης, or because of any preaching on the part of Christ to those who were (allegedly) there. Finally, if this passage refers to Christ's descent into ᾠδης, it proves too much, since in the descent into hades view it is the souls of the Old Testament saints that are freed from hades and taken to heaven by Christ; there is no resurrection of bodies! (The resurrection of Old Testament saints comes later, at Christ's Second Coming).

Ephesians 4:8-10 -- "Therefore it says, When He ascended on high, He led captive a host of captives, and He gave gifts to men. (Now this expression, 'He ascended,' what does it mean except that He also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)"

Two clauses are particularly stressed in support of the descent into hades view: "He led captivity captive" (A.V.), or "He led captive a host of captives" (NASB); and "He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth" (A.V.), or "He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth." (NASB) The first clause is a quotation from Psalm 68:18. This may simply be understood as teaching that Christ broke the slave-hold of sin over His people and bound them as captives to Himself; or it may be understood as teaching that Christ broke the bondage of death and made death His own captive.

The second clause, "He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth," is linked to Isaiah 61:1 -- "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me . . . he hath sent me . . . to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound." This is quoted by Christ in Luke 4:18. This clause really turns on the word "lower", as far as this view is concerned. However, if the contrast is not between Christ's descending to ᾠδης and then ascending to heaven, but between His descending to earth (which is certainly lower relative to His pre-incarnate state in heaven) and His subsequent ascending into heaven, then the use of this Scripture to support the view collapses. Again, if the adherents of this view want to press "the lower parts of the earth" idea, do they really want to locate the "Paradise compartment of Hades" in the interior of the planet earth?

The proclamation of liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound could surely apply to the marvelous deliverance from the guilt, penalty, bondage, and eventual presence of sin which every child of God experiences, rather than to the opening of the gates of ᾗδης, to let out the Old Testament saints.

I Peter 3:11-20 -- "For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, in order that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison, who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water."

Usually quoted together with this passage is I Peter 4:6 -- "For the gospel has for this purpose been preached even to those who are dead, that though they are judged in the flesh as men, they live in the spirit according to the will of God."

Several interpretations of these passages have been suggested:

- (1) Christ went to HADES to preach the gospel to the disembodied saints in the Paradise compartment,
- (2) Christ went to HADES to preach the gospel to the disembodied sinners in the Hell compartment (thereby giving them a second chance)
- (3) Christ went to HADES to preach the gospel to the disembodied sinners in the Hell compartment who never had a first chance
- (4) Christ went to HADES to announce the condemnation of the disembodied sinners in the Hell compartment

However, at best the interpretation would appear to be that Christ did not go to ᾗδης at all ("Thou wilt not abandon my soul to ᾗδης ") but rather that He preached by the Spirit through Noah ("a preacher of righteousness") the gospel of salvation to the unsaved people who were disobedient to the gospel in the time immediately preceding the Flood, those very people who are now in prison (the prison of ᾗδης).

Incidentally, the *New Scofield Reference Bible*, in a footnote on I Peter 3:19, makes the following statement: "The theory that the Lord Jesus, after His crucifixion, preached to the unsaved dead in hades and gave them a second chance is not found in Scripture." Since I Peter 3 speaks of preaching to disobedient persons preceding the Flood, and since I Peter 4 speaks of the preaching of the gospel, this statement is significant, referring as it does to the unsaved dead.

I Peter 3 would therefore best be understood to teach that Christ preached the gospel through Noah to Noah's contemporaries, who rejected Noah's preaching and are now in the prison of ᾗδης. I Peter 4 would best be understood to teach that the gospel was preached in time past to those who have since died, in order that their flesh (sinful nature) might be judged and condemned, and that their spirit might be made alive. Thus I Peter 4 says nothing about ᾗδης.

One strand of development of the descent into hades view is that of a particular understanding of the abovementioned Scriptures; the other strand is

found in speculative thought in the history of doctrine. The idea of Christ descending to hades appears in the writings of several Church Fathers.

Eusebius of Caesarea mentions it. Clement of Alexandria extended the purpose of the descent to include, not only the saints, martyrs, and prophets of the Old Testament, but all of the heathen as well. Clement held that all men would have opportunity to repent, right up to the day of Judgment. Origen wrote, "We say . . . that His (i.e., Christ's) soul, stripped of the body, did there hold converse with other souls . . . that He might there convert those who were capable of instruction, or were otherwise known to Him fit for it." Origen held that eventually there would be a restitution of all things, and that even Satan would be saved! The descent into hades view also appears in the writings of Cyril of Jerusalem, Athanasius, Ambrose, and Jerome. Augustine, however, rejected the view and called it a heresy.

During the middle ages the view dominated the great scholastic writers, and was frequently used to support the dogma of purgatory. Generally speaking, the leaders of the Reformation rejected the view, and for three reasons: (1) it was regarded as a traditional, not a scriptural belief; (2) it appeared to give so support to the Roman Catholic view of purgatory; and (3) it appeared late in the creeds of the Church.

In fact, the phrase "He descended into hell" did not appear in the accepted version of the Apostles' Creed of A.D. 150, or in that of A.D. 350. Not until AD. 700 did the phrase appear in the accepted version.

As a result, most of the confessions and catechise of the Reformed churches ignored the descend into hades view. The Roman Catholic church maintained the article; and gradually a minority of Anglicans and Lutherans came to accept it.

In the twentieth century the view has again become widespread. However, among churches that have retained the clause "He descended into hell" in the Apostles' Creed, a number have understood this to mean, not that Christ went down into the prison of HADES to deliver the Old Testament saints, but rather that He continued for a time under the power of death.

Because of the tendency to adopt pagan Greek mythology as background to this view, and because of the tendency toward universal salvation which has at times accompanied this view, the "Descent into Hades" view would probably be better dropped from evangelical Christian doctrine.

## 2. The intermediate state of the righteous

In connection with the intermediate state of the righteous, there are two scriptural words that are relevant. They are παράδεισος and οὐρανός.

The word παράδεισος is used three times in the New Testament. The A.V. does not translate the word, but transliterates it each of the three items.

Luke 23:42-43 -- "And he was saying, 'Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!' And He said to him, 'Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in παράδεισος.' "

If we reject the pagan Greek mythological concept of ἔδης with its Elysium of bliss and its Tartarus of misery, and if we refuse to identify the Paradise of Scripture with the Elysium section of the pagan Greek c?7 5 , then we are free to understand παράδεισος, for what it really is -- a word that

comes from Persian and means a garden or park, and that is used in the New Testament as a figure for heaven, the garden of God. **παράδεισος** is heaven, the abode of God, of the angels, and of the blessed. Just as Enoch was caught up to God, to the third heaven, to **παράδεισος**; so when Jesus commended His spirit into the Father's hands and breathed His last, His soul/ spirit passed into heaven, to **παράδεισος**, and the repentant thief's soul/spirit with Him.

II Corinthians 12:2-4 -- "I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago -- whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, God knows -- such a man was caught up to the third heaven. And I know how such a man -- whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, God knows -- was caught up into **παράδεισος**, and heard inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak.

This concept of the "third heaven" reflects a common Jewish mode of thought. The first heaven was the air above the ground, the atmosphere in which the birds flew. The second heaven was the sky in which the sun, moon, planets, comets, and stars moved. the third heaven was the abode of God, the angels, and the blessed. In this passage Paul equates **παράδεισος** with the third heaven.

Revelation 2:7 -- "He who has an ear, let hi. hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the **παράδεισος** of God.

This tree of life, which first appeared in the Garden of Eden, appears again in the holy city, the New Jerusalem (Revelation 22:2, 19). Also in the New Jerusalem is found the throne of God and of the Lamb. Since God makes His abode in the New Jerusalem, the third heaven is located in the holy city. Since the tree of life is said to be in **παράδεισος** and in the New Jerusalem (which, following the creation of the new heavens and the new earth, comes down out of the sky to earth), and since the New Jerusalem will be the third heaven, then **παράδεισος**, the New Jerusalem, and the third heaven will be one and the same place. However, since this occurs after the Second Coning of Christ, it would not appear to have any direct bearing on the nature of the intermediate state.

The word **οὐρανός** is used 284 tines in the New Testament. The A.V. translates this word 268 tines as "heaven", 10 tines as "air", five tines as "sky", and once as "heavenly".

Although it would be interesting (and doubtless profitable) to examine all of the uses of **οὐρανός**, we will note merely three.

Philippians 1:21-24 -- "For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I am to live on in the flesh, this will mean fruitful labor for ne; and I do not know which to choose. But I an hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better; yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake."

Now it may have been noticed that the word **οὐρανός** is not used in this passage. However, Philippians 3:20 states, "For our citizenship is in **οὐρανός**, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;" Here we learn that at the present time, Jesus Christ is in **οὐρανός**.

At His coming He will descend from οὐρανός. When Paul therefore says that he has a desire to depart and to be with Christ, he is saying that he desires to be with Christ in οὐρανός. To depart from the flesh in this passage means to depart from the body, to depart from this present life. His statements that to die is gain, and to be with Christ is far better, suggest all sorts of positive, encouraging, exciting ideas about the intermediate state of the righteous!

II Corinthians 5:1-9 -- "For we know that If the earthly tent which is our house Is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the οὐρανοῖς. For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from οὐρανός; inasmuch as we, having put it on, shall not be found naked. For indeed while we are In this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed, but to be clothed, in order that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. Now he who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge. Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord -- for we walk by faith, not by sight -- we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord. Therefore also we have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him."

Here we learn that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord in οὐρανός. At physical death, the union between the soul/spirit and the body is dissolved, and the soul/spirit passes into the intermediate state. For the one trusting in Christ, physical death means that the soul/ spirit passes into heaven (the third heaven) where Christ is present, both in His divine and His human nature. For the believer, physical death is the portal into οὐρανός.

John 14:1-6 -- " 'Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way where I am going.' Thomas said to Him, 'Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?' Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.' "

Again, this passage does not employ the word οὐρανός, yet it clearly refers to οὐρανός in the sense of the third heaven (the abode of God) under the expression "My Father's house". In this passage Jesus was attempting to comfort His disciples and to answer (in a very general way, without getting into details) some of their questions. Where was Jesus going? How was He going to get there? And what was the place like where He was going? One outstanding evangelist and Bible teacher has suggested that Jesus answered these very questions by His assertion in verse 6. What is the way to οὐρανός? Jesus is the way, through faith in Him and His redemption! Where is οὐρανός? Where Jesus is, 'tis heaven there! And what is οὐρανός like? It is like Jesus! He is the life of οὐρανός . Heaven is filled with His light, His truth, His goodness, His beauty. And apparently this is all that His disciples need to know about οὐρανός!

### C. The Nature of the Final States

By the final state is meant the state or condition of human beings following their resurrection and final judgment and continuing on unendingly.

#### 1. The final state of the unrighteous

In the Old Testament the final state of the unrighteous is difficult to distinguish from their intermediate state. In the case of the wicked, <sup>ל</sup>שׂאול would appear to include both states.

In the New Testament the final state of the unrighteous is represented mainly by the Greek word γέεννα. It is used 12 times in the New Testament. The A.V. translates it nine times as "hell" and three times as "hell fire". The word γέεννα is really a transliteration of the Aramaic word GEHINOM, which in turn is derived from the Hebrew GE-HINOM. GEHINOM is a localized word, and was given to the Wadi er-rababi on the south side of Jerusalem. Jeremiah had uttered threats of divine judgment over this valley in Jeremiah 7:32 and 19:6. In 7:32 he wrote: "Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that it shall no more be called Topheth, nor The Valley of the Son of Hinnom, but The valley of slaughter; for they shall bury in Topheth, till there be no place." And in 19:6 he wrote: Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that this place shall no more be called Topheth, not The Valley of the son of Hinnom, but The Valley of Slaughter."

Because of the judgment pronounced over the valley of Hinnom, the place came to be associated in apocryphal literature with the fire of the last judgment; thus GE-HINOM came to be associated with the eschatological fire of hell. Since the Greek word γέεννα was a transliteration of a localized word used by the Jews, it is not found in classical Greek, nor in the Septuagint, nor in Josephus or Philo (these last two are a bit surprising).

All 12 uses of γέεννα follow.

Matthew 5:21-22 -- "You have heard that the ancients were told, 'You shall not commit murder' and 'Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.' But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever shall say to his brother, 'Raca', shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever shall say, 'You fool', shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery γέεννα." (τὴν γέενναν τοῦ πυρός.)

The emphasis here appears to be on punishment consequent to God's Judgment of wickedness.

Matthew 5:29-30 -- "And if your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out, and throw it from you; for it is better for you that one of the parts of your body perish, than for your whole body to be thrown into γέεννα. And if your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off, and throw it from you; for it is better for you that one of the parts of your body perish, than for you whole body to go into γέεννα."

Here γέεννα is portrayed as a place for offenders against God, a place that receives the whole person, including his or her physical body.



Matthew 10:28 -- "And do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in γέεννα." Here again, γέεννα is a place in which both soul and body are destroyed, a place which is more to be avoided than physical death itself!

Matthew 18:9 -- "And if your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out, and throw it from you. it is better for you to enter life with one eye, than having two eyes, to be cast into the fiery γέεννα." (τὴν γέενναν τοῦ πυρός.)

This is quite similar to Matthew 5:29. It is interesting to note that Jesus repeated His teachings at times.

Matthew 23:15, 33 -- "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel about on sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make hi. twice as much a son of γέεννα as yourselves."

"You serpents, you brood of vipers, you shall you escape the sentence of γέεννα?"

In these two uses γέεννα appears to have two related meanings. On the one hand, γέεννα is associated with wickedness, with hypocrisy, insincerity, moral perversity, and self-righteousness. On the other hand, γέεννα is associated with condemnatory judgment. Connecting the two ideas, γέεννα means condemnatory judgment upon the wicked.

Mark 9:43, 45, 47 -- "And if your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life crippled, than having your two hands, to go into γέεννα, into the unquenchable fire." (τὸ πῦρ τὸ ἄσβεστον.)

"And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame, than having your two feet, to be cast into γέεννα."

"And if your eye causes you to stumble, cast it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes, to be cast into γέεννα."

These references are quite similar to Matthew 5:29-30 and 18:9. However, they add one idea: that of the fire which never shall be quenched. In view of the fact that both soul and body are cast into γέεννα, this addition introduces a genuine element of terror into the meaning of γέεννα!

Luke 12:4-5 -- "And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will warn you whom to fear: fear the One who after He has killed has authority to cast into γέεννα; yes, I tell you, fear Him!"

This usage appears to be a parallel to Matthew 10:28.

James 3:6 -- "And the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by γέεννα."

Here the moral wickedness and perversity associated with γέεννα appear to be in view, with Satan as the agent who with that perversity sets the tongue on fire. Of course, the association of fire with γέεννα has already been noticed.

Having noted all of the uses of γέεννα in the New Testament, what are we able to conclude from a study of its usage in context? It would appear that we can say that γέεννα is a place of condemnation and terrible punishment, into which the wicked, following the reunion of their physical bodies and disembodied souls/spirits, will be cast, there to remain forever.

In addition to these instances of the use of γέεννα, there are some other Scriptures and terms that speak of the final state of the unrighteous. Let us note the following:

Revelation 20:11-15 -- "And I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. (ἡ λίμνη τοῦ πυρός) And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."

Those who previously died, whose souls/spirits are released from ᾠδης to be reunited to their resurrected physical bodies, are brought before God's great white throne, their names are found to be missing from the pages of the book of life, they are judged on the basis of their works (which suggests degrees of punishment commensurate with the heinousness of their sins), and are cast into the lake of fire, thus experiencing a living death, called the second death.

Matthew 25:31-34, 41, 46 -- "But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. And all the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; and He will put the sheep on His right and the goats on the left. Then the king will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world . . . . Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire (τὸ πῦρ τὸ αἰώνιον) which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;' . . . And these will go away into eternal punishment (κόλασιν αἰώνιον), but the righteous into eternal life.

On the basis of their response to Christ and His message, demonstrated by their attitude toward and treatment of His disciples, the wicked are sent into eternal punishment, characterized by eternal fire. Again, this is connected with God's throne of judgment.

Matthew 8:11-12 -- "And I say to you, that many shall come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven; but the sons of the kingdom shall be cast out into the outer darkness; (εἰς τὸ σκότος τὸ ἐξώτερον) in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (ὁ κλαυθμὸς καὶ ὁ βρυγμὸς τῶν ὀδόντων)

Expressions similar to these may be found in Matthew 22:13 and 25:30. But what do they imply?

"Outer darkness" seem to imply at least two things. First, the wicked will be cast outside, away from the center of blessedness and bliss, away from comfort and peace, away from joy and delight, far away from the realm where God manifests His presence in blessing and gracious favor and approval. Second, "darkness" implies the absence of light: the absence of righteousness and goodness and the presence of wickedness and evil. In this realm of outer darkness, the wicked will weep in frustration and anger, and will clench and gnash and grind their teeth in remorse and pain and fury. What a horrible destiny!

Matthew 13:40-42 -- "Therefore just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire (κάμινον τοῦ πυρός); in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

The place of punishment is here compared to a furnace of fire (or fiery furnace) in which counterfeit wheat is burned up. That this metaphor is to be taken seriously is shown by the mention of weeping and gnashing of teeth in that place on the part of the people represented by the figure of false wheat.

Matthew 13:47-50 -- "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet cast into the sea, and gathering fish of every kind; and when it was filled, they drew it up on the beach; and they sat down, and gathered the good fish into containers, but the bad they threw away. So it will be at the end of the age; the angels shall go forth and take out the wicked from among the righteous, and will cast them into the furnace of fire (τὴν κάμινον τοῦ πυρός); there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Jude 4, 12-13 -- "For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ . . . . These men are those who are hidden reefs in your love feast. when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted; wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam; wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever."

This reference to the "blackness of darkness" (ὁ ζόφος τοῦ σκότους) suggests that the wicked will be a vast distance from the realm where all is light and beauty and joy. Think of it! Never a ray of sunshine (or even reflected sunshine) will ever pierce that gloom or illuminate the dark corners of that horrific place; the blackness of stygian darkness will forever fill that God-forsaken hell!

Revelation 14:9-11 -- "And another angel, a third one, followed them, saying with a loud voice, 'If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or upon his head, he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment

goes up forever and ever; and they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.' "

Here we are told that those who receive the mark of this personage and worship him and his image will be "tormented with fire and sulphur" (βασανισθήσεται ἐν πυρὶ καὶ θείῳ). And the smoke of this just torment is said to go up day and night without rest or respite for ever and ever! Such a horrific scene of human suffering stuns our minds and stuns our sensibilities -- we are struck dumb as we contemplate it!

Revelation 19:20 -- "And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone." (τὴν λίμνην τοῦ πυρὸς τῆς καιομένης ἐν θείῳ)

Notice that the two "beasts" of Revelation 13 (the first beast and his prophet) are thrown alive (ζῶντες ἐβλήθησαν) into the lake of fire and sulphur. This takes place before the thousand-year period of Revelation 20 begins.

Revelation 20:10 -- "And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever."

After the thousand-year period, the devil is thrown into the lake of fire and sulphur. How the spirit substance of Satan is affected by fire and sulphur is not explained, but the fact that he is tormented in that lake is clearly stated.

Notice that a thousand years after the beast and the false prophet are thrown into the lake of fire, they are still being tormented. They have not been annihilated in the sense that they have ceased to exist. In fact, their torment (as well as that of Satan) is said to continue day and night forever and ever!

Revelation 20:14-15 -- "And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."

All who never repented of their sins and trusted in Christ and His atonement, whose name were never inscribed in the book of life, are reconstituted as souls/spirits united to bodies, and judged on the basis of their works, and are thrown alive into the lake of fire.

Revelation 21:7-8 -- "He who overcomes shall inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son. But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

Those who overcome are those who are faithful to God in the warfare against sin and Satan. Their faith in Jesus Christ is the instrument God uses to make them alive and to give them the victory (I John 5:4-5). But those who fear the opinion of their fellow human beings or the malice of Satan more than God, who refuse to turn away from their wicked forms of sin and to trust in Christ, their destiny is to be thrown into the lake that burns with fire and sulphur.

The final state of the unrighteous is described as a lake and a furnace of everlasting fire and sulphur that will never be quenched, and as a gloomy blackness of outer darkness, into which both the soul/spirit and the body will be cast, in which there will be torment and punishment, weeping, gnashing of teeth, and no rest day or night for ever and ever. There is not the slightest hint in these Scriptures that hell may continue for eons but that it finally comes to an end and ceases to exist. Hell is endless, unending, forever! What an awesome conception!

## 2. The final state of the righteous

The final state of the righteous refers to their state or condition following their resurrection and judgment, and continuing on unendingly.

One problem with the final state of the righteous is peculiar to the Premillennial view. It concerns the time of the beginning of the eternal state relative to the occurrence of the Resurrection. In Premillennialism the resurrection of the righteous and the resurrection of the wicked occur at different times in the eschaton. This problem is further heightened in a Pretribulational Premillennial view, which sees a phase of the Resurrection of the righteous occurring at the Rapture, another phase at Christ's Return at the end of the Tribulation (for the Tribulation saints), and perhaps another phase for any who become believers during the Millennium. In this view the final state of the righteous, since it begins with the Resurrection and Judgment, begins at different times for the various group of believers.

But aside from this peculiarity, the final state of all believers following the inauguration of the new heavens and new earth is described mainly in the book of Revelation. There are of course other Scriptures which speak of this state, such as John 14:2-3, in which our Lord speaks of "dwelling places" in His Father's house; and II Peter 3:13, in which Peter says that we look for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells. But the bulk of the material is found in the last two chapters of Revelation.

In Revelation 21 and 22 John sees new heavens and a new earth. He also sees the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from the sky to the earth. In the holy city are located the throne of God and the Lamb, the river of the water of life, and the tree of life. Heaven will thus be in earth. The holy city is enormous (1500 miles square); has streets, high walls, twelve gates (which are never closed); and constantly lit with the glory of God. The saved of the earth go in and out and serve Him. He will dwell with them, be their God, and wipe away all tears from their eyes. In that eternal state there will be no more sin, no more crying or sorrowing, no more pain, and no more death. There will be only holiness and light and deep joy and life everlasting!

The Lord Jesus will be there, the saints (great and small) of all ages will be there, and our dear loved ones who have gone on before will be there. And we will see God's face, and serve Him for ever and ever in ways that will please Him. We will be completely delivered from the very presence of sin and totally conformed to the likeness of Christ. What a glorious prospect for every child of God!

## II. The Hermeneutics of Predictive Prophecy

As soon as eschatology is mentioned, the issue of hermeneutics becomes very important. There are really two basic reasons why one's principles of interpretation as applied to predictive prophecy (the special use of "prophecy") are important. The first reason concerns the matter of eschatology. On the manner of the interpretation of prophecy rests the basis of distinction between Amillennialism, Postmillennialism, and Premillennialism, considered not merely as points of view regarding the relation of Christ's Second coming to the nature and time-frame of the kingdom of God, but as systems of eschatology containing detailed explanations of biblical apocalyptic material. The second reason, however, is much more important, since it concerns the larger question of whether biblical language, personages, and events are to be understood literally or figuratively, historically or symbolically, as well as the question of whether non-prophetic and prophetic Scriptures (in the special sense) are to be interpreted according to one set of hermeneutical principles or whether each category of Scripture is to be interpreted according to a different set.

In this study of this important issue we will look first at the principles and emphases set forth by some prominent writers who have addressed the issue, and then attempt to distinguish and clarify some basic conceptions and terms employed in discussions of the matter.

### A. Principles and bases Set Forth by Certain Writers

#### 1. William E. Cox

"One very basic conflict between different millennial groups is their hermeneutics -- the manner in which they interpret the Bible. In fact, this difference is what divides equally conservative men into differing camps with reference to the millennium. This fact is acknowledged frequently by all millennial schools of thought. Each of the millennial views has been held by conservative, scholarly men who were devoted to a correct interpretation of the Bible. And all have looked on the Scriptures as divinely inspired, and as the Christian's only rule of faith and life.

"No one millennial school has ever had a corner on conservative Christian scholars. Each of the three main schools -- historical premillennialism, postmillennialism, and amillennialism -- has a roll call of notable conservative giants of the faith. The different millennial views have arisen, not because of indifference toward the Bible, but simply because men interpreted the Word of God in a different manner . . .

"Since all conservative men use essentially the same method of interpreting Scripture, then how is it that they end up with such divergent views on the millennium? Does the Bible, when approached from the grammatical-historical literal point of view, actually give five completely different accounts of the millennium? No, the different teachings come about because of inconsistency of interpretation -- because of the inconsistent use of the known rules of hermeneutics. To be more specific, our differences head up in one major problem. That problem is the hyperliteral interpretation of certain -- and only certain -- verses of Scripture in order to justify preconceived unscriptural presuppositions. .

. . . A secondary problem is the act of taking verses out of their context; however, the paramount problem lies in basing presuppositions on a hyperliteral interpretation of certain passages of the Bible."

-- William E. Cox, *Amillennialism Today* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1966), pp. 13, 18.

2. Floyd S. Hamilton

"So far, we have been pointing out the difficulties and contradictions into which we are plunged if we accept the literal interpretations of all the Old Testament prophecies as the proper method of interpretation. But if we reject the literal method of interpretation as the universal rule for the interpretation of all prophecies, how are we to interpret them? Well, of course, there are many passages in prophecy that were meant to be taken literally. In fact a good working rule to follow is that the literal interpretation of the prophecy is to be accepted unless (a) the passages contain obviously figurative language, or (b) unless the New Testament gives authority for interpreting them in other than a literal sense, or (c) unless a literal interpretation would produce a contradiction with truths, principles or factual statements contained in non-symbolic books of the New Testament. Another obvious rule to be followed is that the clearest New Testament passages in non-symbolic books are to be the norm for the interpretation of prophecy, rather than obscure or partial revelations contained in the Old Testament. In other words we should accept the clear and plain parts of Scripture as a basis for getting the true meaning of the more difficult parts of Scripture. . . .

"But the greatest help in the interpretation of prophecies is in the instances in which the New Testament declares prophecies to have been fulfilled in other than a literal way, by some even in the life of Christ or in the Apostolic history."

-- Floyd E. Hamilton, *The Basis of Millennial faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1942), pp. 53-54.

3. Charles C. Ryrie

"Dispensationalists claim that their principle of hermeneutics is that of literal interpretation. This means interpretation which gives to every word the same meaning it would have in normal usage, whether employed in writing, speaking, or thinking. This is sometimes called the principle of grammatical-historical interpretation since the meaning of each word is determined by grammatical and historical considerations. The principle might also be called normal interpretation since the literal meaning of words is the normal approach to their understanding in all languages. It might also be designated plain interpretation so that no one receives the mistaken notion that the literal principle rules out figures of speech. Symbols, figures of speech and types are all interpreted plainly in this method and they are in no way contrary to literal interpretation. After all, the very existence of any meaning for a figure of speech depends on

the reality of the literal meaning of the terms involved. Figures often make the meaning plainer, but it is the literal, normal, or plain meaning that they convey to the reader. . . .

"There are many reasons given by dispensationalists to support this hermeneutical principle of literal, normal, or plain interpretation. At least three are worthy of mention at this point.

Philosophically, the propose of language itself seems to require literal interpretation . . . . If God be the originator of language and if the chief purpose of originating it is to convey His message to man, then it must follow that . . . He would use language and expect man to use it in its literal, normal, and plain sense.

A second reason why dispensationalists believe in the literal principle is a Biblical one. It is simply this: the prophecies in the Old Testament concerning the first coming of Christ -- his birth, His rearing, His ministry, His death, His resurrection -- were all fulfilled literally . . . . This argues strongly for the literal method.

A third reason is a logical one. If one does not use the plain, normal, or literal method of interpretation, all objectivity is lost. . .

Of course, literal interpretation is not the exclusive property of dispensationalists. Most conservatives would agree with what has just been said. What, then, is the difference between the dispensationalists' use of this hermeneutical principle and the nondispensationalists'? The difference lies in the fact that the dispensationalist claims to use the normal principle of interpretation consistently in all his study of the Bible. He further claims that the nondispensationalist does not use the principle everywhere. He admits that the nondispensationalist is a literalist in much of his interpretation of the Scripture, but charges him with allegorizing or spiritualizing when it comes to the interpretation of prophecy. The dispensationalist claims to be consistent in his use of this principle, and he accuses the nondispensationalist of being inconsistent in his use of it.

Of course there are nondispensational premillennialists. But these men, like the amillennialist, do not apply the literal principle consistently. They apply it more extensively than the amillennialist but not so extensively as the dispensationalist. . . .

. . . consistent literalism is the basis for dispensationalism, and since consistent literalism is the logical and obvious principle of interpretation, dispensationalism is more than justified. it is only the adjusting or adding to the principle of literal interpretation that dispensationalism is avoided."

-- Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1965), pp. 56-59, 91, 97.

#### 4. Oswald T. Allis

"One of the most marked features of Premillennialism in all its forms is the emphasis which it places on the literal interpretation of Scripture . . . .

There are at least three reasons why a thoroughly literal interpretation of Scripture is impossible:

- (1) The language of the Bible often contains figures of speech. . . .
- (2) The great theme of the Bible is, God and His redemptive dealings with mankind. God is a Spirit; the most precious teachings of the Bible



are spiritual; and these spiritual and heavenly realities are often set forth under the form of earthly objects and human relationships. . . .

- (3) The fact that the Old Testament is both preliminary and preparatory to the New Testament is too obvious to require proof. . . .

b. Attitude of Dispensationalists to These Limitations . . .

- (1) This literalistic emphasis has shown itself most plainly in their insistence that Israel: it does not mean or typify the Church . . . . This led to literalism along other lines.

Along with this insistence on the letter, there early developed a tendency to seek for significant meanings in the very letter of Scripture . . . . Thus the words 'dust' . . . 'stars' . . . and 'sand' . . . are obviously used as synonymous terms to indicate that the seed of Abraham will be as countless as these familiar objects. But, if it be argued that the 'stars' signify a heavenly seed and the 'dust' an earthly seed, then . . . 'Sun of righteousness' . . . and 'morning star' . . . are beautiful figures used of the coming of Christ. But to argue that because there is a interval of time between the appearing of the morning star and the sunrise, there will therefore be an interval of time between the rapture and the appearing . . . . Such ingenious subtleties may do great harm . . . .

- (2) Dispensationalists . . . Regarding Israel as an earthly people . . . insist that all of the promises and prophecies which concern Israel are earthly and are to be taken literally. On the other hand, regarding the Church as a heavenly body having no connection with the earth, they insist that everything that concerns the Church is heavenly. . . .
- (3) While Dispensationalists are extreme literalists, they are very inconsistent ones. They are literalists in interpreting prophecy. But in the interpreting of history, they carry the principle of typical interpretation to an extreme which has rarely been exceeded even by the most ardent of allegorizers.

This is the reason that, in attempting to define the word 'type', it is customary to say that it is a person, event, or institution which is 'designed by God' and intended 'to prefigure something future'. . . Scofield . . . defined a type as 'a divinely purposed illustration of some truth'. But, unfortunately, he signally failed to observe this limitation. Where, for example, is there the slightest warrant for regarding the raven and dove as types of the 'believer's two natures'? . . .

. . . Dispensational teaching . . . In dealing with Old Testament history its treatment is highly figurative . . . . In dealing with prophecy, its treatment is marked by a literalism which refuses to recognize types and figures. . . .

The explanation of this seemingly inconsistent attitude of Dispensationalists is to be found in the very heart of their system of interpretation, their conception of the Church. If the Church is a mystery first revealed to the apostle Paul, it cannot be predicted in the prophecies of Isaiah; and if these are taken literally it is not foretold in them. . . .

In view of their preoccupation with the prophetic teachings of the Bible, the attitude of Dispensationalists to prophecy is of special interest and importance. For it is here that their insistence on the principle of literal interpretation is most uncompromising. This raises several questions, . . . .

1. The Intelligibility of Prophecy

- a. The usual view of this subject has been that prophecy is not intended to be fully understood before its fulfillment, . . . Prophecy is a wonderful combination of the clear and the obscure.
- b. It is the view of Dispensationalists that prophecy is intended to be plain and fully intelligible before its fulfillment . . . This view has been more concisely stated in the words, 'Prophecy is prewritten history.' . . The fallacy in this claim will be clear when due weight is given to the following considerations.
  - (1) The use of figurative language -- symbols, parables, etc. -- is far more characteristic of prophecy than of historical narration.
  - (2) Not only is the language of prophecy often figurative and parabolic, it also differs from history in its frequent lack of precision and definiteness.
  - (3) The same principle applies to prophecies which might be regarded as perfectly simple and plain.
  - (4) From a practical standpoint, the clearest indication that prophecy is not 'prewritten history' consists in the fact that there is in many cases such a wide difference of opinion among commentators as to whether certain predictions have been fulfilled, and whether, if fulfilled, this fulfillment is to be regarded as complete and final or as only partial or 'germinant.' "

-- Oswald T. Allis, *Prophecy and the Church* (Philadelphia: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1945), pp. 16-28.

5. John F. Walvoord

"It is generally agreed by all parties that one of the major differences between amillennialism and premillennialism lies in the use of the literal method of interpretation. Amillenarians, while admitting the need for literal interpretation of Scripture in general, have held from Augustine to the present time that prophecy is a special case requiring spiritualizing or non-literal interpretation. Premillenarians hold, on the contrary, that the literal method applies to prophecy as well as other doctrinal areas, and therefore contend for a literal millennium.

In a somewhat less degree the same hermeneutical difference is seen in the pretribulation versus the posttribulation positions. Pretribulationism is based upon a literal interpretation of key Scriptures, while posttribulationism tends toward spiritualization of the tribulation passages. . . ."

-- John F. Walvoord, *The Rapture Question* (Findlay, Ohio: Dunham Publishing Company, 1957), pp. 56-57.

6. Martin J. Wyngaarden

"What is meant by spiritualization, or the spiritual interpretation, in this connection? The spiritual interpretation, here concerned, is that which is contrasted with the view of the Premillenarians, who hold to the so-called literal interpretation, -- happily not consistently, as a rule. . .

Now we are here concerned, especially with the future of the typical, theocratic kingdom, in prophecy and fulfillment.

By the spiritual interpretation, in Scripture, is, therefore, meant, here, the interpretation that the Holy Spirit gives to the various items connected with this kingdom. . . .

In the spiritual interpretation of Scripture, we, therefore, do not simply allegorize the meaning of Scripture. . . .

Again, the spiritual interpretations in Scripture are not the same as mere metaphorical interpretations, . . .

For the Biblical spiritualization of any item, connected with the typical, Old Testament kingdom, includes any special import, or broadened meaning, or figurative usage, or richer implication that the Holy Spirit gives to this item, with a view toward realizing the fulfillment of the typical, Old Testament kingdom, in the antitypical, New Testament kingdom, as identified with the church, both here, and in eternity, hereafter. . . .

"The main difficulty with the Premillennial positions, accordingly, lies in its leading interpretive principle, on which objection is made against spiritualizing various prophecies, while the Old Testament itself, supported by the New, suggests considerable scope for this very principle of spiritualization. . . .

Taking the fundamental principle of spiritualization . . . we may . . . hold to the following more specific interpretive principles:

1. The spiritualization of the capital of the theocratic kingdom, Zion, or Jerusalem;
2. The spiritualization of the Holy Land, the inheritance of the saints;
3. The spiritualization of the Kingdom;
4. The spiritualization of the Seed of Abraham;
5. The spiritualization of the Covenant-People, as the Bride of the Lord;
6. The spiritualization of Israel;
7. The spiritualization of Israel's enemies, as typified in the Edomites;
8. The spiritualization of the physical conquest of the enemies of the theocracy into their spiritual conquest, and voluntary obedience, as similarly typified in the case of Edom;
9. The spiritualization of the Temple;
10. The spiritualization of the Sacrifices;
11. The spiritual interpretation of the Priestly, Royal and Prophetic Types;
12. The spiritualization of the Old Covenant;
13. The spiritualization of Circumcision;
14. The spiritualization of the Passover;
15. The organic spiritualization of the Psalter, as the Praise-book of the kingdom;
16. The organic spiritualization of the Old Testament Scriptures, as they treat of the future of the kingdom;
17. The mere latent spiritualization of these theocratic elements in the Old Testament and their more evident spiritualization in the New;

18. The incipient application of this spiritualization to the theocratic kingdom itself, the fuller application to the eschatological kingdom.

"Now, in asking whether a prophecy was intended to be understood literally or spiritually, there are certain specific questions that would seem to lead to the meaning of the Spirit.

1. The first question . . . Does the Scripture spiritualize this item? . . . all this leads us to observe the Biblical scope of the spiritual interpretation of prophecy. For the entire body of concepts spiritualized by the Scriptures combines to represent the vital and permanent elements of the Old Testament kingdom that reappear in spiritualized form in the spiritual, New Testament kingdom, namely the church.
2. The second question . . . Does the prophecy logically align itself to the church? Does it logically fit into the organic unity, represented by the church? More specifically, does a prophecy, with reference to the future of the typical kingdom fit in organically with the future of the church?

If so, have no right to say that it requires more than a spiritual fulfillment in the church. The demands and requirements of the prophecy will have been met by such a spiritual fulfillment.

We, as mere creatures, have therefore, absolutely no right to say that such a prophecy still requires a literal fulfillment.

Of course, the sovereign Lord is always free to give the prophecy a more literal fulfillment than the prophecy itself requires. But we, on our part, have no right to attempt to hold the Lord to literal fulfillments in such cues, in view of the many spiritualizations in God's Word and particularly in the light of the spiritual fulfillments especially recognized as such in the New Testament.'

-- Martin J. Wyngaarden, *The Future of the Kingdom in Prophecy and Fulfillment* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1955), pp. 84-86, 142-144, 175-177.

7. John F. Walvoord (again)

"It is gradually being recognized in contemporary theology that hermeneutical principles have much to do with the total problem of establishing eschatology. Amillenarians and premillenarians agree that their respective points of view stem from their principles of interpretation. Augustine, who advanced the dual hermeutics, has largely set the pattern for amillennial eschatology. He held that while the scriptures as a whole should be interpreted normally, historically, and grammatically, prophecy was a special case which required spiritualization or allegorical interpretation, and therefore a nonliteral interpretation of prophecy. By contrast, premillenarians generally have adopted a single hermeneutic, namely, that prophecy should be interpreted by the same principles by which any other type of Scripture is interpreted."

-- John F. Walvoord, *The Church in Prophecy* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1964), p. 116.

8. Milton S. Terry

"From these considerations it will be also seen that, while duly appreciating the peculiarities of prophecy, we nevertheless must employ in its interpretation essentially the same great principles as in the interpretation of other ancient writings. First, we should ascertain the historical position of the prophet; next the scope and plan of his book; then the usage and import of his words and symbols; and, finally, ample and discriminating comparison of the parallel Scriptures should be made."

-- Milton S. Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics*, Second Edition (reprinted Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing house, n.d.), p. 418.

9. George L. Murray

"In the book of Acts, we find Peter spiritualizing the sixteenth Psalm as foretelling the resurrection of Christ. The apostle Paul, speaking in a Jewish synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia (Acts 13:34), declared that Isaiah's prophecy concerning 'the sure mercies of David' (Isaiah 55:3) was a foretelling of the resurrection. James, the Lord's brother, showed that the prophecy of Amos concerning the building of the tabernacle of David and the raising of the ruins thereof, was then being fulfilled in the conversion of the Gentiles to Christianity. All the apostles give spiritual interpretations of the Old Testament prophecies, and literalists do not find fault with them for that. It is universally agreed that the chief cornerstone laid in Zion is to be interpreted as Jesus Christ. Peter likens Christians to living stones built up into a spiritual temple. The apostle Paul, speaking of the experiences of Israel in the wilderness, says, 'And did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of the spiritual Rock that followed them; and that Rock was Christ' (I Corinthians. 10:3-4). Here we have a spiritual rock.

