



The Legacy

from the everlasting Father
to His beloved Son,
and from the Son
to His bothers and sisters

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*from the eternal Father
to His beloved Son from the Son to His brothers and sisters*



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*I bequeath to my dear family – Ruzha, Neda, Svetlin, Atanasiya,
Nedyalko, Svetla, Atanas, Plamena, Konstantin and Nelly, as well as
my spiritual brothers and sisters from the group
"Our Merciful Father"*

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Foreword

Over the years, the author has been deeply touched by the diverse facets of beautiful and harmonious divine truth. His interest has, at different times, been captivated by prophecies, and by the varied ideas presented in Scripture. Later, he found particular significance in the practical aspects of biblical faith, those directly related to salvation and godly living, as well as the timely topic of what's called "present truth." His most recent enlightenment from our Heavenly Father has provided "new wineskins" for these studies (Matthew 9:17), which is why he feels compelled to share them with you, the readers.

I. The Legacy

*"And I myself bequeath to you even as this Father
of mine bequeathed by himself a realm to me."*

Luke 22:29

I. 1. The Beginning

"Behold, the man whose name is the Branch; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD. Yea, he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit upon his throne, and shall rule, and be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both."

– Zechariah 6:12-13

Each of us has, at some point, pondered the **beginning**, the origin of everything that exists, both visible and invisible. This question is profoundly important because it directly relates to our **identity**—who are we, really? The Holy Scriptures are tasked with preserving this vital knowledge:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made." – John 1:1-3

These verses speak of the absolute beginning. They tell us that in the beginning, there was only **God and His Word**. This Word proceeded from God Himself, and through Him, all things were created. We learn what this "Word" is just a few verses later in the same passage:

"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth... No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him." – John 1:14, 18

From this, we understand that this Word, which emanates from God, is His **only begotten Son**. The account of this beginning is truly moving. The book of Proverbs invites us to discover who stands at this beginning:

"Who has ascended into heaven and descended? Who has gathered the wind in His hands? Who has bound the waters in His garment?

Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is His name, and what is the name of His Son? Tell me, if you know!" – Proverbs 30:4

The Son of God Himself reveals His heavenly origin by stating:

"If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; for I have not come of Myself, but He sent Me."
– John 8:42

Here, Christ speaks of two distinct events: His departure from God and His coming into this world. The original Greek word in this text translated "went out" (ἐξέρχομαι) is the same one used when it says that Jesus was in a house and then "went out" of it (Matthew 13:1). Thus, He clearly shows that He was once *with* God but then *came out* from Him, signifying that **God begot Him**. Jesus is not a metaphorical son of God, but an actual, literal one.

"For the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me and have believed that I came out from the Father. I came out from the Father and have come into the world; again, I leave the world and go to the Father." His disciples said to Him, "Behold, now You speak plainly and speak no figure of speech. Now we know that You know all things, and have no need that anyone should question You. By this we believe that You came out from God." – John 16:27-30

Jesus spent three and a half years on Earth with His disciples. At the end of that period, He prayed to God for them, mentioning that the disciples had grasped something profoundly important about Him:

"For the words which You gave Me I have given to them; and they have received them, and have known truly that I came forth from You, and they have believed that You sent Me." – John 17:8

If we are to be faithful followers of Christ, we too must understand His identity as the **literal Son of God, begotten from eternity**. For this reason, He is also called the **Firstborn**:

"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation;" – Colossians 1:15

Unlike all other beings, He was not created, but **born of the very nature of God**. By the "good pleasure" of His Father, in Him "all the fullness" of the Godhead dwells (Colossians 1:19 cf. 2:9). Thus, He stands as head over all creation. In fact, the Scriptures tell us that God created the universe and all life in it through His Son:

"For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers..." – Colossians 1:16

Christ not only creates in the name of His Father but also receives from Him all that is created as an **inheritance**:

"...all things were created through Him and for Him;" – Colossians 1:16

Presented as the **wisdom of God** [1], He speaks of the delight He felt in the creation of the universe and our world:

"The LORD possessed me at the beginning of His way, before His works of old. From everlasting I was established, from the beginning, before the earth was made. I was brought forth when there were no depths, when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills I was brought forth; while He had not yet made the earth or the fields or the first dust of the world. When He prepared the heavens, I was there; when He marked out a circle on the face of the deep, when He established the clouds above, when He strengthened the fountains of the deep, when He assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters would not transgress His command, when He established the foundations of the earth—then I was beside Him as a master craftsman; I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him, rejoicing in His inhabited world, and My delight was with the sons of men." – Proverbs 8:22-31

We see that during creation, God delights in His only begotten Son. Jesus Himself rejoices in the presence of His Father, and His delight is with the sons of men. The beauty of this picture is emphasized by the Son's submissive attitude toward His Father. In fact, the expression "master worker" in the original (יומָן) also means "one who is reared or educated." This is how it's translated in the King James Version:

"Then I was beside him, as one brought up by him:..." – Proverbs 8:30

The Son of God does not wish to live independently of His Father. He submits to Him willingly in everything, and this submission is fueled solely by **love and gratitude to God**:

"I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things." – John 8:28

"Therefore Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner."
– John 5:19

This **obedience** of the Son is vital to the entire universe. Christ is the wisdom of God, for through Him the Father provides an example of how living beings can always remain connected to God. Before He began to create, He laid the "cornerstone" of His work in the person of His Son. Since there is no one above Himself, God can only provide an example of obedience through His Son. Thus, He provided a living example of loving obedience and gratitude to God, the Source of all life. Through the Son, the life/Spirit of God is communicated to all beings, including the crucial ingredients of humility and loving obedience.

"And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!"" – Galatians 4:6

The first thing that reveals the value-adding divine love is the fact that God gave everything to His Son without reservation. All of Christ's knowledge and abilities were given to Him by His Father. However, this truth is available only to those who are born of the Spirit of God:

"At that time Jesus answered and said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. All things have been delivered to Me by My Father;..." – Matthew 11:25-27a

Being born of God in eternity, Christ inherited His Father's nature, the **fullness of His divinity, His name, and His character**:

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things... and has become so much better than the angels, as the name which He has inherited is more excellent than theirs. For to which of the angels did God ever say: 'You are My Son, today I have begotten You'? And again: 'I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son'?" – Hebrews 1:1, 2, 5

Christ's divine inheritance gives Him the opportunity to know God as no one else does, and to grant this knowledge to the humble:

"No one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him." – Matthew 11:27b

With this, Jesus tells us that the knowledge of God does not depend so much on a person's intellectual abilities and education, but on their sincere intentions to discover and follow the path of truth and goodness.

Thus, by **hereditary right**, as one who came forth from God, the Son of God received the fullness of the Godhead and the entire universe. This truth is illustrated in the covenants made with Abraham and David:

"And Abram said, "Lord GOD, what will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" Then Abram said, "Look, You have given me no offspring; indeed, one born in my house is my heir!" And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "This one shall not be your heir, but one who

will come from your own body shall be your he¹ir."" – Genesis 15:2-4

"Now therefore, thus shall you say to My servant David, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts: "I took you from the sheepfold, from following the sheep, to be prince over My people Israel... When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom."
– 2 Samuel 7:8, 12

This is exactly the kind of heir the Son of God is—one who "came forth from the body" of God. Through Him, the Father maintained the peace, happiness, and joy of all created worlds:

"And He [Christ] is before all things, and in Him all things hold together." – Colossians 1:17

The wise Creator united the physical elements of the universe through His Son. But all beings possess the gift of **free will**, which means they can choose even that which is harmful to them—namely, to sin. The Son of God was willing to become the guarantor of the inheritance, offering transgressors a second chance.

"He [the Son of God] was indeed foreknown before the foundation of the world, but was manifested in these last times for you," – 1 Peter 1:20

"according to the eternal purpose which He [God] accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord," – Ephesians 3:11

The problem that could arise would not be due to any flaw in the Creator or His creation, for He makes everything perfect. But God gives such complete freedom of choice that creatures can choose to separate themselves from the Source of life:

"And out of the ground the LORD God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was also in

the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." – Genesis 2:9

Such a tree was placed on the territory of each of the created worlds. It was like a ballot box through which all beings could exercise their free will, even in contradiction to the natural principles for the well-being of the universe—divine law.

"Everyone who commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness." – 1 John 3:4

This brings us back to the verse at the beginning of the chapter, which speaks of the **counsel of peace between God and His Son (the Branch)**. According to this counsel, the Son is not only a king but also a **priest** on His throne, for He must be ready to sanctify those who would "profane themselves":

"Behold, the man whose name is the Branch [God's only begotten Son]; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD. Yea, he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit upon his throne, and shall rule, and be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both [God and His Son]." – Zechariah 6:12-13

But who would want to leave the realm of light, life, and happiness to choose darkness and death in its place?

[1] The book of Proverbs is not the only place where Christ is presented this way: 1 Corinthians 1:24, 30; Colossians 2:2, 3

I. 2. The Crisis in Heaven

And the angels who did not keep their original inheritance, but left their own dwelling place... Jude 1:6 (KJV)

The first to decide to live independently of God was Lucifer, a cherub who held the highest position in heaven after the Son of God:

"You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; You were on the holy mountain of God; You walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, Till iniquity was found in you... Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor; I cast you to the ground, I laid you before kings, That they might gaze at you." — Ezekiel 28:14, 15, 17

This angel of the highest station was in the very presence of God and His Son. He had the sacred role of shedding the light of the knowledge of God's character (glory) upon all other angels. But his beauty, abilities, and glory led him to a proud self-forgetfulness, for he began to take credit for all that God had given him. The next step was that he did not want to worship a being who had received everything from God:

But when He again brings the Firstborn into the world, He says:

"Let all the angels of God worship Him." — Hebrews 1:6

The shining cherub began to envy the Son of God and to wonder why everyone could not worship him. He wished to be in the place of Christ, that is, the One who is like the Most High:

"How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! ...For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.'" — Isaiah 14:12-14 (NKJV)

The "mount of the congregation" was the place where God and His Son held their councils for the welfare of all in the universe. Lucifer's distorted view led him to envy the only begotten Son of God, the full participant in His councils and the one through whom he was created. In rejecting the order established by the Creator, Lucifer rejected the very wisdom of God, which decreed the welfare of the universe.

The Story of Haman and Mordecai: An Illustration of Rebellion

The dynamics of these dramatic events are illustrated in the book of Esther through the story of a Jewish captive named Mordecai, who was living in the courts of the Persian king Ahasuerus (Xerxes). The king's right-hand man was an ambitious and proud man named Haman. He walked the streets and wanted everyone to bow down to him. But Mordecai would not worship anyone except the God of heaven. This enraged Haman, and he plotted to issue a death decree to destroy Mordecai and all his people.