Surely there is here a basic argument and disagreement between dispensationalists and Paul. Much more could be said of his allegorizing of Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar, as representing spiritual realities. Time would fail us to follow this principle through the Epistle to the Hebrews where even Zion and Jerusalem are spiritualized. If the literalist still insists that we are spiritualizing prophecy, we can at least boast of being in very excellent company. The same cannot be said of the literalists. He is following the Jewish method of interpretation which led its exponents to expect a literal fulfillment of every prophecy and which led them to reject and crucify their Messiah. Paul says that this was done 'because they knew Him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every Sabbath day' (Acts 13:27). The plain truth is that there is not one chapter of the prophetic Scriptures which can be taken with absolute literalness and shown to prove the restoration of natural Israel and the establishing of a Palestinian kingdom in which Jews will predominate, with Jerusalem as capital and Christ as king.

We believe, therefore, that the only safe method of interpretation is neither strictly literal, nor strictly spiritual; but that whenever possible the New Testament should be allowed to explain the Old. Augustine, of Hippo, had found the secret of true interpretation and expressed it in these words: 'The New was in the Old concealed. The Old is in the New revealed.' "

-- George L. Murray, *Millennial Studies* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1948), pp. 39-41.

10. Gerald B. Stanton

"The science and art of interpreting the Scriptures of God is called hermeneutics. . . .

. . . The purpose . . . is to examine the one central, most basic issue of that science, namely: is the Bible to be interpreted literally? Or to state the problem from the opposing viewpoint: 'To what extent is the spiritualizing of Scripture permissible, and what is the relationship between the literal method and the interpretation of prophecy?' With the Bible abounding in figures of speech and with prophecy full of symbolism, can the rule of literal interpretation be held consistently? . . . It will be demonstrated that the *sine qua non*, the one thing indispensable to the premillennial viewpoint -- indeed, to orthodoxy itself -- is that the Scriptures of God be understood in a normal, grammatical, literal fashion . . .

To interpret the Scriptures literally means to interpret them grammatically, that is, according to the normal use of the words and the accepted rules of grammar. . .

'But when a word, originally appropriated to one thing, comes to be applied to another, which bears some real or fancied resemblance to it, . . . the meaning is called topical, or if we prefer the Latin form of expression, figurative. . . .' When the figurative meaning of a passage of Scripture is taken in preference to the ordinary 'literal' meaning, the passage is often said to be spiritualized, the implication being that a deeper, more spiritual understanding of the passage has been reached by the recognition of the hidden figurative interpretation. While these terms, literal and spiritual, are not the best that could be used to designate the two methods of interpretation under investigation, they have been utilized so widely that a change of terminology seems unwarranted at this point.

It is necessary to understand, however, that the advocate of literal interpretation does not exclude from his method the proper use of Biblical figures. . . . Excessive spiritualization of the Sacred Text is likewise often called allegorizing . . .

The extent to which a man spiritualizes the Scriptures will largely determine his doctrinal position.

By . . . failure to accept the literal sense of the plain testimony of Scripture, some interpreters have stolen away the foundations of every cardinal Christian doctrine and left the Church to drift into liberalism and infidelity. The difference, then, between the liberal and the conservative evangelical lies squarely in the system of hermeneutics employed. . .

Moreover, the basic difference between the amillennial and the premillennial viewpoints is essentially whether one is to interpret the kingdom prophecies figuratively or literally. . . .

. . . dispensationalists are more consistent in adhering to those principles of interpretation which have sheltered them from liberalism's errors and amillennial vagaries . . .

"The above rules for interpretation of prophecy are not exhaustive. Stress has been given to the law of fulfillment, that in the interpretation of unfulfilled prophecy, the pattern of those which have been fulfilled should be followed. There is also the law of time relationship, that two events placed side by side in a prophecy will not necessarily be fulfilled simultaneously, or even in immediate succession. There is the law of double reference, that both an immediate and a future fulfillment of the same prediction may be found. There is the principle that the prophets often took in great periods of time in a single glance, called by Delitzsch 'the foreshortening of the prophet's horizon.' There is the principle that even when the language contains symbols, the language is not necessarily symbolic throughout.

These are, in the main, the principles which govern the right interpretation of prophecy. When coupled with the rules for the recognition and interpretation of Biblical figures, they should enable the careful interpreter to steer his course through the difficulties of predictive prophecy without sacrificing or compromising the basic tenet of literal interpretation."

-- Gerald B. Stanton, *Kept From the Hour* (Holborn, England: Marshall, Morgan, & Scott, 1964), pp. 140-144, 304.

#### 11. Louis Berkhof

"The interpretation of Prophecy . . . . Prophecy may simply be defined as the proclamation of that which God revealed . . . . Two points call for special consideration: (1) The special characteristics of prophecy; and (2) Rules for the interpretation of prophecy.

1. Special Characteristics of Prophecy. . . .
  - a. Prophecy as a whole has an organic character.
  - b. Prophecy is closely connected with history.
  - c. Prophecy has its own peculiar perspective.
  - d. Prophecies are often conditional, i.e., their fulfillment is in many cases depended on the contingent actions of men. . . .
  - e. Though the prophets often express themselves symbolically, it is erroneous to regard their language as symbolical throughout. They did not, as some writers on prophecy supposed, construct a sort of symbolical alphabet to which they habitually resorted in the expression of their thoughts. Even P. Fairbairn falls into this error when he says that 'in the prophecies of the Old Testament and the Book of Revelation, nations are a common designation for worldly kingdom, stars for ruling powers, roaring and troubled seas for tumultuous nations, trees for the higher, as grass for the lower grades of society, running streams for the means of life and refreshment, etc.' (*On Prophecy*, p. 143). It is safer to take the position of Davidson: 'When Joel speaks of locusts, he means those

creatures. When he speaks of the sun, moon and stars, he means these bodies. When he says, 'how do the beasts groan?' he means the beasts, and not, as Hengstenberg thinks, the uncovenanted nations of the heathen world' (*Old Testament Prophecy*, p. 171) When the prophets do express themselves symbolically, the context will usually indicate it. Sometimes it is expressly stated, as it is in Dan. 8 and Rev. 17. As a rule the language of the prophets should be understood literally. Exceptions to this rule must be warranted by Scripture.

- f. The prophets clothes their thoughts in form derived from the dispensation to which they belonged, i.e., from the life, constitution, and history of their own people. . . .
  - g. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the prophets occasionally transcended their historical and dispensational limitations, and spoke in forms that pointed to a more spiritual dispensation in the future. . . .
  - h. Sometimes the prophets revealed the word of the Lord in prophetic actions.
2. Interpretation of Prophecy. . . .
- a. The words of the prophet should be taken in their usual literal sense, unless the context or the manner in which they are fulfilled clearly indicate that they have a symbolical meaning. . . .
  - b. In studying the figurative descriptions that are found in the prophets, the interpreter should make it his aim to discover the fundamental idea expressed. . . .
  - c. In the interpretation of the symbolical actions of the prophets, the interpreter must proceed on the assumption of their reality, i.e., of their occurrence in actual life, unless the connection clearly proves the contrary.
  - d. The fulfillment of some of the most important prophecies is germinant, i.e., they are fulfilled by installments, each fulfillment being a pledge of that which is to follow. . . .
  - e. Prophecies should be read in the light of their fulfillment, for this will often reveal depths that would otherwise have escaped the attention . . . . Moreover, he should not proceed on the assumption that prophecies are always fulfilled in the exact form, in which they were uttered. The presumption is that, if they are fulfilled in a later dispensation, the dispensational form will be regarded in the fulfillment."

-- Louis Berkhof, *Principles of Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book house, 1950), pp. 148-153.

## B. Distinctions and Clarification of Certain Basic Conceptions and Terms

### 1. Literal and figurative uses of language

In the Bible we find various types of materials: laws, instructions, philosophical writings, poetry and songs, recorded visions and insights, parables and allegories, prophecy in the general sense of proclaiming God's Word, and prophecy in the specialized sense of prediction, together with several other categories of materials. Yet in all of these types of materials we find only two basic uses of language -- literal and figurative.



The literal use of language is the usage of words as defined in the dictionary; the ordinary, matter-of-fact, everyday usage of words in a strict, scientific sense. in accordance with this usage, when we say "wolf", we mean a four-legged animal of the dog-like family; and when we speak of a 'leopard' or a 'lion' we mean four-legged animals of the cat family; and when we talk about lambs and goats and cows and calves and oxen and snakes we mean those animals and not something else. This is the language of science, of scientific history, and of every realm in which preciseness and clarity is desirable. It is clear, unambiguous, factual language.

The figurative use of language, on the other hand, is the uncommon, unusual, imaginative, or even novel usage of words, to vividly sharpen a mental image and/or to call forth a certain emotional response.

Both uses of language attempt to communicate information literally. That is, even figures of speech are used to convey literal meaning. Thus if someone says, "Oh, but that's just a figure of speech," the question still remains, "Yes, but what does the figure represent, what does it mean?"

RULE: A FIGURE OF SPEECH IS ALWAYS A FIGURE FOR SOMETHING LITERAL (although not necessarily real).

Throughout all categories of literature, including Scripture, figures of speech abound. There are thousands of figures of speech in the Bible; and persons who do not take account of this fact frequently make the Bible say all sorts of erroneous, strange, and even heretical things.

Throughout the Old Testament there are many figures, especially in the poetical books. The one probably mentioned most frequently is that found in Isaiah 55:12 -- "The mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands." In the New Testament there are also many figures. The classic instance in this section of Scripture is found in Luke 13:31-32 -- "The same day there came certain of the Pharisees, saying unto him, Get thee out, and depart from here; for Herod will kill thee. And he said unto them, Go ye, tell that fox, Behold, I cast out demons, and I do cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall have finished."

Thus we find both the literal and the figurative use of language employed in the Special Revelation that God intended should be a meaningful, significant communication of truth to us. And therefore we can even speak of figures as revelation, since they always convey literal truth.

## 2. Historical and symbolical uses of persons, objects, or actions

Many time in Scripture persons, objects, or actions are used in the simple historical sense. There is no intended meaning beyond them. On the other hand we sometimes discover certain persons, objects, or actions that have symbolic significance. These fall into two categories: symbols and types.

- a. A symbol is a person, object, or action that is a sign for something beyond itself.

The rainbow is a symbol of God's promise never again to destroy the world by a flood.

The twelve stones which were heaped up on the west bank of the Jordan River were a symbol of God's miraculous action in having held back the river until the Israelites could cross over into Canaan.

The Ark of the Covenant was a symbol of God's presence among the people of Israel.

- b. A type is a person, object, or action which prefigures, foreshadows, looks forward to, and in at least one respect is similar to something else yet future. its fulfillment is called an antitype.

Adam is called (Romans 5:14) the figure or type of Christ. Christ, as the Second Adam, is the antitype.

The mosaic tabernacle and its service is called (in Hebrew) a type of the heavenly sanctuary. The high priest is a type of Christ.

There are some Christians who see types everywhere in the old Testament. Anything in the Old Testament that bears the slightest superficial resemblance to anything in the New Testament is seized upon as a type. Other Christians find relatively few types in Scripture.

The *New Scofield Reference Bible* gives us a helpful rule of thumb in determining and identifying types. It states: "Nothing may be insisted upon as a type without the explicit New Testament authority." However, for some this rule is too restrictive.

In determining types, there are four important principles to remember:

- (1) A type must be a historical person, object, or action.
- (2) There must be a point of resemblance between a type and its antitype.
- (3) There must be some indication that the resemblance was purposed by God.
- (4) The type must resemble something future.

Thus persons, objects, or actions are used in Scripture either in the single historical sense, or they are also used symbolically. This symbolic use includes two categories: symbols and types.

### 3. Spiritualization: scriptural and unscriptural

Spiritualization is essentially a figure of thought (not of speech) in which the second of two things is said to be similar to the first, but in a spiritual sense (i.e., as related to the spiritual dimension of life, as distinguished from the natural or the physical).

- a. Scriptural spiritualization refers to the use of this figure of thought in the Scriptures. At least three characteristics of its use should be mentioned:
- (1) Scriptural spiritualization is basically a movement of thought from a truth-principle inherent in an event, or an institution, or the character of behavior of a person in one historical context to that same truth-principle inherent in an event, institution, or person in another context.

- (2) Scriptural spiritualization is sometimes a movement of thought from the external or physical to the spiritual.
- (3) Scriptural spiritualization is frequently a movement of thought from a feature of one dispensation to a corresponding feature of another dispensation, employing appropriate changes on concept and terminology.

An example of scriptural spiritualization is found in I Corinthians 10:1-4. Paul writes: "For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and all were baptized unto Moses by the cloud and by the sea; and all ate the same spiritual food; and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ."

The flow of thought in this passage appears to move from (1) the Israelites' eating of physical food (manna) and drinking of physical drink (water), to (2) their eating of spiritual food (the manner sent down from heaven by God) and drinking of spiritual drink (the water miraculously brought forth from the rock by God through Moses), to (3) their drinking from the spiritual Rock that was to come, Christ.

This must mean that the Israelites all participated and shared in the physical blessings of the spiritual (i.e., supernaturally provided) manna and water; and that these spiritual blessings came to them through or from Christ (and His gracious atonement, through which all blessings come to fallen man).

Notice! The question is not whether they understood that certain benefits and blessings came to them through Christ. The question is rather whether these benefits and blessings actually came to them through Him. And the answer is emphatically yes! We are told that they all drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them; and that Rock was Christ!

- b. Unscriptural spiritualization refers to the unwarranted finding of this figure of thought in the Scriptures. Two characteristics of its misuse should be mentioned:
  - (1) Those who employ unscriptural spiritualization do so by interpreting a word or series of words as necessarily figurative, not because a literal interpretation would be manifestly impossible or absurd or contradict clear teachings of Scripture, but because a literal meaning simply would not fit with their theological system (especially in the areas of ecclesiology, eschatology, and ethics).
  - (2) Those who employ unscriptural spiritualization do so by taking the figurative meaning of a word or words and, without scriptural warrant, referring them to spiritual realities.

An example of unscriptural spiritualization may be found in a book by Jesse Hodges:

"There is one brief passage in Isaiah 11 which we must take space to quote. it reads as follows:

The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall feed; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The sucking child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea (Isaiah 11:6-9, R.S.V.)

In this passage Isaiah is evidently endeavoring to picture the idealistic conditions which would prevail under the leadership and power of the Christ and His gospel of reconciliation. The prophet's reference to wolves, lambs, and other animals are surely intended as illustrations only. The love of God working in the hearts of men is to bring such peace and perfect harmlessness to society, such miraculous changes in the lives of men, as would appear if animals should undergo the changes in their natures and habits here suggested."

-- Jesse Wilson Hodges, *Christ's Kingdom and Coming* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdsman's Publishing Company, 1957), pp. 92-93.

Another example may be found in a book by Floyd I. Hamilton:

"But what, it may be asked, is the amillennial interpretation of these chapters in Ezekiel? (Ezekiel 41-48) Well, we would first of all point out that there has never been any temple that corresponded to the one described in Ezekiel. Neither Ezra's temple nor Herod's temple in any way can be identified with it, so there is no way of claiming that the prophecy about it has already been literally fulfilled. We have already pointed out the absurdity of supposing that it will be literally fulfilled in the future. That shuts the believer in the inspiration of Ezekiel up to only one possible explanation of these prophetic pictures. These last chapters of Ezekiel must be intended to teach spiritual truths under the symbolism of the temple and the restored nation! . . .

Now then, in the last chapters of Ezekiel particularly we have the picture of what the ideal relationship of God's people to God ought to be. In other words, we have here a symbolic picture of the proper relationship of the true, invisible Kingdom of God on earth to the Sovereign God, as it ought to manifest itself in human government and society . . . this prophetic picture presents the worship of God through the temple ritual, as the ideal mode of worship. The spiritual truths here taught are, (1) The worship of God is to be supreme over the whole of society, (represented in Ezekiel by the city), human government, (represented in Ezekiel by the prince), ecclesiastical organization (represented by the priests and Levites), and over the individuals themselves. The Sovereignty of God should be the very center of human life and thought and action. (2) When any phase of human society is not so subservient to God, the 'times are out of joint,' and terrible abuses creep in. . . . Thank

God this ideal relationship will be realized in the eternal Kingdom of God which will follow the return of Christ in glory. Not that we are to expect any of the details themselves given in Ezekiel to be literally fulfilled, but that the truths represented by those details will be realized in the new heaven and the new earth."

-- Floyd E. Hamilton, *The Basis of Millennial Faith* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1942), pp. 44-46.

One more example of unscriptural spiritualizing may be found in a book by George L. Murray:

"Time and space will permit but a brief reference here to the passages in Zechariah which are most frequently quoted in support of dispensationalism. In chapter 12:10-14, we read the words: 'And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplications; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem. . . .'

After the piercing of the Holy One there followed the outpouring of the Spirit and 'a great mourning in Jerusalem'. As we look back upon Pentecost, there is no difficulty in seeing where and when this phase of the prophecy was fulfilled. 'The spirit of grace and supplication' was poured out on that day, and there was certainly a great mourning in Jerusalem. . . .

Zechariah fourteen sums up briefly the gospel age, although not strictly in chronological order. The destruction of Jerusalem is here described as being closely connected with the planting of our Lord's feet upon the Mount of Olives . . . . The Lord Jesus Christ has already stood upon the Mount of Olives, and from its brow He looked down upon the city which represented the Hebrew nation. That nation fell into two parts at His coming, and those two parts have been separated ever since 'by a very great valley,' an impassable gulf. . . .

The remainder of chapter fourteen describes living waters going out from Jerusalem, the gospel of salvation bringing man under the sovereign sway of Jesus Christ. How very inadequate and carnal it is to think of this as a river bringing fertility and prosperity to the land and replenishing the Dead Sea with all manner of fish by reason of the healing virtues of the water! The only living waters recognized by the New Testament proceed from the throne of God and the Lamb. Verses eight to ten of this fourteenth chapter reveal the final consummation of the Divine plan where God shall have made all things new, and when 'holiness unto the Lord' shall characterize every creature and every object in God's new world.

We bring this chapter to a close, wishing that space and time had permitted a fuller treatment of the ground covered. In closing, we submit to our readers a proposition which we do not think anyone can deny or disprove. Every promise which dispensationalists interpret as supporting a Jewish restoration is a promise given either before or during the time of Israel's captivity in Babylon and refers either to that captivity and

restoration or, under appropriate figures and symbols, to the gospel era, or to the ultimate setting up of that everlasting kingdom, which shall never be destroyed, which is neither Palestinian nor political, and whose citizens shall be neither Jews nor Gentiles, but new creatures in Christ Jesus."

-- George L. Murray, *Millennial Studies* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1948), pp. 54-57.

### III. Dispensational Theology and Covenant Theology

#### A. Definitions of Covenants and Dispensations in these Systems of Interpretation

##### 1. Definition of Covenants in these Systems

##### a. Dispensational Theology on the Covenants of Scripture

###### (1) *The Scofield Reference Bible*, edition of 1917, footnote 6 on Gen. 1:28:

"The Edenic Covenant, the first of the eight great covenants of Scripture which condition life and salvation, and about which all Scripture crystallizes, has seven elements. The man and woman in Eden were responsible:

(1) to replenish the earth with a new order -- man; (2) to subdue the earth to human uses; (3) to have dominion over the animal creation, (4) to eat herbs and fruits; (5) to till and keep the garden; (6) to abstain from eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; (7) the penalty -- death. See, for the other seven covenants: Adamic (Gen. 3:15); Noahic (Gen. 9:1); Abrahamic (Gen. 15:15); Mosaic (Ex. 19:25); Palestinian (Deut. 30:3); Davidic (2 Sam. 7:16); New (Heb. 8:8)."

###### (2) Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, Volume 7, "Covenants":

"It does not necessarily follow -- as some contend -- that because there is but one righteous ground upon which God can deal graciously with sinners, namely, by the blood of Christ shed for them, there must be but one covenant relationship between God and man. That God has earthly as well as heavenly purposes and in addition transforming blessings adapted to each group and the sphere to which they belong will be seen by any unprejudiced student of the Sacred Text. In relation to His earthly people, Israel, and their blessings God has made various covenants. Some of these are conditional and some unconditional, which terms suggest that in some covenants God has them to depend upon human faithfulness, while in others He merely declares what He will do wholly apart from the question of human worthiness or faithfulness.

Without much Scripture upon which to base it, Covenant theologians have supposed the existence of a covenant between the Persons of the Godhead in relation to the part each would assume in the whole divine program of the ages, especially in redemption. The most that can be said for this contention is that it is reasonable; yet, all the same, difficulties are engendered. For this assumes that there was a beginning in the plan and purpose of God and that separate Persons of the Godhead sustained individual interests.

God has nevertheless entered into nine covenants with man on the earth. With these nine agreements all Scripture is related. Attention therefore to their provisions will be most essential. It is true that the earlier relationships between God and men included here

are not termed covenants, but still they partake of the nature of covenants. The first of three covenants -- Edenic, Adamic, Noahic -- defined human life at its beginning. The Edenic Covenant conditioned unfallen man's life in Eden and is in seven parts. The Adamic covenant governed fallen man in his state outside of Eden and falls into seven parts. The Noahic Covenant provided for man after the flood and is likewise in seven parts . . . . The fourth covenant in order is the Abrahamic . . . In the fifth covenant, which has been named the Mosaic . . . is a covenant made with Israel as a nation alone and that in the conditional manner . . . The sixth covenant, which is the Palestinian . . . presents the conditions upon which Israel entered their promised land . . . . The seventh covenant is the Davidic, which was made with David . . . The eighth covenant is with Israel and conditions their life in the kingdom (cf. Jer. 31:31-34). It replaces and yet includes the Mosaic commandments (cf. Deut. 30:8), though in heightened form . . . . There remains to be recognized a heavenly covenant for the heavenly people, which I also styled like the preceding one for Israel a 'new covenant'. It is made in the blood of Christ (cf. Mark 14:24) and continues in effect throughout this age, whereas the new covenant made with Israel happens to be future in its application. To suppose that these two covenants -- one for Israel and one for the Church -- are the same is to assume that there is a latitude of common interest between God's purpose for Israel and His purpose for the Church. Israel's covenant, however, is new only because it replaces the Mosaic, but the Church's covenant is new because it introduces that which is God's mysterious and unrelated purpose. Israel's new covenant rests specifically on the sovereign 'I will' of Jehovah, while the new covenant for the Church is made in Christ's blood. Everything that Israel will yet have, to supply another contrast, is the present possession of the church -- and infinitely more.'

-- Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology* (Dallas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1948), Volume VII, pp. 96-99.

(3) *The New Scofield Reference Bible* edition of 1967, footnote 1 on Genesis 2:16

"A covenant is a sovereign pronouncement of God by which He establishes a relationship of responsibility (1) between himself and an individual (e.g., Adam in the Edenic Covenant, Gen. 2:16 ff.), (2) between Himself and mankind in general (e.g., in the promise of the Noahic Covenant never again to destroy all flesh with a flood, Gen. 9:9ff), (3) between Himself and a nation (e.g., Israel in the Mosaic Covenant, Ex. 19:3ff.), or (4) between Himself and a specific human family (e.g., the house of David in the promise of kingly line in perpetuity through the Davidic Covenant, 2 Sam. 7:16ff). A covenant of one category may overlay others; e.g., the Davidic Covenant, where a continuing kingly house is promised with ultimate blessing, not only to David but also to the whole world in the reign of Jesus Christ.

The covenants are normally unconditional in the sense that God obligates Himself in grace, by the unrestricted declaration, 'I will,'



to accomplish certain announced purposes, despite any failure on the part of the person or people with whom He covenants. The human response to the divinely announced purpose is always important, leading as it does to blessing for obedience and discipline for disobedience. But Human failure is never permitted to abrogate the covenant or block its ultimate fulfillment.

In the case of the Mosaic Covenant, the fulfillment of all the promises was made conditional upon Israel's obedience, as implied by the words, ' . . . If ye will obey . . . then ye shall be . . . ' followed by ' . . . all the people answered . . . All that the Lord hath spoken we will do' (Ex. 19:5,8).

The three universal and general covenants are: the Adamic, the Noahic, and also the Edenic in that the whole race is represented as present in Adam in his failure. All the other covenants are made with Israel or Israelites and apply primarily to them, although with ultimate blessing to the whole world."

Footnote 2 on Genesis 2:16 states:

"There are eight major covenants of special significance in explaining the outworking of God's purposes with man. They are: the Edenic (Gen. 2:16); the Adamic (Gen. 3:15); the Noahic (Gen. 9:16); the Abrahamic (Gen. 12:2); the Mosaic (Ex. 19:5); the Palestinian (Dt. 30:3); the Davidic (2 Samuel 7:16); and the New Covenant (Heb. 8:8)."

b. Covenant Theology on the Covenants of Scripture

(1) John Calvin, *Institutes on the Christian Religion* II. 10:1, 2, 8, 23:

". . . let us look . . . at the similarities and differences between the covenant that the Lord made of old with the Israelites before Christ's advent, and that which God has now made with us after his manifestation. . . .

"Both can be explained in one word. The covenant made with all the patriarchs is so much like ours in substance and reality that the two are actually one and the same. Yet they differ in the mode of dispensation . . . . Here we must take our stand on three main points. First, we hold that carnal prosperity and happiness did not constitute the goal set before the law to which they were to aspire. Rather, they were adopted into the hope of immortality; and assurance of this adoption was certified to them by oracles, by the law, and by the prophets. Secondly, the covenant by which they were bound to the Lord was supported, not by their own merits, but solely by the mercy of the God who called them. Thirdly, they had and knew Christ as Mediator, through whom they were joined to God and were to share in his promises.

Does this still seem a little unclear? Well, then, let us pass on to the very formula of the covenant . . . . For the Lord always covenanted with his servants thus: 'I will be your God, and you shall be my people' (Lev. 26:12). . . . He did not declare that he would be a God to their bodies alone, but especially to their souls. . . .

There are two remaining points: that the Old Testament fathers (1) had Christ as pledge of their covenant, and (2) put in him all trust of future blessedness . . . . Let us, therefore, boldly establish a principle unassailable by any stratagems of the devil: the Old Testament or Covenant that the Lord had made with the Israelites had not been limited to earthly things, but contained a promise of spiritual and eternal life. The expectation of this must have been impressed upon the hearts of all who truly consented to the covenant. But away with this insane and dangerous opinion -- that the Lord promised the Jews, or that they sought for themselves, nothing but a full belly, delights of the flesh, flourishing wealth, outward power, fruitfulness of offspring, and whatever the natural man prizes! Christ the Lord promises to his followers today no other 'Kingdom of Heaven' than that in which they may 'sit at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob' (Matt. 8:11). Peter declared that the Jews of his day were heirs of the grace of the gospel because they were the 'sons of the prophets, included in the covenant which the Lord of old made with his people' (Acts 3:25) . . . . In this he has given a sure pledge that whatever be did or suffered in acquiring eternal salvation pertains to the believers of Old Testament as much as to ourselves."

-- John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Phila.: The Westminster Press, 1960), Volume I, pp. 429-430, 434-435, 440-449.

(2) The *Westminster Confession of Faith*, Chapter 7, articles 1-4:

"I. The distance between God and the creature is so great, that although reasonable creatures do owe obedience unto Him as their Creator, yet they could never have any fruition of Him as their blessedness and reward, but by some voluntary condescension on God's part, which He hath been pleased to express by way of covenant.

II. The first covenant made with man was a covenant of works, wherein life was promised to Adam; and in him to his posterity, upon condition of perfect and personal obedience.

III. Man, by his fall, having made himself incapable of life by that covenant, the Lord was pleased to make a second, commonly called the covenant of grace; wherein He freely offereth unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ; requiring of them faith in Him, that they may be saved, and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto eternal life His Holy Spirit, to make them willing, and able to believe.

IV. This covenant of grace is frequently set forth in Scripture by the name of a testament, in reference to the death of Jesus Christ the Testator, and to the everlasting inheritance, with all things belonging to it, therein bequeathed.

(3) Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, "Covenant of Works," "The Covenant of Grace":

"COVENANT OF WORKS. God having created man after his own image in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, entered into a covenant of

life with him, upon condition of perfect obedience, forbidding him to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil upon the pain of death.

According to this statement, (1) God entered into a covenant with Adam. (2) The promise annexed to that covenant was life. (3) The condition was perfect obedience. (4) its penalty was death.

God entered into Covenant with Adam. This statement does not rest upon any express declaration of the Scriptures. It is, however, a concise and correct mode of asserting a plain Scriptural fact, namely, that God made to Adam a promise suspended upon a condition, and attached to disobedience a certain penalty. This is what in Scriptural language is meant by a covenant, and this in all that is meant by the term as used here. Although the word covenant is not used in Genesis and does not elsewhere, in any clear passage, occur in reference to the transaction there recorded, yet inasmuch as the plan of salvation is constantly represented as a New Covenant, new, not merely in antithesis to that made at Sinai, but new in reference to all legal covenants whatever, it is plain that the Bible does represent the arrangement made with as a truly federal transaction. The Scriptures know nothing of any other than two methods of attaining eternal life: the one that which demands perfect obedience, and the other that which demands faith. If the latter is called a covenant, the former is declared to be of the same nature. . . .

God then did enter into a covenant with Adam. That covenant is sometimes called a covenant of life, because life was promised as the reward of obedience. Sometimes it is called the covenant of works, because works were the condition on which that promise was suspended, and because it is thus distinguished from the new covenant which promises life on condition of faith."

"THE COVENANT OF GRACE. The plan of salvation is presented under the form of a covenant. This evident, --

First, from the constant use of the words *BERITH* and *DIATHEKE* in reference to it. With regard to the former of these words . . . there can be no doubt that according to its prevailing usage in the Old Testament, it means a mutual contract between two or more parties. . . . There is . . . no room to doubt that the word *BERITH* when used of transactions between man and man means a mutual compact. We have no right to give it any other sense when used of transactions between God and man. Repeated mention is made of the covenant of God with Abraham, . . . and afterwards with Isaac and Jacob. Then with the Israelites at Mount Sinai. The Old Testament is founded on this idea of a covenant relation between God and the theocratic people.

The meaning of the word *DIATHEKE* in the Greek Scriptures is just as certain and uniform . . . . In the Scriptures it is almost uniformly used in the sense of a covenant. In the Septuagint it is the translation of *BERITH* in all the cases above referred to. It is the term always used in the New Testament to designate the covenant with Abraham, with the Israelites, and with believers . . . . If the word has this meaning when applied to the transaction with Abraham and with

the Hebrews, it must have the same meaning when applied to the plan of salvation revealed in the gospel.

Secondly, that the plan of salvation is presented in the Bible under the form of a covenant is proved not only from the signification and usage of the words mentioned above, but also and more decisively from the fact that the elements of a covenant are included in this plan. There are parties, mutual promises or stipulations, and conditions. So that it is in fact a covenant, whatever it may be called.

The Identity of the Covenant of Grace under all Dispensations. By this is meant that the plan of salvation has, under all dispensations, the Patriarchal, the Mosaic, and the Christian, been the same . . . .

. . . the common doctrine of the Church has ever been, that the plan of salvation has been the same from the beginning. There is the same promise of deliverance from the evils of the apostasy, the same Redeemer, the same condition required for participation in the blessings of redemption, and the same complete salvation for all who embrace the offers of divine mercy.

-- Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1952), Volume Two, pp. 117-118, 354-355, 366-367.

## 2. Definitions of Dispensations in these Systems

### a. Dispensational Theology on the Dispensations of Scripture

#### (1) C. I. Scofield, *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth*, "The Seven Dispensations":

"The Scriptures divide time (by which is meant the entire period from the creation of Adam to the 'new heaven and a new earth' of Rev. 21:1) into seven unequal periods, usually called 'Dispensations' (Eph. 3:2), although these periods are also called 'ages' (Eph. 2:7) and 'days' -- as, 'day of the Lord,' etc.

These periods are marked off in Scripture by some change in God's method of dealing with mankind, or a portion of mankind, in respect of the two questions: of sin, and of man's responsibility. Each of the dispensations may be regarded as a new test of the natural man, and each ends in judgment -- marking his utter failure in every dispensation.

Five of these dispensations, or periods of time, have been fulfilled; we are living in the sixth, probably toward its close, and have before us the seventh, and last -- the millennium.

1. MAN INNOCENT. . . .
2. MAN UNDER CONSCIENCE. . . .
3. MAN IN AUTHORITY OVER THE EARTH. . . .
4. MAN UNDER PROMISE. . . .
5. MAN UNDER LAW. . . .
6. MAN UNDER GRACE. . . .
7. MAN UNDER THE PERSONAL REIGN OF CHRIST. . . ."

-- C. I. Scofield, *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth* (New York: Loizeaux Brothers, Inc., 1896), pp. 12-16.

(2) *The Scofield Reference Bible*, footnotes 4 and 5 on Genesis 1:28:

"A dispensation is a period of time during which man is tested in respect of obedience to some specific revelation of the will of God. Seven such dispensations are distinguished in Scripture.

"The First Dispensation: Innocency. Man was created in Innocency, placed in a perfect environment, subjected to an absolutely simple test, and warned of the consequence of disobedience. The women fell through pride; the man, deliberately (I Tim. 2:14). God restored His sinning creatures, but the dispensation of innocence ended in the judgment of the Expulsion (Gen. 3:24). See, for the other dispensations: Conscience (Gen. 3:23); Human Government (Gen. 8:20); Promise (Gen. 12:1); Law (Ex. 19:8); Grace (John 1:17); Kingdom (Eph. 1:10)."

-- *The Scofield Reference Bible*, ed. C. I. Scofield, edition of 1917 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1917), p. 5.

(3) Ernest Pickering, "Dispensational Theology":

"A Biblical dispensation, therefore, is characterized by an element of time during which it is operative, an element of testing or accountability, and a standard for testing . . . . A dispensation is a period of time during which God tests man according to some special revelation of His will.

. . . dispensations are not subdivisions or parts of a covenant, either the covenant of grace or any other. They are never so identified in Scripture. Dispensations and covenants are different though they are often related.

. . . a dispensation is a rule of life, not a way of salvation. Dispensations are not different ways of going to heaven. Dispensations are different time-periods in which God's people are to live according to a rule of life laid down by God."

-- Ernest Pickering, "Dispensational Theology", reprinted from *Central Conservative Baptist Quarterly*, Spring 1961.

(4) *The New Scofield Reference Bible*, footnote 3 on Genesis 1:28:

"A dispensation is a period of time during which man is tested in respect to his obedience to some specific revelation of the will of God.

Three important concepts are implied in this definition: (1) a deposit of divine revelation concerning God's will, embodying what God requires of man as to his conduct; (2) man's stewardship of this divine revelation, in which he is responsible to obey it; and (3) a time-period, often called an 'age', during which this divine revelation is dominant in the testing of man's obedience to God.

The dispensations are a progressive and connected revelation of God's dealings with man, given sometimes to the whole race and at other times to a particular people, Israel. These different dispensations are not

separate ways of salvation. During each of them man is reconciled to God in only one way, i.e. by God's grace through the work of Christ that was accomplished on the cross and vindicated in His resurrection. Before the cross man was saved in prospect of Christ's atoning sacrifice, through believing the revelation thus far given him. Since the cross man has been saved by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ in whom revelation and redemption are consummated.

On man's part the continuing requirement is obedience to the revelation of God. This obedience is a stewardship of faith. Although the divine revelation unfolds progressively, the deposit of truth in the earlier time-periods is not discarded; rather it is cumulative. Thus conscience (moral responsibility) is an abiding truth in human life (Rom. 2:15; 9:1; 2 Cor. 1:12; 4:2), although it does not continue as a dispensation. Similarly, the saved of this present dispensation are 'not under law' as a specific test of obedience to divine revelation (Gal. 5:18; cp. Gal. 2:16; 3:11), yet the law remains an integral part of the Holy Scriptures which, to the redeemed, are profitable for 'instruction in righteousness' (2 Ti. 3:16-17; cp. Rom. 15:4).

The purpose of each dispensation, then, is to place man under a specific rule of conduct, but such stewardship is not a condition of salvation. In every past dispensation unregenerate man has failed, and he has failed in this present dispensation and will in the future. But salvation has been and will continue to be available to him by God's grace through faith.

Seven dispensations. . . are distinguished in this edition of the Bible: Innocence (Gen. 1:28); Conscience or Moral Responsibility (Gen. 3:7); Human Government, (Gen. 8:15); Promise (Gen. 12:1); Law (Ex. 19:1); Church (Acts 2:1); Kingdom (Rev. 20:4), . . .

-- *The New Scofield Reference Bible*, ed. C. I. Scofield, E. Schuyler English, Chairman, Editorial Committee of the New Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 3.

b. Covenant Theology on the Dispensations of Scripture

(1) John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, II 11: 1, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13:

"What then? You will ask: will no difference remain between the Old and New testaments? What is to become of the many passages of Scripture wherein they are contrasted as utterly different?

I freely admit the differences in Scripture, to which attention is called, but in such a way as not to detract from its established unity. . . . Those chief differences, as far as I can note or remember, are four in number. If anyone wants to add a fifth difference, I shall not object at all. I say that all these pertain to the manner of dispensation rather than to the substance, and I undertake to show this. In this way there will be nothing to hinder the promises of the Old and New Testaments from remaining the same, nor from having the same foundation of these very promises, Christ!

Now this is the first difference: the Lord of old willed that his people direct and elevate their minds to the heavenly heritage; yet, to

nourish them better in this hope, he displayed it for them to see and, so to speak, taste, under earthly benefits. But now that the gospel has more plainly and clearly revealed the grace of the future life, the Lord leads our minds to meditate upon it directly, laying aside the lower mode of training that he used with the Israelites.

Those who do not pay attention to this plan of God think that the ancient people did not transcend those benefits promised to the body.

The point of our quarrel with men of this sort is this: they teach that the Israelites deemed the possession of the Land of Canaan their highest and ultimate blessedness, and that after the revelation of Christ it typified for us the heavenly inheritance. We contend, on the contrary, that, in the earthly possession they enjoyed, they looked, as in a mirror, upon the future Inheritance they believed to have been prepared for them in heaven. . . .

The second difference between the Old and New Testaments consists in figures: that, in the absence of the reality, it showed but an image and shadow in place of the substance; the New Testament reveals the very substance of truth as present. . . .

I come to the third difference, taken from Jeremiah. His words are: 'Behold, the days will come, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the agreement which I made with your fathers, in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant which they broke, though I ruled over them. . . . But this will be the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel . . . . I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts . . . and I will forgive their iniquity. And each will not teach his neighbor, each man his brother. For all will know, from the least to the greatest.' (Jer. 31:31-34). . . . From these words the apostle took occasion to make a comparison between the law and the gospel, calling the former literal, the latter spiritual doctrine; the former he speaks of as carved on tablets of stone, the latter as written upon man's hearts; the former is the preaching of death, the latter of life; the former of condemnation, the latter of righteousness; the former to be made void, the latter to abide (II Cor. 3:6-11). . . . the apostle speaks more opprobriously of the law than the prophet does -- not simply in respect to the law itself, but, because of certain wretches who aped the law and, by their perverse zeal for ceremonies, they are contrasting the Old and New Testaments, consider nothing in the law except what properly belongs to it. For example: the law contains here and there promises of mercy, but because they have been borrowed from elsewhere, they are not counted part of the law, when only the nature of the law is under discussion. They ascribe to it only this function: to enjoin what is right, to forbid what is wicked; to promise a reward to the keepers of righteousness, and threaten transgressors with punishment; but at the same time not to change or correct the depravity of heart that by nature inheres in all man.