Later, one night, when the king could not sleep, he ordered that the royal archives be read to him. There was recorded the case of Mordecai, who had exposed the plot of two men who wanted to kill the king. Ahasuerus asked his servants what reward had been given to Mordecai for his good deed, and it became clear that he had not been rewarded. The king called for his advisor Haman, and from here on, the rest of the story unfolds:

And Haman came in, and the king said to him, "What shall be done for the man whom the king delights to honor?" Now Haman thought in his heart, "Whom would the king delight to honor more than me?" So Haman answered the king, "For the man whom the king delights to honor, let a royal robe be brought which the king has worn, and a horse on which the king has ridden, which has a royal crest placed on its head. Then let this robe and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that he may array the man whom the king delights to honor. Then parade him on horseback through the city square, and proclaim before him: 'Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor!'" And the king said to Haman, "Hurry, take the robe and the horse, as you have

suggested, and do so for Mordecai the Jew who sits within the king's gate! Omit nothing of all that you have spoken." — Esther 6:6-10

Thus, he who sought worship did not receive it, but he who did not seek worship was exalted and praised. Haman's murderous hatred illustrates what had been brewing in Lucifer's heart against the meek Son of God. Hence it is said of him that he was a murderer from the beginning (John 8:44). But he would not reveal his feelings directly, but began in an insidious way to slander the character of God and His Son. At first he said nothing bad about them, but he suggested improvements in the government and laws of heaven. This is also illustrated in the story of one of King David's sons, Absalom. His name means "father of peace." But he turned against his father and acted subversively against his government:

After this it happened that Absalom provided himself with chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him. Now Absalom would rise early and stand beside the way to the gate. So it was, whenever anyone had a lawsuit which was to come before the king for judgment, that Absalom would call to him and say, "What city are you from?" And they would say, "Your servant is from such and such a tribe in Israel." Then Absalom would say to him, "Look, your case is good and right; but there is no deputy of the king to hear you." Moreover Absalom would say, "Oh, that I were made judge in the land, and everyone who has any suit or cause would come to me; then I would give him justice!" And so it was, whenever anyone came near to bow down to him, that he would put out his hand and take him and kiss him. In this manner Absalom dealt with all Israel who came to the king for judgment. So Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel. — 2 Samuel 15:1-6

In a similar way, Lucifer stole the hearts of the angels by presenting God as someone who did not have their best interests at heart. Gradually, he succeeded in implanting a new idea of justice in the minds of the angels:

"I will ascend into heaven; I will exalt my throne above the stars of God [the angels]..." — Isaiah 14:13

Shall the throne of iniquity, which devises evil by law, have fellowship with You? — Psalm 94:20

Since, according to Lucifer, angels had no need for law, transgression of God's law naturally had no negative consequences. Satan's theory of justice led to the conclusion that every sin must be punished, and God could not annul the punishment and still be just:

For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me. Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good. Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful. — Romans 7:11-13

The sinful thinking that Lucifer proposed led to the conclusion that every sin must receive its punishment and God cannot forgive sin and at the same time remain just.

On the other hand, by instilling in the angels his new philosophy, according to which beings had their own value and life independent of God, he implied that they had no need for law because, as higher beings, they could determine for themselves what was right and what was wrong.

"You have defiled your sanctuaries by the multitude of your iniquities, by the iniquity of your trading; ..." — Ezekiel 28:18

Lucifer's "trading" was made possible by his lie that he and the rest of creation possessed all their gifts of themselves. If you possess something, you can trade it. There was great confusion and commotion in heaven. Some of the angels went to tell God of the alarming situation. They found Him conferring with His Son in the unapproachable light of His glory (1 Timothy 6:15, 16). The angels were warned of the disastrous consequences of Lucifer's chosen course, and moved by concern, they went to try to dissuade their friends. The Son of God also tried to dissuade Lucifer with tenderness and inexpressible love, showing him the justice and wisdom of God's decisions.

Although Lucifer did not at first fully understand where his path was leading, God's warning measures fully revealed to him the danger in which he was. Nevertheless, after some hesitation, he still chose to pursue his independent and rebellious course. He chose this in the light of the full revelation of the true, good, merciful, and loving character of God. Henceforth, therefore, nothing more could be done for him. We hear an echo of God's sorrow for his backsliding son in the words of David when he learned of his son's death:

Then the king was deeply moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate and wept. And as he went, he said thus: "O my son Absalom—my son, my son Absalom—if only I had died instead of you, O Absalom my son, my son!" — 2 Kings 18:33

Lucifer, having harnessed all the powers of his mighty intellect, waged this heavenly war of ideas to draw as many followers as possible into his empire. Thus he reached out to the very heritage of Christ, which the Scriptures symbolically represent as His bride, who is at the same time in travail for Him.

Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth. And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born.
— Revelation 12:1-4

The former light bearer now used his insidious lies about God's character, symbolized here by the dragon's tail (Isaiah 9:15b), to deceive a third of the angels. He thus deprived both himself and them of their eternal inheritance:

And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day; — Jude 1:6

These angels numbered more than a third, but Satan, as his new name is, failed to deceive all into believing that if they returned to God and His Son, They would not forgive them and accept them. For this reason, some of his followers returned to their Creator, who, like the father of the prodigal son, forgave them and welcomed them with joy (Luke 15:11-32).

God could have stopped Lucifer's rebellion by using force against him, but that would have been in complete contradiction to His non-violent nature. Moreover, it was decided for the good of the entire universe that Lucifer would be allowed to develop his ideas to the fullest extent, so that all could see how bitter their "fruit" was.

Daniel's Vision: Another Heavenly Illustration

In the book of Daniel there is another illustration of the crisis in heaven, although the primary meaning of the symbols in it refers to earthly powers that Satan used. The ram symbolizes the kingdom of Christ and His Father, where the former is represented by the larger horn that grew up later, and the latter is represented by the smaller horn whose glory (character) was magnified by His Son (Daniel 8:3; Philippians 2:9-11).

The goat represents Satan's kingdom, and its king is identified by his great horn (Daniel 8:5). Since Satan "stood up because of his beauty" and thus initiated a value system based on achievement, as opposed to one based on inheritance, he would no longer worship Christ, who had received everything from His Father. Thus the goat succeeded in "breaking the two horns" of the ram and in corrupting the divine pattern of their relationship in the minds of the angels.

But Lucifer was "broken" when the Father gathered all the heavenly host and clearly revealed the relationship He had with His Son (Daniel 8:8).

After this defeat, Lucifer recovered and spread 4 other lies/horns that gave him authority among the "four winds of heaven" (Daniel 8:8b). These are the main lies by which he rules over the inhabitants of the earth. But the

lie by which Satan succeeded in sweeping away a third of the angels (stars)¹ in heaven was the lie about the character of the Father (Daniel 8:10).

Satan envied Christ for His part in the plans for the coming creation of the earth and its inhabitants. How pleased he would be if he could win this new creation to his side.

So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. — Revelation 12:8-9

Now that the enemy has descended to earth with his army, God and His Son hope that the representatives of the new creation will make the right choice to remain forever within the boundaries of Their happy world.

¹ "The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand... The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches..." (Revelation 1:20 NKJV). Note: The original text referred to "stars" as angels, which is typically derived from Revelation 1:20. However, the provided text uses Isaiah 14:13 to connect "stars of God" to angels. For clarity and consistency, Revelation 1:20 is added as a note to directly link "stars" to "angels" within the biblical context.

J. 3. The Crisis on Earth

*...And Sarah saw that the son of Hagar the Egyptian,
whom she had borne to Abraham, mocked; and she said unto Abraham,
Cast out this bondwoman and her son:
for the son of this bondwoman shall not inherit with my son
Isaac...Genesis 21:9, 10*

Through the creation of humanity, God and His Son demonstrate the truth of Their relationship.

And God said to His Son, *"Let us make man in our image, after our likeness."* (Genesis 1:26) ... And God created man in His own image; in the image of God, He created him; male and female He created them. (Genesis 1:27)

Man and his wife together reflect the image of God and His Son. The leadership of the man and the submission of the wife are rooted in this truth.

But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God. (1 Corinthians 11:3)

Man has been made aware of the problem of Lucifer and understands that he will attempt to deceive humanity.

And the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." (Genesis 2:15-17)

It is important to note that up to this point, the woman has not yet been created, and she will learn all this from her husband.

And the LORD God said, *"It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him."* ... Then the LORD God

caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh in its place. And the rib which the LORD God had taken from the man, He made into a woman and brought her to the man. (Genesis 2:18-22)

The woman was not made from dust like her husband but was taken from him. Thus, she is "born" of him, just as Christ came from God. She inherits her husband's nature, just as Christ inherited that of God. Therefore, their equality is based on their relationship, not on power. This reveals the value system of the Kingdom of God, where the value of a person is determined by the role and authority bestowed by God in their life. Consequently, the relationship of man and woman as a reflection of that of God and His Son stands as a powerful rebuke to the satanic philosophy of inherent worth and personal achievement.

And how far does the lesson of this extend?

For man is not from woman, but woman from man; for man was not created for the woman, but woman for the man. (1 Corinthians 11:8-9)

Now the angelic world has a vivid picture of what Satan and the demons are attempting to obscure. The love of a husband and the submission of his wife reflect the relationship of God and His Son.

Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, *"Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?'"* (Genesis 3:1)

The woman dares to tread alone on forbidden ground while contemplating the meaning of the divine prohibition. Since the cunning enemy acts through the medium of the serpent, he mesmerizes the woman, who is astonished by her ability to speak. Her words reflect her thoughts about the tree. When she is told, absolutely falsely, that God has restricted them from eating from any tree in the garden, she leaps to her defense with exaggerated words:

"We may eat the fruit of the trees in the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, 'You shall not eat of it, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" (Genesis 3:2-3)

God did not say they shouldn't touch the fruit; however, the serpent's suggestion of God's stinginess has done its job. It can now continue to poison its victim, showing the woman that by eating the fruit, she not only would not die but would also "acquire" the gift of speech:

And the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die; for God knows that in the day you eat of it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." (Genesis 3:4-5)

The subtext is: *"If I gained speech through the fruit, just imagine how much more you will ascend by eating it! What kind of God is this who presents Himself as your benefactor but hides such goodness from you?"* The outcome is swift:

And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. (Genesis 3:6)

Her perception of the tree and her understanding of her Creator's character are utterly transformed. She now believes that through the fruit she has entered a higher realm of existence, outgrowing her dependence on God. Thus, she quickly approaches Adam to share her newfound "freedom."