. . . We are not to surmise from this difference between letter and spirit that the Lord had fruitlessly bestowed his law upon the Jews, and that none of them turned to him. But it was put forward by way of comparison to commend the grace abounding, wherewith the same Lawgiver -- assuming, as it were, a new character -- honored the preaching of the gospel. For suppose we reckon the multitude of those whom he gathers into

the communion of his church from all peoples, men regenerated by his spirit through the preaching of the gospel. Then we will say that in ancient Israel there were very few -- almost none -- who embraced the Lord's covenant with their whole hearts and minds. Yet, reckoned by themselves without comparison, there were many.

The fourth difference arises out of the third. Scripture calls the Old Testament one of 'bondage' because it produces fear in men's minds; but the New Testament, one of 'freedom' because it lifts them to trust and assurance . . . . To sum up: the Old Testament struck consciences with fear and trembling, but by the benefit of the New they are released into joy. The Old held consciences bound by the yoke of bondage; the New by its spirit of liberality emancipates them into freedom.

But suppose that our opponents object that, among the Israelites, the holy patriarchs were an exception; since they were obviously endowed with the same Spirit of faith as we, it follows that they shared the same freedom and joy. To this we reply: neither of these arose from the law. But when through the law the patriarchs felt themselves both oppressed by their enslaved condition, and wearied by anxiety of conscience, they fled for refuge to the gospel. . . Further, we shall deny that they were so endowed with the spirit of freedom and assurance as not in some degree to experience the fear and bondage arising from the law. For, however much they enjoyed the privilege that they had received through the grace of the gospel, they were still subject to the same bonds and burdens of ceremonial observances as the common people. They were compelled to observe those ceremonies punctiliously, symbols of a tutelage resembling bondage (cf. Gal. 4:2-3); and the written bonds (cf. Col. 2:14), whereby they confessed themselves guilty of sin, did not free them from obligation. Hence, they are rightly said, in contrast to us, to have been under the testament of bondage and fear, when we consider that common dispensation by which the Lord at that time dealt with the Israelites. . . . The fifth difference, which may be added, lies in the fact that until the advent of Christ, the Lord set apart one nation within which to confine the covenant of his grace . . . . He lodged his covenant, so to speak, in their bosom; he manifested the presence of his majesty to them; he showered every privilege upon them . . . . in communicating his Word to them, he joined them to himself, that he might be called and esteemed their God . . . . 'But when the fullness of time came' (Gal. 4:4) which was appointed for the restoration of all things, he was revealed as the reconciler of God and men; 'the wall' that for so long had confined God's mercy within the boundaries of Israel 'was broken down' (Eph. 2:14). 'Peace was announced to those who were far off, and to those who were near' (Eph. 2:17) that together they might be reconciled to God and welded into one people (Eph. 2:16).

The calling of the Gentiles, therefore, is a notable mark of the excellence of the New Testament over the Old. Indeed, this had been attested before by many very clear utterances of the prophets, but in such a way that its fulfillment was postponed until the kingdom of the Messiah . . . .

. . . God ought not to be considered changeable merely because he accommodated diverse forms to different ages, as he knew would be expedient for each . . . . if a householder instructs, rules, and guides, his children one way in Infancy, another way in youth, and still another



in young manhood, we shall not on this account call him fickle and say that he abandons his purpose. When, then, do we brand God with the mark of inconstancy because he has with apt and fitting marks distinguished a diversity of times? . . . God's constancy shines forth in the fact that he taught the same doctrine to all ages, and has continued to require the same worship of his name that he enjoined from the beginning. In the fact that he has changed the outward form and manner, he does not show himself subject to change. Rather, he has accommodated himself to man's capacity, which is varied and changeable.

-- John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Phil: The Westminster Press, 1960), Volume I, pp. 449-463.

(2) *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, Chapter VII, articles V-VI:

"V. This covenant was differently administered in the time of the law, and in the time of the gospel: under the law, it was administered by promises, prophecies, sacrifices, circumcision, the paschal lamb, and other types and ordinances delivered to the people of the Jews, all foreshadowing Christ to come; which were for that time, sufficient and efficacious, through the operation of the Spirit, to instruct and build up the elect in faith in the promised Messiah, by whom they had full remission of sins, and eternal salvation, and is called, the Old Testament.

VI. Under the gospel, when Christ, the substance, was exhibited, the ordinances in which this covenant is dispensed are the preaching of the Word, and the administration of the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper: which, though fewer in number, and administered with more simplicity, and less outward glory, yet, in them, it is held forth in more fullness, evidence and spiritual efficacy, to all nations, both Jews and Gentiles; and is called the New Testament. There are not therefore two covenants of grace, differing in substance, but one and the same, under various dispensations."

(3) Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, "Different Dispensations":

"Although the covenant of grace has always been the same, the dispensations of that covenant have changed. The first dispensation extended from Adam to Abraham. . . . The second dispensation extended from Abraham to Moses . . . . The third dispensation of this covenant was from Moses to Christ . . . . The gospel dispensation is called new in reference to the Mosaic economy, which was old, and about to vanish away. It is distinguished from the old economy, --

1. In being catholic, confined to no one people, but designed and adapted to all nations and to all classes of man.

2. It is more spiritual, not only in that the types and ceremonies of the Old Testament are done away, but also in that the revelation itself is more inward and spiritual. . . .

3. It is more purely evangelical . . . in the New Testament the gospel greatly predominates over the law. . . .

4. The Christian economy is specially the dispensation of the Spirit. The great blessing promised of old, as consequent on the coming of Christ,

was the effusion of the spirit on all flesh, i.e., on all nations and on all classes of men.

...

5. The old dispensation was temporary and preparatory; the new is permanent and final . . . . This dispensation is, therefore the last before the restoration of all things; . . . Afterwards comes the end; the resurrection and the final judgment . . . . we have no intimation in Scripture that the dispensation of the Spirit is to give way for a new and better dispensation for the conversion of the nations. When the gospel is fully preached, then comes the end.

-- Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1952), Volume Two, pp. 373-377.

## B. Contrasts in these Systems

In an article entitled "The Nature of Covenant Theology", Ernest Pickering (at the time of writing *Professor of Systematic Theology* in the Central Conservative Baptist Theological Seminary) wrote the following:

"While there are shades of difference among covenant theologians concerning the details, the broad outline is generally the same. In eternity past God made a covenant (widely known as the covenant of redemption) which bound Him to redeem the elect. Included in this covenant was the obligation on the part of God to provide for the incarnation of Christ, His vicarious death by which He would procure salvation for the elect, and His victorious resurrection. Also included in the covenant was the obligation of God to efficaciously draw the elect to Christ so that they would appropriate the salvation which God has provided. All the Biblical covenants (Abrahamic, etc.) are simply facets of this one eternal covenant of grace.

Covenant theology also holds to the concept of a covenant of works. This is a covenant made by God with Adam in which He promised Adam eternal life if He obeyed and eternal death if He disobeyed. God dealt with Adam in this covenant as the representative head of the human race, tested him in behalf of all the race, and passed judgment upon all the race because of his failure in the covenant relationship.

Summarily, covenant theology views God's purpose with the human race as essentially soteriological. God is saving the elect. All of his dealings with men are to be viewed in the light of this pervading purpose. . . .

Later in the article Dr. Pickering wrote the following:

### A Critique of Covenant Theology

The church remains indebted to many of the great covenant theologians for their outstanding contributions in various areas. Among them have been some of the greatest of conservative scholars. It is evident, however, that great and good men often build large system of thought upon very meager premises. Such is the case with regard to the system of covenant theology.

An extra-Biblical Invention. While there are of course elements of truth within the covenant scheme, as a system, the major premises of it are largely derived from theological speculation rather than sound Biblical exegesis. . . .

A narrowing of the purposes of God. In their presentation of the covenants of redemption and grace, the purpose of God with man is limited largely to a soteriological one. Thus in every age the primary purpose of God is that of bringing individual persons to saving faith. An examination of Scripture disproves this contention. God has several purposes. He has a purpose for the Gentile nations, a purpose for Israel as a nation, a purpose for the church . . . Personal salvation is only one of several purposes of God.

All Biblical covenants are actually reduced to one. The distinctive character of the various Biblical covenants is not recognized by covenant theologians. Without regard to their plain meaning or proper interpretation they are all lumped together as various expressions of one eternal covenant, the covenant of grace. . . .

The dispensational distinctions of Scripture are obliterated. In covenant theology the evident differences of God's dealings in various dispensations are denied. The dispensations (whatever number are recognized) are only various modes of administering the one covenant of grace. Even the dispensation of law is in reality a phase of God's gracious dealings. No more serious charge could be brought against the covenant system than to say that it confounds the principles of law and grace, which error is condemned strongly in the New Testament. . . .

Covenant theology has an objectionable adjunct -- the federal headship of Adam. At least two arguments can be brought against the federal theory. First of all, it calls into question the justice of God. If Adam was the representative of mankind, and if mankind did not actually sin when he sinned, then what right has God to account as sinners men who did not actually sin? God can only regard men as responsible for Adam's sin if they actually had some part in it.

A more serious objection can be raised. Federal theologians who maintain that God, in view of Adam's sin, immediately creates each soul in corruption, are wide open to the charge of making God the author of sin. . . . is it not better and more Scriptural (in light of Romans five) to state that corruption precedes the imputation of sin and is the basis of it?

A false and harmful view of the nature of the church. . . . Theologically, . . . they do not see the church as a distinct purpose of God for this age. The church is found in every age. To undergird this contention extensive spiritualization of the Old Testament Scripture is required in defiance of many of the common laws of Biblical interpretation.

In short, the covenant system is unsatisfactory in many ways. its exegesis is faulty. its premises are artificial. its conclusions are seriously at odds with plain New Testament teaching. As such it cannot lay claim to being a Biblical system of thought.

-- Ernest Pickering, "The Nature of Covenant Theology", reprinted from the *Central Conservative Baptist Quarterly*, Winter, 1960.

In his notable book, *Dispensationalism Today*, Charles C. Ryrie sets forth what he considers to be "THE *SINE QUA NON* OF DISPENSATIONALISM":

"What marks off a man as a dispensationalist? What is the *sine qua non* of the System? Even though certain later discussions must be anticipated in order to answer the question, it seems appropriate to give an answer at this point.

Theoretically the *sine qua non* ought to lie in the recognition of the fact that God has distinguishably different economies in governing the affairs of the world. Covenant theologians hold that there are various dispensations (and even use the word!) within the outworking of the covenant of grace . . . in other words, a man can believe in dispensations, and even see them in relation to progressive revelation, without being a dispensationalist.

Is the essence of dispensationalism in the number of dispensations? No, for this is in no way a major issue in the system, . . .

Perhaps the issue of premillennialism is determinative. Again the answer is negative, for there are those who are premillennial who definitely are not dispensational. . . .

What, then, is the *sine qua non* of dispensationalism? The answer is threefold.

- (1) A dispensationalist keeps Israel and the Church distinct. . . . Chafer summarized it as follows:

The dispensationalist believes that throughout the ages God is pursuing two distinct purposes: one related to the earth with earthly people and earthly objectives involved which is Judaism; while the other is related to heaven with heavenly people and heavenly objectives involved, which is Christianity. . . .

This is probably the most basic theological test of whether or not a man is a dispensationalist, and it is undoubtedly the most practical and conclusive. A man who fails to distinguish Israel and the Church will inevitably not hold to dispensational distinctions; and one who does, will.

- (2) This distinction between Israel and the Church is born out of a system of hermeneutics which is usually called literal interpretation. Therefore, the second aspect of the *sine qua non* of dispensationalism is the matter of plain hermeneutics. . . .

- (3) A third aspect of the *sine qua non* of dispensationalism . . . concerns the underlying purpose of God in the world. The covenant theologian in practice makes this purpose salvation, and the dispensationalist says the purpose is broader than that, namely, the glory of God. To the dispensationalist the soteriological or saving program of God is not the only program but one of the means God is using in the total program of glorifying Himself . . . John F. Walvoord . . . puts it this way:

All events of the created world are designed to manifest the glory of God. The error of covenant theologians is that they combine all the many facets of divine purpose in the one objective of the fulfillment of the covenant of grace. From a logical standpoint, this is the reductive error -- the use of one aspect of the whole as the determining element.

The essence of dispensationalism, then, is the distinction between Israel and the Church. This grows out of the dispensationalist's consistent employment of normal or plain interpretation, and it reflects an understanding of the basic purpose of God in all His dealings with mankind as that of glorifying Himself through salvation and other purposes as well."

-- Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1965), pp. 43-47.

From these quotations (and others previously quoted) together with the matters discussed under "The Hermeneutics of Prophecy" we can discern some contrasts between Dispensational Theology and Covenant Theology, among which the following appear to be important:

1. The contrast between the doxological, all-inclusive purpose of God and the soteriological or redemptive purpose of God.
2. The contrast between Israel and the Church.
3. The contrast between Law and Grace, viewed both as principles and as dispensations.
4. The contrast between the Work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Dispensation (i.e., pre-Pentecost) and His work during the present Dispensation.
5. The contrast between consistently literal interpretation of Old Testament predictive prophecy and spiritualization or inconsistently literal interpretation, and the implications of these approaches for eschatology.
6. The contrast between an emphasis on historical covenants and an emphasis on the outworking of the Covenant of Grace (following the Fall).
7. The contrast between dispensations viewed as recurrent cycles of tests of the natural man following the pattern of revelation, responsibility, failure, and judgment; and dispensations viewed as historical stages in the progressive unfolding of revelation concerning both law and gospel.

C. Analysis of Genuine Differences between these Systems, together with Proposals Regarding Possible Areas of Rapprochement

During the past twenty-five years several attempts have been made to build bridges of mutual understanding and agreement between adherents of Dispensational Theology and those of Covenant Theology. In 1979 Ian D. Radmacher was able to detect a "growing rapprochement that has been taking place between covenant and dispensational theologians of orthodox persuasion over the last decade or so." During the past five years several articles witnessing this development have appeared, including Harold O. J. Brown's "Covenant and Dispensation" (*Trinity Journal*, Spring 1981), Kenneth L. Barker's "False Dichotomies Between the Testaments" (*JETS*, March 1982), Robert Saucy's "Contemporary Dispensational Thought" (*TSF Bulletin*, March-April 1984), and Saucy's "Dispensationalism and the Salvation of the Kingdom" (*TSF Bulletin*, May-June 1984).

The question, of course, is this: in what ways do Dispensational Theology and Covenant Theology really differ in the areas of contrast mentioned above; and in what ways can these contrasts be narrowed still further? Let us consider these questions in connection with each of the seven areas of contrast listed above.

1. With regard to Dispensationalism's claim that it is doxological or theocentric on the one hand, whereas Covenant Theology is soteriological or redemptocentric on the other, it should be pointed out that Covenant Theology's distinction between the decrees of God in general and His decrees that pertain to salvation raises a question whether it can properly be said to 'narrow the purposes of God to one, namely that of individual salvation.

The *Westminster Shorter Catechism* Questions 7, 8, and 11 run as follows:

"Q. 7. What are the decrees of God?

A. The decrees of God are, his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.

Q. 8. How doth God execute his decrees?

A. God executeth his decrees in the works of creation and providence.

Q. 11. What are God's works of providence?

A. God's works of providence are, his most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures, and all their actions."

Subsumed under God's works of providence are His covenant of works and His covenant of grace, as expressed in Question 12 and 20:

"Q. 12. What special act of providence did God exercise towards man the estate wherein he was created?

A. When God had created man, he entered into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of perfect obedience; forbidding him to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, upon the pain of death.

Q. 20. Did God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery?

A. God having, out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer."

God's providence appears to include the preserving and governing of the physical universe, the spirit world, and Gentile nations, Israel, and the Church, and all for His own glory! Thus God's overall purpose includes subpurposes related to creation, preservation, providence, and judgment, as well as to redemption.

The claim that Covenant Theology focuses almost exclusively on soteriological concerns may therefore be a caricature. The counterclaim that Dispensationalism focuses almost exclusively on ecclesiological and eschatological concerns may also be a caricature. On the other hand, these may be only relative differences of emphasis, in which case further dialogue should clarify them.

2. With regard to Dispensationalism's distinction between Israel and the Church, it should be asked whether this distinction is absolute or relative, and whether Covenant Theology is committed by inherent principle to a rejection of this distinction. In this connection, the following questions should be raised:
  - a. Is Christ's kingdom a wholly earthly/future concept, or can it be both earthly/future and spiritual/present? Is there a sense in which Christ's kingdom includes Jewish and Gentile believers, both in the present and in the future? Robert Saucy, Professor of Systematic Theology at Talbot Theological Seminary, addresses this question:

"Although all dispensationalists maintain a distinction between Israel and the Church, there are significant differences as to the extent of their separation in the purposes and program of God. These differences focus on the relationship of the present Church age with the messianic promises of the Old Testament. Since these promises contain the restoration of the nation of Israel as a central feature, older traditional dispensationalism has tended to deny any fulfillment in the Church age of those promises related to the Messianic kingdom during the present church age, arguing that their fulfillment involves the salvation and restoration of Israel as a nation under the Messiah. . . .

Some dispensationalists, however, have come to see a greater unity in the historical program of God centered in the Messianic kingdom. Without giving up the fulfillment of the promises for the nation of Israel when Christ returns to reign openly in glory, this form of dispensationalism agrees with non-dispensational premillennialism that it is preferable to interpret this age as the first phase of the fulfillment of the one promised Messianic kingdom. The present age involves the spiritual aspects of the Messianic kingdom, that is, the blessings of the New Covenant (i.e. regeneration, the indwelling spirit, etc.). The remainder of the promises including those concerning Israel and the nations will find their fulfillment following the second advent.

Thus this form of dispensationalism shares much in common with non-dispensational premillennialism in seeing the action of God through His word and Spirit in this age as the presence of the power of the Messianic kingdom in fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies.

-- Robert Saucy, "Contemporary Dispensational Thought" in *TSF Bulletin*, March-April 1904, pp. 10-11.
  - b. Who were the intended inheritors of the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and those Israelites who followed them -- promises that God would be their God, would lead them, bless them, forgive their sins, be with them in life and death, resurrect them from the dead, give them the land of Palestine as a perpetual possession, and raise up the Son of David to be their everlasting Messiah and king? Were the intended inheritors of these promises to be all of the Israelites, believers and unbelievers alike, or only believing Israelites? And who will actually inherit these promises? Will it not be believing Israelites? Who will be saved, when

"they look on Him whom they have pierced"? Will it not be believing Israelites? And who will be resurrected to live and reign with Christ during His earthly kingdom? Will it not be believing Israelites?

- c. Since the heavenly city, the New Jerusalem, is seen in Revelation 21 as coming down from the sky to the earth; and since God's throne is in the city and His tabernacle is with men; what does the distinction between a heavenly destiny for the Church and an earthly destiny for Israel actually mean?
  - d. Is there a future for the nation of Israel? this appears to be a crucial issue for Dispensationalists. Three things should be said in this connection. First, it would appear very difficult, exegetically speaking, to take "Israel" as used in Romans 11:26 ("And so all Israel shall be saved; as it is written, There shall come out of lion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob") as anything other than ethnic Israel (as John Murray points out so forcefully in his excellent commentary on Romans). Second, historical developments since 1945 have caused many interpreters to take a second look at predictions concerning the nation of Israel, and to consider at least the possibility of a historical instead of a symbolic or spiritual fulfillment of these predictions. Third, it should be pointed out and stressed that the figurative-spiritualization approach to the interpretation of Old Testament predictive prophecy concerning Israel bears no organic relationship to the basic features of Covenant Theology. Therefore there is no conflict between Covenant Theology and the affirmation of a genuine future for the nation of Israel in God's program.
3. With regard to Dispensationalism's contrast of Law and Grace, an ambiguity arises when we ask whether the difference between Law and Grace as dispensations is as absolute as the difference between law and grace as principles.

Robert Saucy notes a difference between earlier and contemporary Dispensationalism on this issue:

"The focus on distinctive expressions of the will of God for human life on earth has led to many accusations that dispensationalism teaches more than one way of salvation. In response, most dispensationalists will acknowledge a lack of clarity and even exaggeration in some statements made by early advocates of this system. . . .

The subsequent development of dispensational theology as well as non-dispensational covenant theology has led to a convergence on the issue of law and grace with regard to salvation so that today the charge of two ways of salvation is seldom heard. Both recognize God's gracious dealings with His people during the Old dispensation as well as a clearer and fuller manifestation of grace through the work of Christ."

-- Robert Saucy, *ibid.*, p. 10.



This difference may be documented by noting the change from *The Scofield Reference Bible* of 1917 to *The New Scofield Reference Bible* of 1967 in the footnote on John 1:17.

From the 1917 edition:

"Grace. Summary: (1) Grace is 'the kindness and love of God our saviour toward man . . . not by works of righteousness which we have done' (Tit. 3:4, 5). It is, therefore, constantly set in contrast to law, under which God demands righteousness from man, as, under grace, he gives righteousness to man (Rom. 3:21, 22; 8:4; Phil. 3:9). Law is connected with Moses and works; grace with Christ and faith (John 1:17; Rom. 10:4-10). Law blesses the good; grace saves the bad (Exod. 19:5; Eph. 2:1-9). Law demands that blessings be earned; grace is a free gift (Deut. 28:1-6; Eph. 2:8; Rom. 4:4, 5).

(2) As a dispensation, grace begins with the death and resurrection of Christ (Rom. 3:24-26; 4:24, 25). The point of testing is no longer legal obedience as the condition of salvation, but acceptance or rejection of Christ with good works as a fruit of salvation (John 1:12, 13; 3:36; Matt. 21:37; 22:42; John 15:22, 25; Heb. 1:2; I John 5:10-12). The immediate result of this testing was the rejection of Christ by the Jews, and His crucifixion by Jew and Gentile (Acts 4:27). The predicted end of the testing of man under grace is the apostasy of the professing church (see 'Apostasy,' 11 Tim. 3:1-8, note), and the resultant apocalyptic judgments.

(3) Grace has a twofold manifestation: in salvation (Rom. 3:24, refs.), and the walk and service of the saved (Rom. 6:15, refs.). See, for the other six dispensations: Innocence, Gen. 1:28; Conscience, Gen. 3:23; Human Government, Gen. 8:21; Promise, Gen. 12:1; Law, Ex. 19:8; Kingdom, Eph. 1:10."

From the 1967 edition:

"Grace, Summary: (1) Grace is 'the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man . . . not by works of righteousness which we have done . . . being justified by his grace; (Ti. 3:4, 5, 7). As a principle, therefore grace is set in contrast with law (Rom. 11:6), under which God demands righteousness from men, as under grace, He gives righteousness to man (Rom. 3:21-24; 8:3-4; Gal. 2:16; Phil. 3:9). Law is connected with Moses and works; grace, with Christ and faith (Jn. 1:17; Rom. 10:4-10). Under law blessings accompany obedience (Dt. 28:1-6); grace bestows blessing as a free gift (Rom. 4:3-5; Eph. 2:8).

(2) In its fullness, grace began with the ministry of Christ involving His death and resurrection, for He came to die for sinners (Jn. 1:17; Matt. 11:28-30; 16:21; 20:28; Rom. 3:24-26; 4:24-25). Under the former dispensation, law was shown to be powerless to secure righteousness and life for a sinful race (Gal. 3:21-22). Prior to the cross man's salvation was through faith (Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:3), being grounded on Christ's atoning sacrifice, viewed anticipatively by God (Rom. 3:25; see Gen. 1:28, heading, note, par. 3); now it is clearly revealed that salvation and righteousness are received by faith in the crucified and resurrected Savior (Jn. 1:12-13; 5:24; I Jn. 5:11-13), with holiness of life and good works for following as the fruit of salvation (Jn. 15:16; Rom. 8:2-4; Eph. 2:8-10; Tit. 2:11-14).

(3) There was grace before Christ came, as witnessed by the provision of sacrifice for sinners (Ex. 20:24-26; Lev. 5:17-18; 17:11). The difference between the former age and the present age, therefore, is not a matter of no grace and some grace, but rather that today grace reigns (Rom. 5:21), in the sense that the only Being who has a right to judge sinners (Jn. 5:22) is now seated upon a throne of grace (Heb. 4:14-16), not imputing unto the world their trespasses (II Cor. 5:19)."

Both Dispensational Theology and Covenant Theology affirm an absolute difference between Law and Grace as principles, and a relative difference between Law and Grace as dispensations.

However, something further must be said. When we speak of law and grace as principles (i.e., descriptions of the way things operate), we are thinking of them as principles of salvation i.e., as ways in which men are saved. The Law Principle says, "Obey the preceptive will of God and you will merit the reward of righteousness and life!" The Grace Principle, on the other hand, says, "Trust in God's redemptive provision for sinners through Christ, and you will receive the gifts of forgiveness, righteousness, life, and enablement to do the revealed will of God!"

But there is another important meaning of law: that of an objective standard of righteousness addressed to man's obedience. The meaning of law has two quite distinct uses: the law as an expression of the standard of righteousness required for justification (including a title to eternal life), and the law as an expression of the standard of righteousness needed as a pattern for the kind of righteous living that will both please God and achieve man's highest well-being and potential for good. This latter use of this meaning of law is what the authors of the Formula of Concord (1584) referred to in Article VI, when they spoke of "the Third Use of the Law."

It is in this area--the use of the unchangeable will of God addressed to man's obedience as a rule of life--that we find both continuing controversy and development. On the one hand we find statements like the following by C. I. Scofield (which many Dispensationalists still affirm):

"it was reserved to modern nomolaters to wrench these holy and just but deathful tables from underneath the mercy-seat and the atoning blood, and erect them in Christian churches as the rule of Christian life."

-- C. I. Scofield, *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth* (New York: Loizeaux Brothers, Inc., 1896), p. 42.

On the other hand we find statements like the following by Ray L. Aldrich:

"For the sake of simplicity we shall use the term moral law to describe the eternal principles of righteousness which are a reflection of the character of God. This law has always existed and is the essence of the will of God for every dispensation . . . . When so many commentators and theologians say that the Ten Commandments have never been repealed or abrogated they really mean that the moral law of God is eternal. This conclusion no one would question. . . . all people in every dispensation are under the moral law of God . . . .

To avoid confusion and legalism a careful distinction should be made between the moral law and the Mosaic Ten Commandments."

-- Roy L. Aldrich, "Causes for Confusion of Law and Grace," in *Bibliotheca Sacra* Vol. 116, No. 463 (July 1959), pp.225-226.

" . . . most dispensationalists would approve of the following: . . . (3) That the eternal moral law of God (not the Mosaic law) applies to all dispensations."

-- Roy L. Aldrich, "An Outline Study on Dispensationalism," in *Bibliotheca Sacra* Vol. 118, No. 470 (April 1961), p. 134.

"The moral law is the basis of the Mosaic law, but the two should not be confused. Christians and all of God's intelligent creatures are under His eternal moral law, but only Israel was ever under the Mosaic pattern of the moral law. . . .

In conclusion, it has been noted that none of the Ten Commandments reappear in the New Testament for this age of grace as Mosaic legislation. All of the moral principles of the ten laws do reappear in the New Testament in a framework of grace. The Christian is not under 'the ministration of death, written and engraven in stone,' but he is under all the moral principles of those stones restated for this economy of grace."

-- Roy L. Aldrich, "The Mosaic Ten Commandments Compared to their Restatements in the New Testament," In *Bibliotheca Sacra* Vol. 118. No. 471 (July 1961), pp. 251, 257.

"Much of the argument over law and grace is caused by a failure in definition of terms. If the eternal moral law of God is distinguished from the Mosaic laws, much of the confusion disappears. All agree that we are still under the 'righteousness of the law,' i.e., the moral principles contained in the law of Moses, and all but extreme legalists also agree that we are not under 'the ministration of death written and engraven in stones,' (2 Cor. 3:7), i.e., under the Mosaic economy of the moral law with its death penalties."

-- Roy L. Aldrich, "A New Look at Dispensationalism," in *Bibliotheca Sacra* Vol. 120, No. 177 (January-March 1963), p. 48.

To summarize. It is important to distinguish between Law as a dispensation, law as a principle of salvation, law as the standard of righteousness required for justification, and law as the standard of righteousness needed to live a righteous life. And it is important to distinguish between Grace as a dispensation and grace as a principle of salvation. It should be noted that grace is not a standard of righteousness, but rather God's favor extended toward sinners in blessing and enablement.

The moral law of God is the will of God addressed to man's obedience in every dispensation; and grace enables man to obey and do the will of God. In this sense law and grace are not antithetical, but sweetly work together via the principle, "Christ for us, the Holy Spirit in us". Christ fulfilled the

law of God for us, and the Holy spirit fulfills the law of God in us, as Paul tells us in Roams 8:3-4:

"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

4. With regard to Dispensationalism's emphasis on the contrast between the work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament and His work in this dispensation, it should be noted that much development has occurred during the past twenty-five years to bring Dispensational Theology and Covenant Theology closer in this area of truth. Notable in this connection has been a renewed stress in Dispensational circles on the reality of regeneration during the Old Testament period. In Aldrich's article, "A New Look at Dispensationalism", he says:

"The new birth. Perhaps both sides of the dispensational debate could also agree that the new birth is characteristic of every period since the fall, even though this doctrine is not as clearly revealed in the Old Testament as in the New. It was before the inauguration of the church age that the Lord said to Nicodemus: 'Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God' (John 3:5). Old Testament saints are clearly declared to be in the kingdom of God (Luke 13:28-29) and therefore they must have experienced the new birth. The Scriptural truth of man's sinful nature would make the new birth a necessity before there could be entrance into the kingdom of God."

ibid., pp. 47-48.

However, a further sticking-point has been the Holy Spirit's ministry of indwelling in the Old Testament period, especially as related to Dispensationalism's view of the rapture. For if indwelling is denied to members of Israel and confined to members of the Church, then when the Church is raptured and God turns once more in grace to Israel, the indwelling ministry must cease. This appears to many Dispensationalists to be a strong argument in favor of a pre-tribulation rapture. Any suggestion of indwelling in the Old Testament (or during the Tribulation) appears to weaken or threaten the clean, clear-cut contrast between Israel and the Church, and thus the necessity of a rapture prior to the Tribulation.

Part of the problem appears to lie in the spatial conception of indwelling prevalent among many Christians. Redefinition is clearly needed! But there is another erroneous conception among many believers: that of an absolute contrast between the Old Testament as dealing exclusively or primarily with the outward, external, physical, carnal aspect of life, and the New Testament as dealing exclusively or primarily with the inward, internal, spiritual, godly aspect of life. This contrast should be seen as a relative, not an absolute one!

5. With regard to Dispensationalism's emphasis on its consistently literal interpretation of Old Testament predictive prophecy versus the alleged inconsistently literal interpretation of non-dispensational premillennialism or the figurative-spiritualization interpretation of amillennialism, it should

be noted that it is quite possible to affirm literal, normal, or plain interpretation and at the same time be an adherent of Covenant Theology! Once again let us assert that there is nothing in Covenant Theology's distinction between the covenant of works between God and our first parents in Eden before the Fall, and the covenant of grace between God and believing sinners throughout all ages since the Fall, that inherently and necessarily leads to a figurative-spiritualization interpretation of predictive prophecy. The adoption of such a hermeneutic is a free, conscious choice, not a necessary implication arising from a Covenant orientation. Dispensationalism is inherently premillennial and pretribulational; Covenant Theology does not inherently imply a particular eschatology.

6. With regard to Dispensationalism's claim that it emphasizes the various historical covenants of Scripture, whereas Covenant Theology emphasizes the covenants of work and grace, it would appear that this is a relative difference rather than an absolute one. It is true that in Covenant Theology there are only two arrangements or covenants between God and man that condition salvation (works and grace), but it is also true that Covenant Theology refers frequently to other covenants mentioned in Scripture -- covenants that pertain to various aspects of the outworking of God's purposes.

By way of comparison, Dispensationalism discerns eight great covenants in Scripture:

1. The Edenic Covenant (Genesis 2:16)
2. The Manic Covenant (Genesis 3:15)
3. The Noahic Covenant (Genesis 9:16)
4. The Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 12:2)
5. The Mosaic Covenant (Exodus 19:5)
6. The Palestinian Covenant (Deuteronomy 30:3)
7. The Davidic Covenant (II Samuel 7:16)
8. The New Covenant (Hebrews 6:6)

From a Covenant Theology point of view, the covenants of Scripture may be schematized as follows (i.e., according to proposal, and by no means the only possible one):

1. The Edenic Covenant (Genesis 2:15-17)
2. The Adamic Covenant (Genesis 3:15 -- the Protoevangelium)
3. The Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 17:1-8) -- The Palestinian Covenant (Deuteronomy 30:3) appears to be an amplification of one aspect of the Abrahamic Covenant.
4. The Mosaic Covenant (Exodus 19:5)
5. The Davidic Covenant (II Samuel 7:16)
6. The New Covenant (Hebrews 9:15)
7. The Heavenly Covenant (Revelation 21:3-5)

In this schema, the first (the Edenic) is a covenant of works; the others are all grace covenants (including the Mosaic). That is, in this schema no covenant given after the Fall, including the Mosaic, was ever given as a covenant of works by which the unregenerate man or Israelite might merit the reward of righteousness and life; rather they all envisioned fallen man as a sinner in need of God's grace (albeit responsible for his sin and unbelief). Even the Mosaic Covenant was given as a grace covenant, by which Israelites were given the Mosaic Law to reveal more clearly and definitely their sins, to restrain their outward expressions of depravity in a civic context, and to instruct them how to conduct their lives spiritually and morally and socially,

both corporately and individually. God never intended that the Mosaic Law be used as a works covenant by which to earn salvation, but rather as a grace covenant to reveal to Israel their sin, the way of salvation, and the way of life.

7. With regard to Dispensationalism's interpretation of history in terms of recurrent cycles of testing of the natural man, each testing period ending in failure and judgment, versus a view of history that affirms stages in the progressive unfolding of revelation concerning both law and gospel, it should be noted that both Dispensational Theology and Covenant Theology stress the progressive unfolding of revelation; both agree that, since the Fall, the natural man in every age has failed to meet God's standards; both affirm human responsibility for sin and unbelief in every age; and both posit divine judgment for failure and sin in every age. Thus there are aspects of each dispensational cycle that run as threads throughout human history; and this would allow for considerable continuity as well as diversity.

With respect to a definition of "dispensation", Roy C. Aldrich suggests a simple definition on which he believes there could be close agreement by both sides of the issue. He quotes the following from *Funk and Wagnalls New Standard Dictionary*: "The period during which a particular revelation of God's mind and will has been operative on mankind; as during the Christian dispensation; during the patriarchal dispensation."

-- Roy C. Aldrich, "A New Look at Dispensationalism," in *Bibliotheca Sacra* Vol. 120, No. 477 (January-March), p. 46.

Aldrich also suggests (on the same page) that "Some of the seven dispensations outlined by many dispensationalists may be only convenient historical divisions."

Accordingly, from a Covenant Theology point of view a dispensation may be defined as a historical period in which the administration of one of the major covenants of Scripture is prominently featured.

With this definition in hand, the dispensations of Scripture may be formulated. By way of comparison, Dispensationalism discerns seven dispensations in Scripture:

1. Innocence
2. Conscience or Moral Responsibility
3. Human Government
4. Promise
5. Law
6. Church
7. Kingdom

From a Covenant Theology point of view, the dispensations of Scripture may be schematized as follows (again, one proposal, not the only possible one):

1. The Adamic (pre-Fall) Dispensation
2. The Mosaic (post-Fall) Dispensation

3. The Abrahamic Dispensation
4. The Mosaic Dispensation
5. The Present Dispensation
6. The Millennial Dispensation
7. The Dispensation of the Eternal States

Combining the proposed covenants of Scripture with these proposed dispensations, we get the following proposal:

<b>Dispensation</b>	<b>Historical Period</b>	<b>Covenant Prominently Featured</b>	<b>Other Covenants in Force</b>
<b>1. Adamic (pre-Fall)</b>	<b>from the creation of man to the Fall</b>	<b>Edenic</b>	<b>-----</b>
<b>2. Adamic (post-Fall)</b>	<b>from the Fall to Abraham</b>	<b>Adamic</b>	<b>-----</b>
<b>3. Abrahamic</b>	<b>from Abraham to Moses</b>	<b>Abrahamic</b>	<b>Adamic</b>
<b>4. Mosaic</b>	<b>from Moses to Christ</b>	<b>Mosaic Davidic</b>	<b>Adamic Abrahamic</b>
<b>5. Present</b>	<b>from Christ's death to His second coming</b>	<b>New</b>	<b>Adamic Abrahamic Davidic (in spiritual sense)</b>
<b>6. Millennial</b>	<b>from Christ's second coming to the creation of the new heavens and earth</b>	<b>Davidic</b>	<b>Adamic Abrahamic New</b>
<b>7. Eternal States</b>	<b>from new heavens and earth to eternity</b>	<b>Heavenly</b>	<b>Abrahamic New</b>

#### IV. The Kingdom and the Millennium

##### A. The Kingdom of God in Scripture

All Christians in all ages have believed in Christ's Return, His Second Advent, His Second Coming. These term "return", "Second Advent", "Second coming" all imply Christ's First Advent or Coming. In the fullness of time He came; once again in the fullness of time He will come again.

R. A. Torrey, well-known evangelist and writer, said that the greater number of predictions concerning Christ in the Old Testament are connected with His Second Coming. He also stated that the Second Coming of Christ is mentioned 318 times in the 260 chapters of the New Testament. Of course, others term are used as well. We not only read about His Coming, His advent, His return; we also find terms manifestation, "appearing", "revelation", and "rapture". All of these term refer to various aspects of the doctrine of the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This great doctrine has been expressed in Christian creeds and confessions from the earliest times. In the Apostles' Creed (the earliest form of which dates back to A.D. 150) we read "he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right band of God the Father almighty; from thence *he shall come* to judge the quick and the dead." In the Athanasian Creed (dating back to the fifth century) we read: "Ascended to heaven, sitteth at the right hand of God the Father omnipotent, whence *he shall come* to judge the living and the dead. At whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies, and shall render an account for their own works." (italics added)

This truth of the Second Coming of Christ is a truly universal doctrine; one which has been held by the whole household of faith. It has been confessed always, everywhere, and by all. It has been held by all churches, whether eastern or western, whether ancient, medieval, or modern, as one of the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith.

However, although all Christians have believed in the personal return of Christ, they have held widely differing positions on the relationship of the Second Coming to the Kingdom of God, positions that have affected their conception of both the nature and the time of that kingdom. In part, these differing positions arise because of the different meanings of the term "Kingdom of God".

1. Various meanings of the term "Kingdom of God" in Scripture
  - a. God's comprehensive rule in the created universe

In its most comprehensive sense, the Kingdom of God means the rule of God in all spheres of the universe. This rule is as old as the universe itself. In this sense God's kingdom is already present, throughout the world. This first meaning is beautifully expressed in two Old Testament Scriptures:

Chronicles 29:11-12 -- "Thine, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, indeed everything that is in



the heavens and the earth; Thine is the dominion, O Lord, and Thou dost exalt Thyself as head over all. Both riches and honor come from Thee, and Thou dost rule over all, and in Thy hand is power and might; and it lies in Thy hand to make great, and to strengthen everyone."

Daniel 4:34-35 -- "But at the end of that period I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Host High and praised and honored Him who lives forever; For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom endures from generation to generation. And all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But He does according to His will in the host of heaven And among the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, "What hast Thou done?"

b. God's spiritual rule in the lives of regenerated human beings

In this sense, God rules in the hearts of all who trust in His salvation. According to this meaning God's kingdom is already present in the hearts and lives of His people. This meaning is found in several Scriptures, of which the following may be noted:

Luke 17:20-21 -- "Now having been questioned by the Pharisees as to when the kingdom of God was coming, He answered them and said, 'The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; nor will they say, "Look, here it is!" or, "There it is!" For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst.' " (or within you)

John 3:3-5 -- "Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus said to Him, 'How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?' Jesus answered, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.' "

Romans 14:16-18 -- "Therefore do not let what is for you a good thing be spoken of as evil; for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. For he who in this way serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by man."