...she also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. (Genesis 3:6-7)

Adam is not deceived regarding the serpent's identity (1 Timothy 2:14); however, he thinks that since his wife is alive, death will not come naturally but directly from their Creator. Thus, influenced by the spirit of rebellion, he decides to share his wife's fate. Had he sought help from God, he could have saved her and prevented the evil that would soon overshadow the

world. The Fall did not stem from the woman's decision, so the loss of their garment of light does not occur until after Adam's fatal choice. In him, we all die because he is the head. (Romans 5:17; 1 Corinthians 15:22)

From this point forward, the story unfolds as if reality reflects what the sinners perceive. Their eyes are said to have been opened, but this is an illusion. Hearing the footsteps of the Son of God, they believe He is coming to execute the death sentence:

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

The reason they are alive is not due to the serpent's assurances as they believe but because the plan of salvation has been activated.

I [Christ] will declare the decree of the LORD: He said to Me, *"You are My Son; today I have begotten You."* (Psalm 2:7)

... of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (Revelation 13:8)

God and His Son are striving to reclaim their stolen inheritance. Christ is crucified in man and his wife, as His life-giving power sustains those filled with a rebellious spirit.

And God said to him, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?" And the man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate." (Genesis 3:11-12)

Instead of confessing his sin, Adam reflects Satan's enmity against the Son of God by shifting the blame onto both God and his wife. If another form of enmity against Satan had not been planted in Adam's heart, he would not have even desired to return to God. But the Son of God instilled just such an enmity:

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel. (Genesis 3:15)

The Seed of the woman is Christ. The heavenly battle with the dragon is echoed on earth. (Revelation 12:1-5) This encompasses both the future incarnation of Jesus as a man and the effort to convince people to allow Him to “become flesh” in them by His Spirit, to adopt them and restore their stolen inheritance. Let us now connect this with the verse at the beginning of this chapter:

And Sarah saw the son of Hagar, the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, mocking. Therefore, she said to Abraham, *“Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, namely with Isaac.”* (Genesis 21:9-10)

We recall that Abraham’s true heir could only be one who *“came forth from his own body”* (Genesis 15:4), and that body was his wife.² (Ephesians 5:28-29) The promised son, Isaac, born of Sarah, could only be the heir because he had the Spirit of the Son of God.

The Son of God declares what the natural consequences of sin will be, as Scripture reveals their potential benefits:

1. The “dominion” of man over woman signifies the expulsion of the filial submissive Spirit from her heart but also the blessing of the struggle to receive it again. (Genesis 3:16; cf. 1 Peter 3:4-6)
2. “Birth in pain” relates to the salvation of the woman and the children. (Genesis 3:16; 1 Timothy 2:15)

² But we, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise. But just as then he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now. But what does the Scripture say? *“Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman will not be heir with the son of the freewoman.”* So then, brothers, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the freewoman. (Galatians 4:28-31)

3. The labor of uprooting “thorns and thistles” reflects the cleansing of the heart's garden from Satan’s plantings. (Genesis 3:17-19; 1 Corinthians 9:27; Matthew 13:27-28)
4. The addition of wild grass to man's diet counters the notion of a superior state, as this food was originally meant solely for animals. (Genesis 1:29-30; cf. 3:18)

Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. (Genesis 3:7)

Alongside their perishability, fig leaves symbolize human righteousness tainted by sin.

For we have all become like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; and we all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. (Isaiah 64:6)

Adam and his wife believe that they now see because of the serpent, but the tragic truth is that they have never been more blind.

Because you say, “I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,” and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked; I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich, and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. (Revelation 3:17-18)

A sacrificial system was introduced to provide them with sight and clothing. When Adam slew the first animal, he began to understand the magnitude of his sin against the Son of God.

And the LORD God made tunics of skin and clothed Adam and his wife. (Genesis 3:21)

The skins, symbolizing the righteousness of Christ, are the only means to permanently cover man’s shameful sin. However, the sacrificial system is

so brutal that it does not reflect God's will or requirement. (Psalm 40:6) Yet it is unavoidable since man could not grasp how deeply evil his sin truly is. Additionally, by embracing Satan's false system of justice, wherein every sin must be punished and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness (Hebrews 9:22), it is man who requires these sacrifices to feel accepted again by his Redeemer.

This makes the event of Calvary irrevocable, as man "knows" that the blood of goats and calves cannot take away sins. (Hebrews 9:11) The ultimate price must be paid—the death of God's only begotten Son. (John 3:16)

Until the complete destruction of enmity in man occurs, God will engage with him according to his sinful reasoning, allowing it to be wholly revealed and prompting man to yearn for God's grace.

And the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil; and now, lest he put out his hand and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever," therefore the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from whence he was taken. (Genesis 3:22-23)

God and His Son speak of the events as if they accepted Satan's lie. Yet They never experienced evil as Adam now does. God reflects the corrupted perspective that man has adopted from Satan about His character. Adam's sin-corrupted nature rendered him incompatible with life in Eden; yet God describes his removal as an expulsion, as if He were truly stingy in keeping His treasures for Himself. This mirrors the devil's portrayal of God's character to man—the alien spirit within him. Consequently, humanity has a long journey ahead before it can be fully adopted by God.

I. 4. The Adopter

I appeal to you for my child Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my chains, who was once useless to you, but now useful both to you and to me, whom I have sent back to you, my very heart. (Philemon 1:10-12)

In order for people to be adopted and become part of the inheritance of the Son of God again, they must be born again or from above:

There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to Him, *"Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."* Jesus answered and said to him, *"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."* (John 3:1-3)

Nicodemus begins to speak to Jesus about matters that seem trivial, so Christ shifts to the crucial question for everyone: How can we once again enter the kingdom of God, which is the inheritance of the Son?

Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" (John 3:4)

The Jewish ruler interprets Christ's words literally. This reflects the truth that "the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (1 Corinthians 2:14) Nevertheless, the Savior continues His instruction, knowing that the seeds He plants in Nicodemus' heart will eventually take root (John 7:50, 51; 19:39-40) and bear fruit:

Jesus answered, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound

thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." (John 3:5-8)

Now Jesus offers a more detailed explanation, linking the new or heavenly birth with water and the Spirit—an invisible process of God's guidance and transformation in man's life. This recalls creation, when "*the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters*" (Genesis 1:2), and man's embryonic state, surrounded by waters in his mother's womb. It also echoes the baptism with water for the repentance of sins, which John the Baptist practiced in preparation for the Messiah:

"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." (Matthew 3:11)

The essence of this is that due to his alienated state, man needs to be re-created by the Spirit of God. However, this must be the Spirit as manifested through the Son of God. Therefore, after Nicodemus' next confusion (John 3:9), Jesus addresses him:

Jesus answered, "Are you the teacher of Israel and do not know these things? Truly, truly, I say to you, we [God and His Son] speak what we know, and testify to what we have seen, but you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except the one who came down from heaven, the Son of Man who is in heaven." (John 3:10-13)

The only heavenly representative to step onto our earth is the Son of Man. Thus, Jesus speaks of Himself as one who, in the process of our adoption, took upon Himself our fallen nature:

"For both he who sanctifies [Jesus] and those who are sanctified [those who believe in Him] are all from one [God]; for which reason he is not ashamed to call them brothers, saying, 'I will proclaim Your name to My brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will praise You.'" And again, "I will put my trust in Him." And again, "Behold, I

and the children whom God has given Me.” Since then the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise took part of the same. (Hebrews 2:11-14)

This is a remarkable process! Jesus takes our fallen nature so that we can share His filial Spirit and thus be adopted back to God.

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but you have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, ‘Abba, Father!’” (Romans 8:14-15)

When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, “*Abba, Father!*” (Galatians 4:4-6)

Glory and honor be to the Father and His precious Son for this extraordinary work of adoption, which They planned before the foundation of the world:

“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ! Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ; just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love; having predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He has freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.” (Ephesians 1:2-6)

Of course, adoption is possible only through the giving of the Spirit of the Son. Adoption is a spiritual process, not simply signing adoption papers. Yes, Christ enabled this through the shedding of His blood on Calvary; but this blood has the power to cleanse and restore specifically through what it represents—the very life or Spirit of the Son of God:

“For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.” (Leviticus 17:11)

The opening text of this chapter concerns a runaway slave named Onesimus, whom the Apostle Paul claims he *“begot in my chains.”* (Philemon 1:10) This is because Paul is imprisoned for his faith and there preaches the gospel to Onesimus, who believes and becomes a Christian. Paul then writes a letter to his master, Philemon, who is also a Christian, instructing him to receive Onesimus no longer as a slave, but as a brother in the Lord. This is a true story of spiritual adoption, achieved through the Spirit of the Son of God.

God intended to adopt an entire people for Himself, namely the Jews. Although this plan was not successful concerning ethnic Israel, God still adopts a spiritual Israel by virtue of the Testament. This is how Saul, a Benjaminite and fierce persecutor of Christians until he experienced a dramatic transformation upon meeting the Messiah, explains it:

“For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brothers, my relatives according to the flesh; who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the law and the service and the promises; whose are the fathers, and from whom according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen. But it is not as if the word of God has failed; for not all who are of Israel are Israel, nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, ‘In Isaac shall your seed be called.’ So it is not the children who are born according to the flesh; these are God’s children; but the children who are born according to the promise are counted as the seed. For this is the word of promise: ‘At this time I will come, and Sarah shall have a son.’” (Romans 9:3-9)

For the adoption process to take place, it is essential to accept God’s promises with faith. Unbelief was the primary issue among the Jews, which led them to reject even the Messiah himself, who was born among them. The narratives of Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac are significant because God

chose this family to illustrate the principles of His kingdom. This unfolds during a time when the founder of ancient Babylon, Nimrod, ruled the earth, establishing his identity and value based on power and achievements:

“And Cush begat Nimrod. He began to be a mighty one on the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the LORD; therefore it is said, ‘Even Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD.’ And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.” (Genesis 10:8-10)

The world in Nimrod's time had largely disconnected from the kingdom of God, where value and identity stem from fathers:

“Children’s children are the crown of the aged, and the glory of children is their fathers.” (Proverbs 17:6)

God calls Abraham to come out of Babylon, restoring the model for His kingdom. The success of this endeavor completely relies on Abraham's faith in God's promises:

“Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.” And He said to him, “So shall your descendants be!” And Abram believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.” (Genesis 15:5-6)

Although Abraham experienced lapses in faith, he persevered through tests and was later given a name that means “father of a multitude.” (Genesis 17:4-8) From Abraham would come Christ in the flesh. Thus, this man symbolizes God the Father, who adopts people into His kingdom through the Spirit of His Son:

“Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know therefore that only those who are of faith are the children of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, ‘In you all nations shall be blessed.’ So then

those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham."
(Galatians 3:6-9)

When time passed, and the promised offspring did not appear, Abraham showed doubt in God's promise and attempted to fulfill it through his own means. Upon his wife's advice, he slept with her maidservant, Hagar, and she bore him a son, Ishmael. For 13 years, Abraham believed Ishmael was the promised offspring until, at 99 years old, God appeared to him again, clarifying that Ishmael was not the promised child, but a son would be born to Sarah the following year. Initially, this seemed so unbelievable that both Abraham and Sarah laughed. (Genesis 17:1-18:1-19; 21:1-3) However, when Sarah conceived and gave birth, she named him Isaac, which resonates with the joy of laughter.

"And without weakening in faith, [Abraham] did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God and being fully convinced that what He had promised, He was also able to perform. And it was accounted to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was accounted to him, but also for us. It shall be accounted to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead."
(Romans 4:19-24)

By faith, Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, for she judged Him faithful who had promised. Therefore, from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as numerous as the stars of heaven and as the innumerable grains of sand along the seashore. (Hebrews 11:11-12)

This is how the Spirit of adoption is activated in us, making us capable of fulfilling God's law's requirements (Romans 3:31; 8:2-4). This prepares us for final adoption when our bodies will also be redeemed, freeing us from corruption and decay (Romans 8:19-23; cf. 1 Corinthians 15:35-57). Adoption is the only legal process by which we can be restored as heirs of the Son of God.

I. 5. The Heir

*"And Athaliah [the wicked earthly kingdoms that war against the Heir]... arose and destroyed all the royal seed of the house of Judah. But Jehoshabeath the king's daughter took Joash [the Heir in the line of King David] the son of Ahaziah, and stole him away from the king's sons when they were slain, and hid him... And Joash was with them hid in the house of God six years [6,000 years of sinful human history]; and Athaliah reigned over the land. **And in the seventh year... they brought out the king's son, and put the crown upon him, and gave him the testimony, and made him king.**" 2 Chronicles 22:10-12; 23:1, 3, 11*

Now we will reflect on the experience of the Son of God as the heir of the Covenant and how this relates to humanity. Let us recall the text:

"But I [God] have set My King [Son] upon Zion, My holy hill. I [the Son] will declare the decree; the LORD said to Me, 'Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession.'" (Psalm 2:6-8)

In the previous chapter, we saw that for Christ to reclaim the stolen inheritance, it is necessary for Him to adopt through His Spirit all who accept Him as their Adopter. But how do He and God experience this throughout thousands of years of sinful human history? What determines the acceleration or deceleration of this adoption process, and where are we in this history today? These are the questions we will explore in this chapter.

Because of humanity's sin, its history repeats itself in the past, present, and future:

"What has been is what will be; and what has been done is what will be done; and there is nothing new under the sun." (Ecclesiastes 1:9)

"Whatever is has already been, and whatever is to be has already been; and God will call back that which has been." (Ecclesiastes 3:15)

This means that if we trace the development of history in one of the three parts of time—past, present, and future—we will know what basic events are repeated in the other two parts.

Let us imagine that we are in the time of the exiled prophet Daniel in Babylon, around the sixth century B.C.E. He has earned the respect of the royal court with his wisdom (Daniel 1), and the following year, Nebuchadnezzar, the ruler of Babylon, has a disturbing dream (Daniel 2:1). He realizes that this dream is an omen and calls the wise men of the kingdom to interpret it for him. To ensure that they do not mislead him, he asks them to tell him what he has dreamed before they explain its meaning.

The Chaldeans answered before the king, saying, "There is not a man upon the earth that can show the king's matter; for no great and mighty king has required such a thing of any scribe, astrologer, or Chaldean. The thing the king requires is difficult; and there is none that can show it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with mortals." For this cause, the king was very angry and furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. And the decree went out to slay the wise men; and they sought Daniel and his friends to slay them. (Daniel 2:10-13)

The king's counselors are right. No man can fulfill the king's request. So Daniel asks for a reprieve and goes to his friends to pray to God for the answer. He does not delay, and that evening, in a night vision, Daniel is shown everything, along with the dream's meaning. Daniel is brought before the king and begins to relate the contents of the dream in detail:

"You, O king, saw, and behold, a great image. This image was great, and its brightness was excellent. It stood before you, and its appearance was terrible. The head of this image was of pure gold; its chest and arms were of silver; its belly and thighs were of bronze; its legs were of iron; its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. You watched until a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were all broken

to pieces together, and became like the dust of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, so that no place was found for them. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. This is the dream, and we will tell the king its interpretation.” (Daniel 2:31-36)

Daniel then explains to the astonished king that the various parts of the image represent the coming world empires beginning with his kingdom. In order of significance in the world empire, these are:

- **Golden Head:** Babylon (605-539 BC)
- **Silver Chest and Arms:** Medo-Persia (539-331 BC)
- **Bronze Belly and Thighs:** Greece (331-168 BC)
- **Iron Legs:** Rome (168 BC – 476 AD)
- **Feet of Iron and Clay:** Divided Europe

The declining value of the metals signifies the degradation of humanity. Daniel then tells the king:

“You saw until a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces... And in the days of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. Forasmuch as you saw that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold. The great God has made known to the king what shall be hereafter. The dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof certain.” (Daniel 2:34, 44-45)

The kingdom of God is represented by the cutting of a stone from a mountain. This symbolizes the birth of the Son of God from eternity. Here He is indicated as the heir by divine right, as He shares the same nature as the mountain (God) from which He was taken. In contrast to the earthly kingdoms of power, represented by the cast metal parts of the image, the

kingdom of God is founded on the principles of family relationships. This kingdom will ultimately be established during the period of modern Europe.

When Jesus first came to earth, He told many parables about the kingdom of God, one of which partially reflects the symbolism of the king's dream:

"Hear another parable. There was a landowner [God] who planted a vineyard [Israel], and put a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it, and built a tower; and he leased it to vinedressers [the leaders of the people], and went into a far country. And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants [the prophets] to the vinedressers, that they might receive the fruit of it. And the vinedressers took his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned a third. Again he sent other servants, more than the first; and they did the same to them. And last of all, he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will reverence My Son.' But when the vinedressers saw the Son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.' And they took him, cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him. So when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?" They said to him, "He will put those evildoers to a terrible death and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons." Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone that the builders rejected has become the head of the corner. This is the LORD's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes'? Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth its fruits. Whoever falls on that stone will be broken to pieces; and on whomever it falls, it will crush him." (Matthew 21:33-46)

The falling of the stone corresponds to the event represented in the dream of the Babylonian ruler (the Second Coming). But what is meant by the words, *"Whoever falls on this stone will be broken"*? The fundamental principle of the kingdom of God is self-denial for the benefit of others. It completely opposes the principles of earthly kingdoms. It signifies receiving the very Spirit of Christ, who loves all and delights to minister to

their welfare. Scripture describes the “crushing” of a person when he “falls on the stone” in the following way:

“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. And the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” (Galatians 2:20)

“And he called the multitude together with his disciples, and said unto them, ‘If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.’” (Mark 8:34)

“Brethren, by the boasting of you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.” (1 Corinthians 15:31)

Later, in the first year of the last Babylonian ruler, Belshazzar, Daniel himself “had a dream and visions” while “upon his bed” (Daniel 7:1). He dreamed of the same empires and again of the coming of God’s kingdom, but this time presented differently:

“And four great beasts rose up out of the sea, diverse one from another. The first was like a lion, and had eagle’s wings... And behold, another, a second beast, like a bear. And it raised itself up on one side and had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth... After this I looked, and behold, another beast, like a leopard, which had upon its back four wings of a bird. The beast also had four heads; and dominion was given to it. After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and exceedingly strong... It was diverse from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. As I considered the horns, behold, another little horn came up among them, before which three of the first horns were plucked up by the roots... I beheld till thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of Days sat... The judgment was set, and the books were opened... I beheld in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days; and they brought Him before Him. And there was given Him

dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him..." (Daniel 7:3-13)

As we can easily discern, the lion represents Babylon, the bear represents Medo-Persia, which conquered three kingdoms on its path (the three ribs are Babylon, Egypt, and Lydia), the leopard represents Greece with its four heads (the generals of Alexander the Great, who shared power after his death: Lysimachus, Cassander, Seleucus, Ptolemy), and the terrible beast represents Rome. The ten horns of the beast correspond to the ten toes in the king's dream in Daniel chapter 2 and represent the barbarian tribes that defeated the Roman Empire, leading to a divided Europe. The little horn that arises from three of the ten horns indicates the Church of Rome.

The three peoples who were "eradicated" when she came to power (538 AD) were the Heruli, the Vandals, and the Ostrogoths. Notably, these groups did not accept her teachings on the Godhead, which concluded that Christ was not the eternally begotten real Son of God but a self-existent being like the Father. Thus, the titles Father and Son were deemed only for the purposes of the plan of salvation but did not define their core characteristics. Furthermore, the belief that the Spirit of God was a separate self-existent person like the Father and the Son undermined the familial essence of the kingdom of God, aligning it instead with the power-based ideals of earthly kingdoms.

In this vision, unlike the king's dream in Daniel 2, Christ is presented as the Son of Man. This is another essential prerequisite for Him to reclaim His lost human inheritance. Thus, He is the representative of God (the Son of God) and the representative of man (the Son of Man).

And how does this apply to us in the Testament? Here is how:

"And the kingdom and the dominion shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High." (Daniel 7:27)

"I [God's Son] pray for them [those who believe in Him]; for those whom You [God] have given Me... I desire that they also may be with Me where I am..." (John 17:9, 24)

I. 6. The Firstborn

One day Jacob was cooking stew, and Esau came in from the field, faint. And Esau said to Jacob, "Feed me, I pray thee, with that red pottage; for I am faint." Therefore was he called Edom. And Jacob said, "Sell me thy birthright first." And Esau said, "Behold, I am at the point of death; of what use is this birthright to me?" And Jacob said, "Swear to me first". And he swore unto him, and sold his birthright unto Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright. (Genesis 25:29-34)

At the beginning of this book, we saw that God gave His Son the fullness of His nature, as well as the universe and everything in it. Thus, He placed Him in the position of the Firstborn of all creation:

He is the image of the invisible God, the Firstborn of all creation ; for in him all things were created, that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers—all things were created through him and for him ; (Colossians 1:15-16)

But the Son of God did not take everything to keep for Himself, but to bless created beings with the life, love, joy, and peace that He received from God. In this cycle of charity, the Father is the head or source of all, His Son is the One *through whom* life flows to all others, and their gratitude returns to the Father as a wave of Love to the Great Giver of all.

For to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things , and we for him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things , and we through him. (1 Corinthians 8:6)

This is the law of life for the entire universe. But when our world was torn from this cycle of beneficence by the deception of sin, God and His Son proceeded to set in motion the plan of the Testament, according to which Christ should again become the Firstborn, but this time of the human family, to restore the authority lost by Adam.

...but he [Joseph] did not know her until she [Mary] *had given birth to her firstborn son* ; and he called his name Jesus. (Matthew 1:25)

He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David. (Luke 1:32)

With His incarnation, Christ becomes the Son of God in a new sense. He is revealed as the full representative of fallen humanity. By coming to us as a man, He assures us that He has always been aware of our weaknesses and ready to provide for us what is necessary to live as children of God.