Colossians 1:13 -- "For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son"

c. God's eternal rule in the recreated universe

The reality conveyed by this conception is marvelously pictured for us in the last 2 chapters of the book of Revelation, in which the throne of God and of the Lamb are located in the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, following the creation of the new heavens and earth. In addition, two other Scriptures should be noted:

Corinthians 15:22-26 -- "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, then comes the end, when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death."

Peter 1:11 -- "for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you."

d. God's millennial rule in the earth; more specifically, the Millennial Kingdom of Christ

This meaning is expressed in a number of Scriptures. Let us note three:

Isaiah 11:1-9 -- "Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse,  
And a branch from his roots will bear fruit,  
And the Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him,  
The spirit of wisdom and understanding,  
The spirit of counsel and strength,  
The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.  
And He will delight in the fear of the Lord,  
And He will not judge by what His eyes see,  
Nor make a decision by what His ears hear;  
But with righteousness He will judge the poor,  
And decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth;  
And He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth,  
And with the breath of His lips he will slay the wicked.  
Also righteousness will be the belt about His loins,  
And faithfulness the belt about His waist.

And the wolf will dwell with the lamb,  
And the leopard will lie down with the kid,  
And the calf and the young lion and the fatling together;  
And a little boy will lead them.  
Also the cow and the bear will graze;  
Their young will lie down together;  
And the lion will eat straw like the ox.  
And the nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra,  
And the weaned child will put his hand on the viper's den.  
They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain,  
For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord  
As the waters cover the sea."

Micah 4:1-4 -- "And it will come about in the last days  
That the mountains of the house of the Lord  
Will be established as the chief of the mountains.  
It will be raised above the hills,  
And the people will stream to it.

And many nations will come and say,  
'Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord  
And to the house of the God of Jacob,  
That He may teach us about His way  
And that we may walk in His paths.'  
For from Zion will go forth the law,  
Even the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.  
And He will judge between many peoples  
And render decisions for mighty, distant nations.  
Then they will hammer their swords into plowshares  
And their spears into pruning hooks;  
Nation will not lift up sword against nation,  
And never again will they train for war.  
And each of them will sit under his vine  
And under his fig tree,  
With no one to make them afraid,  
For the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken.

Revelation 19:11-16, 19-20; 20:1-6 -- "And I saw heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True; and in righteousness He Judges and wages war. And His eyes are a flame of fire, and upon His head are many diadems; and He has a name written upon Him which no one knows except Himself. And He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood; and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses. And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may smite the nations; and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." . . . And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies, assembled to make war against Him who sat upon the horse, and against His army. And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshipped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone . . . . And I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he should not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshipped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years."

At this point it should be stressed that it is not the fact of this usage of "Kingdom of God" as referring to the Millennial Kingdom of Christ that is in dispute, or the fact of the reality to which the term refers. The question concerns rather the nature and the time of the Millennial Kingdom.

All of the millennial views hold to the reality of the Millennial Kingdom of Christ. The question is, is it a rule from heaven or upon earth? Does it include all men or only believers? Is it already present or is it still future? Is it a long period of indefinite length, or a definite period of one thousand years? Will Christ come before it, during it, or after it? Is there a sharp contrast between the Millennial Kingdom and the eternal state? These and many other questions have arisen concerning the nature and the time of the Millennial Kingdom of Christ. And on the basis of the answers to these questions, three major views of the Millennial kingdom of Christ have emerged in the history of the Church.

#### FIVE SCENARIOS OF REVELATION 20:4-6

Text: And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls (τὰς ψυχὰς) of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshipped the beast or his image, and had not receive the mark upon their forehead and upon their head; and they came to life (ἔζησαν) and reigned (ἐβασίλευσαν) with Christ (μετὰ τοῦ χριστοῦ) for a thousand years (χίλια ἔτη.) (5) The rest of the dead (οἱ λοιποὶ τῶν νεκρῶν) did not come to life (οὐκ ἔζησαν) until the thousand years (χίλια ἔτη) were completed. This is the first resurrection (αὕτη ἡ νάστασις ἡ πρώτη) (6) Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection (ἀναστήσει τῇ πρώτῃ); over these the second death (ὁ δεύτερος θάνατος) has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years (χίλια ἔτη)."

#### Scenarios:

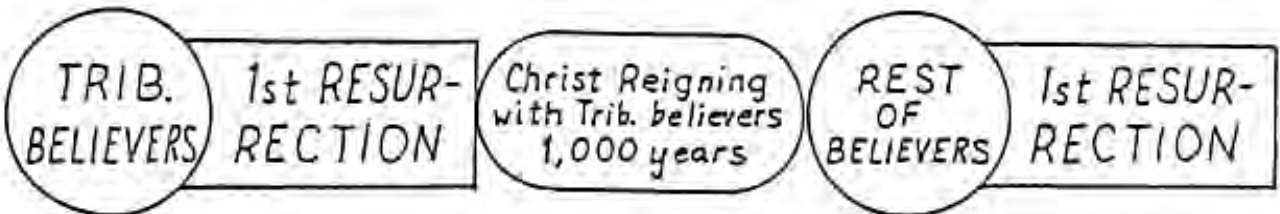
##### Scenario 1



Comment: This scenario reads Revelation 20:4-6 in a *prima facie* fashion, taking each clause or phrase as referring to a distinct event in sequence. Problems: Are there really two one-thousand-year periods when Christ reigns in God's program? Also, the resurrection of non-Tribulation believers comes at

the time of Christ's Second Coming (1 Cor. 15:22-23; 1 Thess. 4:16); in this scenario their resurrection occurs a thousand years after His Second Coming!

Scenario 2



Comments: This scenario takes "the first resurrection" of verse 5b as including both, the Tribulation believers who came to life before the thousand years and the rest of the believers who came to life after the thousand years; thus the first resurrection involves two stages. Problem: verse 6 says that those who have a part in the first resurrection reign with Christ for a thousand years. How can the rest of the believers who come to life after the thousand years, reign with Christ during the thousand years? And if the rest of the believers do not reign with Christ during the thousand years, how can they "have a part in the first resurrection," since verse 6 clearly states that those who have a part reign with Christ for a thousand years?

Scenario 3



Comments: This scenario sees verse 5b ("This is the first resurrection") as referring to "the rest of the dead" in verse 5a, viewed as non-believers. Problem: Verse 6 says that the second death has no power over those who have a part in the first resurrection. Yet these non-believers experience the second death (Rev. 20:14-15). In addition, verse 6 says that these non-believers who have part in the first resurrection reign with Christ for one thousand years; yet they are not resurrected until after the thousand years!

Scenario 4



Comments: This scenario takes verse 5a as a parenthesis; thus verse 5b refers to the Tribulation believer. In verse 6 these Tribulation believers reign with Christ for a thousand years. Problems: When are all the other believers resurrected? This is important, since the Resurrection is connected with Christ's Second Coming (1 Cor. 15:22-23; 1 Thess. 4:16). In a posttrib framework, if all the other believers are resurrected at the end of the Tribulation, do they enter the Millennium with the Tribulation believers? In a pretrib framework, If all the other believers are resurrected at the Rapture, do they return with Christ and enter the Millennium with the Tribulation believers? Also, when is II Timothy 2:12 ("If we endure, we shall also reign with Him") fulfilled for other believers?

Scenario 5



Comments: This scenario takes verse 5a as a parenthesis; thus verse 5b refers to the completion of the first resurrection, which was begun by Christ at His resurrection ("the firstfruits"), continued by those who are Christ's at His Coming, and completed by the Tribulation believers prior to the Millennium. Thus all believers participate in the first resurrection, and all believers reign with Christ for a thousand years.

B. Basic Views of the Millennial kingdom of Christ

Three basic views of the Millennial Kingdom of Christ have arisen in the history of this area of doctrine: Amillennialism, Postmillennialism, and Premillennialism. They differ as to the nature and the time of Christ's Millennial kingdom, and to some extent on the interpretation of Old Testament predictive prophecy.

1. Amillennialism

Millard J. Erickson, in his book *Contemporary Options in Eschatology*, mentions seven general features of Amillennialism:

- a. There will be no earthly, thousand-year reign of Christ. thus the name A-millennialism.
- b. The second coming of Christ will inaugurate the final age and the final state for both believers and unbelievers. This means that the second coming will be followed immediately by a general resurrection and general judgment of the righteous and the unrighteous, and their assignment to one of two ultimate and permanent states -- heaven or hell.
- c. The one thousand year period mentioned six times in Revelation 20 is symbolical rather than literal. It is symbolic of the present age between Christ's first and second comings.
- d. The two resurrections mentioned in Revelation do not require an intervening millennium. In addition, the two resurrections are not both physical. Some amillennialists hold that the first is spiritual and the second physical, others hold that both resurrections are spiritual.
- e. Old Testament prophecies which predict things concerning Israel and world conditions are to be understood figuratively and symbolically, as being fulfilled within the history of the New Testament church (or, as Anthony Hoekema has proposed, in the new earth).
- f. The amillennial view allows for either a deterioration or an improvement of world conditions, teaching neither that the entire world will be converted prior to Christ's return nor that world conditions will inevitably grow worse. Amillennialism thus claim to have a philosophy of history that is neither overly optimistic (as it claim Postmillennialism is) or overly pessimistic (as it claims Premillennialism is).
- g. Christ's second coming is imminent. With no major events of long duration yet to be fulfilled, the Lord could come at any time.

2. Postmillennialism

Erickson lists seven themes characteristics of Postmillennialism.

- a. The kingdom of God is primarily a present reality. The kingdom is not a realm, a domain over which the Lord reigns. It is more correctly the rule of Christ in the hearts of man.
  - b. The preaching of the gospel, accompanied by the Holy Spirit's convicting and regenerating work, will produce a conversion of the nations prior to Christ's return. Not necessarily one hundred percent of the people will be converted, but substantially all persons in each of the areas and nations of the world will come to believe.
  - c. As more and more persons submit themselves to the Lord's plan and being to practice the teachings and way of life that He established, a long period of earthly peace called the millennium will be ushered into world history. This period, which is yet future, will not necessarily be 1,000 years long, but will simply be a long period.
  - d. The millennium will not begin in a sudden, dramatic fashion; rather it will arrive by degrees, as the continuing spread of the gospel increasingly introduces the kingdom and causes it to grow.
  - e. At the end of the millennium there will be a time of apostasy and a flare-up of evil occurring in connection with the coming of the Antichrist.
  - f. The millennium will end with the personal, bodily return of Christ to the earth. Thus the name: post-millennialism.
  - g. The Lord's return will be followed immediately by a general resurrection and general judgment of the righteous and the unrighteous, and their assignment to one of two ultimate and permanent states -- heaven or hell.
3. Premillennialism

Erickson gives nine distinctives of Premillennialism:

- a. Christ's second coming will establish His earthly reign, a period in which the will of God is done on earth, when there will be complete peace, righteousness, and justice among man, and Christ's reign will be an actuality among man.
- b. This earthly millennium will not come into reality through a gradual process of progressive growth or development, but rather will be dramatically or cataclysmically inaugurated by the second coming. The return of Christ will be similar to His departure -- dramatic and external, readily observable by anyone, and consequently unmistakable.
- c. The millennium will not be a mere extension and perfection of trends already present on earth. It will not be brought into being by human engineering or social improvement. In fact, it will be preceded by a deterioration, not an improvement, of spiritual and social conditions. Conditions on the earth will be transformed supernaturally.



- d. A "great tribulation" will immediately precede the millennium. This will be a time of intense anguish, truly unlike anything previously occurring upon the earth. It may well involve cosmic phenomena, persecution, and great suffering.
- e. Christ's second coming will bring Satan and his demons under control, binding them for one thousand years. Without this control the conditions found in the millennium would be impossible. Near the end of the millennium however, Satan will be unbound briefly and will launch one desperate, final struggle. Then he and his demons will be utterly vanquished, and cast into the lake of fire prepared for them.
- f. The two resurrections of Revelation 20:4-6 are to be distinguished on the basis of their participants. Both resurrections are physical or bodily. Only believers are involved in the first resurrection, whereas the rest of the human race, the non-Christians, are not resurrected until the end of the millennium
- g. Premillennialism adopts a relatively literal method of interpretation in understanding Scripture, including predictive prophecy and the book of Revelation. This means that the words are taken literally whenever this does not lead to absurdity.
- h. During the millennium Jesus Christ will possess absolute control. The major forces opposing Him and His rule during the period between His ascension and His second coming will have been, for all practical purposes, eliminated. Satan will have been restrained. Antichrist and the false prophet will already have been destroyed by Christ at the beginning of the millennium. All human beings who are alive during this period will submit to the rule of the Messiah. In addition, there will be a worldwide peace. Swords shall be beaten into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks, and nation will not raise sword against nation. There will also be harmony within the creation. The curse upon "groaning and travailing" nature will be removed. Further, the saints will reign together with Christ.
- i. There will be a special status for Israel. National Israel is yet to be saved. Israel will turn to Christ and be saved. Not every single Israelite will be converted, but the nation as a whole will be. Through the agency of Israel, God will bless the whole world.

By way of evaluation of these views of the Millennial Kingdom of Christ, some pointed things can be said.

The Amillennial view adopts literal-historical principles of interpretation and applies them to predictive prophecies referring to Christ's first coming, Christ's death and resurrection, Christ's second coming, the resurrection of the dead, the final judgment, and the new heavens and earth; but when it comes to the Millennial kingdom of Christ and the future of Israel, it adopts a special set of figurative-spiritual (or figurative-symbolic) principles of interpretation and applies them to those predictions related to these realities. Even Anthony Hoekema's proposal that the Old

Testament predictions concerning external peace and safety and righteousness on the earth be understood to refer to the eternal state (following the creation of the new heavens and earth) in a literal-historical fashion has severe problem with Isaiah 65 and Revelation 20. Isaiah 65 speaks of the death of non-believers in the Millennial kingdom; Hoekema wants to refer this passage to the eternal state but admits that there will be no death there. Revelation 20 clearly speaks of events before the thousand years and events after the thousand years, and Hoekema cannot explain this sequence away. Nevertheless, his efforts to pull amillennialism to a more literal-historical interpretive approach is highly commendable. When we take note of the fact that some Amillennialists speak of a literal period of tribulation before our Lord's return, of the revelation of a literal Man of Lawlessness (the Antichrist) at the end of the present age, and of a literal salvation of ethnic Israel at Christ's coming, we begin to get the impression that this view has internal inconsistencies, and that its hermeneutical stance in recent years is beginning to undermine its basic distinctives.

The Postmillennial view employs basically the same special set of interpretive principles as the Amillennial view, and thus opens itself to the same criticisms. In addition, it has difficulty squaring with the facts of history. In the second half of the nineteenth century, with its seemingly endless progress and boundless optimism, it was easy to believe that the world was on the brink of a golden age and that men had it in his grasp to overcome all problem. But in the twentieth century, with the coming of World War I, the Great Depression, World War II and the Holocaust, and the threat of nuclear catastrophe, it is much more difficult to believe that the world is getting better and better, and that the gospel is permeating the structures of society and transforming the major part of humanity into godlikeness! And although there is a mini-revival of Postmillennialism in the United States today, with such prominent proponents as Rousas Rushdoony, Gary North, Greg Bahnsen, and John Jefferson Davis, and a significant journal (The Journal of Christian Reconstruction) to disseminate its viewpoint, this movement seems to be more expressive of a desire for what should be, than a description of what is.

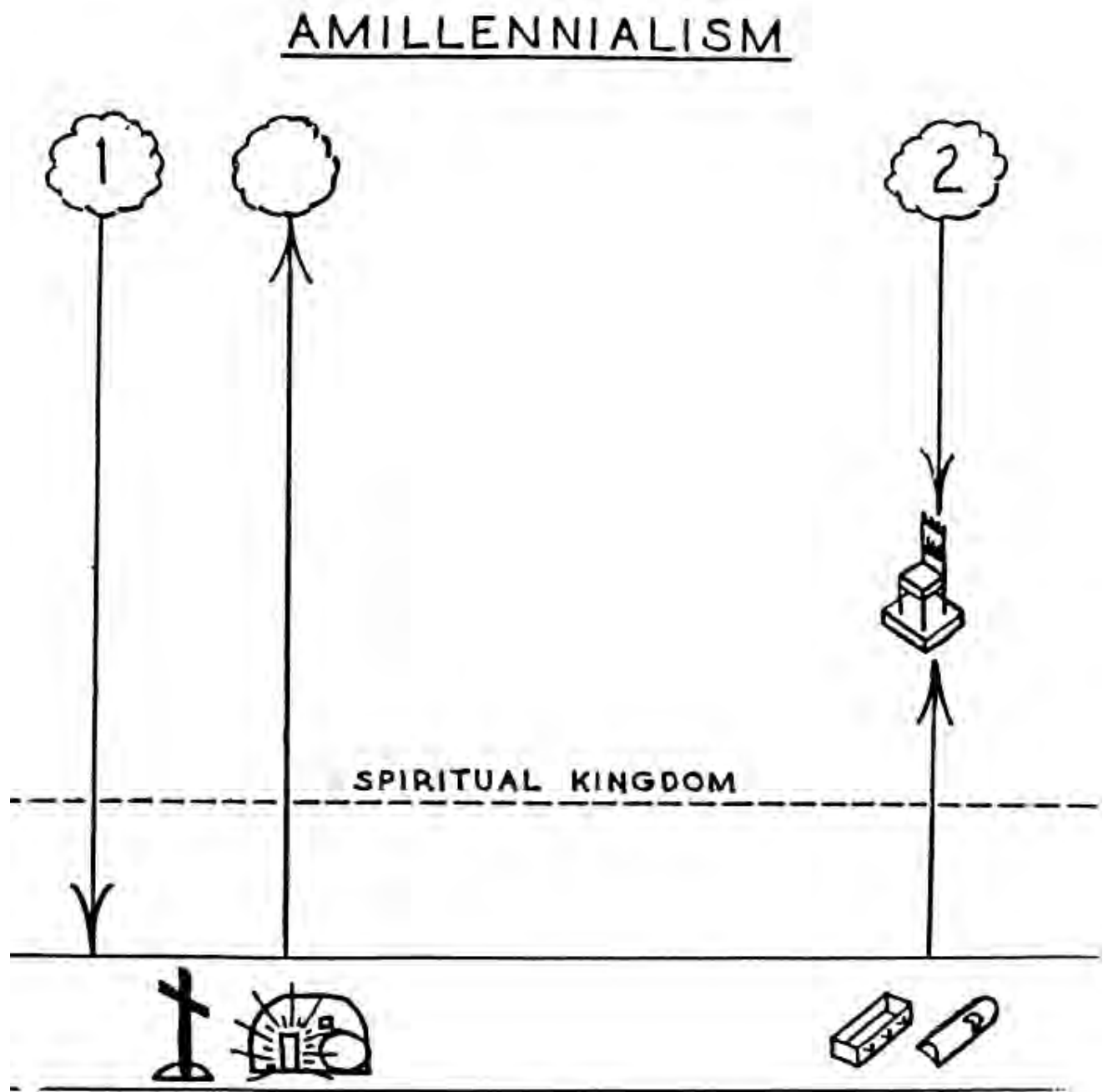
The Premillennial view has much to commend it. It attempts to maintain consistency in its application of literal-historical principles of interpretation to its understanding of predictive prophecy, the meanwhile recognizing the same need to correctly understand figurative language in predictive prophecy as in other genres of Scripture. its philosophy of history seems to fit the pattern of the present century, with its slide toward pervasive unbelief, immorality, materialism, and apostasy. And its literal-historical reading of Scripture has received tremendous encouragement from one of the most significant events of modern history: the emergence of the modern State of Israel and the reclaiming of Jerusalem as its capital. For the first time since A.D. 70 the nation of Israel has been reconstituted, occupies her own land, and is in control of her holy city and the temple area!

Jesus is coming again! He will establish His Millennial Kingdom! And He will rule with His saints!

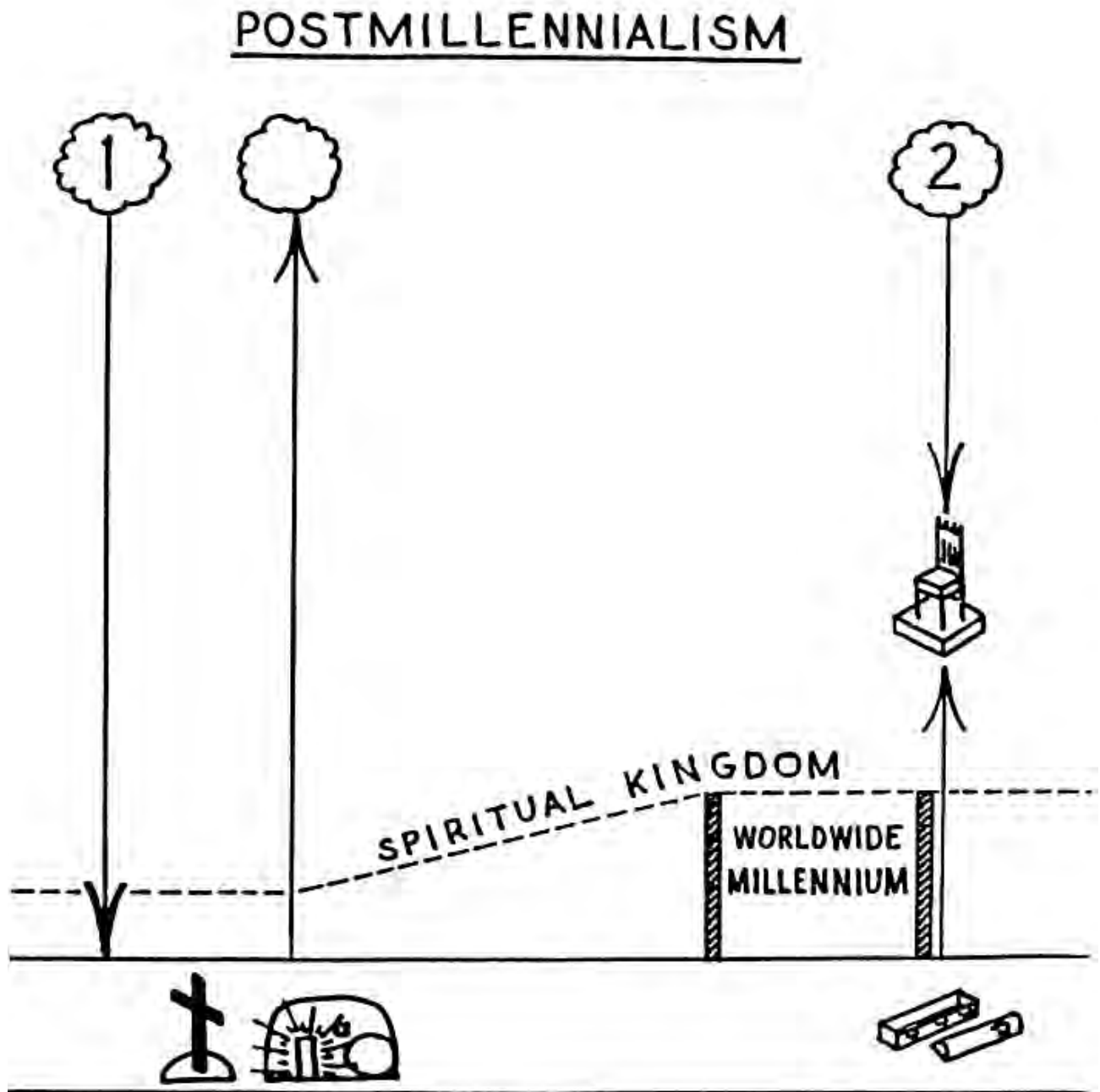
And we must ask ourselves the question: Are we ready for these events? Are we joyously looking forward to His Coming and His kingdom?

The following diagrams are intended to promote understanding of these three views. In each diagram, downward arrows represent descent and upward arrows ascent. In each diagram, a descending arrow connected to a cloud numbered "1" represents Christ's Ascension to heaven following His crucifixion and resurrection (symbolized by the cross and open tomb); and a descending arrow connected to a cloud numbered "2" represented Christ's Second Coming. The open coffin represents resurrection; the ascending arrow to a throne represents believer's ascent; the throne represents judgment; and a second descending arrow in the Premillennial diagrams represents believers' return with Christ to the earth.

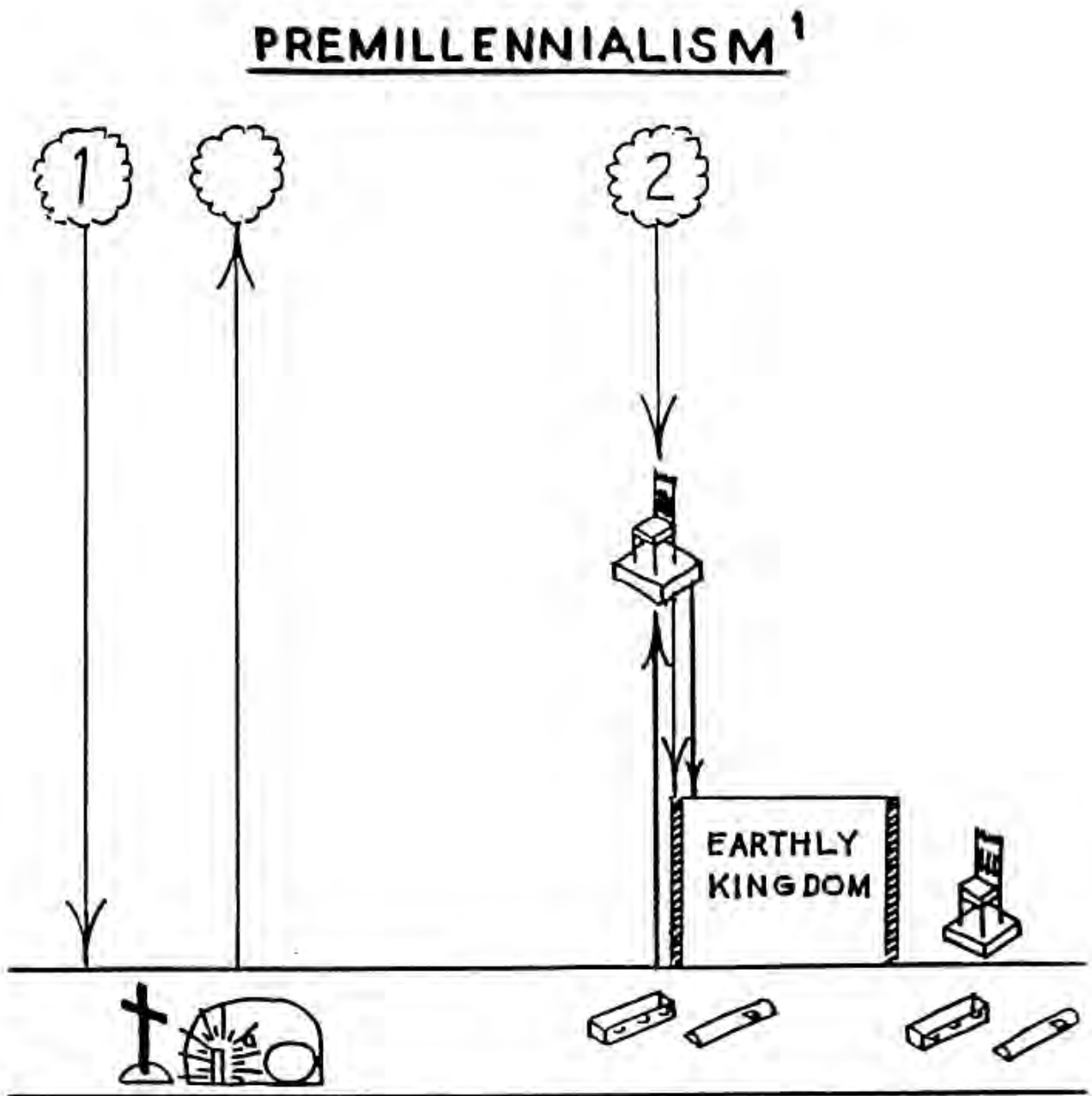
## AMILLENNIALISM



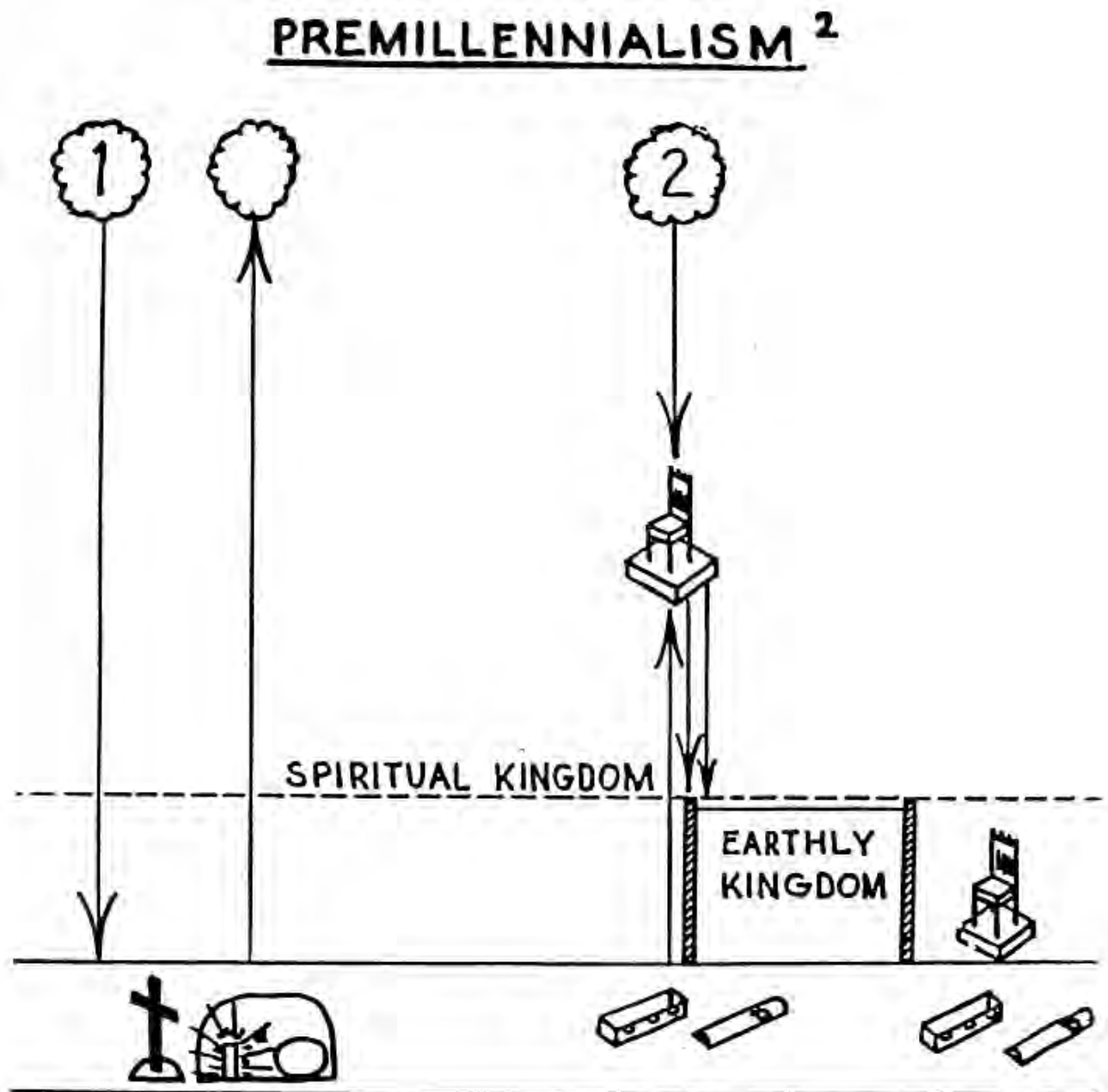
## POSTMILLENNIALISM



## PREMILLENNIALISM 1



## PREMILLENNIALISM 2



## V. The Rapture and the Return

### A. Scriptural Data

In many Scriptures related to Christ's Second Coming, we discover some that appear to make a distinction between the "rapture" aspect of His coming and the "return" or "revelation" aspect.

In I Thessalonians 4:16-17 we read that "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

The term "caught up" is the one from which we get the term "rapture". The *American College Dictionary* defines "rapture" as follows: "1. ecstatic joy or delight; joyful ecstasy. 2. an utterance or expression of ecstatic delight. 3. the carrying of a person to another place or sphere of existence." The English word derives from the Latin *rapio* which literally means "to seize and carry off, to snatch, tear, drag, draw, or hurry away", and figuratively means "to snatch, force, carry, or hurry away, and to carry along or away with passion, to transport, ravish, captivate."

In II Thessalonians 2:1 Paul says "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our *gathering together unto him*."

In II Thessalonians 1:7 Paul speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ being "revealed from heaven with his holy angels"; and in verse 10 he says that this will happen when "He shall come to be glorified in his saints."

And in Revelation 19:6--8 and 11-14, John sees the bride of Christ in heaven, dressed in the fine white linen of the righteousness of saints; and then sees that bride accompanying Christ as He comes to earth to fight the Battle of Armageddon and establish His Millennial kingdom on the earth.

On the one hand Christ is seen coming for and catching up His saints. On the other hand He is seen as being revealed to the world in power and glory and coming with His saints to earth. What is the relationship between these two aspects of Christ's coming? Are they simply two aspects of one event? Or are they two distinct phases of the Second Coming, with a time interval between?

In John 16:33 Jesus says: "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world." This appears to be speaking of distress, affliction, persecution that all disciples of Christ are to expect as they live their lives in the midst of an evil, hostile world-system. But in the Olivet Discourse He mentions a special form of tribulation, encompassed in a relatively brief period. In fact, He says that that brief tribulation period will be unique in world history, both in its intensity and its destructiveness. He speaks of it as "great tribulation". Thus there is both a general sense of tribulation that all believers in all ages experience, and a special sense of tribulation that only some persons living at a specific time will experience. Jesus said that this Great Tribulation period would immediately be followed by His Coming in power and glory; i.e., His return or revelation. But does the rapture occur at the same time? Or does it occur



some time during or prior to the Great Tribulation period? These questions introduce the basic positions on the relationship of the Rapture to the Tribulation.

B. Eight Basic Views of the Relationship of the Rapture to the Tribulation

All of these views are sketched in a Premillennial framework, although some of them also apply to Amillennial or Postmillennial frameworks as well (minus, of course, the Millennial component).

1. The Posttribulational view

This view holds that after the Tribulation and prior to the Millennium Christ will come again. He will descend from heaven, the saints who have died trusting in Him will be resurrected, the saints who are still alive will be transformed (I Cor. 15:51-53), the two companies of saints will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and the Lord will immediately return with the glorified saints to the earth. The Rapture and the Return (or Revelation) will be one event, with two aspects. Just as in the days of the Roman Empire the people went out of the gates of their city to acclaim a returning victorious general and immediately returned with him to the city to accord him honors, so the saints will be caught up to meet the returning victorious Lord and immediately return with Him to the earth.

2. The Midtribulational View

This view holds that in the middle of the Tribulation Christ will descend from heaven, the saints will be caught up to meet Him in the air, and He together with them will return to heaven for a period of time. Then after the Tribulation and prior to the Millennium Christ will return in power and glory with His glorified saints to the earth. The Rapture and the Return (or Revelation) will be two events, or two phases of the Second Coming. In this view there is a time interval between the first and second phases of the Second Coming.

3. The Pretribulational, Mid-Seventieth Week view

This view holds that the Tribulation occupies the second half of Daniels seventieth "week". Prior to the Tribulation in the middle of the seventieth "week" Christ will descend from heaven, the saints will be caught up to meet Him in the air, and He together with them will return to heaven for the duration of the Tribulation period. Then after the Tribulation at the end of the seventieth "week" and prior to the Millennium Christ will return in power and glory with His glorified saints to the earth. The Rapture and the Return (or Revelation) will be two events or two phases of Christ's Second Advent. In this view there is a time interval between the first and second phases of the Second Coming.

4. The Posttribulational Pre-Wrath view

This view holds that the first half of Daniel's seventieth week will be "the beginning of sorrows", and that the second half will be comprised of two periods: the Great Tribulation, and the Day of the Lord. At the end of the Great Tribulation, God's wrath will be poured out during the Day of the Lord, in the form of the trumpet and bowl judgments. Following the Great Tribulation and prior to the outpouring of the wrath of God during the Day of the Lord, Christ will descend from heaven, the saints will be caught up to meet Him in the air, and He together with them will return to heaven for the duration of the outpouring of God's wrath. Then after the outpouring of God's wrath Christ will return to earth in power and glory with His glorified saints. The Rapture and the Return (or Revelation) will be two events or two phases of Christ's Second Advent. In this view there is a time interval between the first and second phases of the Second Coming.

5. The Partial-Rapturist view

This view holds that prior to the Tribulation Christ will descend from heaven, the saints who are ready and worthy will be caught up to meet Him in the air, and He together with these raptured saints will return to heaven for a period of time. The rest of the saints, who are carnal and therefore not ready or worthy, who have not been watching and waiting, and who have not kept their garments pure from the world, will be left on earth to endure the Tribulation period. Then after the Tribulation and prior to the Millennium Christ will return to earth in power and glory with the glorified saints from heaven, and will receive and transform the saints who have had to endure the Tribulation. The Rapture and the Return (or Revelation) will be two events or two phases of the Second Coming. In this view there is a time interval between the first and second phases of the Second Coming.

6. The Pretribulational view with distinct, identifiable signs

This view holds that prior to the Tribulation Christ will descend from heaven, the saints will be caught up to meet Him in the air, and He together with them will return to heaven for the duration of the Tribulation period. The uniqueness of this view lies in its emphasis on distinct, identifiable signs that must occur before the Rapture can occur. Some of these signs are: (1) the development of apostasy, a great falling away from the faith; (2) the decline of morality and a great increase of immorality; (3) the return of Israel to her own land; and (4) the proclamation of the gospel to the ends of the earth. Then after the Tribulation and prior to the Millennium Christ will return in power and glory with His glorified saints to the earth. The Rapture and the Return (or Revelation) will be two events or two phases of Christ's Second Coming. In this view there is a time interval between the first and second phases of the Second Coming.