But Jesus' birthright on earth is most closely associated with His resurrection:

And from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, *the firstborn of the dead* , and the ruler of the kings of the earth, to him who loves us and freed us from our sins in his blood... (Revelation 1:5)

The Son of God was not the first in time to be raised from the dead, for Moses was raised before Him (Jude 1:9). Why then is He called the Firstborn from the dead? The answer is that the death by which men die is not because of the full consequences of sin. By bearing our sin on the cross, Jesus was the first to die a death which is the full result of sin (Romans 6:23). Therefore He is the first and only One to be raised from it, because He did not commit sin, but took upon Himself the sin of another.

Having been in a state of non-existence for a time in the tomb, He was resurrected to a new life and, by virtue of this fact, was declared the Son of God for the third time:

For his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and *was declared to be the Son of God* with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, *by the resurrection from the dead* , Jesus Christ our Lord, (Romans 1:3-4)

And we bring you good news that the promise made to the fathers, *God has fulfilled it* to us, their children, *by raising Jesus* , as it is also

written in the second Psalm: " *You are my Son, today I have begotten you .*" (Acts 13:32-33)

Here we see how the second Psalm is applied to the resurrection, not to His birth into eternity, as is the case in Hebrews 1:5. This birthright of Christ is connected with His re-empowerment over the human race ³after its alienation from God's kingdom. Therefore Jesus is the second Adam who is put to sleep (dies on the cross) so that the church (the woman) may be taken from him and He may be its Head:

And he is the head of the body, the church : who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead : that in all things he might have the preeminence. (Colossians 1:18)

After His resurrection, Jesus is reintroduced into the universe to be recognized as the Firstborn and above the creation that was previously lost through sin:

And when he again brings the Firstborn into the universe, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him." (Hebrews 1:6)

Isaac, who is a type of Jesus, is the son born by promise, but also the one who, in a symbolic way of resurrection, is returned to Abraham when he believes that God wants to offer him as a sacrifice:

By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac; he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son; of whom it was said, "In Isaac shall your descendants be called." He considered that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from which, *as an illustration of the resurrection, he received him back again .* (Hebrews 11:17-19)

Abraham is once tested in waiting for Isaac to be born, and then he experiences him again in his heart as lost, only to receive him again

³Then [after His resurrection] Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." (Matthew 28:18)

through faith in the resurrection. Thus is presented the experience of our heavenly Father when he is separated from his Son, once at his incarnation, and then before his resurrection.

Following the pattern of Christ's birthright to God, the first son of every family on earth is ordained to inherit a special *spiritual blessing from his father and a double share of his estate* :

If a man has two wives, one beloved and the other hated, and they have borne him sons, both the beloved and the hated, and if the firstborn son is the son of the hated, then on the day he makes a will for his sons, he shall not make the firstborn son of the beloved instead of the son of the hated, who is the firstborn; but he shall acknowledge the firstborn, the son of the hated, *by giving him a double portion of all his substance* , for he is the beginning of his strength; *the right of the firstborn belongs to him* . (Deuteronomy 21:15-17)

And he [Jacob] came near and kissed him, and Isaac smelled the smell of his raiment, and *blessed him, and said* , Behold, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the LORD hath blessed. God give thee of the dew of heaven, and of the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and new wine!... (Genesis 27:27-29)

We see the father blessing his son as God blesses His Son. Thus the blessing of heaven is channeled to humanity through the family. And modern fathers can speak words of blessing over their children, and husbands to their wives. And mothers can water the seeds of this blessing by setting an example of respect for the authority of the father.

When the birthright was granted in ancient times, the ideal was that the first son born in the family should be blessed. But since the leading purpose is spiritual, many times the biological candidates were found unfit and were replaced by those who accepted to be led by the Spirit of the Son of God. Thus Jacob's firstborn son, Reuben, lost his rights because he slept with his father's concubine:

The sons of Reuben, the firstborn of Israel [Jacob]—for he was the firstborn, but because he defiled his father's bed, *his birthright was given to the sons of Joseph* the son of Israel, and *he was not enrolled in the genealogy according to the birthright* . (1 Chronicles 5:1)

Usually, when choosing a king for Israel, the firstborn was chosen, as in the case of King Jehoram (2 Chronicles 21:3), but in the family of Jesse, the divine choice fell on David instead of the biological firstborn Eliab, which surprised even the divine messenger himself:

And the names of his three sons [of Jesse] that went to the battle were, *Eliab the firstborn* , and Abinadab the second, and Shammah the third. (1 Samuel 17:13)

And when they came, he (the prophet Samuel) saw Eliab, and said, Surely the LORD hath his anointed. But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; for I have rejected him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth: for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart... And the LORD said, *Arise, anoint him [David]; for this is he* . (1 Samuel 16:6-12)

In another similar case, God showed the blesser that the one who would use the privileges of the birthright in the desired way was not the older son.

And Joseph said unto his father [Jacob], Not so, my father: for this [Manasseh] is the firstborn: put thy right hand upon his head. But his father refused, and said, I know it, my son, I know it. He shall also become a people, and he shall be great: *but his younger brother [Ephraim] shall be greater than he*, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations. (Genesis 48:18-19)

They (the apostate Jews) shall come with weeping, and when they pray, I will lead them; I will lead them by streams of water, in a straight path in which they shall not stumble; for I am a Father to Israel, and *Ephraim is my firstborn* . (Jeremiah 31:9)

The text at the beginning of this chapter concerns Jacob, who fraudulently usurped the birthright of his hungry brother. Of course, the birthright could not be obtained fraudulently, for spiritual blessings come by virtue of the righteous life of God's Son. Yet, things were allowed to develop this way because God knew that in the future Jacob would actually allow the spirit of the heavenly Firstborn to possess him. Before he could come to such a realization, however, Jacob lied once more, impersonating his blind father as his older brother in order to obtain the blessing. And he did ☺, but the enraged Esau, the biological firstborn, decided to kill him, and Jacob had to flee to his uncle's house, where he was now the one deceived.

He worked for seven years for one of his daughters, but his uncle gave him the other and made him work another seven for the one he wanted. Finally, when he was about to return home, he found that his brother was coming against him with 400 soldiers. This was the critical hour when he went into solitude to pray, to surrender himself completely to God. Then the Son of God entered into a struggle with him, since Jacob considered him an enemy. The struggle continued until sunrise, and his faith did not weaken until he finally received the longed-for blessing along with the new name Israel. We are invited to the same, so that we may be his spiritual heirs:

This is the generation of those who seek Him, who seek Your face,
they are Jacob. (Reflection Silence) (Psalm 24:6)

Thus is demonstrated the birth of the people of Israel – those whom God chooses as the firstborn among the family of nations, to bless the entire earth through them:

And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD, Israel is my
son, even my firstborn: (Exodus 4:22)

For more than fourteen hundred years the Jewish people had been the means through which God had sought to give light and blessing to other nations, but they generally persisted in their sins and disqualified themselves from their high calling. Finally, after rejecting and putting to

death the very Firstborn of God, He was compelled to choose others in their place.

The call to birthright has as its ultimate goal Christ becoming the firstborn within us through His Spirit:

For whom [God] foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be *the firstborn among many brothers* ; (Romans 8:29)

We are invited to respond to this call to participate in the final phase of Heaven's sacred mission for this world:

We have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God,... *to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven* ,... (Hebrews 12:22-23)

In the last book of the Bible, Revelation, it is recorded that, at the very end of time, 144,000 people will have the name or character of the Father written on their “foreheads.” They are called “the firstfruits of God and of the Lamb [Christ].” We are all invited to be part of this special group, revealing the light of God’s character in our dark world. Do you want to be one of them? Pray to receive the Spirit of God’s Firstborn in fullness.

I. 7. The Bridegroom

And Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, have I acquired [Boaz] to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren... And all the people... said, We are witnesses: The LORD make the woman that is come into thine house like Rachel and Leah, which two built the house of Israel:
(Ruth 4:10-11)

The symbolism of humanity's union with God, despite being alienated by sin (Isaiah 62:5), is presented from several perspectives:

1. **Restoration through the Second Adam:** According to the Levitical law, the name of Adam, who "died in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1), was to be exalted to prevent his inheritance from being lost forever (cf. Deuteronomy 25:5, 6). Christ took on fallen human nature, becoming the second Adam, to restore the name or character of the deceased.
2. **Christ's Birth and the Church:** Just "as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman" (1 Corinthians 11:11-12

), and thus Christ entered this world through Mary. He is also portrayed as being born of the church, reflecting the believers' millennial expectations for the Messiah's coming, which were as painful as labor pains (Revelation 12:1-5). These labor pains continue even through the disappointment of His disciples when He is led to the cross, and their eventual joy is likened to that of a woman who has given birth and forgotten her pain (John 16:20-22).

3. **The Church Born from Christ:** Conversely, the church itself is also presented as originating from Christ. Just as Adam fell asleep so that Eve could be taken from him, Christ was "put to sleep" in death on Calvary so that the Church could be born from this manifestation of His love (cf. Genesis 2:21-23; Ephesians 5:25-33).

4. **Believers through the Church:** And just as the seed of man comes through the woman, so believers in Christ come through the Church (Revelation 12:17).

In the context of the Testament, the Father initially gave the nations to His Son (Psalm 2:7, 8). However, due to the deceptive and alienating power of sin, Christ had to seal the Testament with His blood, for such was the original faith of those who were alienated (Hebrews 9:15–22), and such was the ransom demanded by the kidnapper (Satan) after he had deceived the heirs. But even then, it is the Father who draws believers to the Son (John 6:44), and He is the One who gives them to Him because He is His Father (John 17:6, 9, 11, 24). Thus, the Father is the One who brings the Bride to His Son.

According to the law of Levirate, along with the wife of the deceased brother, Christ also takes his material inheritance. Therefore, in God's Testament to His Son, in addition to the nations, "the uttermost parts of the earth" are also promised to Christ (Psalm 2:8). The earth will become the inheritance of Christ's joint heirs, who are distinguished by their meekness and lowliness of mind (Psalm 37:9). This material inheritance also includes "the city, whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:9, 10).

The New Jerusalem and the 144,000

Then one of the seven angels came... and spoke with me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife [Jesus]." And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me "that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory [character] of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious... And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel... And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb... And he

measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man..." (Revelation 21:9–17).

The elements of this city reveal the main representatives of the church of Christ. The wall, which is 144 cubits (human measure), is the result of multiplying 12 x 12. These represent the leaders of God's people in Old Testament and New Testament times. But this number (144) multiplied by 1000 gives the value of those who have fully portrayed the character of God at the very end of time.

"Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads." And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed "an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel" [spiritual Israel] (Revelation 7:3–4).

"And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name [character] written in their foreheads... These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb" (Revelation 14:1–5).

Thus, while all the saved throughout human history are joint heirs with Christ of His God-given inheritance, according to the divine pattern of source and channel, the 144,000 are representative of all the saved. They are the bride of Christ who will reside in His palace, and the rest are the guests at the wedding.

"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb" (Revelation 19:7–9).

The promise to those who can become part of this Bride is given during the Philadelphian period of Christianity, when the door to the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary is opened (Revelation 3:7), because there is a

people who can follow Christ there by faith. Only in this room is the character of the Father, as revealed by His Son on earth, fully seen, and therefore only those who have had this experience can become part of the Bride of Christ:

"Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name" (Revelation 3:12).

Growth in Character and Final Preparation

The number 144,000 signifies multiplied growth and maturity of character. It is the final fulfillment of the promise given to Abraham to multiply his descendants (Genesis 22:17).

This pattern of natural growth was captured by the Italian mathematician Leonardo Fibonacci (1170-1240), who observed various natural structures. This growth is expressed in the so-called Fibonacci numbers, where each subsequent number equals the sum of the previous two. Interestingly, the twelfth number in this sequence is 144.

Likewise, if we open the Psalms—the only book in Scripture with 150 chapters—and read the 12th verse of the 144th Psalm, we encounter the same pattern:

1		1
2		1
3		2
4		3
5		5
6		8
7		13
8		21
9		34
10		55
11		89
12		144
13		233
14		377
15		610

"That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; that our daughters may be as corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace" (Psalm 144:12).

This expresses the secret dream of reaching that maturity which reflects the perfection of the Father (Matthew 5:48). This growth is the result of the discovery and application of the principles of truth which began to be revealed at the opening of the door to the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary. The culmination of this process is the so-called third angel's cry, which is associated with the increased amount of the filial Spirit of Christ at the appointed times and the revelation of the merciful and non-violent character of the Father through the life of His Son on earth (cf. Revelation 14:9; Revelation 18:1).

This loud cry signifies that the 144,000 are set apart and sealed in their destiny as the Bride of the Son of God and are ready to dwell in the New Jerusalem, which becomes their permanent dwelling place. In the end-time apocrypha, this moment is presented as follows:

"At these words of mine to her, her face and her eyes suddenly lighted up, and behold, her appearance became radiant [acceptance of God's character], so that I, being afraid of her, wondered what this thing might be. And behold, she suddenly cried out so loudly and so fearfully that the earth shook at her cry. And I looked: and behold, the woman appeared no more to me, but a city was being built, and its place was marked out on broad foundations" (3 Ezdras 10:25–27).

God's Word teaches us that we cannot produce righteousness of our own accord, for "there is none righteous, no, not one" (Romans 3:10). What we need is the righteousness of Christ, but at the end of time there will come a final stage in which this righteousness will be revealed in His people in a fullness never seen before because of the increased knowledge of God's character (cf. Isaiah 11:9; Habakkuk 2:14). As the Bride beholds the beauty of her King, she will be transformed according to what she sees (2 Corinthians 3:18). Jesus spoke of the period of final preparation in one of His parables, in which the kingdom of God is compared to a wedding:

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king [God], which made a marriage for his son [Christ], And sent forth his servants [the prophets] to call them that were bidden to the wedding [the Jewish people]: and they would not come... Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage [people from all nations in the Christian era are invited]. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good [not all professing Christianity are true]: and the wedding was furnished with guests. And when the king came in to see the guests [court], he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment [not having the righteousness of Christ]: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot [this is what sin does to man – Proverbs 5:22], and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness [outside of God's presence]; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 22:2–14).

This is the judgment spoken of in Daniel 7, when the Son of Man is given the kingdom (cf. Daniel 7:9–13).

This judgment is not at the time of the Second Coming, but some time before. The Son of Man is not represented as coming to earth, but is brought to God to receive the kingdom. And this is in consequence of the judgment that has taken place, for it is understood by it who are (1) false believers [the man without a wedding garment], who (2) will remain at the wedding as guests, and who (3) will constitute His Bride itself throughout eternity. Therefore, when He speaks to His disciples about how they should be awake and ready for His Second Coming, He says:

"Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that

he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them" (Luke 12:35–37).

Notice that at His Second Coming, Jesus returns from a wedding. This means that by then everything concerning the subjects of the kingdom should have been decided. Jesus presents another parable with a wedding theme to highlight other aspects of the preparation:

"Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins [believers in the Second Coming], which took their lamps [God's Word], and went forth to meet the bridegroom [Christ]. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil [the Holy Spirit] with them: But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps... And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh" (Matthew 25:1–13).

The reason the foolish did not have enough of the Spirit of Christ is because they had not sought to commune with Him and to know Him, and thus to know the character of the Father. This is also the reason the foolish did not have enough of the Spirit of the Son of God, which is here represented by the oil necessary for the light of the lamps (cf. Zechariah 4:1–6).

II. The Original Time

And God said, “Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days, and years;”... And God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: and the stars. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, to rule the day and the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening, and there was morning, the fourth day.
(Genesis 1:14-19)

II. 1. The Day

And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years; (Genesis 1:14)

On the fourth day of creation, God and His Son created the celestial bodies that separate day from night and light from darkness. Yet, during the first three days, light was already present. Let's explore this:

"And God said, Let there be light: and there was light." (Genesis 1:3)

Where did this light originate, since the sun and moon had not yet been created?

"This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." (1 John 1:5)

This light emanates directly from God Himself.

"And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness." (Genesis 1:4)

Light is not only good in a physical sense:

"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (2 Corinthians 4:6)

The absence of this knowledge is **darkness**, a darkness chosen by those who wish to persist in their evil deeds (John 3:19-21).

The separation of light from darkness suggests, on one hand, that sin had already manifested through Lucifer. On the other hand, by creating humanity with free will, God allowed for the potential of evil to arise. It is only in this sense that He states He created both good and evil (Isaiah

45:7). If Adam and Eve had passed the test of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, night would have vanished forever from human existence (Revelation 21:25).

The Beginning of the Day in Creation

In the initial stage of creation, we find two definitions for the concept of "day":

"And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day." (Genesis 1:5)

The first definition refers solely to the **daylight hours**, while the second refers to the **entire 24-hour period**. An example of the first usage is the sentence, "The garden looks very beautiful during the day." The second could be demonstrated by saying, for instance, "My mother hasn't been here for two days."

Another crucial point in understanding original time is the beginning of the day. Notice the following observations from the days of creation:

"...And the evening and the morning were the first day... And the evening and the morning were the second day... And the evening and the morning were the third day..." etc. (Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31)

This refrain reveals that the daily cycle commences not with the light portion, but with the dark portion. This implies that the beginning and end of a day, according to the second definition (day and night), is the setting of the sun (Leviticus 23:32).

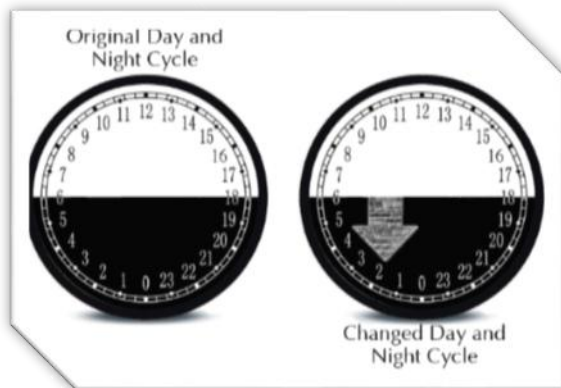
The Origin of the Midnight Start

So, where did the idea that the day begins at midnight come from?

When the Egyptians developed their time system, they needed to account for the time when there was no shadow. Since the highest point of the day

was noon, the opposite must have been midnight, when the 12 hours began again. That's why the day begins at midnight.⁴ [1]

The common convention among the ancient Romans, the ancient Chinese, and in modern times is for the civil day to begin at midnight (00:00) and to last a full 24 hours until 24:00, which is 00:00 of the next day.⁵



Therefore, with respect to the original day's beginning, the world has shifted towards the darkest part of the day. This has led to the perception of the hours from 00:00 to 6:00 as morning hours. Since the sun and moon were created to separate "light from darkness"

(Genesis 1:14, 18), perceiving the time from 00:00 to 6:00 as belonging to the morning mixes darkness with light and blurs the line between good and evil! We recall that it was Rome that "shall think to change times and laws" (Daniel 7:25).

Chronology of the Last Week Before Calvary

Now we can follow the chronology of the last week before Golgotha. John tells us that "six days before the passover" (John 12:1) Jesus was a guest at the home of Simon the Pharisee, where His sisters Martha and Mary and their brother Lazarus, whom He had recently raised from the dead, were staying. There, Mary anointed the Son of God with expensive perfume, to which Judas reacted with indignation, but Christ interceded for her (John

⁴ <https://www.vermontpublic.org/programs/2019-01-18/why-do-days-start-at-12-oclock>

⁵ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Day>

12:3-8). It was then that Judas went to the Jews and offered to betray Him (Matthew 26:14, 15).

Days before Passover	Day of the Week	Events
6 days	Saturday	At Simon's house
5 days	Sunday	Welcome in Jerusalem
4 days	Monday	
3 days	Tuesday	
2 days	Wednesday	
1 day	Thursday	
	Friday	Passover
	Saturday	Unleavened bread

The interest in the resurrected Lazarus was great, and therefore, "the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death; Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus" (John 12:10-11). The next day (5 days before Passover), according to John's

account, Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey, where, according to prophecy, the people welcomed Him as king (John 12:12-16 cf. Zechariah 9:9). Later in his book, John reports the following information about the time of the Passover itself:

"Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover." (John 18:28)

This was the same day that Jesus would be crucified. The Jews called this day **Preparation** because it was the day they were preparing for the Sabbath that would come at sunset, but also because they now considered it to coincide with the first day of Unleavened Bread (Leviticus 23:5-7), which was considered an annual Sabbath:

"The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away." (John 19:31)

The problem with John's chronology, as illustrated by the table, is that it is not in sync with the other three Gospels:

"Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover?" (Matthew 26:17)

"And the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the passover, his disciples said unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the passover?" (Mark 14:12)

"Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed. And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat." (Luke 22:7-8)

The other three evangelists state that Jesus and His disciples celebrated the Passover on Thursday evening. Some believe that Jesus ordered this

because He knew that He would not be able to celebrate the following day. However, the texts report that the Passover sacrifices were slaughtered on that day. According to the Passover law, the lamb was slaughtered "**at evening**" (Exodus 12:6). This word in the original means "between the two evenings," that is, the time between the moment the sun begins to descend from its highest point (at noon) and its sunset. This is about 3:00 p.m. In the evening, at the beginning of the 15th day of the first month, which is the first day of Unleavened Bread, Jesus and His disciples ate the Passover meal.