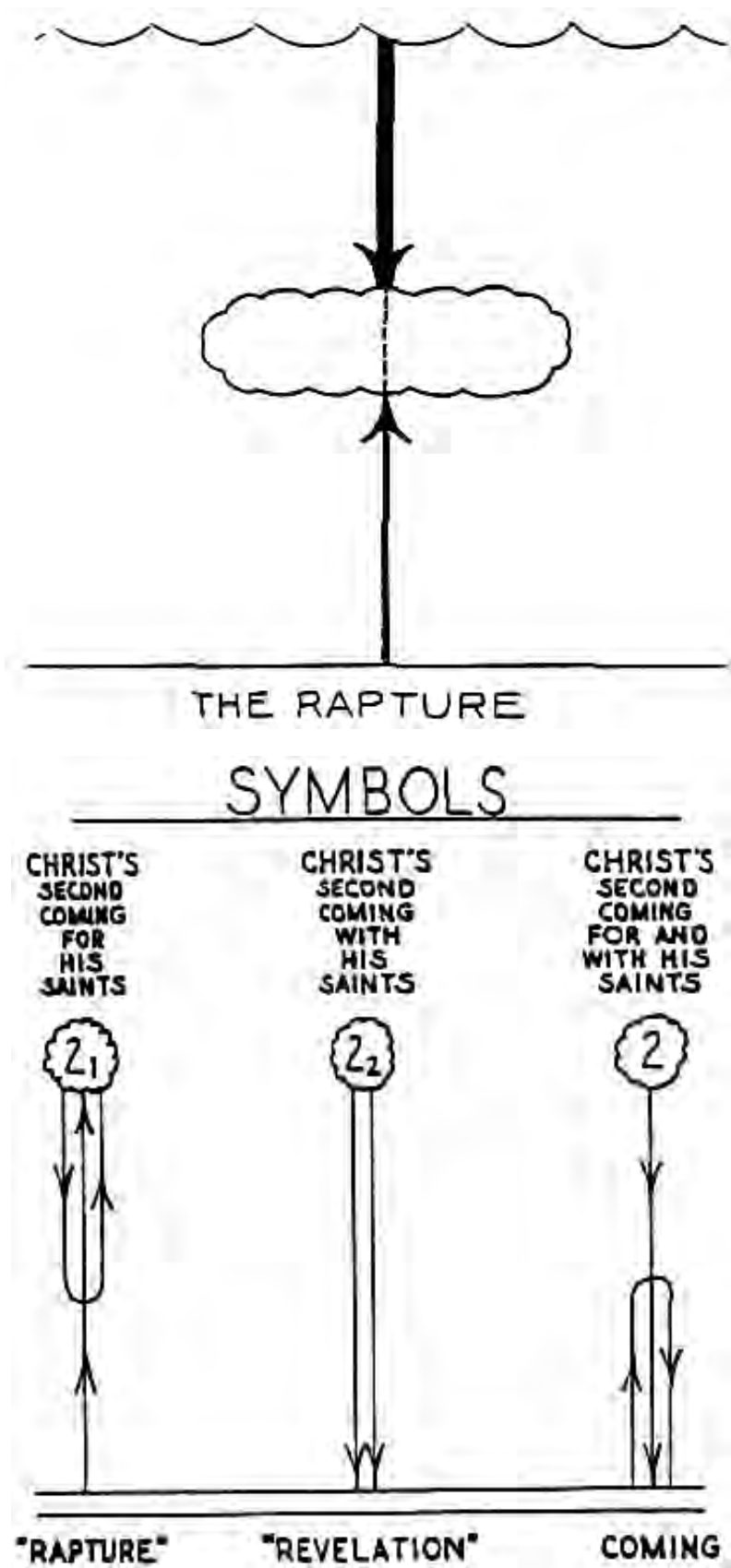
7. The Imminent Posttribulationai view

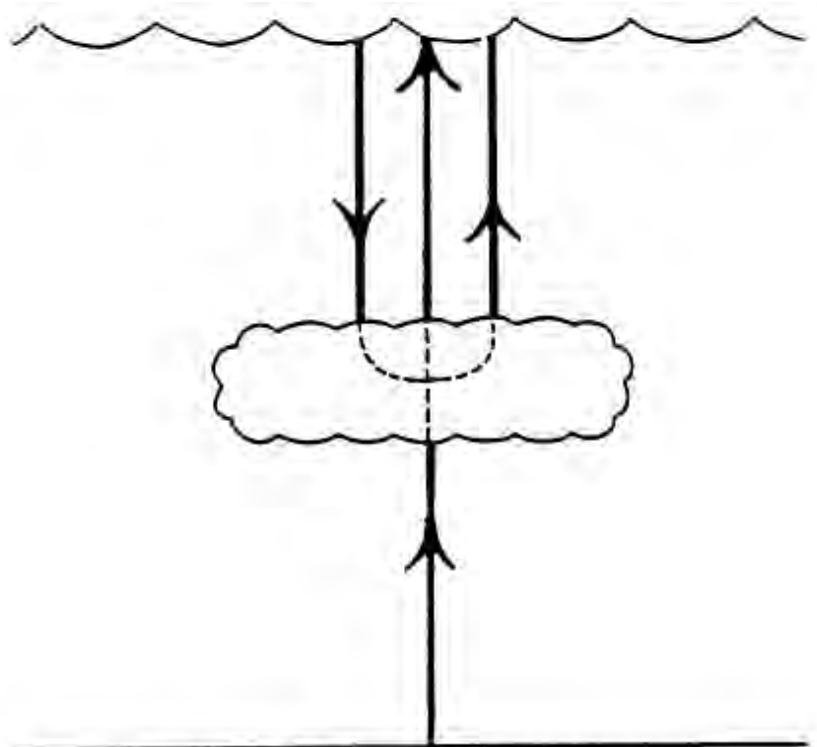
This view holds that there are two periods of Tribulation mentioned in Matthew 24: the Jewish Tribulation (24:21), which occurred in A.D. 67-70, and the Great Tribulation (24:29) which is uncertain as to its time. After the Jewish Tribulation and some time during the Great Tribulation Christ will descend from heaven, the saints will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and the Lord will immediately return with the glorified saints to the earth. The Rapture and the Return (or Revelation) will be one event with two aspects. Since there is no discernible sign with which to connect the Great Tribulation, we don't know when it will begin; in fact, we may be in it now. Since we don't know when it will begin or how long it will be (it could be a few days long, or a few years, or even as long as 70 years), we need to be ready for Christ's imminent Return at all times. In this view the Second Coming is post-tribulationai with respect to the Jewish Tribulation and imminent with respect to the Great Tribulation.

8. The Imminent Pretribulationai view

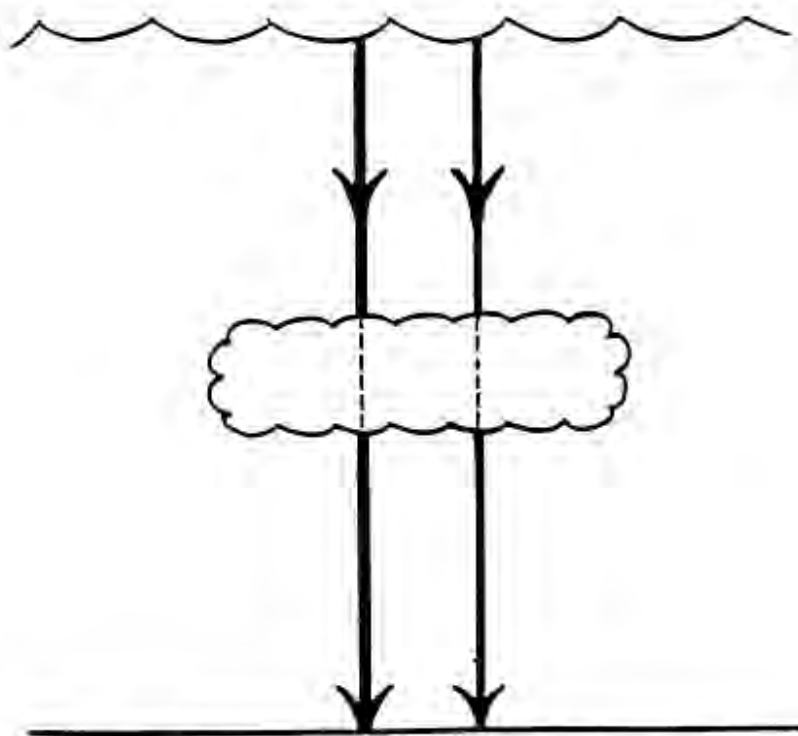
This view holds that prior to the Tribulation Christ will descend from heaven, the saints will be caught up to meet Him in the air, and He together with them will return to heaven for the duration of the Tribulation period. Then after the Tribulation and prior to the Millennium Christ will return in power and glory with His glorified saints to the earth. The Rapture and the Return (or Revelation) will be two events or two phases of Christ's Second Advent. In this view there is a time interval between the first and second phases of the Second Coming. There are no distinct, identifiable signs preceding the Rapture.

The following diagrams are intended to promote understanding of these eight views. In each diagram, downward arrows represent descent and upward arrows ascent. In each one, a descending arrow connected to a cloud numbered "1" represents Christ's First Coming; a descending arrow connected to a cloud numbered "2" represents Christ's Second Coming; and an ascending arrow connected to an unnumbered cloud represents Christ's Ascension to heaven, following His crucifixion, resurrection, and post-resurrection appearances. An ascending arrow connected to a cloud numbered "2" or "2(1)" represents believers' ascent to Christ at the Rapture, and a second descending arrow connected to a cloud numbered "2" or "2(2)" represents believers' descent with Christ at the Return (or Revelation).

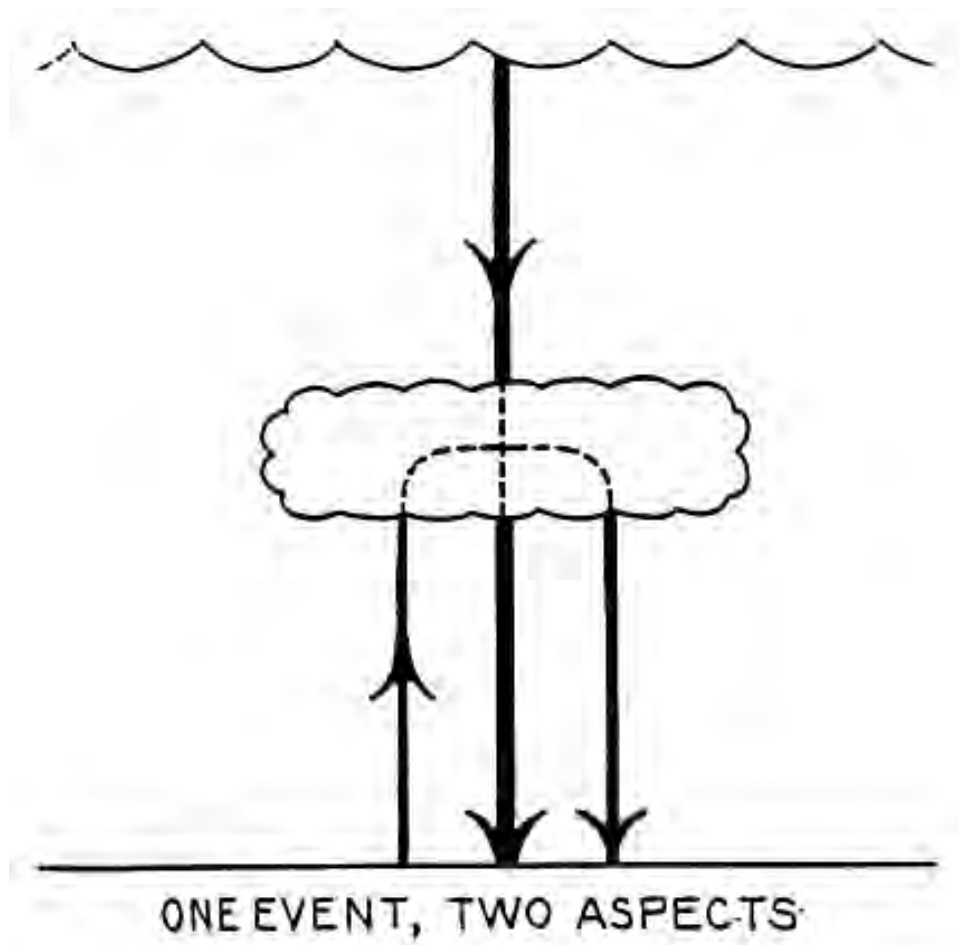




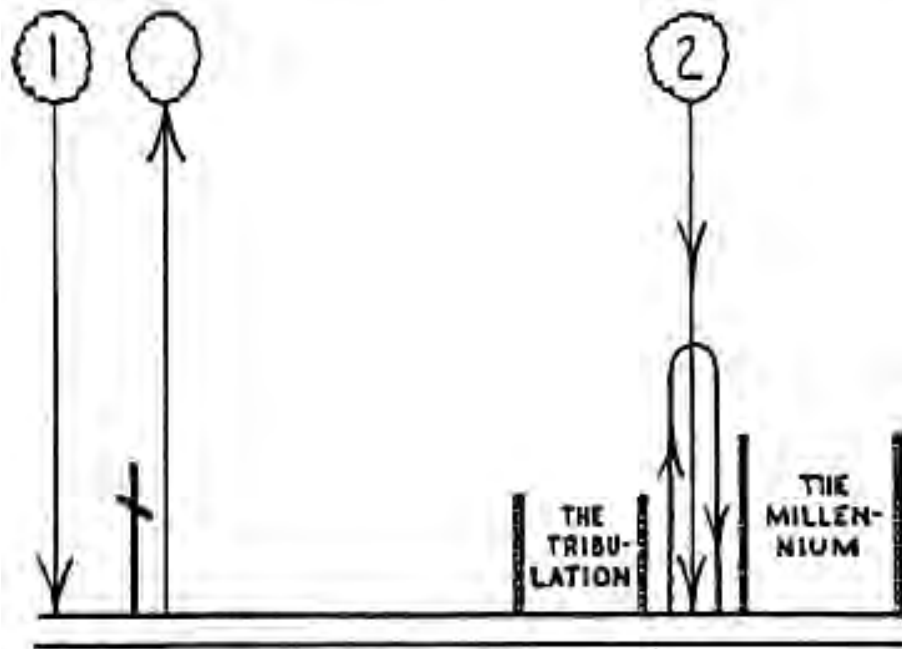
RAPTURE PHASE, CHRIST'S COMING



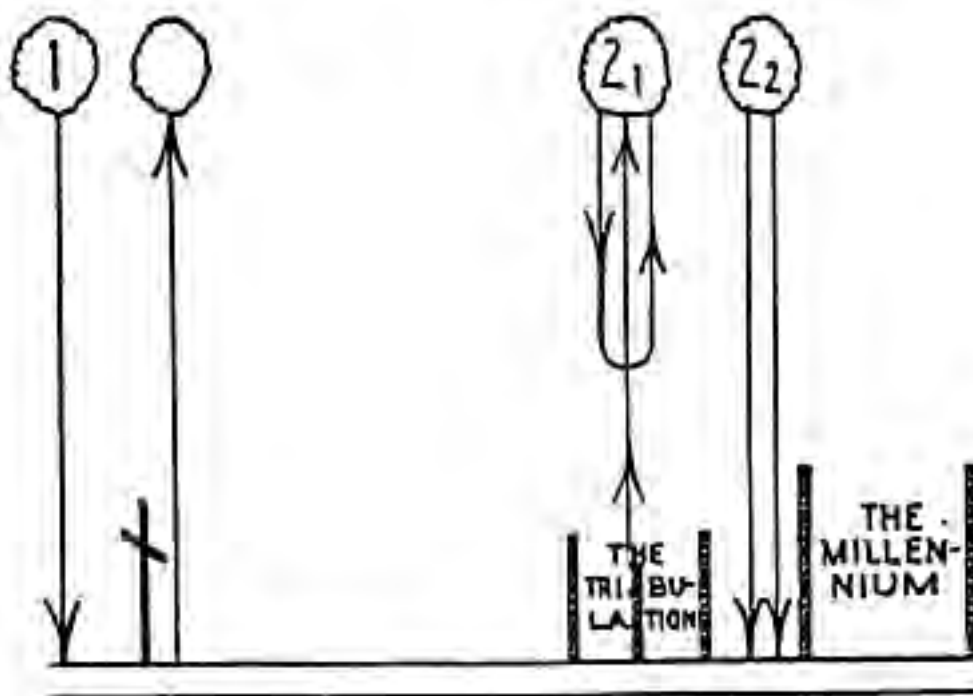
REVELATION PHASE, CHRIST'S COMING



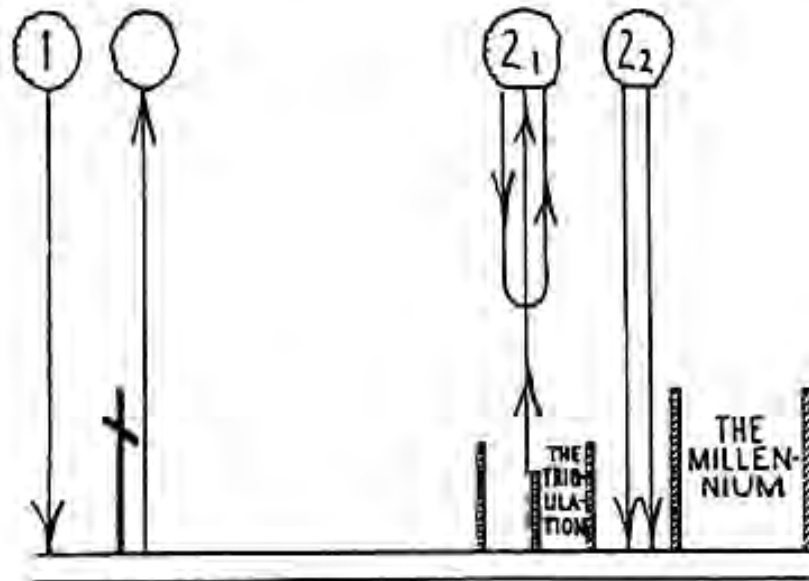
### THE POSTTRIBULATIONIST VIEW



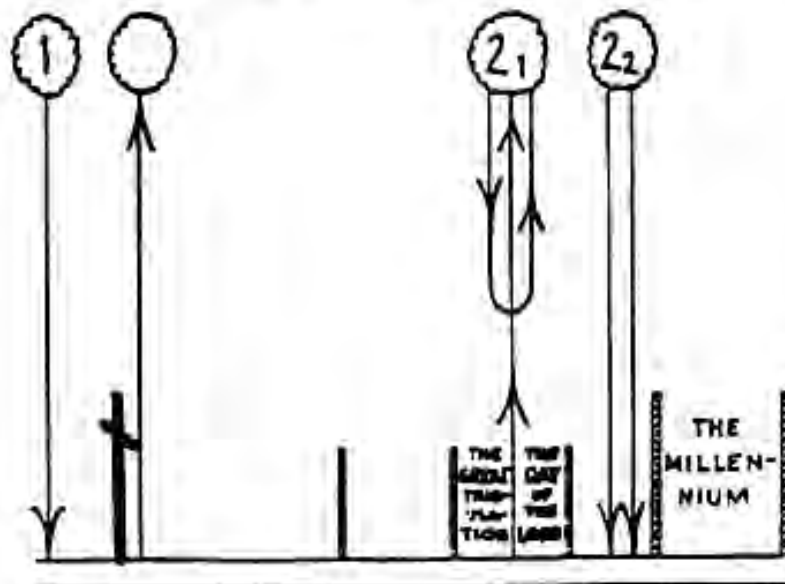
### THE MIDTRIBULATIONIST VIEW



### THE PRETRIBULATIONIST, MID-SEVENTIETH WEEK VIEW

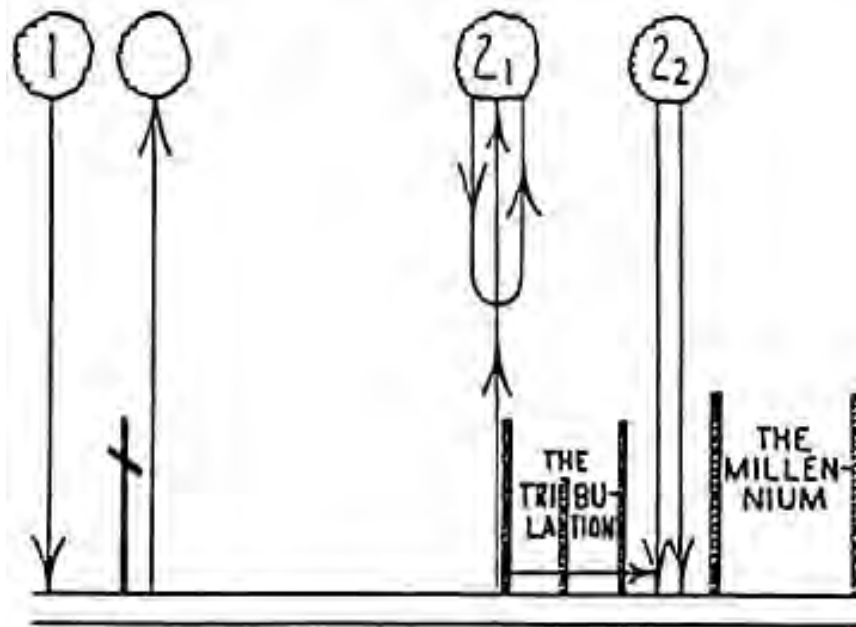


### THE POSTTRIBULATIONIST, PRE-WRATH VIEW

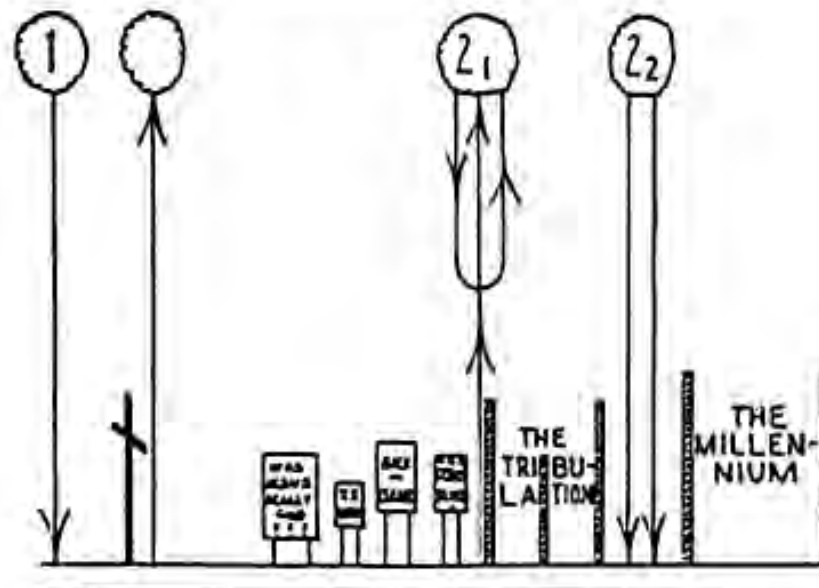




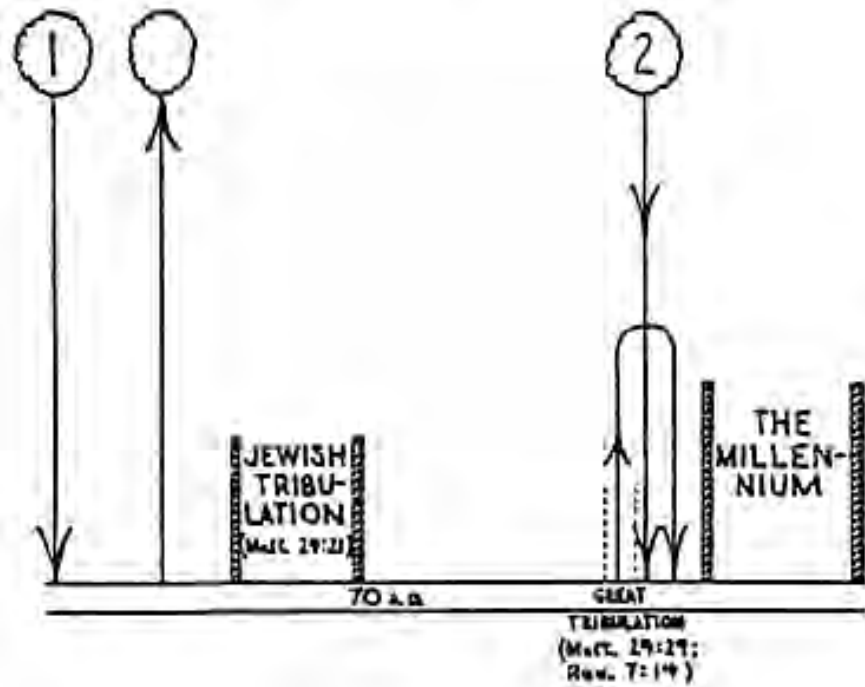
## THE PARTIAL-RAPTURIST VIEW



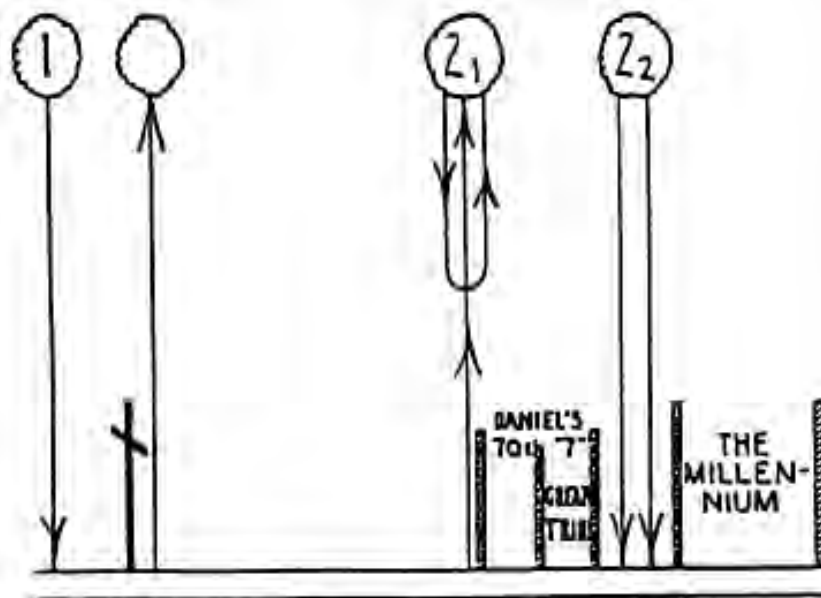
## THE PRETRIBULATIONIST VIEW WITH DISTINCT, IDENTIFIABLE SIGNS



### THE IMMINENT, POSTTRIBULATIONIST VIEW



### THE IMMINENT, PRETRIBULATIONIST VIEW



## VI. A Chronological Framework for Prophetic events

### A. Chronologically Significant Passages in Scripture

Although the genre of Apocalyptic Literature is represented in Scripture by a number of passages, there are a few that are especially significant to the construction of a chronological framework for the events of the end time, as well as the relationship of the present age to the eschaton. These include the Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24-25, Mark 13, Luke 21), Daniel's vision of the seventy "weeks" (Daniel 9:24-27), Paul's reference to the "Man of Lawlessness" (II Thessalonians 2), and John's vision of the two "beasts" (Revelation 13).

#### 1. The Olivet Discourse

##### a. Preliminary considerations

##### (1) Why is this Discourse so important?

- (a) Because it is one of the few passages of Scripture that gives extended teaching concerning the course of the events of the present age, as well as so of the events immediately preceding and accompanying those of the Second Coming of Christ
- (b) Because it places the Second Coming of Christ in chronological relationship to other future events (i.e., future to the time when the Discourse was given)
- (c) Because it makes reference to or contains concepts linking it to other important passages in Scripture which also relate to the events of the last time
- (d) Because it is a passage which various views have claimed as teaching or at least supporting their particular concept of the nature and relative time of the events occurring in connection with the Second Coming of Christ

##### (2) What is the historical setting of the Discourse?

A few days before this Discourse, Christ had entered Jerusalem amid the loud praises of His followers. He had begun a week of teaching in the temple during the day and returning to Bethany each night. When He had approached the city during His triumphal entry, He had stopped, gazed at the city, and spoken these words:

"If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes. For the days shall come upon you when your enemies will throw up a bank before you, and surround you, and hem you in on every side, and will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation."

This ominous prediction forms part of the setting of the Discourse.

On one of the days of that final week of His earthly ministry, Jesus had finished teaching in the temple and was preparing to leave it when some of His disciples pointed out to Him the beauty of the

temple buildings. Jesus told them that the time would come when the temple buildings would be utterly torn down. After He and His disciples had left the temple area, gone out of a gate and across a causeway spanning the Kidron Valley, climbed up the slope of the Mount of Olives and sat down in the area overlooking the temple area, His disciples asked Him when the temple would be destroyed, and what would be the sign of His coming and the end of the age. This forms the occasion of the Discourse.

(3) What are the main sections of the Discourse?

There appear to be four main sections. The first may be entitled "Characteristics marking the present age". The second deals with "The Great Tribulation". The third may be headed "The Second Coming of Christ in Glory". And the fourth may be entitled "Exhortations in view of Christ's imminent Coming".

These verses included in these four sections are as follows:

<u>Section</u>	<u>Matthew</u>	<u>Mark</u>	<u>Luke</u>
1	4-14	5-13	8-24
2	15-28	14-23	
3	29-31	24-27	25-28
4	32-51 25:1-46	28-37	29-35

(4) What is the gist of each of the main sections of the Discourse?

(a) Section 1 -- Characteristics marking the present age

Jesus tells His disciples that the entire present age will be characterized by a number of false Christs, wars, famines, earthquakes, plagues, persecutions, defections, and false prophets. The Lukan account also inserts a unique segment predicted the siege and destruction of Jerusalem (repeating His triumphal entry prediction as recorded in Luke 19:41-44) and the final dispersion of the Jews.

(b) Section 2 -- The Great Tribulation

Our Lord says that a unique period of great tribulation is coming, characterized by terrible distress and marked by the setting up in the temple of the abominable idol that makes the temple and Jerusalem desolate, as predicted by Daniel. Believers living in Israel at the time are urged to flee to safety in the hills.

(c) Section 3 -- The Second Coming of Christ in Glory

Jesus states that immediately following the Great Tribulation, awesome and fearful astronomical phenomena will prepare the way for His coming in great power and glory; and that at that time there will

be a great gathering of the elect, both those in heaven and those on earth.

(d) Section 4 -- exhortations in view of Christ's Imminent Coming

In this section Jesus gives several parables, analogies, and illustrations, all emphasizing the imminency of His coming, and all arousing professing believers to alertness and readiness in view of the uncertainty of the time of His return.

b. Analysis of the Discourse itself

The following pages contain a proposed harmony of the Discourse, using the NASB as the text and Matthew as the control passage (the enumeration of the verses in Matthew is consecutive). The headings of the proposed sections have been inserted, and parallels from other places in Luke have been placed in parentheses at the appropriate locations.

MATTHEW 24

THE SETTING

- 1 And Jesus came out from the temple and was going away when His disciples came up to point out the temple buildings to Him.
- 2 And He answered and said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, not one stone here shall be left upon another, which will not be torn down."
- 3 And as He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"

FIRST SECTION: CHARACTERISTICS MARKING THE PRESENT AGE

- 4 And Jesus answered and said to them, "See to it that no one misleads you.
- 5 For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will mislead many.
- 6 And you will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars; see that you are not

MARK 13

THE SETTING

- 1 And as He was going out of the temple, one of His disciples said to Him, "Teacher, behold what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!"
- 2 And Jesus said to him, "Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone shall be left upon another which will not be torn down."
- 3 And as He was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew were questioning Him privately,
- 4 "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things are going to be fulfilled?"

FIRST SECTION: CHARACTERISTICS MARKING THE PRESENT AGE

- 5 And Jesus began to say to them, "See to it that no one misleads you.
- 6 Many will come in My name, saying, 'I am He!' and will mislead many.
- 7 And when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be frightened; those

LUKE 21

THE SETTING

- 1 And He looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury.
- 2 And He saw a certain poor widow putting in two small copper coins.
- 3 And He said, "Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all of them;
- 4 for they all out of their surplus put into the offering; but she out of her poverty put in all that she had to live on."
- 5 And while some were talking about the temple, that it was adorned with beautiful stones and votive gifts, He said,
- 6 As for these things which you are looking at, the days will come in which there will not be left one stone upon another which will not be torn down.
- 7 And they questioned Him, saying, "Teacher, when therefore will these things be? And what will be the sign when these things are about to take place?"

FIRST SECTION: CHARACTERISTICS MARKING THE PRESENT AGE

- 8 And He said, "See to it that you be not misled; for many will come in My name, saying, 'I am He,' and, 'The time is at hand'; do not go after them.
- 9 And when you hear of wars and disturbances, do not be terrified;

MATTHEW 24

MARK 13

LUKE 21

frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end.

- 7 For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes.  
8 But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs.

(10:17-18 -- But beware of men; for they will deliver you up to the courts, and scourge you in their synagogues; and you shall even be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles.)

- 9 Then they will deliver you to tribulation,\* and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations on account of My name. \* (εις θλιψιν)

- 10 And at that time many will fall away and will deliver up one another and hate one another.

things must take place; but that is not yet the end.

- 8 For nation will arise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will also be famines. These things are merely the beginning of birth pangs.

- 9 But be on your guard; for they will deliver you to the courts, and you will be flogged in the synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them.  
13 And you will be hated by all on account of My name,

- 12 And brother will deliver brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and have them put to death.

for these things must take place first, but the end does not follow immediately."

- 10 Then He continued by saying to them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom,  
11 and there will be great earthquakes, and in various places plagues and famines;

A BRIEF LEAP FORWARD TO THE ESCHATON?

and there will be terrors and great signs from heaven.  
(compare verses 25-26)

RETURN TO THE PRESENT AGE

- 12 But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and will persecute you, delivering you to the synagogues and prisons, bringing you before kings and governors for My name's sake.  
13 It will lead to an opportunity for your testimony.  
17 and you will be hated by all on account of My name.  
16 But you will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death,  
18 Yet not a hair of your head will perish.

MATTHEW 24

- 11 And many false prophets will arise, and will mislead many.  
12 And because lawlessness is increased, the love of many will grow cold.

(10:19-20 -- But when they deliver you up, do not become anxious about how or what you will speak; for it shall be given you in that hour what you are to speak. For it is not you who speak, but it is the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.)

- 13 But the one who endures to the end, he shall be saved.

- 14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations, and then the end shall come.

NOTE: Does this mean that the gospel will be proclaimed in all the world in such a way that all nations will hear it once during their history, or in such a way that all nations will hear it during a period of a lifetime or a generation?

Does this mean that Christ cannot return until this proclamation is completed?

The answers to these questions are very important, since they are relevant to the formulation of a global strategy in allocating human and material resources to the task of world evangelism and missions.

In attempting to understand Christ's prediction and our responsibility to fulfill it, Paul's statements in Colossians and Romans should be noted.

Colossians 1:5-6 -- "the word of truth, the gospel, which has come to you, just as in all the world also it is constantly bearing fruit and increasing"

Colossians 1:23 -- "the gospel...which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven"

Romans 16:25-26 -- "the preaching of

MARK 13

- 11 And when they arrest you and deliver you up, do not be anxious beforehand about what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour; for it is not you who speak, but it is the Holy Spirit.

- 13 but the one who endures to the end, he shall be saved.

- 10 And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations.

LUKE 21

- 14 So make up your minds not to prepare beforehand to defend yourselves;

- 15 for I will give you utterance and wisdom which none of your opponents will be able to resist or refute.

- 19 By your endurance you will gain your lives.

THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM

- 20 But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation\* is at hand.

- 21 Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those who are in the midst of the city depart, and let not those who are in the country enter the city;

- 22 because these are days of vengeance,† in order that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

- 23 Woe to those who are with child and to those who nurse babes in those days; for there will be great distress\* upon the land, and wrath to this people,

- 24 and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the

\* (ἡ ἐρημωσις αὐτῆς)

† (ἡμέραι ἐκδίκησεως)

★ (ἀνάγκη γενέσθαι)



MATTHEW 24

Jesus Christ...has been made known to all the nations"

SECOND SECTION:  
THE GREAT TRIBULATION

- 15 Therefore when you see the Abomination of Desolation\*which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand),
- 16 then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains;
- 17 let him who is on the housetop not go down to get the things out that are in his house;
- 18 and let him who is in the field not turn back to get his cloak.
- 19 But woe to those who are with child and to those who nurse babes in those days!
- 20 But pray that your flight may not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath;
- 21 for then there will be a great tribulation,†such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall.
- 22 And unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days shall be cut short.
- \* (τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως)  
† (θλίψις μεγάλη)
- 23 Then if anyone says to you, 'Behold, here is the Christ,' or 'There He is,' do not believe him.
- 24 For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect.
- 25 Behold, I have told you in advance.

MARK 13

SECOND SECTION:  
THE GREAT TRIBULATION

- 14 But when you see the Abomination of Desolation\*standing where it should not be (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.
- 15 And let him who is on the housetop not go down, or enter in, to get anything out of his house;
- 16 and let him who is in the field not turn back to get his cloak.
- 17 But woe to those who are with child and to those who nurse babes in those days!
- 18 But pray that it may not happen in the winter.
- 19 For those days will be a time of tribulation†such as has not occurred since the beginning of the creation which God created, until now, and never shall.
- 20 And unless the Lord had shortened those days, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect whom He chose, He shortened the days.
- 21 And then if anyone says to you, 'Behold, here is the Christ'; or, 'Behold, He is there'; do not believe him;
- 22 for false Christs and false prophets will arise, and will show signs and wonders, in order, if possible, to lead the elect astray.
- 23 But take heed; behold, I have told you everything in advance.
- \* (τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως)  
† (αἱ ἡμέραι ἐκείναι θλίψεις)

LUKE 21

Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

SECOND SECTION:  
THE GREAT TRIBULATION

(17:30-31 -- It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed. On that day, let not the one who is on the housetop and whose goods are in the house go down to take them away; and likewise let not the one who is in the field turn back.)

(17:22-24 -- And He said to the disciples, "The days shall come when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it. And they will say to you, 'Look there! Look here!' Do not go away,

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LUKE 21

- 26 If therefore they say to you, 'Behold, He is in the wilderness,' do not go forth, or, 'Behold, He is in the inner rooms,' do not believe them.  
27 For just as the lightning comes from the east, and flashes even to the west, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be.  
28 Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.

THIRD SECTION:  
CHRIST'S COMING IN GLORY

- 29 But immediately after the tribulation\* of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.  
\*(Ευθὺς δὲ μετὰ τὴν θλίψιν)

- 30 and then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory.

- 31 And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.

THIRD SECTION:  
CHRIST'S COMING IN GLORY

- 24 But in those days, after that tribulation,\* the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light,  
25 and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers that are in the heavens will be shaken.  
\*(μετὰ τὴν θλίψιν ἐκείνην)

- 26 And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory.

- 27 And then He will send forth the angels, and will gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest end of the earth, to the farthest end of heaven.

- and do not run after them. For just as the lightning, when it flashes out of one part of the sky, shines to the other part of the sky, so will the Son of Man be in His day)  
(17:37 -- Where the body is, there also will the vultures be gathered.)

THIRD SECTION:  
CHRIST'S COMING IN GLORY

- 25 And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and upon the earth dismay among nations, in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves,  
26 men fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

- 27 And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

- 28 But when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.

MATTHEW 24

FOURTH SECTION:  
EXHORTATIONS IN VIEW OF  
CHRIST'S IMMINENT COMING

- 32 Now learn the parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender, and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near;  
33 even so you too, when you see all these things, recognize that He is near, right at the door.
- 34 Truly I say to you, this generation<sup>\*</sup> will not pass away until all these things take place. <sup>\*</sup>(ἡ γενεὰ αὕτη)
- 35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words shall not pass away.
- 36 But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.
- 37 For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah.
- 38 For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, they were marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark,  
39 and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so shall the coming of the Son of Man be.
- 40 Then there shall be two men in the field; one will be taken, and one will be left.
- 41 Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken, and one will be left.

MARK 13

FOURTH SECTION:  
EXHORTATIONS IN VIEW OF  
CHRIST'S IMMINENT COMING

- 28 Now learn the parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender, and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near.  
29 Even so, you too, when you see these things happening, recognize that He is near, right at the door.
- 30 Truly I say to you, this generation<sup>\*</sup> will not pass away until all these things take place. <sup>\*</sup>(ἡ γενεὰ αὕτη)
- 31 Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.
- 32 But of that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.

LUKE 21

FOURTH SECTION:  
EXHORTATIONS IN VIEW OF  
CHRIST'S IMMINENT COMING

- 29 And He told them a parable: "Behold the fig tree and all the trees;  
30 as soon as they put forth leaves, you see it and know for yourselves that summer is now near.  
31 Even so you, too, when you see these things happening, recognize that the kingdom of God is near.
- 32 Truly I say to you, this generation<sup>\*</sup> will not pass away until all these things take place. <sup>\*</sup>(ἡ γενεὰ αὕτη)
- 33 Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.
- (17:26-27 -- And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it shall be also in the days of the Son of Man: they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.)
- (17:36 -- Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other will be left.)
- (17:35 -- There will be two women grinding at the same place; one will be taken, and the other will be left.)

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42 Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming.

43 But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into.

44 For this reason you be ready too; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will.

45 Who then is the faithful and sensible slave whom his master put in charge of his household to give them their food at the proper time?

46 Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes.

47 Truly I say to you, that he will put him in charge of all his possessions.

48 But if that evil slave says in his heart, 'My master is not coming for a long time,'

49 and shall begin to beat his fellow slaves and eat and drink with drunkards;

50 the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour which he does not know,

51 and shall cut him in pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites; weeping shall be there and the gnashing of teeth.

33 Take heed, keep on the alert; for you do not know when the appointed time is.

(12:39-40 -- And be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have allowed his house to be broken into. You, too, be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour that you do not expect.)

(12:42-46 -- And the Lord said, 'Who then is the faithful and sensible steward, whom his master will put in charge of his servants, to give them their rations at the proper time? Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes. Truly I say to you, that he will put him in charge of all his possessions. But if that slave says in his heart, 'My master will be a long time in coming,' and begins to beat the slaves, both men and women, and to eat and drink and get drunk; the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him, and at an hour he does not know, and will cut him in pieces, and assign him a place with the unbelievers.)

34 It is like a man, away on a journey, who upon leaving his house and putting his slaves in charge, assigning to each one his task, also commanded the doorkeeper to stay on the alert.

35 Therefore, be on the alert--for you do not know when the master of the house is coming, whether in the evening, at midnight, at cockcrow, or

MATTHEW 24

MARK 13

LUKE 21

MATTHEW 25

- 1 Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins, who took their lamps, and went out to meet the bridegroom.
- 2 And five of them were foolish, and five were prudent.
- 3 For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them,
- 4 but the prudent took oil in flasks along with their lamps.
- 5 Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got drowsy and began to sleep.
- 6 But at midnight there was a shout, 'Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.'
- 7 Then all those virgins rose, and trimmed their lamps.
- 8 And the foolish said to the prudent, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.'

- in the morning--
- 36 lest he come suddenly and find you asleep.
  - 37 And what I say to you I say to all, "Be on the alert!"

- 34 Be on guard, that your hearts may not be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life, and that day come on you suddenly like a trap;
  - 35 for it will come upon all those who dwell on the face of all the earth.
  - 36 But keep on the alert at all times, praying in order that you may have strength to escape all these things\* that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.
- \* (ἵνα κατισχύσητε ἐκφυγεῖν ταῦτα πάντα)

- 9 But the prudent answered, saying, 'No, there will not be enough for us and you too; go instead to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.'
- 10 And while they were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut.
- 11 And later the other virgins also came, saying, 'Lord, lord, open up for us.'
- 12 But he answered and said, 'Truly I say to you, I do not know you.'
- 13 Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour.
- 14 For it is just like a man about to go on a journey, who called his own slaves, and entrusted his possessions to them.
- 15 And to one he gave five talents, to another, two, and to another, one, each according to his own ability; and he went on his journey.
- 16 Immediately the one who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and gained five more talents.
- 17 In the same manner the one who had received the two talents gained two more.
- 18 But he who received the one talent went away and dug in the ground, and hid his master's money.
- 19 Now after a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them.
- 20 And the one who had received the five talents came up and brought five more talents, saying, 'Master, you entrusted five talents to me; see, I have gained five more talents.'
- 21 His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things, enter into the joy of your master.'
- 22 The one also who had received the two talents came up and said, 'Master, you entrusted to me two talents; see, I have gained two more talents.'
- 23 His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.'
- 24 And the one also who had received the one talent came up and said, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed.
- 25 And I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the ground; see, you have what is yours.'
- 26 But his master answered and said to him, 'You wicked, lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I scattered no seed.
- 27 Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my money back with interest.'



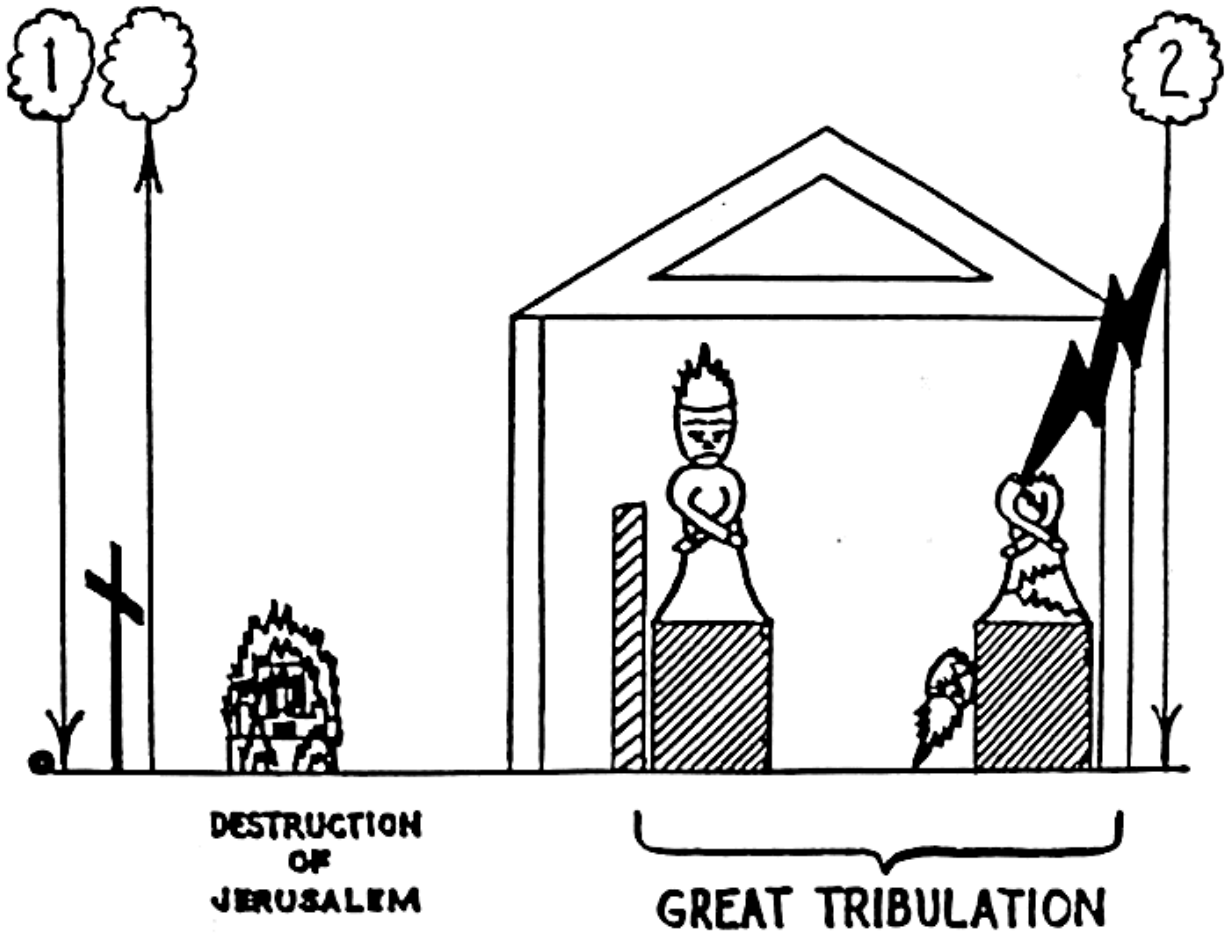
MATTHEW 24

MARK 13

LUKE 21

- 28 Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.'
- 29 For to everyone who has shall more be given, and he shall have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away.
- 30 And cast out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.
  
- 31 But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne.
- 32 And all the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats;
- 33 and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left.
- 34 Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.
- 35 For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in;
- 36 naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.'
- 37 Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You drink?
- 38 And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You?
- 39 And when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?'
- 40 And the King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.'
- 41 Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;
- 42 for I was hungry, and you gave Me nothing to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me nothing to drink;
- 43 I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me.'
- 44 Then they themselves also will answer, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of You?'
- 45 Then He will answer them, saying, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.'
- 46 And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.

# DETAILS OF THE OLIVET DISCOURSE





c. An Internal tension built into the Discourse

If the first section of the Discourse traces the course of the present age with its recurrent characteristics; and if the second section tells of the unique nature and sign of the Great Tribulation; and if the third section alerts us to Christ's Coming in power and glory immediately after the Tribulation; then what is the force of the fourth section's exhortations to alertness and readiness in view of Christ's imminent coming? How can a posttribulational coming in power and glory be reconciled with an emphasis on imminency and implications of alertness and any-moment readiness? If Christ is not coming until after the Tribulation, then perhaps we need to be alert and ready, not for Christ's coming, but for the beginning of the Tribulation period. This is the tension that Christ Himself builds into the Olivet Discourse.

Some students of eschatology have stressed the posttribulational Coming taught by the Discourse to the exclusion of the Discourse's emphasis on imminency. And others have so stressed imminency that they have seemingly ignored or virtually lost the implications of the clear arrangement of the events of the second and third sections of the Discourse. Both emphases must be held if we are to be true to Christ's teaching, even if it means that we must hold them in some sort of creative tension. However, perhaps a resolution of this tension is possible.

2. Daniel's Vision of the Seventy weeks

a. Preliminary considerations

(1) Why is Daniel 9:24-27 important?

In Matthew 24:15 Jesus says, "Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand) . . . then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall." (verse 21) The abomination of desolation is the sign marking the Great Tribulation; and Jesus says that this abomination was predicted by Daniel. The abomination of desolation links the Olivet Discourse with Daniel's prediction of the Seventy Weeks. The chronological importance of Daniel 9:24-27 to eschatology is great, for it gives us the chronological key or framework into which the eschatological statements of the Olivet Discourse and a large part of the book of Revelation fit.

(2) What historical events correlate with and form the background of this passage?

In 605 B.C. Jeremiah predicted that Judah (the southern kingdom remaining in Palestine after Israel's removal to captivity in Assyria in 722 B.C.) would go into captivity in Babylon for 70 years. In the same year (605) the first captives were deported, under the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. In 587 B.C. God's Word came to Jeremiah promising that

Judah and Jerusalem would be reinhabited. In 586 B.C. Jerusalem fell, the First Temple was destroyed, and most of the remaining population of Jews was deported to Babylon.

In 558 B.C. Cyrus II (the Great) became king of Persia, and enlarged his dominion to include Media, Lydia, and Bactria. In 539 Cyrus' general, Gobryas, attacked the Babylonians; and in 538 he took the citadel of Babylon, killing the king, Belshazzar. Gobryas became the king of Babylon, taking the name Darius the Mede. In the first year of Darius' reign (his only year) Daniel concluded from a study of the book of Jeremiah that the Babylonian Captivity was about to end. He began to pray fervently (as recorded in Daniel 9:3-19), and the angel Gabriel revealed to him the vision of the Seventy "Weeks". In 536 B.C. the foundations of the Second Temple were laid, thus ending the seventy-year captivity (605 to 536, inclusive enumeration).

(3) What is the chronological meaning of the seventy 'sevens'?

Six times in this passage the word שְׁבוּעַ is used. According to the TWOT, שְׁבוּעַ occurs twenty times in the OT, always indicating a period of seven. In a number of its uses שְׁבוּעַ means a period of seven days. What is its meaning here in Daniel 9:24-27?

The entire period of seventy sevens is subdivided into three distinct segments: seven sevens, sixty-two sevens, and one seven. However these sevens are defined, the meaning must meet two requirements: (a) the duration of the seventy sevens must involve enough time to fulfill the purposes mentioned in verse 24 -- "to finish the transgression, and to seal sin, and to make atonement for transgression, and to bring in righteousness for ever, and to seal vision and a prophet, and to anoint the must holy place;" (b) the duration of the seventy sevens must stretch far enough into the future for the seventieth seven to fit Christ's statement (in the Olivet Discourse) that the period of Great Tribulation marked by the abomination of desolation is future to the giving of the Discourse and immediately prior to Christ's Second Coming in power and glory.

What meaning of the seventy sevens could fit the above two requirements? A period of seventy sevens of days would cover 490 or 1.34 years. A period of seventy sevens of weeks would cover 490 weeks or 9.42 years. A period of seventy sevens of months would cover 490 months or 40.83 years. A period of seventy sevens of years would cover 490 years. The only meaning of the sevens that allows enough time to complete God's purposes in verse 24 and allows Christ to speak of the seventieth seven as yet future is that of years. Now although these years could be understood as prophetic years or jubilee years, we will understand them as ordinary solar/sidereal years of 365 1/4 days each.

Applying this meaning of sevens to the three segments of Daniel's prediction, we arrive at the following:

Seven sevens of years	= 49 years
Sixty-two sevens of years	= 434 years
One seven of years	= <u>7 Years</u>
Seventy sevens of years	= 490 years

b. Analysis of the passage itself

"Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to take atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy place. So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a word to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in the times of distress. Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined. And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who made desolate."



וְתִדְעַ וְתִשְׁכַּל<sup>25</sup>

"and have insight" "and know"  
Hiph. inff. 2 m.s. → עָלַל Gal. inff. 2 m.s. → יָדַעַ

מִן־מִצָּא דָּכָר לָהֶשִׁיבִי וּלְבָנוֹת

"to build, rebuild" "to bring back, restore" "word" "issuing of, from"  
Qal inff. → בָּנָה Hiph. inff. → הֵשִׁיב going forth (blessing)

יְרוּשָׁלַם עַד־מְשִׁיחַ נָגִיד

"ruler, leader" "anointed" "until" "Jerusalem"

נִשְׁבָּעִים שִׁבְעָה

"seven" "sevens"  
form. of שִׁבְעָה

וְשִׁבְעִים שָׁנִים וְשִׁבְעִים שָׁנִים

"shall turn back, return" - Qal "and two" "sixty" "and seventy"  
inff. 3 f.s. → שָׁבַע plural of שִׁבְעִים

וּבְצֹק רְחוֹב וְחָרוֹץ וּבְנִתָּהּ

"and in effusion, distress" "and moat" "open place" "and shall be built"  
Niphal inff. 3 f.s. → בָּנָה

נְדָעָתִים:

"the times, appointed times"  
plur. of נֶדָעָה

26 וְאַחֲרֵי הַשָּׁבָעִים שְׁנָיִם

"sixty" "the seven" "and after"  
(Qamats form)

\* וּשְׁנָיִם יָכַרְתַּם מִשִּׁיחַ וְאַיִן לֹא \*

"to, for him" "and no, not" "anointed" "little cut off" "and two"  
Nifal inf. 3 a.s. → וְיִכָּרְתוּ

וְהָעִיר וְהַקֹּדֶשׁ יִשְׁהוּתָם עַם

"people of" "will destroy" "and the holy place, the temple" "and the city"  
Nifal inf. 3 a.s. → וְיִשְׁהוּתוּ

נָגִיד הַבָּא וְקִצּוֹ בַשָּׁטָף

"in the flood" "and his end" "the coming one" "ruler, leader"  
Qal participle → וְקִצּוֹ

וְעַד קֵץ מִלְחָמָה נִחְרָצֶת

"are determined" "war, battle" "the end" "and until"  
Nifal part. → וְנִחְרָצוּ

שְׂמֻתָּה:

"dedication"  
Qal part. → וְשִׁמְתָה

- \* Kittel's critical apparatus suggests that "a word has fallen out; insert יָן (a legal claim or judgment) or יָאֵל (evil, wickedness)." But this is conjectural.

וְהִגְבִּיר<sup>27</sup> בְּרִית לְרַבִּים  
 "with the many" "a covenant" "and he will come to prevail,  
 force" - Hiph. perf. 3 m. s.  
 → גִּבַּר

שְׁבוּעַת אֶחָד  
 "one" "seven"

וְחֵצִי הַשְּׁבוּעַת יִשְׁכְּבִית וְזֶבַח  
 "sacrifice" "he will come to cease" "the seven" "and half of,  
 Hiph. perf. 3 m. s.  
 → שָׁכַב זֶבַח

וּמִנְחָה  
 "and offering"

אֶעֱלֶה כִּנְרָה שְׁקוּצִים\* מִשָּׁמַם  
 "desolating" "detested idol" "the sing. of,  
 Hiph. perf. 3 m. s. → שָׁקַץ  
 "and upon"

וְעַד-כָּלָה וְנִחְרָצָה תִּתָּד  
 "will pass forth" "and that which is determined" "complete" "and until"  
 Qal perf. 3 f. s. → נִחְרָץ  
 Hiph. perf. 3 m. s. → חָרַץ

עַל-שָׁמַם:  
 "the desolator" "upon"  
 Qal perf. 3 m. s. → שָׁמַם

\* Kittel's critical apparatus reports that the Septuagint and Theodotion's Greek translation of the O. T. both have the singular; thus they attest to שְׁקוּץ.

WHEN DID THE FIRST 69 OF DANIEL'S 70 'WEEKS' BEGIN?

"from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks" (Daniel 9:25)

	VIEW # 1	VIEW # 2	VIEW # 3	VIEW # 4	VIEW # 5
AUTHOR OF DECREE	Cyrus	Artaxerxes (seventh year)	Artaxerxes (twentieth year)	Artaxerxes (twentieth year)	God
BIBLICAL REFERENCE	Ezra 1:1-3	Ezra 7:6-7, 11-13, 23	Nehemiah 2:1-8	Nehemiah 2:1-8	Jeremiah 32:1, 6-9, 13-17, 24-27
OBJECT OF DECREE	to rebuild Temple	to rebuild Temple	to rebuild Jerusalem	to rebuild Jerusalem	to rebuild Jerusalem
DATE OF DECREE	538 B.C.	458 B.C.	445 B.C.	445 B.C.	587 B.C.
YEARS TO MESSIAH	483 (69x7)	483 (69x7)	483 (69x7)	483 prophetic (69x7)	483 (69x7)
DATE OF MESSIAH	55 B.C.	A.D. 26	A.D. 39	A.D. 32	104 B.C.
ADVANTAGES OF VIEW		Brings us closest to beginning of Christ's public ministry	Specifies the city and the walls	Specifies the city and the walls	Promises restoration of the city
PROBLEMS OF VIEW	Specifies the Temple, not the city  Date of Messiah too early	Specifies the Temple, not the city	Date of Messiah too late	Date of Messiah too late	Daniel says "decree," Jeremiah says "word." Date of Messiah much too early



Thus far no satisfactory chronology of the first 69 "weeks" has been suggested. All of the views that add together the 7 "weeks" and the 62 "weeks" bring us to a date which is either too early or too late for the Messiah. But what about a chronology that does not add together the 7 "weeks" and the 62 "weeks"? What if a time-interval were to be placed between the 7 "weeks" and the 62 "weeks"? Perhaps then one of the views that end too early would fit the historical fulfillment of Daniel's prediction.

Two details attract our attention as we examine Daniel 9:25-26. The first, found in verse 25, concerns the division between the 7 "weeks" and the 62 "weeks". The verse says, "from the issuing of a word to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks." Why this division? If the 62 "weeks" were intended to follow upon the heels of the 7 "weeks", then why didn't the writer simply say 'sixty-nine weeks'? The second detail occurs in verse 26. There we read, "Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will cut off" Why did the writer say 'sixty-two weeks' instead of 'sixty-nine weeks'? Did he intend us to understand that he was assuming the 7 "weeks" as prior to the 62? Or was he dealing with the 62 "weeks" as a distinct unit in the 70 "weeks" complex? Is there a hint that the 7 "weeks" and the 62 "weeks" constitute distinct or even separate time periods in the prediction?

Three bits of information may be helpful in formulating an answer to these questions:

- (1) The Hebrew construction of verse 25 does not appear readily to lend itself to the idea of simply adding the 7 "weeks" and the 62 "weeks" to get 69 "weeks". In fact, the Hebrew text is set up in such a way as to suggest that the 62 "weeks" go with what follows, rather than what comes before. Thus verse 25 reads:

From the going forth of the word to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until an anointed ruler is seven sevens. And sixty and two sevens the street and wall shall return and be built, even in times of distress.

- (2) Other persons beside Christ are called "anointed ones" in Scripture. One of these is Cyrus, king of Persia. In Isaiah 45:1 we read, Thus says the Lord to Cyrus His anointed." Why is Cyrus called "anointed"? Isaiah 44:24, 26, 28 and 45:1, 4, 5 tell us the answer:

Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, and the one who formed you from the womb, I, the Lord, am the maker of all things, . . . it is I who says of Jerusalem, "She shall be inhabited!" And of the cities of Judah, "They shall be built." And I will raise up her ruins again . . . it is I who says of Cyrus, "He is My shepherd! And he will perform all My desire." And he declares of Jerusalem, "She will be built," And of the temple, "Your foundation will be laid."

Thus says the Lord to Cyrus His anointed, Whom I have taken by the right hand, . . . For the sake of Jacob My servant, And Israel My chosen one, I have also called you by your name; I have given you a title of honor Though you have not known Me. I am the Lord, and there is no other; Besides Me there is no God. I will gird you, though you have not known me.

In 538 B.C. Cyrus, king of Persia, issued a decree ending the captivity of the Jews in Babylon, and permitting them to return to their homeland. This would certainly seem to be sufficient reason for calling Cyrus "Messiah the Prince" or "an anointed ruler"!

- (3) The time span between the going forth of the word of the Lord to Jeremiah in 587 B.C. promising that Jerusalem would be rebuilt and reinhabited, and the decree of Cyrus ending the captivity of the Jews in Babylon in 538 B.C. (49 years) is seven 'sevens' of years.

Is it merely a coincidence that Isaiah, writing in 700 B.C., predicted that a ruler named Cyrus would be God's anointed instrument to foster the rebuilding of the temple and the city of Jerusalem; and that 162 years later Cyrus, king of Persia, would issue a decree freeing the Jews in 538 B.C.; and that Daniel would record a vision in which an anointed ruler, 49 years after God's promise to Jeremiah that Jerusalem would be rebuilt and reinhabited, would be mentioned in connection with that rebuilding?

All of the views of the first 69 of Daniel's 70 sevens that simply add together the 7 sevens and the 62 sevens in immediate succession either bring us to a date too early or too late for Jesus Christ, or do not specify the restoration of the city of Jerusalem. However, if a time interval is seen between the 7 sevens and the 62 sevens, the view that proposes the time of the beginning of Daniel's 70 sevens as the going forth of the word to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem in 587 B.C. would fit all the data, provided that a rationale for the time interval, and a basis for the beginning of the 62 sevens, could be found.

When did the 62 sevens of Daniel begin and when did they end? If there is a time interval between the 7 sevens and the 62 sevens, how long is that interval, what happens during that time, and when does the interval come to an end?

Immediately upon coming to power in Babylon, Cyrus decreed that all nationals captive in Babylon and in the surrounding country might return to their homelands. This included the Jews. The Babylonian captivity of Judah thus came to an end. Early in 538 B.C., Zerubbabel led an expedition to the Holy Land to begin the work of rebuilding the temple. The altar of the Second Temple was dedicated in October of the same year. The work on the temple was often interrupted; both under the urging of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, this temple was finally completed 23 years later, in 515.

Ezra led another expedition of returnees in 445 B.C., and Nehemiah led still a third contingent, in 444 B.C. Under Nehemiah the repair of Jerusalem's walls was carried through to completion. Nehemiah continued as governor from 444 to 433 B.C. The restoration of the streets and houses continued, amid much trouble and opposition. In 433 B.C., Nehemiah was recalled to the Persian court, to resume his duties as cupbearer to the king. Nehemiah returned to Judea and Jerusalem in 430 B.C., to commence his second governorship. Restoration and rebuilding continued, along with internal and external problems and harassment. We do not have specific knowledge of the time of Nehemiah's retirement or death. However, we do have knowledge of a letter (in the Elephantine Papyri) from a Jewish colony in Egypt to a certain Bagoas, a Persian who had been appointed to Nehemiah's post of Judean

governor, a letter dated 408 B. C. (this letter is reported by J. Barton Payne In his *Outline of Hebrew History* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1954), p. 172)

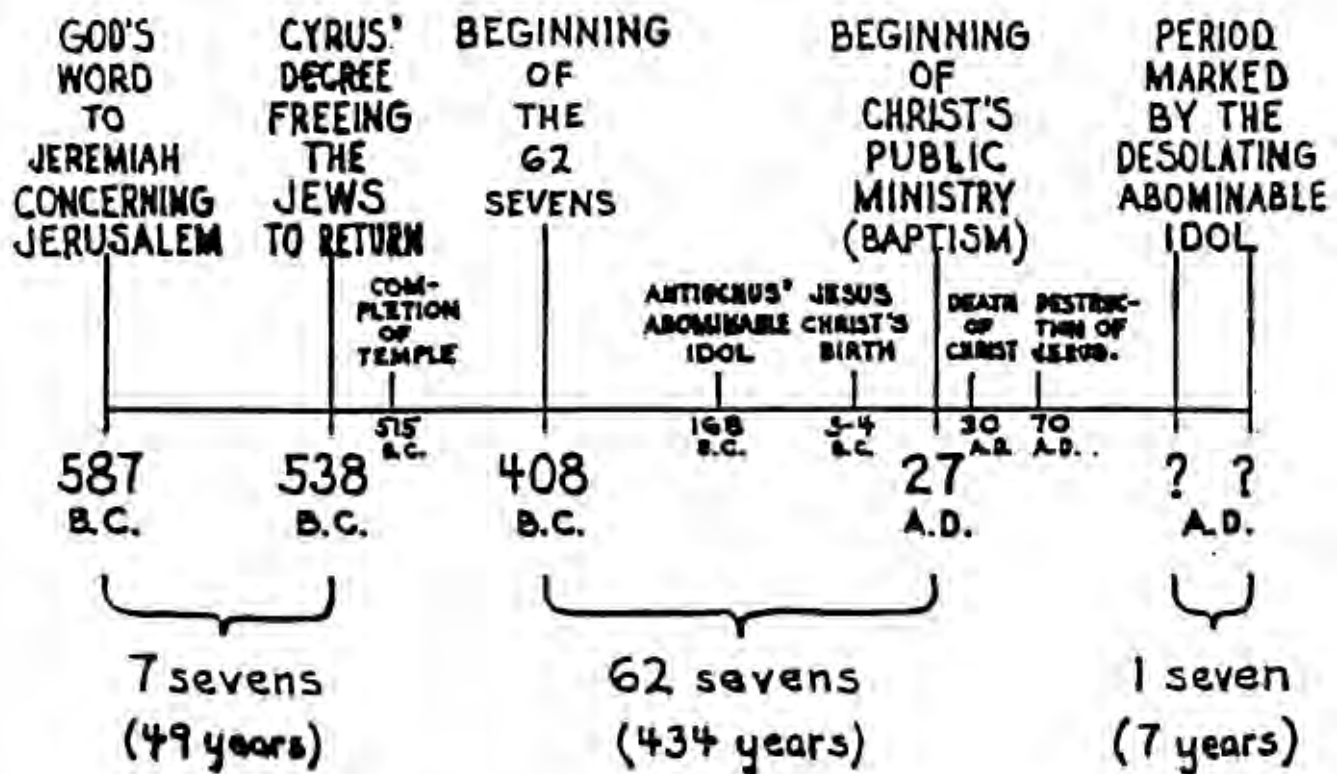
If we take A.D. 27 as the beginning of Christ's public ministry, and count back 434 years (62 sevens), we are brought to 408 B.C. If we take 4 B.C. as the date of Christ's birth and count back 434 years, we are brought to 438 B.C. If we take A.D. 30 as the date of Christ's death and count back 434 years, we are brought to 405 B.C. The date of 438 B.C. is too early, since the task of rebuilding the city of Jerusalem is still very much under way, and Nehemiah is in the middle of his first governorship. The date of 405 B.C. really has nothing with which to connected itself historically. The date of 408 B.C. seems on the whole the best choice. Of course, this posits a gap of some 130 years between Cyrus's decree in 538 B.C. (ending the 7 sevens) and the commencement of the 62 sevens in 408 B.C. However, it should be noted that whatever date we choose for the beginning of the 62 sevens, it seem that a gap time between the 7 sevens and the 62 sevens is indicated.

Daniel 9:26 says, "After the sixty-two sevens Messiah shall be cut off." Does this present a problem, if the date of A.D. 27 is chosen for the end of the 62 sevens? It should be noted that Daniel does not say immediately after, but simply after. The date of Christ's substitutionary death was A.D. 29 or 30. He was cut off out of the land of the living, but not for Himself!

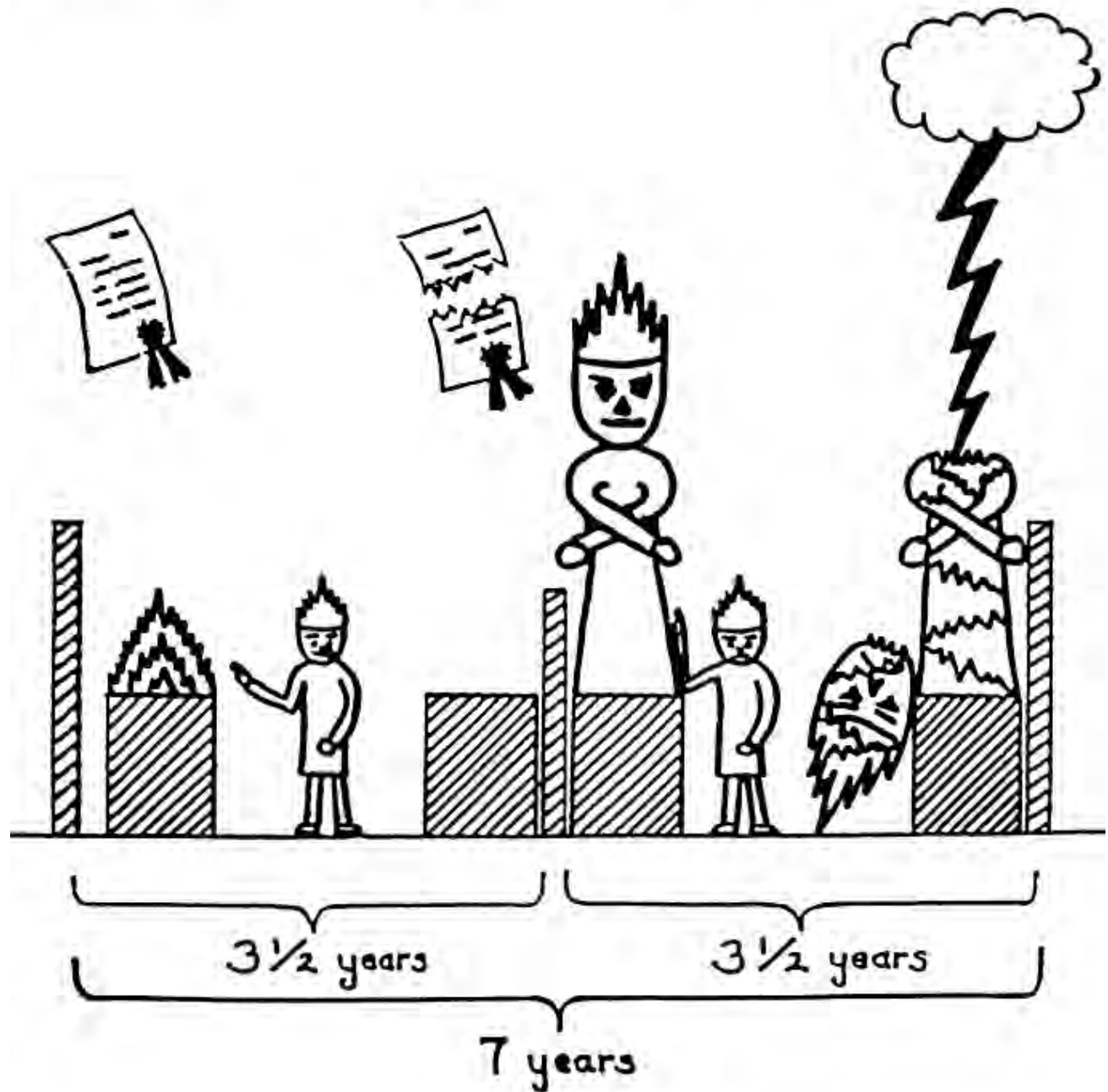
Is there a time interval between Daniel's 62 sevens and his one seven? Does the seventieth seven immediately follow the 62 sevens? Or is there a gap between these two segments?

Daniel 9:26 says, "And after the sixty-two sevens Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself. And the city and the holy place shall be destroyed by the people of the coming prince." If the 62 sevens ends in A.D. 27, and Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed in A.D. 70, we must recognize a gap between the 62 sevens and the one seven. In addition, our Lord in the Olivet Discourse stated that He would come again immediately after the Great Tribulation, which takes place during Daniel's seventieth seven. If no gap is posited between the 62 sevens and the one seven, and if the 62 sevens ended In A.D. 27, then the one seven ended in A.D. 34. Did Christ return in power and great glory immediately after A.D. 34? if He did, then Paul, writing to the Thessalonians church in A.D. 51 and urging them to be ready for the Lord's appearing, must have been greatly misled! And the beloved John, writing in the Revelation the words, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" in A.D. 95, must have been greatly deceived! And although many have said "I am He" in the years between A.D. 95 and the present, our Lord has not yet returned, there has been no Tribulation period marked by the Abominable idol that makes desolate, followed by the coming of the Son of Man in a cloud with power and great glory. Daniel's seventieth seven is still future, and there is a great gap of time between the 62 sevens and the one seven.

## OVERVIEW OF DANIEL'S SEVENTY "SEVENS"



# DETAILS OF DANIEL'S SEVENTIETH "7"



What will transpire during Daniel's seventieth seven? In Daniel 9:26-27 we read:

- 26 And after the sixty-two sevens Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself. And the city and the holy place shall be destroyed by the people of the coming prince. And his destruction shall be in the outpouring; and until the destruction there shall be war, desolations are decreed.
- 27 And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one seven. But in the middle of the seven he shall cause sacrifice and offering to cease; and upon the wing shall come a desolating abominable idol, even until the end, and until that which is decreed shall be poured out upon the desolator.

Daniel uses the expression "desolating abominable idol" or "abominable idol that makes desolate" (שְׁקוּצִים מְשֻׁמֵּם) three times in his book. The other instances are found in 11:31 and 12:11. Do these three instances have reference to three distinct events? Do they all refer to the same event? To which of these three instances does our Lord refer in the Olivet Discourse?

In Daniel 11:31 the construction is וְנִתְּנוּ הַשְׁקוּץ מְשֻׁמֵּם. To what does this use refer? In Daniel 11, verses 2-35 predict what came to pass in the history of Persian and Greece in such a precise fashion that liberal critics of Daniel have taken the position that this book must have been written after the events it describes. In the historical sweep of this section, Daniel 11:31 clearly refers to the desolating abominable idol of Zeus that Antiochus Epiphanes, king of Syria, placed in the Holy of Holies of the temple in June, 168 B.C. Thus Daniel 11:31 cannot be the Abomination of Desolation referred to in the Olivet Discourse, because our Lord said that that Abomination marking the Great Tribulation was yet future.

In Daniel 12:11 the construction is וְלִתֵּת שְׁקוּץ שָׁמַם. It would appear that this reference to a desolating detested idol refers to the same event spoken of in 9:27.

In Daniel 9:27 the construction is וְעַל כִּנּוּר שְׁקוּצִים מְשֻׁמֵּם (see the note on 387 for the problem of the plural of שְׁקוּץ). It is the setting up of this abominable desolating idol referred to in Daniel 9:27 and 12:11 to which our Lord in the Olivet Discourse makes reference, an event that marks the Great Tribulation described in the section of the Discourse.

What are the major features of Daniel's seventieth seven? What will transpire during that yet future period of seven years? What does Daniel 9:26-27 tell us?

The following features can be discerned in Daniel's seventieth seven:

- (1) A "coming prince" will make a strong covenant or firm treaty with the Jewish people for one seven (seven years).
- (2) Under the terms of this treaty, the Jews will once again sacrifice in the temple in Jerusalem (this implies the building of the Third Temple).
- (3) After three and one-half years of the seven year period, the "prince" will stop the Jewish sacrifices in the temple.

- (4) In place of the Jewish sacrifices, the "prince", now revealing himself in his true character, will set up an abominable idol in the temple, thus making the temple desolate. It is this outrageous and blatant act to which our Lord refers in the Olivet Discourse. The abomination of desolation will continue to stand in the temple until the end of the seven year period.
- (5) During the second half of Daniel's seventieth seven, there will be war and destruction and desolation. Thus the second half of the one seven will be a time of great distress and trouble.
- (6) At the end of the seventieth seven, the "prince" and his abominable idol that makes desolate will be destroyed, in the outpouring of God's Judgment.

Thus far we have seen that the abominable idol that makes the temple desolate, as spoken of by our Lord in the second section of the Olivet Discourse, is the same as that which will be set up in the temple in the middle of Daniel's seventieth seven. Our Lord said that this abominable, desolating idol will mark the Great Tribulation, after which He will return to earth in power and great glory. Note that by combining Christ's Discourse with Daniel's prediction, we learn that the Great Tribulation will fall into the same time-frame as Daniel's seventieth seven, and that the abominable desolating idol will be set up in the middle of that seven year period.

Who will it be that sets up this abomination that desolates? Daniel calls him "the coming prince" (Daniel 9:26), and says that he will do certain things by which he may be recognized. Although our Lord does not state who it is that will set up the abomination, the question is insistent, "Who is he?"

Is he a ruler of the revived Roman Empire (a kind of United Confederation of Europe) as some have suggested? Is he a new world messiah, who will offer himself to the world as savior from world starvation or from nuclear holocaust? Is he Satan incarnate, who will rule upon the earth during the second half of the seventieth seven in diabolical imitation of Christ's millennial reign? Who is this personage?

Two New Testament passages appear to throw additional light on the identity, characteristics, and actions of this personage.

### 3. Paul's Reference to the 'Man of Lawlessness

#### II Thessalonians 2:1-11

- (1) Now that we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to Him,
- (2) that you may not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. (ὥς ὅτι ἐνέστηκεν ἡ ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου)

- (3) Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the ἀποστασία comes first, and the man of lawlessness (ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς νομίας) is revealed, the son of destruction,
- (4) who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God (τὸν ναὸν τοῦ θεοῦ), displaying himself as being God.
- (5) Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things?
- (6) And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he may be revealed.
- (7) For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains (μόνον ὁ κατέχων) will do so until he is taken out of the way.
- (8) And then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming;
- (9) that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders,
- (10) and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.
- (11) And for this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they might believe what is false.

There are four key concepts in this passage that appear to require some comment: (a) the "Day of the Lord" (verse 2); (b) the ἀποστασία (verse 3); (c) the "man of lawlessness" or "man of sin" (verse 3); (d) the "one who now restrains" (verse 7).

- a. The "Day of the Lord" concept has a considerable background in the OT. There it appears quite consistently to refer to a time when the Lord manifests Himself in wrath. Generally the Day of the Lord is associated with darkness, thick clouds, gloom, and strong manifestations of God's disfavor. However, in the dark clouds there is a silver lining for the remnant, the true spiritual people of God. In wrath God always remembers mercy. Among OT references to the Day of the Lord are the following:

Isaiah 13:6-11 -- "Wail, for the day of the Lord is near! It will come as destruction from the Almighty. Therefore all hands will fall limp. And every man's heart will melt. And they will be terrified, pains and anguish will take hold of them; they will writhe like a woman in labor, they will look at one another in astonishment, their faces aflame. Behold, the day of the Lord is coming, cruel, with fury and burning anger, to make the land a desolation; and He will exterminate its sinners from it. For the stars of heaven and their constellations will not flash forth their light; the sun will be dark when it rises, and the moon will not shed its light. Thus I will punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; I will also put an end to the arrogance of the proud, and abase the haughtiness of the ruthless."