The True Time of Passover

So which of the two days—**Thursday or Friday**—is the true time of the Passover? The Lord has provided additional witnesses to confirm the truth (2 Corinthians 13:1). The lamb was set apart "on the tenth day" of the first month, four days before it was to be sacrificed (Exodus 12:3, 6). Thus, Jesus set Himself apart on the day He rode into Jerusalem on a donkey and was welcomed as King, even though He knew that by doing so He would finally set in motion the murderous actions of the leaders of the people (John 10:17, 18; 12:15). John says that this was the day after Jesus had been a guest at Simon's house, where Mary had anointed Him, which is 5 days before the Passover (John 12:1-3, 12-15). But Jesus set Himself apart 4 days before the Passover, not 5.

John recorded the chronology of the last week according to the Jewish understanding. This is typical of his book, for he alone consistently calls the feasts "Jewish" (John 5:1; 6:4; 7:2), uses the Roman reckoning of the hours (Matthew 27:46-50, Luke 12:38; Matthew 14:25 cf. John 19:13-16), and presents the superstition that an angel troubled the waters of the pool of Bethesda so that the quickest could be healed, as if it were true (John 5:1-4). In other words, John records events according to the false system of justice of the natural man.

This is also confirmed by Jesus' words to the Pharisees that "the Son of Man will be in the heart of the earth **three days and three nights**" (Matthew

12:38-40), something that can only be literally true if we start counting from the bright part of Thursday, when it was the actual time of Passover.

This makes it clear that the true Passover was on Thursday, and this is of great significance, for it confirms the fact that the Father did not require the death of His Son at His Passover time. According to His calendar, His Son completed His work, revealing His true character, on the day before His crucifixion. This is in agreement with Jesus' words in His prayer that same day after the supper:

"I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." (John 17:4)

The Son of God completed His God-given work before the cross because the Father **never required the death of His Son so that He could forgive our sins** (Psalm 40:6, 7). But the cross was inevitable because of our false system of justice, which states that every sin must be punished and "without shedding of blood is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22). We are the ones who have reflected the requirement of death on the law by demanding the death of the Testator so that we can believe we can receive the inheritance:

"For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth. Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood." (Hebrews 9:16-18)

This applies to us and our ideas, but when God bequeathed everything to His Son—His nature and possessions—the Father did not have to die for the Will to take effect. It was not God who appointed His Son's death on Friday. He simply gave Him to us—all His treasure—to decide what to do with Him. Jesus agreed to take upon Himself the sin of the world, thereby being separated from His Father in a world that did not understand His Father's character. After the lambs were offered that Thursday afternoon, the crushing weight of our sins was already upon Jesus' soul (Matthew

26:38; Luke 22:42-44), and He was already dwelling in "the heart of the earth" or "the hour of darkness" (Luke 22:53).

Can we imagine what the Father and the Son agreed to in order to reach us in our thinking and open the door for us to know them and thus be saved?!

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Thursday (Abib 14 th)			Friday (Abib 15 th)		Sabbath (Abib 16 th)		Sunday (Abib 17 th)	
Night	Day		Night	Day	Night	Day	Night	Day
		Slaying the Passover at 15:00	Unleavened Bread 1 st day		Unleavened Bread 2 nd day		Unleavened Bread 3 rd day	

*A day in the Bible starts from the night (Gen 1:8; Lev 23:32; Luke 23:54; Mark 1:21, 32)

“For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” Matthew 12:40

This makes it clear that the true Passover was on Thursday, and this is of great significance, for it confirms the fact that the Father did not require the death of His Son at His Passover time. According to His calendar, His Son completed His work, revealing His true character, on the day before His crucifixion. This is in agreement with Jesus' words in His prayer that same day after the supper:

I have glorified you on the earth: I have finished the work which you gave me to do. (John 17:4)

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death of the Testator so that we can believe that we can receive the inheritance:

For where there is a will, *there must also be the death of the testator* . For a will is of force only after death, for it is of no force while the testator is alive. Therefore even the first covenant was not ratified without blood. (Hebrews 9:16-18)

This applies to us and our ideas, but when God bequeathed everything to His Son—His nature and possessions—the Father did not have to die for the Will to take effect. It was not God who appointed His Son's death on Friday. He simply gave Him to us—all His treasure—to decide what to do with Him. Jesus agreed to take upon Himself the sin of the world, thereby being separated from His Father to a world that did not understand His Father's character. After the lambs were offered that Thursday afternoon, the crushing weight of our sins was already upon Jesus' soul (Matthew 26:38; Luke 22:42-44), and He was already dwelling in "the heart of the earth" or "*the hour of darkness*" (Luke 22:53).

Can we imagine what the Father and the Son agreed to in order to reach us in our thinking and open the door for us to know them and thus be saved?!

II. 2. The Week

*And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had created; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had created. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.
(Genesis 2:2-3)*

On the seventh day of the creative week, God and His Son established the weekly cycle of time on Earth. The week, independent of astronomical phenomena, serves as evidence of the **divine origin of our world**. Years ago, I had a conversation with my wife's grandfather, a wonderful man whose atheistic communist beliefs, despite his frequent reading of the Scriptures, prevented him from fully accepting their testimony.

I once told him that, unlike other units of time, the week as a division of time is not based on any natural astronomical regularity. I asked him, "From where, then, did people collectively adopt such a division of time?"

My question piqued his interest, and in time he inquired of his learned son whether the week could indeed be a sign of the world's divine origin. He was told that it was, and I believe this event significantly influenced his thinking about the reality of the biblical God.

Theories on the Origin of the Week

Despite the light of God's word, some scholars who favor the influence of ancient Babylon (Pan-Babylonians) believe that the origin of the week lies with the Babylonians:

"The most common hypothesis was formulated by Jules Oppert, a famous nineteenth-century Assyriologist, who discovered a list of Babylonian star deities arranged in an order that corresponded to the days of the week: Shamash (Sun), Shin (Moon), Nergal (Mars),

Nebo (Mercury), Merodach (Jupiter), Ishtar (Venus), and Adar (Saturn). For each hour of the day, a patron god was assigned, and the star associated with the first hour of the day (sunrise) was considered the patron of the entire day: Sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, and Saturn, i.e. exactly in the order of the days of the week."⁶ [1]

This hypothesis, however, overlooks the possibility that the Babylonians utilized a pre-existing system of dividing time into weeks. They also divided the 28-day lunar cycle into four weeks. Yet, the lunar cycle is not precisely 28 days. It takes the moon 27 days, 7 hours, and 43 minutes to complete one full orbit around the Earth. This is called a **sidereal month** and is measured by its position relative to distant "fixed" stars. However, it takes the moon approximately 29.5 days to complete one cycle of phases (from new moon to new moon). Therefore, those who attempt to follow so-called lunar Sabbaths disregard the fact that Scripture never linked the weekly Sabbath with the moon. In fact, the Divine pattern of Father [source] and Son [channel], as expressed in 1 Corinthians 8:6, identifies the sun as the factor associated with the weekly Sabbath and the moon with the annual Sabbaths (holidays) (Psalm 104:19).

It should also be noted that the history of the Jews parallels that of the Babylonians. According to the genealogical and chronological records in Genesis chapters 10 and 11, Abraham, the forefather of Israel, was most likely a contemporary of Nimrod, the founder of Babylon.

"Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws." (Genesis 26:5)

"For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him." (Genesis 18:19)

⁶ Jim W. Faul, *The Invention of Time and Space: A Reconstruction of the Ancient World*, Great Pyramid Publishing, 2013, page 69.

Abraham kept the commandments of God and His Son, among which is invariably the one about the Sabbath, which is at the end of the weekly cycle:

"And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made." (Genesis 2:2)

"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God... For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it." (Exodus 20:8-11)

It couldn't be said more clearly, could it? The original and true seventh day is **Saturday**. And if Abraham followed these principles, how much more so must the believers who lived before the flood have done so?! Even today in countries like the USA, Canada, and Japan, Sunday is still considered the first day of the week. But then why in our country and in many other countries is Sunday the seventh day of the week, and when did this change come about? The signs of the change are also visible in the Bulgarian name of the day **Wednesday** (сряда), which is related to the idea of the middle of the week. But Wednesday could only be Wednesday when the first day of the week is Sunday and the last is Saturday.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Also, the meaning of the words "Sunday" and "Saturday" does not unambiguously resolve the issue. While "Sunday" (in some interpretations) may imply "not acting," i.e., resting, "Saturday" comes from the Hebrew *shabbat*, which is also related to rest.

Historical Shifts in the Weekly Cycle

When Christianity began to spread and influence calendar reckoning (4th-6th centuries), the beginning of the week remained unchanged, even as

the Sabbath was shifted to Sunday. When Cyril and Methodius (late 9th century) brought Christianity to the Slavs through the alphabet, they adopted the Greek tradition of counting days, but started counting from Monday instead of Sunday. As a result, Slavic languages now treat Monday as the first day, Tuesday as the second, and so on. Saturday and Sunday are the only days that are named, not numbered. In Russian, the word for "Sunday" (воскресенье) means "Resurrection."

Of particular interest in this regard is the letter of Pope Nicholas I in response to the questions of Prince Boris I (852-889) regarding the day off:

"You want to know whether someone has the right to work on Saturday or Sunday.... if the Truth itself commands through itself that the Sabbath should not be kept according to the letter, then whoever keeps the Sabbath leisure time according to the letter of the law, whom else is he contradicting but the Truth itself? But on Sunday a person should cease earthly labor and devote himself to prayer in every way, so that any negligence committed during the other six days can be atoned for by prayers throughout the day of the Lord's resurrection."⁷

Although not explicitly stated, the phrase "the remaining six days" implies that Sunday should be understood as the last day of the week. However, the so-called "Judaization" of Christians in Sabbath observance continued, and this issue became controversial during the schism between the Western and Eastern churches:

"Among the accusations leveled by the Christians of the West (Catholics) against those of the East (Orthodox) was that they "sabbatized" [rested on Saturday] in addition to worshipping on the first day of the week. Patriarch Michael Cerularius defended the "Sabbath" by citing God's command in Exodus 20:8-11. On July 16, 1054, a Saturday, just before the service began, three papal legates

⁷ Pope Nicholas I, Letter 99, 866. Available at: <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/basis/866nicholas-bulgar.asp>

placed the document of anathematization on the altar in the Cathedral of Hagia Sophia."⁸

It is believed that the final transformation of Sunday into the seventh day occurred sometime only in the 10th century through a natural shift of the end of the week due to the festive nature of Sunday:

"We may note that on early Christian coins the Sabbath was designated as the seventh day, following the Bible. On later coins, however, it is designated as the sixth day. This change seems to have been brought about by the natural tendency to regard the celebrated special day of the weekly cycle as the end of the cycle, rather than the beginning. Thus, after about the tenth century, Sunday replaced the Sabbath as the seventh day for most Christians. A similar change occurred in the Islamic world, where Friday began as the sixth day, but later came to be counted as the seventh day." (Michael Falk, *On the Name of the Weekly Day of Rest*, p. 6)