Ezekiel 30:1-3 -- "The word of the Lord came again to me saying, Son of man, prophesy and say, 'Thus says the Lord God, "Wail, Alas for the day!" ' For the day is near, even the day of the Lord is near; it will be a day of clouds, a time of doom for the nations."



Joel 2:1-2a -- "Blow the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm on My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming; surely it is near, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness."

Zephaniah 1:14-18 -- "Near is the great day of the Lord, near and coming very quickly. Listen, the day of the Lord! In it the warrior cries out bitterly. A day of wrath is that day, a day of trouble and distress, a day of destruction and desolation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of trumpet and battle cry, against the fortified cities and the high corner towers. And I will bring distress on men, so that they will walk like the blind, because they have sinned against the Lord; and their blood will be poured out like dust, and their flesh like dung. Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to deliver them on the day of the Lord's wrath; and all the earth will be devoured in the fire of His jealousy. For He will make a complete end, indeed a terrifying one, of all the inhabitants of the earth."

Malachi 4:5 -- "Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord."

Acts 2:18-20 -- "Even upon My bondslaves, both men and women, I will in those days pour forth My spirit and they shall prophesy. And I will grant wonders in the sky above, and signs on the earth beneath, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great day of the Lord shall come" (quoted from Joel 2:29-31)

I Thessalonians 5:1-5 -- "Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. While they are saying, "Peace and safety!" then destruction will come upon them suddenly like birth pangs upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day should overtake you like a thief; for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness;"

II Peter 3:10 -- "But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the element, will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up."

Among these OT (and a few NT) references to the Day of the Lord should also be included Isaiah 34:1-8; 5:18-20; Obadiah 15-21; and Zephaniah 1:7-13 and 2:1-3.

In all these references it is interesting to note that God's wrath upon mankind includes both temporal and eternal expressions of wrath. Punishment for iniquity includes both temporal punishment (i.e., punishments here on earth) and eternal punishment (in the eternal state).

In view of the content and emphases of these Scriptures, it would appear that the eschatological Day of the Lord brackets the time period from Christ's Second Coming to the Final Judgment of the wicked. Whether this includes or excludes the Tribulation period depends on the time of the Rapture relative to the Tribulation.

In regard to this passage, it would appear from verse 2 that there was a possibility that some of the Thessalonian believers were disturbed and upset, thinking that the Day of the Lord had come and had caught them like a thief in the night, and that the wrath of God was about to fall upon them. In his previous epistle (in I Thessalonians 5:1-11) Paul had told them that the Day of the Lord's wrath would not overtake them like a thief (5:4) and that God had not destined them for wrath (5:9). In this second epistle he now assures them that the Day of the Lord has not yet come, and for two reasons: the ἀποστασία has to come first, and the "man of lawlessness" has to be revealed. Since neither of these things had as yet occurred, the Thessalonian believers did not need to be shaken or disturbed, even if someone were to claim that the Day of the Lord had come.

- b. The ἀποστασία of verse 3 is sometimes transliterated and sometimes translated. The A.V. translates it "falling away," the NASB transliterates it "the apostasy", and the NIV translates it "the rebellion". Since ἀποστασία is used only twice in the NT, an examination of the usage of its cognate ἀφίστημι in the NT is needful. This is facilitated by classifying its uses according to meaning in context with the help of a chart. Such classification shows that ἀποστασία should simply be translated as "departure." (See next page for chart)

The word ἀποστασία can mean either a physical departure of a person or persons from one location to another, or an ideological departure from one set of beliefs to another. The difference between these two kinds of departure is that a person can depart physically (move from one location to another) without changing his beliefs, and he can depart ideologically (change his beliefs) without moving physically.

On the basis of usage alone, it would appear at least as likely that ἀποστασία means a physical departure as an ideological departure. If it refers to a physical departure, it could be an allusion to the event Paul mentioned in I Thessalonians 4:17 -- the Rapture. If this is the case, then in his second epistle Paul was telling the concerned believers in Thessalonica that before the Day of the Lord can come, the Rapture must occur first, and then the "man of lawlessness" will be revealed, whom the Lord will destroy at His coming in power and glory.

- c. The "man of lawlessness" in this passage is spoken of in terms of various actions and characteristics. The following truths are taught in this account:
  - (1) As the personification of evil, he will be restrained for a time (verse 6).
  - (2) At a certain point in history, he will be revealed to the world (verses 3, 8a).

## APOSTASIA AND APHISTEMI IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

APOSTASIA AND APHISTEMI IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

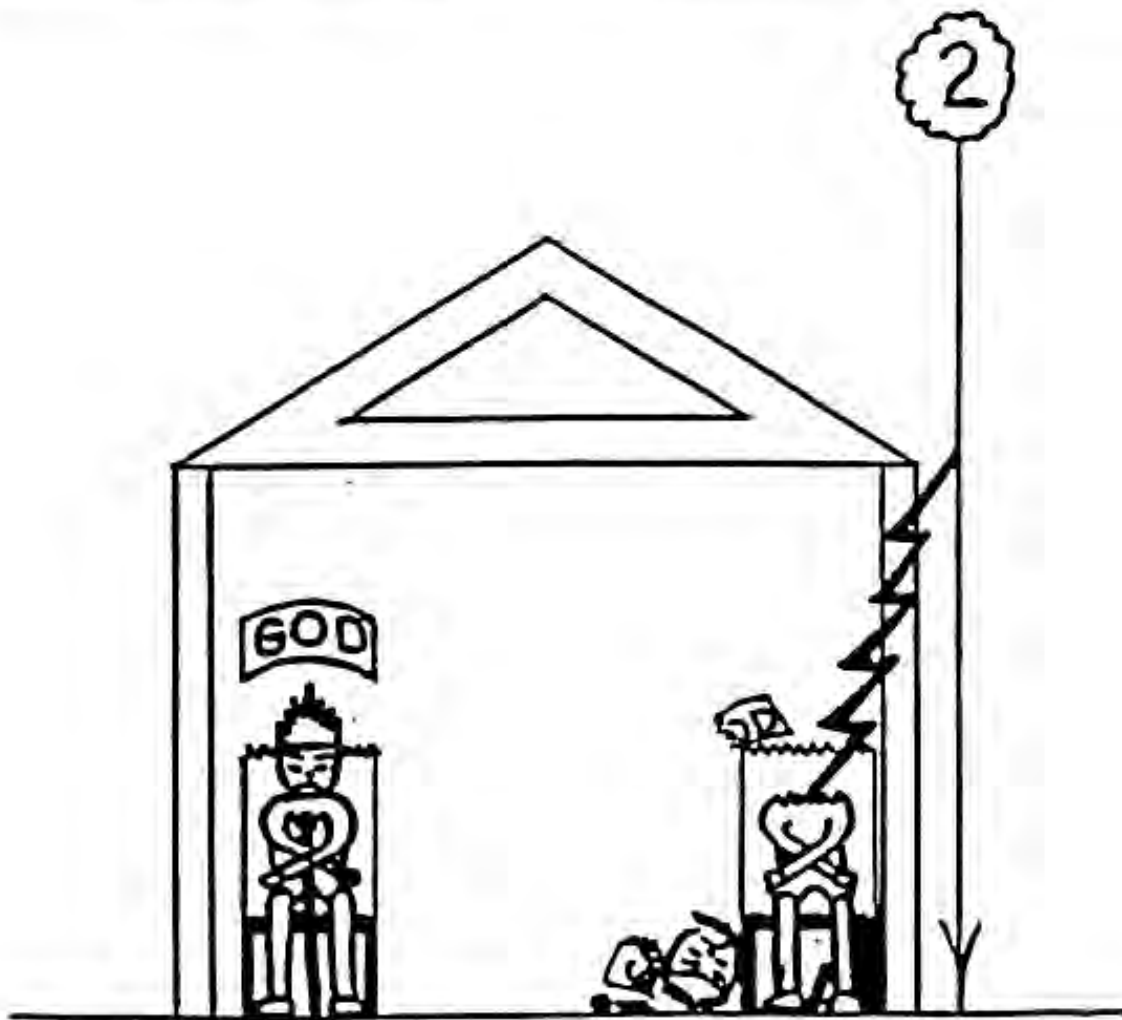
REFERENCE	SPATIAL DEPARTURE	IDEOLOGICAL DEPARTURE	MISCELLANEOUS
Luke 2:37 - "And she (Anna) never left the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers."			
Luke 4:13 - "And when the devil had finished every temptation, he departed from Him (Jesus) until an opportune time."			
Luke 8:13 - "And those on the rocky soil are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no firm root: they believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away."			
Luke 13:27 - "and He will say, 'I tell you, I do not know where you are from; depart from me, all you evildoers'."			
Acts 5:37 - "After this man Judas of Galilee rose up in the days of the census, and drew away some people after him, he too perished, and all those who followed him were scattered."			
Acts 5:38 - "And so in the present case, I say to you, stay away from these men and let them alone, for if this plan or action should be of men, it will be overthrown;"			
Acts 12:10 - "And when they had passed the first and second guard, they came to the iron gate that leads into the city, which opened for them by itself; and they went out and went along one street; and immediately the angel departed from him."			
Acts 15:38 - "But Paul kept insisting that they should not take him (John Mark) along who had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work."			
Acts 19:9 - "But when some were becoming hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way before the multitude, he withdrew from them and took away the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus."			
Acts 22:29 - "Therefore those who were about to examine him immediately let go of him; and the commander also was afraid when he found out that he was a Roman, and because he had put him in chains."			
II Cor. 12:8 - "Concerning this I entreated the Lord three times that it might depart from me."			
I Tim. 4:1 - "But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons."			
I Tim. 6:5 - "and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain."			
II Tim. 2:19 - "Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, 'The Lord knows those who are His,' and, 'Let every one who names the name of the Lord abstain from wickedness'."			
Hebrews 3:12 - "Take care, brethren, lest there should be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart, in falling away from the living God."			
Acts 21:21 - "and they have been told about you, that you are teaching all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children not to walk according to the customs."			
II Thess. 2:3 - "Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the departure comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction."			

- (3) His activities will be in accord with the working of Satan, and will include all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs, and wonders (verse 9).
  - (4) He will oppose God and every religion, and will establish his own religion (verse 4a).
  - (5) He will establish his world center of worship in God's temple, and there show himself as God, to be worshipped (verse 4b).
  - (6) He will deceive those who have not believed and have refused the truth, so that they might continue in the wickedness in which they have delighted. Because they have rejected God's truth, God, by withdrawing the influences of His Spirit, will allow them to be strongly deluded and deceived by the man of lawlessness (verses 10-12).
  - (7) This lawless one is doomed to destruction, and will be overthrown and destroyed by the Lord Jesus at His coming in power and glory (verse 3, 8b).
- d. Who is the one who restrains the full expression of the mystery of lawlessness that is already at work? Is it the great system of Roman Law that deterred the grosser forms of social and personal immorality? Is it the Body of Christ, individually and collectively, that functions as salt and light in an ungodly, unrighteous world-system? Is it the Holy Spirit particularly in His ministry of indwelling the church? Or is it the Holy Spirit, working both outside of and through the members of Christ's Body?

One advantage of the last-mentioned option is that the Spirit of God has always been the Restrainer, even holding back the full expression of human depravity in all dispensations. Before the Flood He strove with mankind, and throughout human history since the Flood He has worked through the Law of God written on man's nature, through the conscience, through human laws and human government, and has held back many outward expressions of innate sin among men and nations.

The option that appears the best to fit all the data is that the one who presently restrains the full expression of human corruption from bursting forth is the Holy Spirit.

## DETAILS OF II THESSALONIANS 2



REVELATION OF THE MAN  
OF SIN

4. John's Vision of the Two Beasts in Revelation 13

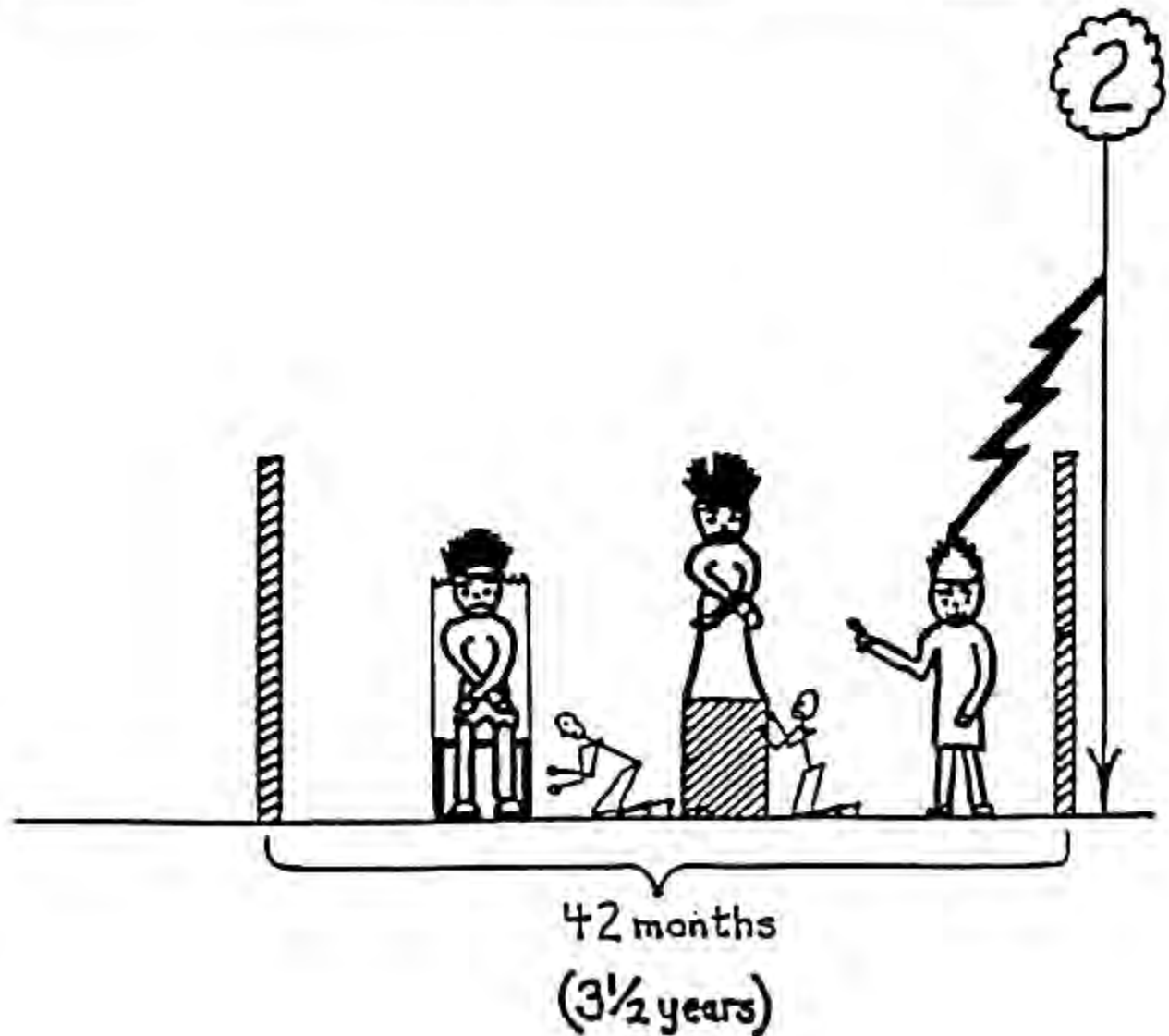
- (1) And I saw a beast (θηρίον) coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems, and on his heads were blasphemous names.
- (2) And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like those of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority.
- (3) And I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed. And the whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast;
- (4) and they worshipped the dragon, because he gave his authority to the beast; and they worshipped the beast, saying "Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?"
- (5) And there was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies; and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him.
- (6) And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven.
- (7) And it was given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them; and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him.
- (8) And all who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.
- (9) If anyone has an ear, let him hear.
- (10) If anyone is destined for captivity, to captivity he goes; if anyone kills with the sword, with the sword he must be killed. Here is the perseverance and the faith of the saints.
- (11) And I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spoke as a dragon.
- (12) And he exercises all authority of the first beast in his presence. And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed.
- (13) And he performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to earth in the presence of men.
- (14) And he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who had the wound of the sword and has come to life.
- (15) And there was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast might even speak and cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed.
- (16) And he causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free man and the slaves, to be given a mark of their right hand, or on their forehead,
- (17) and he provides that no one should be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark, either the name of the beast or the number of his name.

There are four key features in this passages: a beast, a dragon, another beast, and an image.

- a. In verses 1-8 we learn seven things about the first beast:
  - (1) He will have a received deadly wound, and yet he is not dead, but rather alive (verses 3, 14b)
  - (2) He will receive his power and authority and his position from Satan (verse 4)
  - (3) He will utter blasphemous boasts against God, His name, His tabernacle, and His saints (verses 5-6)
  - (4) He will be given power over all the earth (verse 7b)
  - (5) He will receive worldwide worship from the unsaved (verses 4, 8)
  - (6) He will make war on the saints and kill or destroy some of them (verse 7a)
  - (7) He will continue in power for 42 months or 3 1/2 years (verse 5)
- b. In verses 2 and 4 the dragon is mentioned. In Revelation 12:9 we are told that the dragon in the pictorial representations given to John was none other than the serpent of old, the devil, Satan. Thus we learn that the dragon in the picture represents Satan.
- c. In verses 11-17 we learn five things about the second beast (who in Revelation 19:20 is called the false prophet):
  - (1) He also will receive his power and authority from Satan (verse 12a)
  - (2) He will cause the unsaved to worship the first beast (verse 12b)
  - (3) He will cause the unsaved to make a living, speaking image to the first beast, and will cause the unsaved to worship this image (verses 14-15)
  - (4) He will have power to do great lying wonders, and to make fire come down from the sky, in order to deceive the unsaved (verses 13, 14a)
  - (5) He will place the mark of the first beast on the unsaved, and will cause those who refuse this mark to be killed (verses 15b, 16)
- d. In verses 14-15 we learn four things about the image:
  - (1) This image will be made by "those who dwell on the earth," at the direction of the second beast (verse 14)
  - (2) This image (εἰκόνα) will in some sense be like the first beast. It is an image, a likeness of him made in his honor (verse 14)
  - (3) The second beast gives this image power to speak (verse 15)
  - (4) The second beast has the power to put to death those who do not worship the image of the first beast (verse 15)

With regard to the final end and destruction of these two beasts, Revelation 19:19-20 tells us: "And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse (the glorified Lord Jesus Christ) and his army (the saints who come with Christ from heaven). And the beast was taken (i.e., the first beast), and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles (i.e., the second beast who exercised the authority of the first beast in his presence) before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone."

## DETAILS OF REVELATION 13:1-17





B. A Synthesis of these Passages

We have examined four passages that are chronologically significant for the development of a framework for the understanding of God's prophetic program: the Olivet Discourse, Daniel 9:21-27, II Thessalonians 2:1-11, and Revelation 13.

We have learned that in the middle of Daniel's seventieth seven the "coming prince" sets up the abominable, detestable idol that makes the temple and city of Jerusalem desolate. This action is the great identifying sign that marks the Great Tribulation period spoken of by our Lord in the Olivet Discourse. Could this "coming prince" be the "man of lawlessness" of II Thessalonians 2, as well as the first beast of Revelation 13? And could the abominable idol of Daniel 9 and the Olivet Discourse be the image of the beast spoken of Revelation 13? The answer to both these questions would seem to be yes.

If the personage spoken of in these four passages is one and the same, then we must ask two questions: (a) What will he be like? (b) How will he be recognized when he appears on the world scene?

Upon combination of the four passages, we can develop a profile of this personage, as follows:

1. He will be some kind of ruler or "prince", and will probably be a very powerful and influential figure.
2. At first he will present himself as a man of peace, and will seek to be a peacemaker.
3. At first he will be favorable to Israel, and to Jewish claims, acknowledging these claims by a firm treaty.
4. After a few years he will reveal himself in his true character and will break his treaty with Israel and perhaps his agreements with other nations and powers as well.
5. He will claim world dominion, and require absolute submission and allegiance by all peoples of the world. Thus a one-world government will be established.
6. He will gain control of all political, social, and economic structures, and will use them for his own purposes.
7. He will require religious worship of himself as a god by means of an amazing image, which will be erected in the temple in Jerusalem.
8. He will do lying wonders, deceptive amazing signs, thereby causing the people of the world to believe that he has supernatural powers. However, whatever power he has will be extended to him by Satan.
9. He will have at his side a religious leader, who will prophesy lies and cause people to worship this person and his amazing image. Thus a one-world religion will be established.
10. Those people who refuse to receive this man's mark of absolute allegiance will be discriminated against and persecuted; many of them will be put to death, including many believers.
11. Those people who willingly receive the mark of allegiance to this man will be doomed to everlasting torment in the lake of fire, the final hell.
12. At the end of his brief period of world dominion, this personage and his false prophet will be struck down (no doubt along with his image) and cast into the lake of fire by Christ at His Second Coming.

C. A Framework Developed from these Passages

Thus far it has been suggested that God's word to Jeremiah in 587 B.C. that Jerusalem would be reinhabited and rebuilt and the temple would be restored began to be fulfilled to 538 B.C. when Cyrus released his Jewish captives and they returned to Palestine to lay the foundations of the Second Temple and to rebuild the walls, the streets, and the houses of Jerusalem. Daniel's vision continued to be fulfilled when Christ began His public ministry in AD. 27 and died an atoning death in AD. 29 or 30, and when the temple and the city were again destroyed in A.D. 70. Daniel predicted that a yet-future seven year period will be characterized by the making of a firm treaty by a coming prince with Israel, that the Third Temple will be built and that temple sacrifice will resume, but that after 3 1/2 years the prince will break the treaty, stop the Jewish sacrifice, and set up an abominable idol that will make the temple desolate.

Jesus says that the setting up of this abominable, desolating idol in the temple by the coming prince will unmistakably identify and mark the beginning of the Great Tribulation period, which means that since the placement of the abomination occurs in the middle of Daniel's seventieth seven, the Great Tribulation will occupy the second half of this seven year period. Christ says that His coming in power and glory will occur immediately after the Great Tribulation, which places His Return at the end of Daniel's seventieth seven and before the Millennium (in a Premillennial scheme).

Paul in II Thessalonians 2 says that this prince, the "man of lawlessness," will occupy the temple, claim to be a god, and demand universal worship, but that he will be destroyed by Christ at His Return in power and glory at the end of the Great Tribulation and Daniel's seventieth seven.

John in Revelation 13 tells us that this prince, this "man of lawlessness", this first "beast" will reveal his true character in the second 3 1/2 years of Daniel's seventieth seven, and will demand universal worship by means of an image, which is the abominable, detestable idol of Daniel 9 and the Olivet Discourse. However, he will be destroyed (and his false prophet with him) by Christ at His Return in power and glory at the end of Daniel's seventieth seven and the Great Tribulation. Thus we see that Christ's coming in power and great glory occurs after the Great Tribulation.

However, this still leaves open-ended the question: How can Christ in the fourth section of the Olivet Discourse emphasize the imminency of His coming when He has clearly stated in the same Discourse that His coming in power and glory will immediately follow the Great Tribulation? That is, how can a posttribulation Return in power and glory be reconciled with Christ's emphasis on the need of alertness and readiness in view of His imminent coming?

This question highlights the need of getting clear on what is meant by "imminency", not only in the context of current discussions of eschatological concerns, but also in Scripture.

## VII. The Concept of Imminency In Prophecy

Earlier, in the treatment of the Olivet Discourse, the fourth section was entitled "Exhortations in view of Christ's imminent coming". What does "Imminency" mean in general? And what does it mean in connection with Christ's Second Coming?

(In passing, note the difference in spelling and meaning between "Imminent", immanent", and eminent". The word "immanent" is defined by Webster's *New World Dictionary* as meaning "1. living, remaining, or operating within; inherent; 2. Theol. present throughout the universe; said of God; distinguished from transcendent." The word "eminent" is defined in the same dictionary as meaning "1. rising above other things or places; high; lofty; 2. projecting; prominent; protruding; 3. standing high by comparison with others, as in rank or achievement; renowned; exalted; distinguished; 4. outstanding; remarkable; noteworthy.")

Webster's *Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary* defines "imminency" as "ready to take place", "hanging threateningly over one's head", "impending", "manifesting signs that keep one in suspense". It says that "Imminent emphasizes the shortness of time before happening."

Webster's *New World Dictionary* defines "imminent" as "likely to happen without delay; impending; threatening; said of danger, evil misfortune."

### A. Definitions of Imminency in eschatological Writings

Robert H. Gundry in *The Church and the Tribulation* states:

By common consent imminence means that so far as we know no predicted event will necessarily precede the coming of Christ. The concept incorporates three essential elements: (1) suddenness, (2) unexpectedness or incalculability, (3) a possibility of occurrence at any moment.

J. Barton Payne in *The Imminent Appearing of Christ* asserts that:

Imminency does not mean that Christ's coming must be soon . . . . But His day could be soon, "close at hand in its incidence". Does this mean then that it could be as soon as to happen right away, at any time? This is the thought associated with imminency, "ready to befall or overtake one."

Gerald B. Stanton in Kept From the Hour writes:

Many Christians affirm that the coming of Christ is imminent, which does not mean that this glad event must be immediate, but rather that it is overhanging, that it may occur at any moment. The word imminent, if used of an evil event, might be rendered impending, for it is always threatening to come to pass. An imminent event is one that hangs suspended, possibly for an indefinite period of time, but

the final occurrence is certain. As applied to the coming of the Lord, Imminency consists of three things:

- (1) the certainty that He may come at any moment,
- (2) the uncertainty of the time of that arrival,
- (3) the fact that no prophesied event stands between the believer and that hour.

B. Imminency and the Scriptural Teachings and Emphases

1. In current discussions about Christ's Coming, four basic conceptions of imminency are used:

- (a) Unconditional Imminency
- (b) Delayed Imminency
- (c) Subsequent Imminency
- (d) Generational Imminency

What does each of these conceptions of imminency hold?

- a. Unconditional Imminency holds that from Christ's ascension to His Second Coming His Return is absolutely imminent, which means that it could occur at any time, and that there is no identifiable event that must precede His coming.

(Incidentally, this conception could fit with some form of Amillennialism and some form of Premillennialism. It could not fit with Postmillennialism.)

- b. Delayed Imminency holds that, following Christ's ascension, there was an indeterminate period of delay during which certain predictions Christ made were fulfilled. During this period Christ's Return was relatively imminent, which means that it could have occurred at any time following the completion of the predicted set of events (i.e., His coming was relative to those events). There are at least four such events that necessitated a brief period of delay:
  - (a) The sending of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 1:4-5)
  - (b) Peter's death by execution (John 21:18-19)
  - (c) The destruction of Jerusalem (Luke 19:43-44)
  - (d) The writing of the books of the New Testament (John 16:12-13)

Following this relatively brief period of delay (which runs from A.D. 29 or 30 to 95 or 100 -- the Apostolic Age), Christ's Return is absolutely imminent.

- c. Subsequent Imminency holds that, following Christ's ascension, there is an indeterminate period during which Christ's Return is relatively imminent. This period of relative imminency comes to an end at the Tribulation period, after which there is a brief period of absolute imminency. Thus Christ's coming is relative to the completion of the

Great Tribulation (i.e., He cannot come at any moment during the present time), but after the Tribulation He can come on any day and at any hour.

- d. Generational Imminency holds that, following Christ's ascension, there is an indeterminate period during which Christ's Return is relatively imminent. This relative imminency continues until the last generation of human beings comes on the world scene, and then Christ's Return is generational, i.e., it will occur during that generation. Further, within that generation the Great Tribulation will occur; and after the Tribulation period His Return will be absolutely imminent for a brief period of time.

## 2. Imminency and the fourth section of the Olivet Discourse

The fourth section of the Discourse contains several analogies and parables that emphasize imminency. But which conception of imminency?

- a. The parable of the fig tree

Matthew 24:32-33 -- "Now learn the parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender, and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near; even so you too, when you see all these things, recognize that He is near, right at the door."

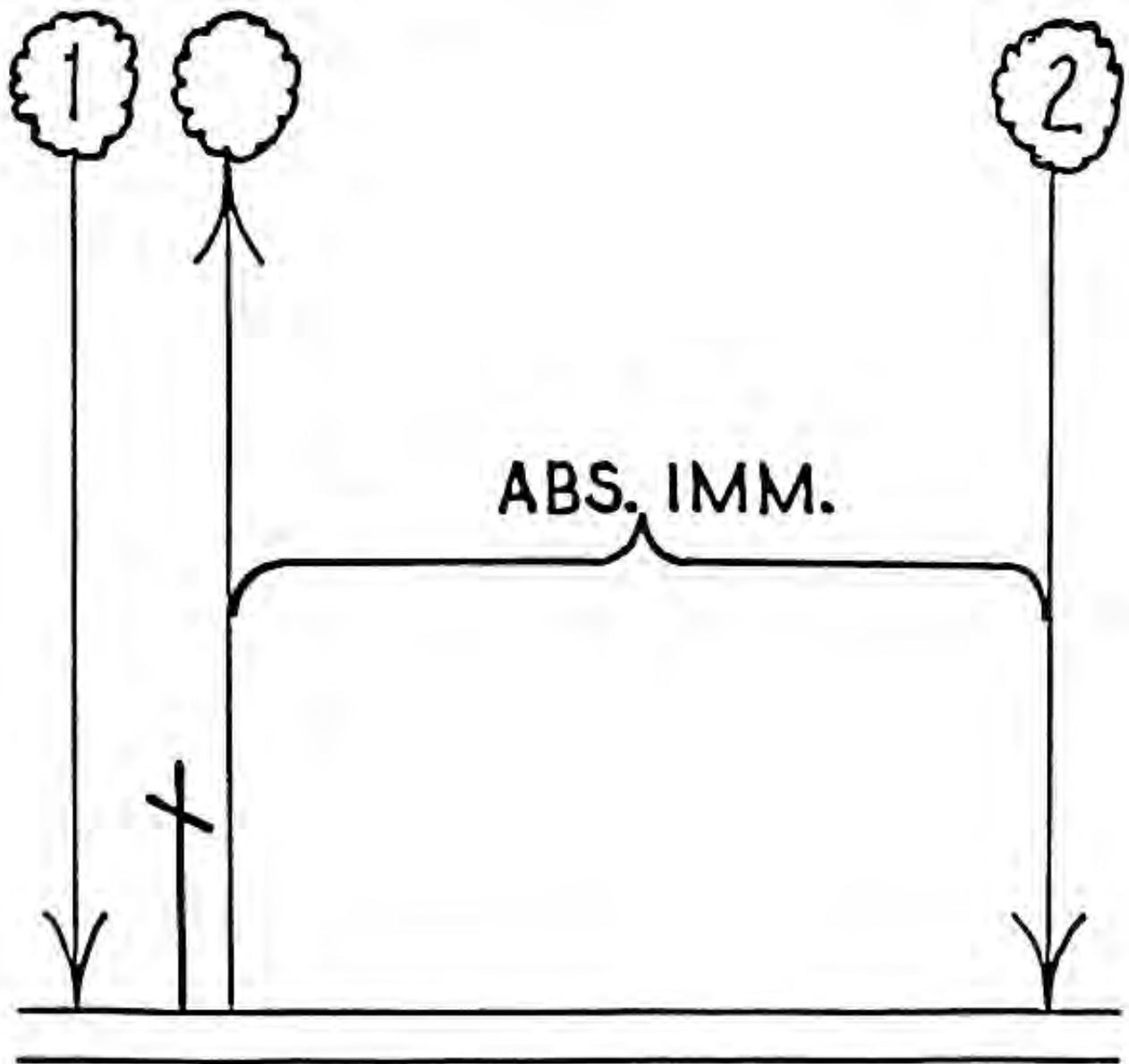
Which of the four conceptions of imminency described above is implied in the parable of the fig tree? if "all these things" refers to the events characterizing the course of the present age, then delayed imminency would seem to be implied. if "all these things" refer to the events marking the Great Tribulation, then subsequent imminency would seem to be implied.

- b. The analogy of the days of Noah

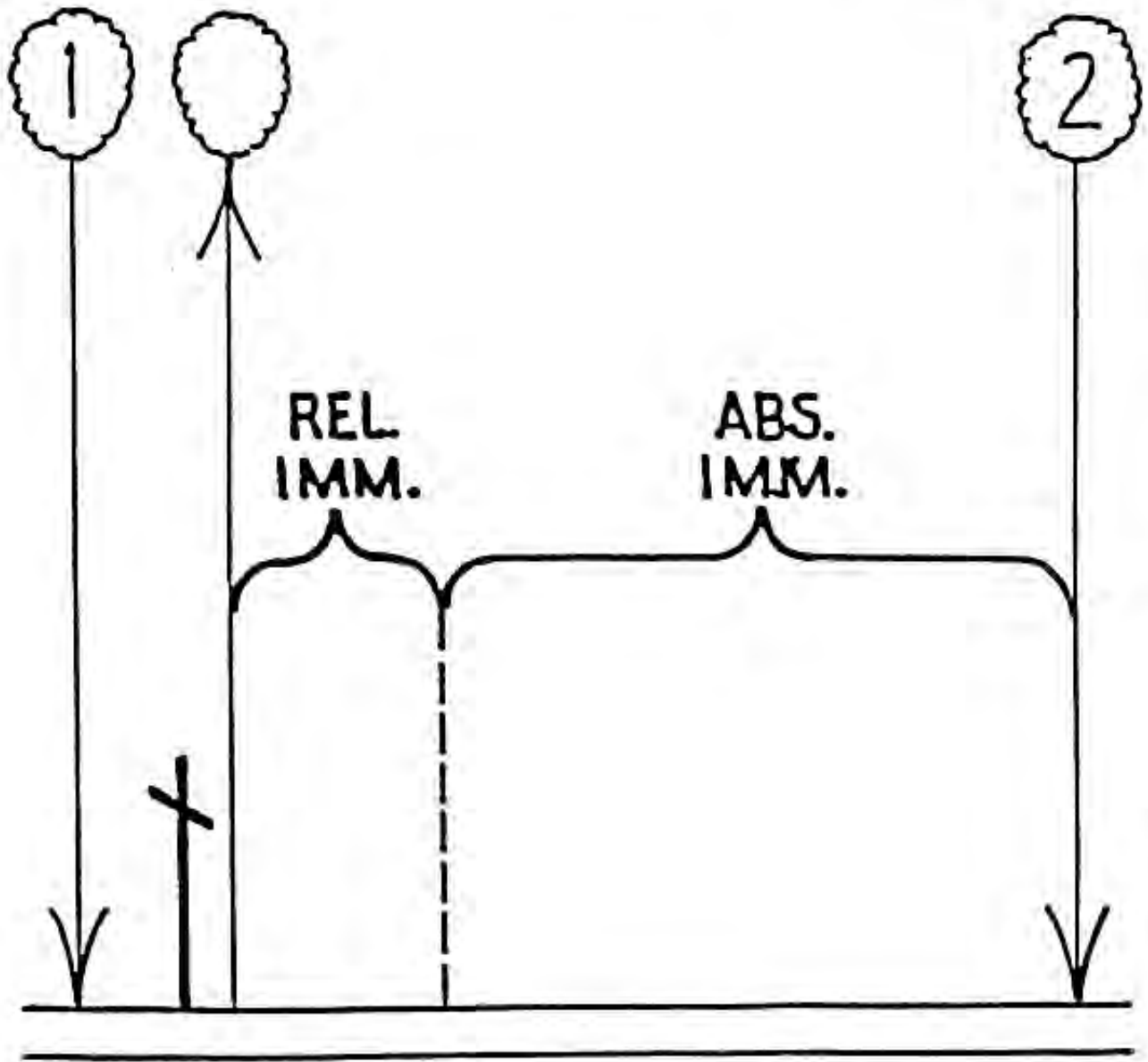
Matthew 24:37-42 -- "For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, they were marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be. Then there shall be two men in the field; one will be taken, one will be left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken, and one will be left. Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming."

Which concept of imminency is implied in this analogy? The answer here is difficult. In the days of Noah the imminency of the Flood was delayed while Noah was preaching and building; and was subsequent to the completion of the Ark and the onloading of the animals and food. But in the days prior to the Coming of Christ, there is no event mentioned in the analogy subsequent to which Christ's Coming is imminent. The point of similarity in the analogy appears to lie in the fact that in both time periods life for unbelievers will go on as usual until the destruction overtakes them suddenly and unexpectedly, and finds them totally unprepared. The net effect of this analogy as far as believers are concerned is minimal, but either delayed or subsequent imminency could be implied.

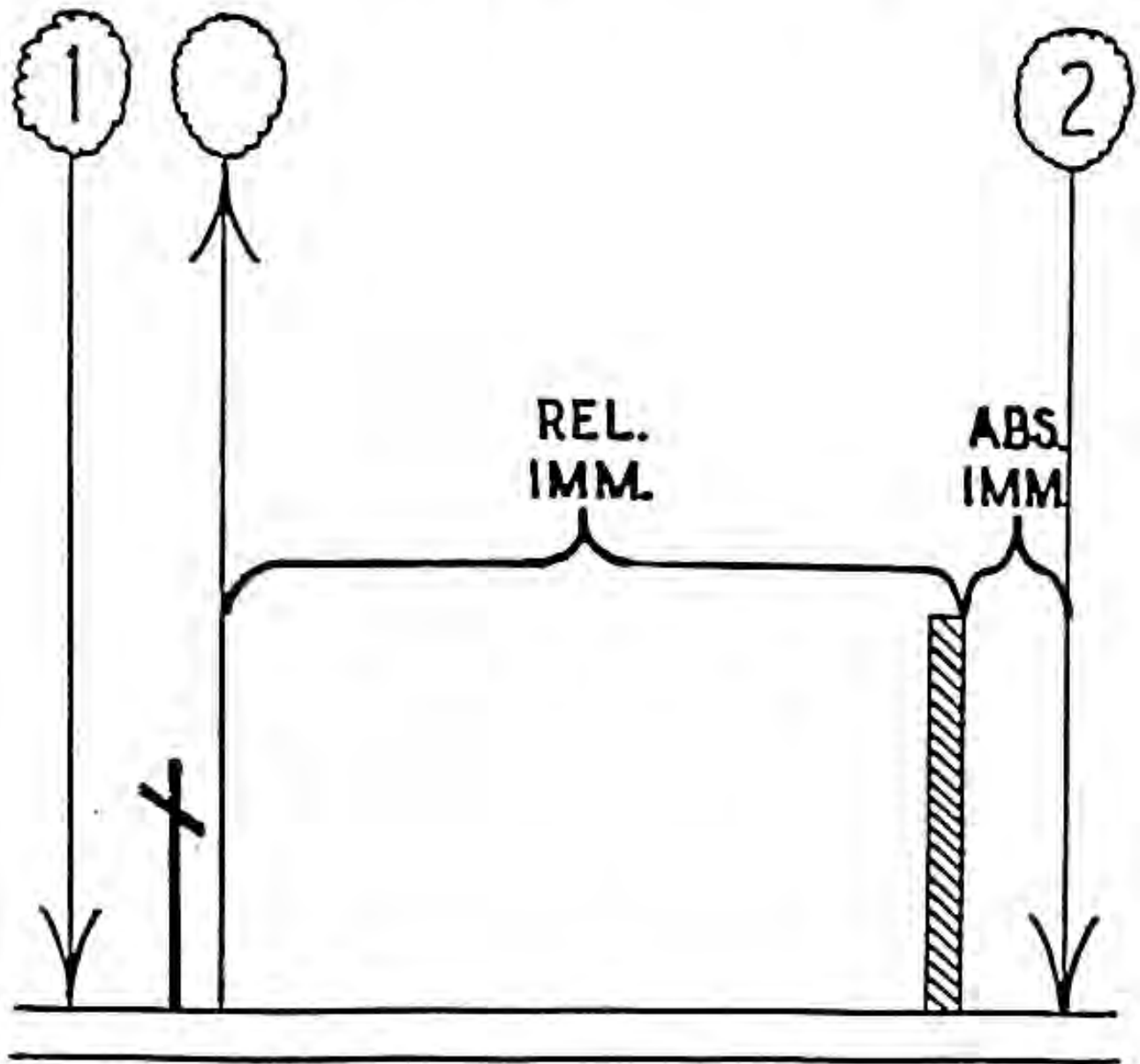
# UNCONDITIONAL IMMINENCY



## DELAYED IMMINENCY

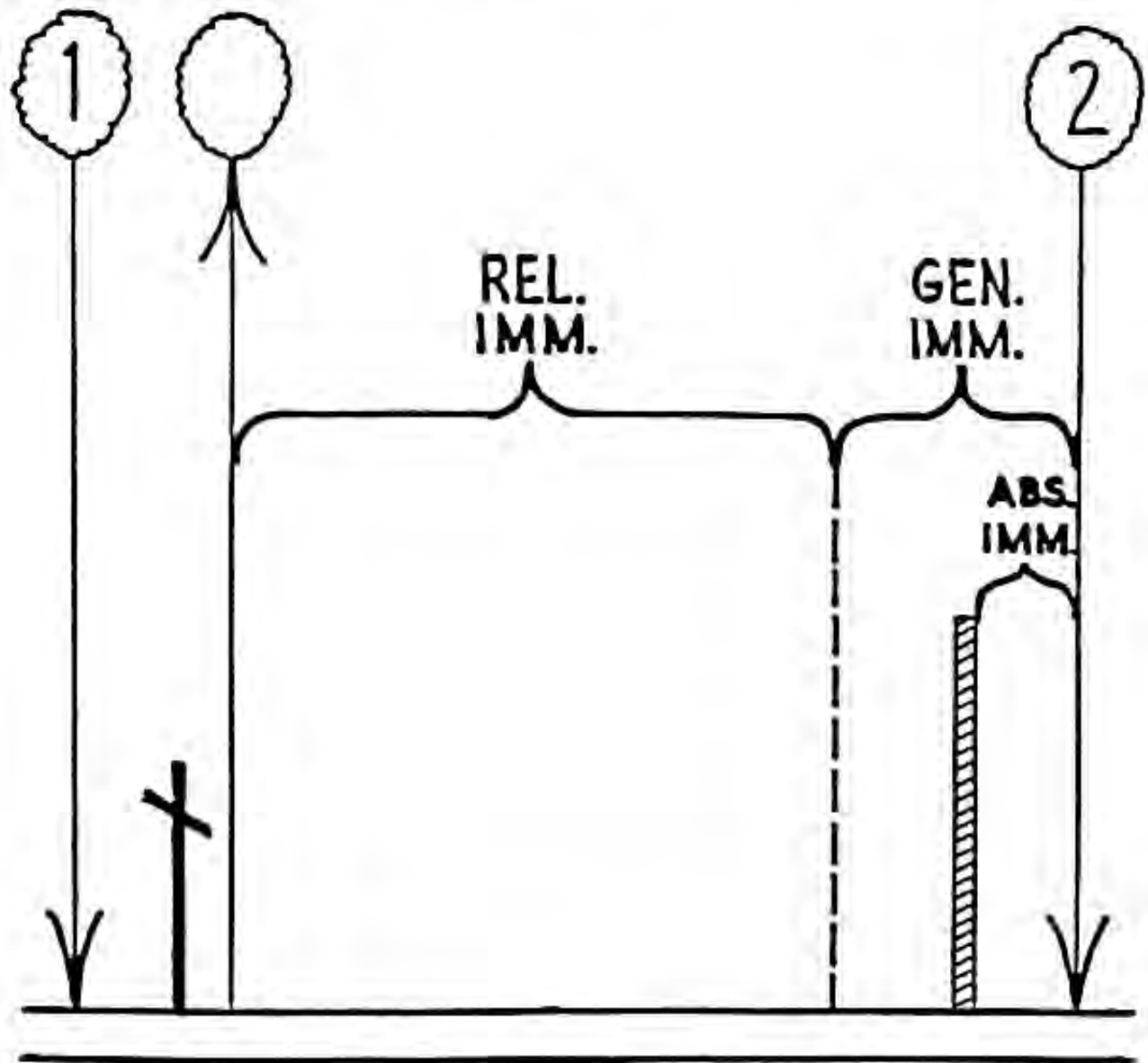


# SUBSEQUENT IMMINENCY





# GENERATIONAL IMMINENCY



c. The parable of the thief

Matthew 24:43-44 -- "But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. For this reason you be ready too; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will.

Which concept of imminency is implied? It would appear that either unconditional or delayed Imminency is implied.

d. The parable of the household steward

Matthew 24:45-51 -- "Who then is the faithful and sensible slave whom his master put in charge of his household to give them their food at the proper time? Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes. Truly I say to you, that he will put him in charge of all his possessions. But if that evil slave says in his heart, "My master is not coming for a long time," and shall begin to beat his fellow-slaves and eat and drink with drunkards; the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour which he does not know, and shall cut him in pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites; weeping shall be there and the gnashing of teeth."

Which concept of imminency is implied in this parable? Since the master in this illustration is envisioned as making an extensive trip necessitating a period of delay, and since there is no event envisioned after which he can be expected to return, delayed imminency would appear to be clearly implied.

e. The parable of the doorkeeper

Mark 13:34-37 -- "It is like a man, away on a journey, who upon leaving his house and putting his slaves in charge, assigning to each one his task, also commanded the doorkeeper to stay on the alert. Therefore, be on the alert -- for you do not know when the master of the house is coming, whether in the evening, at midnight, at cockcrowing, or in the morning; -- lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. And what I say to you I say to all, 'Be on the alert!' "

Which concept of imminency is implied in this parable of the doorkeeper? Again, delayed imminency is clearly implied, since a trip is involved (thus some delay), and there is no event envisioned after which he can be expected to return. The master of the house can return at any time of the day or the night; and therefore it is necessary to be alert, watchful, and ready at all times!

f. If Matthew 25 is seen as part of the Olivet Discourse, then two additional parables imply delayed imminency: the parable of the five prudent and five foolish virgins, and the parable of the talents.

But now we come to the crucial question: which concept of imminency is implied in and/or fits the fourth section of the Discourse as a whole? To summarize our analysis of the individual parables/analogies:

Parable of the Fig Tree	Delayed or Subsequent
Analogy of the Days of Noah	Delayed or Subsequent
Parable of the Thief	Unconditional or Delayed
Parable of the Household Steward	Delayed
Parable of the Doorkeeper	Delayed
Parable of the Five Prudent and Five Foolish Virgins	Delayed
Parable of the Talents	Delayed

As to which concept fits the fourth section of the Discourse as a whole, we have a choice between delayed, subsequent, and unconditional imminency. However, delayed imminency appears in all, of the illustrations, and would appear to best fit the thrust of the fourth section of the Discourse as a whole. Unconditional imminency does not take into account the necessity of a brief period of time following Christ's ascension for the fulfillment of His predictions of the coming of the Spirit, the execution of Peter, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the writing of the New Testament. And subsequent imminency allows for only a brief period of absolute imminency following the Great Tribulation, and thus appears to negate the thrust of the fourth section of the Discourse, as far as the need, among Christ's disciples, of alertness and watchfulness and readiness at the present time.

3. Implications of views denying absolute imminency at the present time

If the position is taken that Christ cannot return now or for some time (which position, in effect, is taken by subsequent and generational imminency), what does this do to Christ's exhortations to alertness and watchfulness in view of the uncertainty of the time of His return? The fact of His Return is not uncertain, but the time is. He says, in effect, "You don't know when I will return, therefore you must live in constant readiness and preparedness!"

If we say, "I don't know when Christ is coming again, but I do know that He is not coming now," what does this do to Christ's exhortations in view of His imminent coming, as recorded in the fourth section of the Olivet Discourse? The thrust of this question may be seen in Robert H. Gundry's statements in *The Church and the Tribulation*, at the end of his chapter on "Expectation and Imminence". Gundry says: "The full force of the exhortations to watch for Jesus's return, then, does not require imminence of the Parousia . . . . Concerning NT exhortations to watch, we are led to the conclusion: until the tribulational events have taken place, New Testament expectancy does not mean to look for the return of the Lord as a present possibility, but to look forward to His return after the events of the tribulation."

Any view of future things that claims to represent the teaching of Scripture as a whole must incorporate two elements:

- (1) It must square with Christ's own teaching about His Coming in power and glory immediately following the Great Tribulation
- (2) It must square with Christ's teaching about the necessity of constant alertness and readiness in view of His imminent coming.

Any view that cannot incorporate these two vital elements of Christ's teaching must be suspect.

The concept of imminency that appears to best incorporate these two elements is delayed imminency.

Delayed imminency allows for a relatively brief period of delay during the first century in which certain predictions could be fulfilled.

Delayed imminency allows for absolute imminency following the brief period of delay, and throughout all of the centuries from the first to the present.

Delayed imminency allows us to say, "I don't know when Christ will come again, but I do know that He may come at any time; therefore I must always be alert and watchful and circumspect, so that when He comes I will be ready to meet and welcome Him."

This concept of imminency best fits the spirit and thrust of the parables and analogy of the fourth section of the Discourse.

#### 4. Imminency and the Rapture

We have asked how the concept of imminency can be reconciled with a posttribulational Coming of Christ in power and glory. Now we must ask concerning the time relationship of the Rapture to the Tribulation period.

If the Return of Christ in power and glory is to occur after the Tribulation period, and is thus non-imminent (in the sense of absolute imminency), to what can Christ's emphasis on imminency refer? Is imminency a characteristic of the Rapture? If the Rapture aspect or phase of Christ's Second Coming is distinguished in time from the Return or Revelation aspect or phase, can imminency be attached to the Rapture? If so, then in the passages at which we have looked, can the Rapture be shown to be imminent? And how?

In Daniel 9:24-27, it would appear that if the Rapture is to be absolutely imminent, it must occur before the first recognizable event of the seventieth seven, which is the making, by a "coming prince", of a firm treaty with Israel for seven years, by virtue of which sacrifice is reinstituted in the Third Temple.

In the Olivet Discourse, it would appear that if the Rapture is to be absolutely imminent, it must occur some time before the abominable, desolating idol is set up in the temple in Jerusalem.

In II Thessalonians 2, it would appear that if the Rapture is to be absolutely imminent, it must occur some time before the "man of lawlessness sets himself up in the temple of God and claim universal worship.

In Revelation 13, it would appear that if the Rapture is to be absolutely imminent, it must occur some time before the first "beast" is revealed in his true character and claim absolute allegiance and universal worship.

If we merge these passages, it would appear that, unless the making of a seven-year treaty with Israel takes place secretly, and the Third Temple is built secretly, and Jewish sacrifice is reinstituted secretly and clandestinely (all of which are extremely unlikely!), the Rapture needs to be located prior to the beginning of Daniel's seventieth seven, and prior to the Tribulation period, since the Return of Christ to earth with His saints clearly takes place after the Tribulation period (according to the third section of the Olivet Discourse), then if the Rapture is to be absolutely Imminent, it must take place before Daniel's seventieth seven and before the Tribulation period, and this necessitates an interval between the Rapture aspect of the Second Coming and the Return or Revelation aspect (in this case, a time interval of seven years).

#### 5. A personal view and its implications

The author of this syllabus hereby places himself on record as holding to the position of Imminent Pretribulational Premillennialism. He believes that the Rapture phase of the Second coming is now absolutely imminent and will take place before the Tribulation period, and that the Return or Revelation phase of the Second coming is now relatively Imminent and will take place after the Tribulation period.

At what level of conviction or certitude does the professor hold his position? This necessitates distinguishing between levels of conviction.

At the first level of conviction -- teachings that are clearly stated in Scripture -- the professor would believe that Jesus is definitely coming to earth again.

At the second level of conviction -- teachings that by necessary deduction may be drawn out of Scripture -- the professor would believe that Jesus is coming to earth again to establish His Millennial kingdom of external safety, righteousness, and peace.

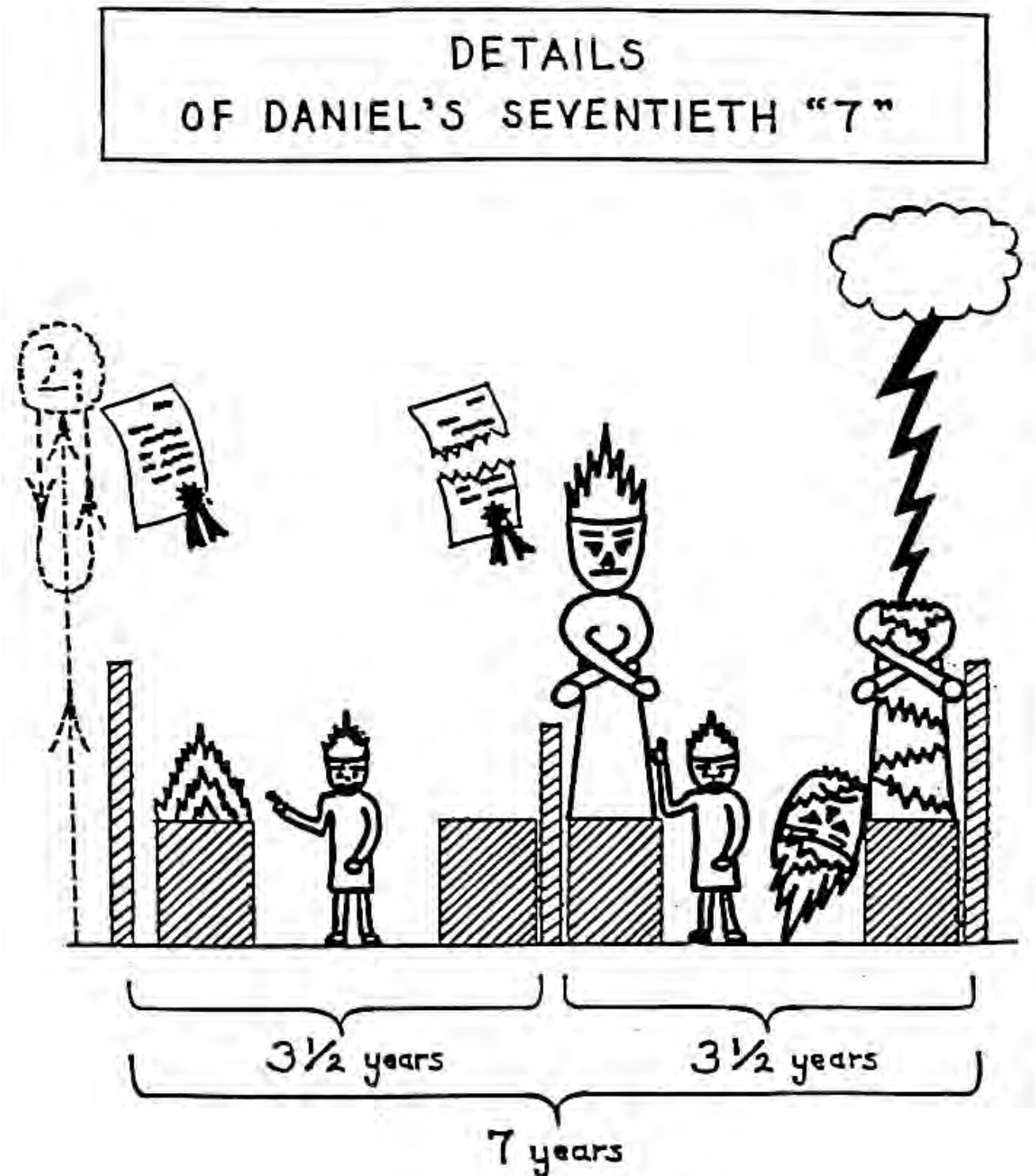
At the third level of conviction -- teachings that appear to be implied by the overall "drift" of scriptural teaching -- the professor would believe that Jesus is coming before the Tribulation to catch up His own to Himself, and coming after the Tribulation with His saints to reign on earth.

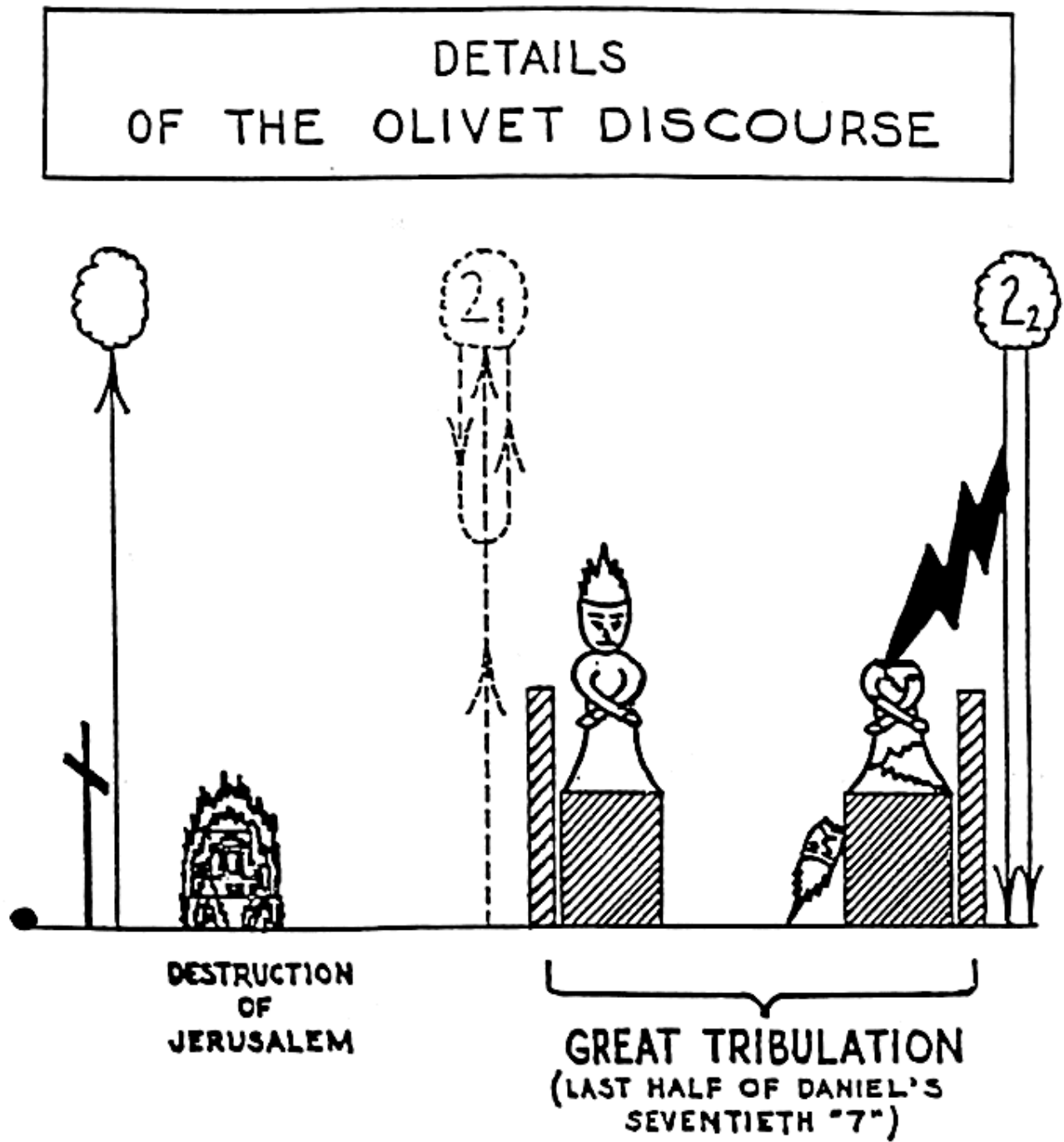
The professor realizes that saying he holds to a pretribulation view at the third level may seem like a weak position, but he believes it to be the proper stance in view of the evidence.

what are some of the implications of this position for the professor's personal and working relationships with those who differ from him?

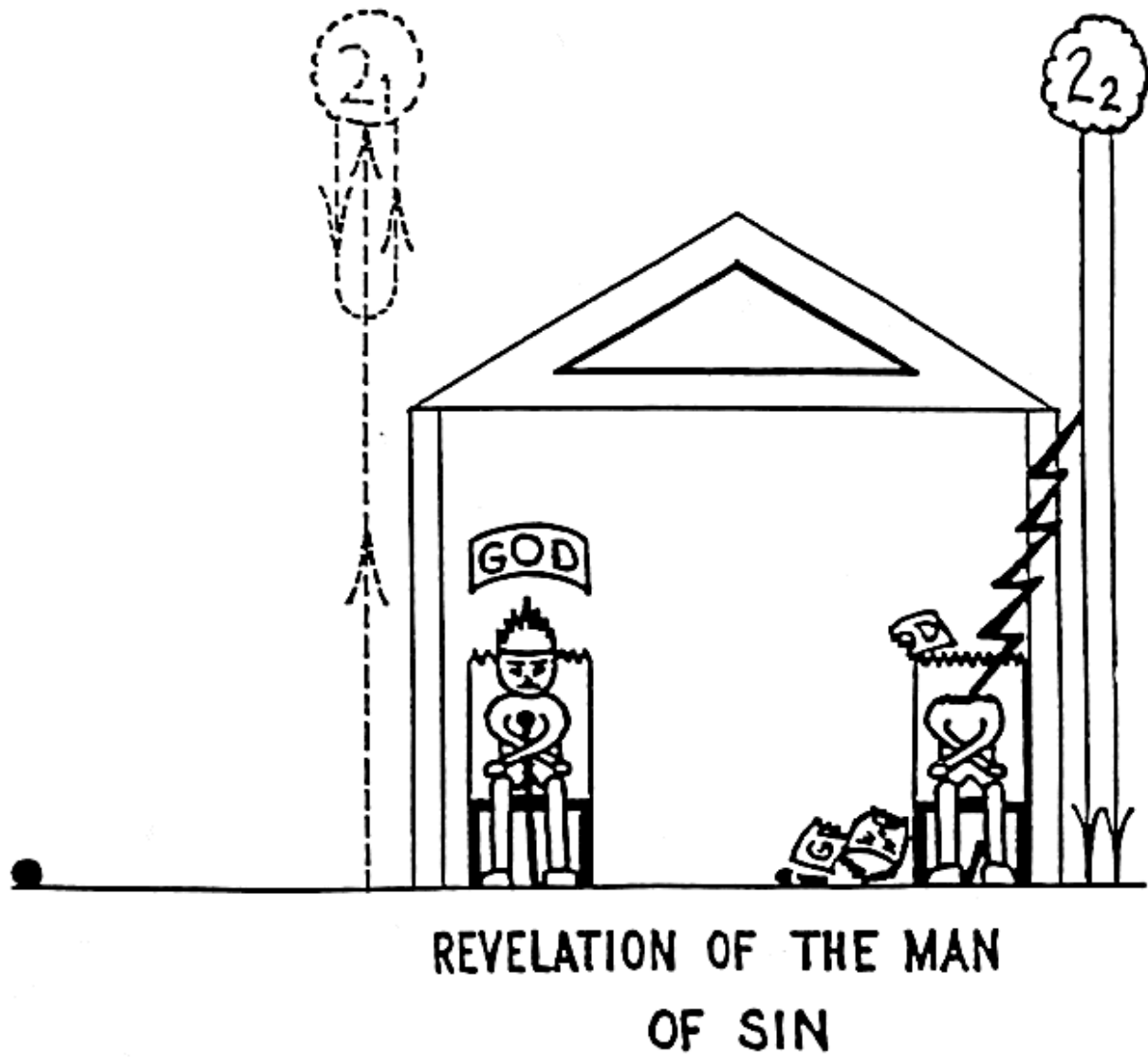
As to his personal relationships with those who differ from him, the professor has some fine Christian friends who hold to positions other than imminent pretribulational premillennialism. He and they simply agree to differ. When they engage in discussion about their difference, he and they

simply try to keep it on a high ethical level, try to test everything by Scripture, try to avoid strife and bitter controversy, and respect each other's viewpoint even when they do not agree with it?



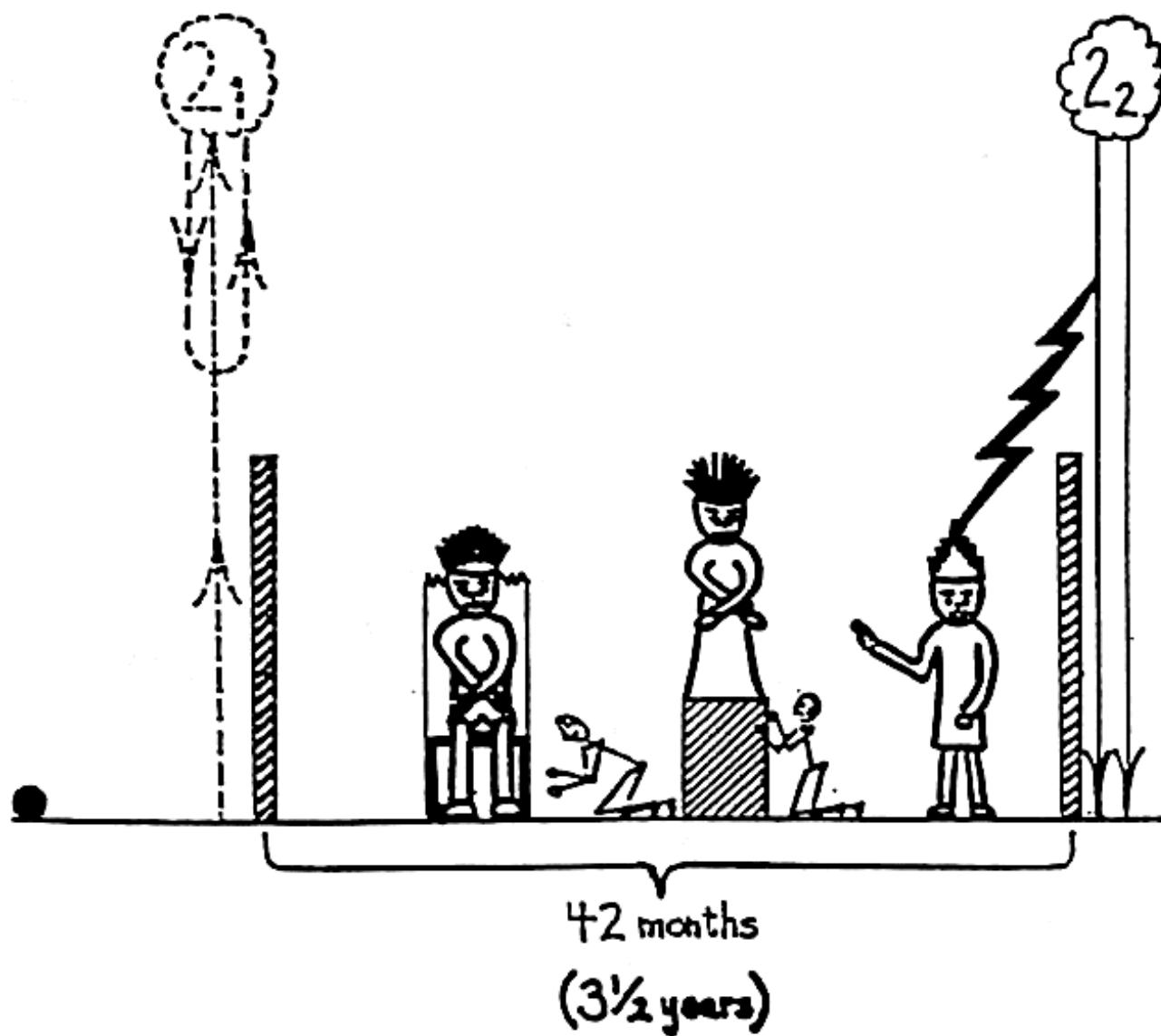


DETAILS  
OF II THESSALONIANS 2





## DETAILS OF REVELATION 13:1-17



As to his working relationships with those who hold differing positions, the professor has worked with amillennialists and posttribulationists in most cordial relationships, has conducted prophecy conferences in churches whose pastors were posttribulationists, and has even ministered in prophecy conferences with other speakers who were posttribulationists! Once again, the professor respects their right to follow the overall "drift" of Scripture as they have seen it, just as he hopes they will respect his right to do the same.

The truth of the matter is that pretribulationists are going to have to learn how to associate and work with posttribulationists and vice versa; and premillennialists and postmillennialists and amillennialists are going to have to learn how to get along and work together for the greater glory of Christ!

6. What if my view (or your view) is incorrect?

Since the professor holds his view at the third level of conviction, he must be careful not to hold his view so tenaciously that if he finds that he is incorrect, he will conclude that God has failed or that the Bible is not true. Two illustrations may serve to point up this danger: the first, the devastating effect of date-setting in Millerism; the second, the experiences of many professing Christians in China in 1949.

In 1818 William Miller, a New England farmer, following a two-year study of the Bible, predicted that the end of the world would occur in 1843. Gradually he convinced a number of people of his views; and by 1842 the message of the near return of Christ was being widely spread through lectures, conferences, camp meetings, articles, pamphlets, and two Millerite newspapers, *Signs of the Times* (published in Boston) and *The Midnight Cry* (published in New York).

On January 1, 1843, Miller stated that Christ's Second Coming with His saints would occur sometime between March 21, 1843 and March 21, 1844 (according, as he said, to the Jewish mode of computation of time).

Some Millerites specified April 23, 1843 as the date, but April came and went. Many Millerites fixed their hopes on December 31, 1843 as the time of Christ's return, but that date also passed without incident. Miller's predicted span of dates ran out on March 21, 1844, and once again nothing happened. The movement was temporarily saved by Samuel S. Snow, who predicted an absolute date of October 22, 1844. Most of the leaders of the movement resisted this date, but by October 1, 1844 the sheer weight of enthusiasm, conviction, and fervor among the followers had increased to such a pitch that they too accepted Snow's date.

The followers of the movement now began to take drastic actions. Many farmers left their crops standing in the field, to show their faith by their works. New periodicals were begun, and extra issues of *The Midnight Cry* and *The Advent Herald* were published. Some merchants closed their stores; others sold their possessions and gave their money to keep four presses running constantly, pouring out Millerite literature. Many paid off all of their debts, and tried to help others pay off their debts. Some gave considerable gifts to the poor. And all were zealous to spread the message of Christ's return on October 22.

But alas, October 22, 1844 came and went, and with it went all the hopes of the Millerites! One of the convinced believers, writing in the aftermath of this event, expressed the general disillusionment of both leaders and followers eloquently in the following words:

Our fondest hopes and expectations were blasted, and such a spirit of weeping came over us as I never experienced before. It seemed that the loss of all earthly friends could have been no comparison. We wept, and wept, till the day dawn. I mused in my own heart, saying, My advent experience has been the richest and brightest of all my Christian experience. If this had proved a failure, what was the rest of my Christian experience worth? Has the Bible proved a failure? Is there no God, no heaven, no golden home city, no paradise? Is all this but a cunningly devised fable? Is there no reality to our fondest hope and expectation of these things? And thus we had something to grieve and weep over, if all our fond hopes were lost.

The failure of Christ to come on October 22, 1844 brought about the collapse of Millerism. Miller's followers gave up their beliefs, and the movement quickly disintegrated in dissension, controversy, and discord. By the late spring of 1845 it had virtually disappeared.

The second illustration comes from a tract by Keith Green entitled "Will You Be Bored In Heaven?" Green writes:

I think that one of the saddest stories I've ever heard, was how the believers in China fared when the communists took over their country in 1949. The evangelical churches had been teaching that the Church would definitely be raptured before any "great tribulation" or suffering would befall the faithful. It had become such a central doctrine that all worry (and preparation) were abandoned, and praise for their absolute safety from harm and persecution was offered at every meeting. Then the communist government took over and a vicious attack was made upon the church, including confiscation of property, beatings, imprisonment, and even the taking of children from parents. The unprepared church was caught so off-guard, that millions fell away and denied Christ thinking they had been abandoned by a God who did not keep His promise. Ah, but that's Just it! God has promised tribulation! God has promised persecution! "In the world ye shall have tribulation . . . he who desires to save his life shall lose it . . . all who desire to live godly in Christ shall suffer persecution." (John 16:33, Matt. 16:25, II Tim. 3:12). But these promises from God (no less precious than His others), were neglected in the teachings of the Chinese church . . . just as they are being neglected today in the West. How sad to think that so many have become mesmerized into believing that no physical harm or suffering can befall them because they believe in Jesus. But Jesus said, Do not fear those who kill the body!" (Matt. 10:28).

I'm not saying there won't be a rapture. I'm just not too sure about the timing. Yes, I believe that God could deliver all true believers from the great tribulation, but since He hasn't always gotten even the faithful Christians off the hook from suffering (in

the Bible or in Church history), there's no guarantee that He'll protect the lazy, apathetic believers of today from something that might not only wake them up, but would certainly divide the true sheep from the "religious" goats.

When it Comes to believing in either a pre-tribulation or post-tribulation rapture, my motto has always been pray for "pre" but prepare for "post". That way we'll be ready for truly anything -- which is exactly the way God wants us to be!

We need to be constantly watchful over our lives and alert to the constant possibility of Christ's return at any time, so that we will be ready to meet Him if He hastens His coming, or ready for opposition, persecution, tribulation, or even death if He delays His return. If we live for His honor and according to His will, then we will be ready, no matter when He comes! May God grant this for all of us!

US. = <u>DIAKONOS</u>	SERVANT of man	SERVANT of God	SERVANT who serves	SERVANT who imparts	MINISTER who serves	MINISTER who imparts	OF ON (office)
MATTHEW 20:26			X				
MATTHEW 22:13	X						
MATTHEW 23:11			X				
MARK 9:35			X				
MARK 10:43			X				
JOHN 2:5	X						
JOHN 2:9	X						
JOHN 12:26		X					
ROMANS 13:4		X					
ROMANS 13:4		X					
ROMANS 15:8			X				
ROMANS 16:1			X				X
I CORINTHIANS 3:5		X					
II CORINTHIANS 3:6						X	
II CORINTHIANS 6:4					X		
II CORINTHIANS 11:15			X				
II CORINTHIANS 11:15					X		
II CORINTHIANS 11:23					X		
GALATIANS 2:17				X			
EPHESIANS 3:7						X	
EPHESIANS 6:21					X		
PHILIPPIANS 1:1							X
COLOSSIANS 1:7					X		
COLOSSIANS 1:23						X	
COLOSSIANS 1:25					X		
COLOSSIANS 4:7					X		
I THESSALONIANS 3:2					X		
I TIMOTHY 3:8							X
I TIMOTHY 3:12							X
I TIMOTHY 4:6					X		

## LEVELS OF AUTHORITY IN LOCAL CHURCH POLITIES

PATTERN	FIRST LEVEL	SECOND LEVEL	THIRD LEVEL	FOURTH LEVEL
1	Pastor			
2	Pastor	Congregation		
3	Pastor	Deacons	Congregation	
4	Pastor	Board	Congregation	
5	Pastor	Elders	Congregation	
6	Pastor	Elders	Deacons	Congregation
7	Pastor	Elders, Deacons	Congregation	
8	Pastor, Deacons	Congregation		
9	Pastor, Board	Congregation		
10	Pastor, Elders	Deacons	Congregation	
11	Pastor, Elders, Deacons	Congregation		
12	Pastor, Congregation	Deacons		
13	Pastor, Congregation	Board		
14	Pastor, Congregation	Elders		
15	Pastor, Deacons, Congregation			
16	Pastor, Board, Congregation			
17	Pastor, Elders, Congregation			
18	Deacons.	Pastor	Congregation	
19	Board	Pastor	Congregation	
20	Elders	Pastor	Deacons	Congregation
21	Elders	Pastor	Congregation	
22	Deacons	Pastor		
23	Board	Pastor		
24	Elders	Pastor		
25	Elders, Deacons	Pastor	Congregation	
26	Elders, Deacons	Pastor		
27	Elders, Deacons	Congregation	Pastor	
28	Elders, Deacons	Congregation		
29	Deacons	Congregation	Pastor	
30	Board	Congregation	Pastor	
31	Elders	Congregation	Pastor	Deacons
32	Elders	Congregation	Pastor	
33	Deacons	Congregation		
34	Board	Congregation		
35	Elders	Congregation		
36	Congregation	Pastor	Elders	Deacons
37	Congregation	Pastor	Board	
38	Congregation	Pastor	Deacons	
39	Congregation	Pastor		
40	Congregation	Elders	Pastor	
41	Congregation	Board	Pastor	
42	Congregation	Deacons	Pastor	
43	Congregation	Elders, Deacons	Pastor	
44	Congregation	Elders	Deacons	Pastor
45	Congregation	Elders	Deacons	
46	Congregation	Elders		
47	Congregation	Board		
48	Congregation	Deacons		
49	Congregation			

Insert after p 164

## d. SOME ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF HISTORIC PATTERNS OF RELATIONSHIP AMONG LOCAL CHURCHES

Features	Episcopal		Presbyterial		Congregational	
Administrative body responsible for watch-care over men preparing for the ministry	✓	A	✓	A	✓	A
Placement service to assist ministers and churches	✓	A	X	D	X	D
Mechanism for matching of ministers and churches	✓	A	X	D	X	D
Mechanism for continuing oversight of ministers and churches	✓	A	✓	A	X	D
Administrative body responsible to protect local churches from the entrance of false teachers and doctrine	X	D	✓	A	X	D
Administrative body responsible to protect denominations from the entrance of false teachers and doctrine into its agencies	✓	A	✓	A	X	D
Administrative body responsible for disciplining officials of local churches	X	D	✓	A	✓	A
Feasibility of disciplining ministers	✓	A	✓	A	X	D
Feasibility of disciplining denominational officials	X	D	X	D	X	D
Mechanism for appeal in cases of false accusation, slander, or improper discipline	✓	A	✓	A	X	D
Freedom within local churches to exert administrative power	✓	A	✓	A	✓	A
Denominational efficiency in exerting administrative power upon local churches	✓	D	X	A	X	A
Encouragement of initiative among local lay people	X	D	✓	A	?	?
Encouragement of initiative among local church officers	X	D	✓	A	?	?
Ease of carrying out certain functions of the church on a larger scale	✓	A	?	?	X	D
Tendency toward bureaucratic red tape	✓	D	?	?	X	A
Denominational power to lay assessments on local churches for support of larger-scale functions and projects	✓	D	X	A	X	A
Local property rights held by local congregation	X	D	?	?	✓	A

Q.#1. Does this pattern have this feature? ✓ = yes X = no

Q.#2. Is having this feature an advantage or a disadvantage? A = advantage D = disadvantage

## ERRATA

א

p58 " irreconcilable conflict with the Bible" ==> " irreconcilable conflict with what the Bible"

112 j. "congregation" (EDAH -- עדה)

113 k. "assembly" (QAHAL -- קהל)

143 figure

152 διάκονος ποιμήν επίσκοπος πρεσβυτέρος

164 figures

211 table -- compose?

279 ff frequent uses of אֶדָּה and אֶדָּה. The Hebrew is a picture since the text order gets re-arranged in WORD.

300 correction/addition to Ryrle quote.

325 correct quote of Westminster Confession Ch VII Art. V (build and -> build up)

339 INSERT TABLE

343,345 INSERT FIGURE

352-355 FIGURES

360-366 FIGURES

INSERT TABLES page 370-380

382 אֶדָּה

שְׂקוּצִים מְשֻׁמֵּם

וְנִתְּנוּ הַשְׂקוּץ מְשֻׁמֵּם

וְלִתְּת שְׂקוּץ שִׁמֵּם

וְעַל כֵּן שְׂקוּצִים מְשֻׁמֵּם

394 אֶדָּה

399 insert table 401, 404 410-413 418-421

Insert 3 (unpaged) tables after p424