There is another point of view regarding changing Monday to the first day of the week:

"The increasingly common convention of starting calendar weeks on Mondays is a result of Western European names, especially German, not calling Saturday Saturday - or no longer doing so in a recognizable way. Since Christians, especially Protestants, consider Sunday to be "Saturday", the tendency is to number it as the 7th day, not the 1st. However, knowledge of Greek or Arabic, or several Romance languages, would show us that Saturday remains Saturday, not only in Hebrew, but even for Christians and Muslims."⁹

⁸ St. Network, Sunday is the seventh day of the week, true or false?. Available at: <https://st.network/religion/sunday-is-the-seventh-day-of-the-week-true-or-false.html>

⁹ Friesian.com, The Days of the Week. Available at: www.friesian.com

In more recent times, industrial society has done much to disrupt the traditional concept of Sunday as the first day. According to Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary (1983), the term "weekend," first recorded in 1878, refers to "the period between the end of one work or business or school week and the beginning of the next." This understanding firmly places Sunday at the end of the week. This is probably why the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) decided in 1988 that Monday should be considered the first day of the week. Calendars in many European countries now follow the same organization's decision 8601.¹⁰

The Sabbath and New Covenant

The so-called arguments in favor of Sunday (John 20:19, 26-29; Acts 2:1-4; 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1, 2) only emphasize that it is the first day of the week. Revelation 1:10 tells us that John received his visions on "the Lord's day," which according to the entire Bible is the Sabbath. Only Ephesians 2:15 and Colossians 2:16, 17 deserve special consideration, because here the argument is different.

"Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances..." (Ephesians 2:15)

The word "ordinances" in Greek is *dogma* and is found in the following places in the Greek Old Testament of the Apostolic Polyglot: Ezra 8:8; Ezekiel 20:26; Daniel 2:13; Daniel 3:10, 12, 29; Daniel 4:6; 6:8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 15, 26. In none of these cases is the word connected with the law of God, and its meaning gravitates around the idea of **mortal human decrees**. These decrees are according to the false justice that every sin must be punished and the enmity of man against God, and it is precisely this that the Son of God destroyed on the cross by "making sacrifice and offering to cease" (Daniel 9:27). The same word is also found in Colossians 1:14-17.

¹⁰ Wikipedia, ISO 8601. Available at: https://bg.wikipedia.org/wiki/ISO_8601

"Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross... Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ." (Colossians 2:14-17)

The phrase "in respect of" (or "in connection with") is one of the few possible translations of the Greek *meros*, which in 31 of its 43 uses in the New Testament means a **part**, **share**, or **portion** of something. The text would then be:

"Therefore let no one judge you in food or drink, or in respect of a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath, which are a shadow of things to come, but the reality is Christ." (Colossians 2:14-17)

The "shadow" spoken of here is not what is included in the expression "festival, new moon, or Sabbath," but the **meals and drinks**, which actually have a transitory meaning as symbols and therefore constitute only a **part** of the eternal divine times.

II. 3. The Month

*For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make,
shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name
remain. And from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to
another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD.
(Isaiah 66:22-23)*

Besides "ruling the night," the "lesser luminary" is also responsible for the **month**. This connection is evident in many languages. For instance, in Bulgarian, the word "month" (месец - *mesets*) is synonymous with "moon" (луна - *luna*), as beautifully captured in Botev's famous poem:

"...Evening comes - the moon rises.

Stars sprinkle the firmament;..."

English, as part of the Germanic language family, also shares similar words for **month** and **moon**. This linguistic similarity extends to other languages as well:

- Afrikaans: *maand – maan*
- Danish: *måned – måne*
- Dutch: *maand – maan*
- German: *Monat – Mond*
- Krio: *mɔnt – mun*
- Luxembourgish: *Mount – Mound*
- Norwegian: *måned – måne*
- Swedish: *måned – måne*
- Tajik: *mən – моҳ*

Lunar Phases and Creation Symmetry

In approximately 29.5 days, the moon cycles through 7 phases and 1 dark period of about 2-3 days. This sequence of lunar phases exhibits an opposite symmetry, which can reflect various universals, such as the pattern of creation.

Thus, the waxing and waning crescent moons are associated with the physical light of the first day and the spiritual light of the seventh:

"And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light."
(Genesis 1:2-3)

"And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made." (Genesis 2:2-3)

The **first quarter of the moon** corresponds to **day two**, where God divides the waters and the atmosphere appears. The **third quarter** reflects **day six**, where the opposite environment, the dry land, is filled with life.

"And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day." (Genesis 1:6-8)

"And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good. And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have

dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." (Genesis 1:24-27)



The **waxing gibbous moon** finds its opposite in the **waning gibbous moon**. These phases correspond to the **third and fifth days**. On the third day, God divides the waters to reveal dry land, and on the fifth day, He fills with creatures the environment that is the opposite of the earth – air and water:

"And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good." (Genesis 1:9-10)

"And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good." (Genesis 1:20-21)

The **full moon** corresponds to the **fourth creative day**, which is in the very **middle of the creative week** and is associated with **complete illumination**. It

is no coincidence, then, that on this day God created the luminaries destined for our Earth:

"And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good." (Genesis 1:14-18)

Beautiful are the creations of our Father and His Son, despite the darkening power of sin.

The 30-Day Month and the Flood Chronology

In Part II, Chapter 4, we mentioned that the month before the Flood was exactly 30 days long. Let us now examine in more detail the reasons for this. The chronology of the Flood is symmetrical. Noah waits in the ark for 7 days until the rain begins to fall (Genesis 7:10). It rains for 40 days (Genesis 7:12). The waters rise for 150 days (Genesis 7:24) and fall for another 150 days (Genesis 8:3). Another period of 40 days is mentioned as Noah opens the window of the ark and sends out a raven (Genesis 8:6, 7). After 7 days he sends out a dove, which returns because it has nowhere to perch (Genesis 8:8, 9). After 7 days he sends out a dove again, this time returning with an olive leaf in its beak (Genesis 8:10, 11). And when he sent out the dove a third time after another 7 days, it did not return (Genesis 8:12). The first seven days before sending out the dove are only hinted at by the phrase "and he waited yet another seven days, and sent forth the dove" (Genesis 8:10). Thus, in the mirror structure, this week can be assigned to the left side of the equation, to give the following:

7 - 7 - 40 - 150 - 150 - 40 - 7 - 7

Scholar Warren H. Johns suggests that the weeks in the flood chronology be understood as a reflection of the creative week at the beginning of the book of Genesis.¹¹ [1] I find this entirely reasonable, not only because the chronological record of the flood is found only a few chapters later in the same book, but also because, due to mankind's wickedness, the flood is the exact opposite of the creation process. Understanding the weeks in this way reveals that the Sabbath day of rest falls on dates that actually correspond to its purpose and thus confirms the correct ordering of the time periods in the chronology:

Genesis	Event	Biblical Date	Day of the Week
7:6	Noah’s 600th birthday	1-1-600	Wednesday
7:7ff.	Starting to board the ark—humans and animals	2-10-600	Sunday
7:10	Seven days of waiting, the seventh being a Saturday	2-16-600	Saturday/sabbath
7:11	Beginning of the Flood	2-17-600	Sunday
7:12	40 days of rain ending	3-27-600	Friday
8:4	Ark rests on Mt. Ararat after 150 days	7-17-600	Wednesday
8:5	Water decreasing for another 150 days, ending on:	12-17-600	Saturday/sabbath
8:5	Tops of the mountains appear	11-1-600*	Tuesday
8:6	Raven sent out after 40 days (39 full days)	12-10-600	Saturday/sabbath
8:8	First dove sent out seven days later at end of 150 days	12-17-600	Saturday/sabbath
8:10	Second dove sent out after seven days; returns with leaf	12-24-600	Saturday/sabbath
8:12	Third dove sent out after seven days, but did not return	1-1-601	Saturday/sabbath
	<i>No delay after the 3rd dove sent and ark’s opening</i>		
8:13	Waters dried up; ark opened up on Noah’s birthday	1-1-601	Saturday/sabbath
8:14	Noah exits the ark with his family and animals	2-27-601	Saturday/sabbath

In the table, we see that each of the seven events that occurred on the Sabbath is in complete harmony with its design as a day of freedom and

¹¹ Warren H. Johns, "Noah’s Flood Chronology: Seven-Day Cycles," *Answers Research Journal* 15 (2022): 61–82. Available at: <https://answersresearchjournal.org/noahs-flood/flood-chronology-seven-day-cycles/>

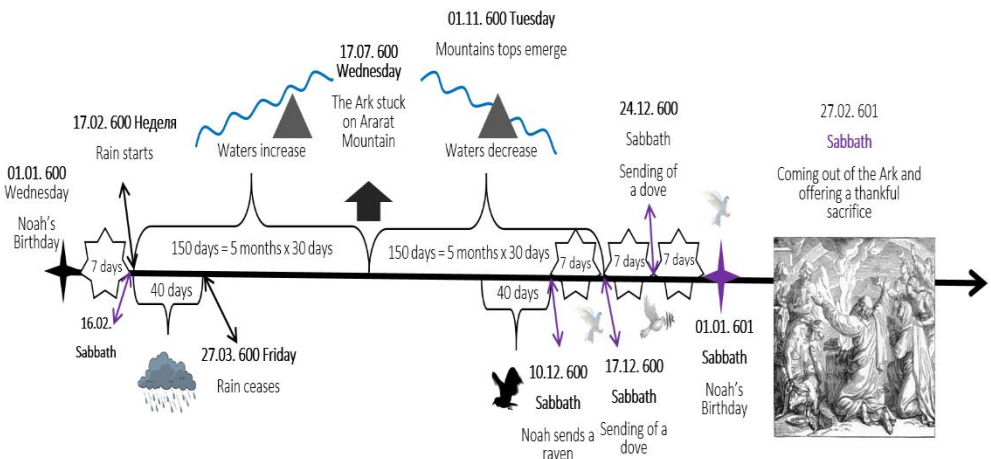
rest. This is secondarily confirmed by the chronology itself. The duration of the month as exactly 30 days is confirmed especially by the two periods of 150 days when the water rises and falls.

These two 150-day periods fall on the indicated dates only when the month has exactly 30 days.

The New Heavens and New Earth

In the opening text of this chapter, we read that in the new heaven and new earth that God will create, all creatures will come to worship before Him and His Son "from new moon to new moon, and from sabbath to sabbath." (Isaiah 66:23) This also harmonizes with the light in John's Revelation regarding the new world, in which there is the tree of life, bearing fruit 12 times, "every month." (Revelation 22:1, 2)

The new moon will indeed continue to be a factor in the new earth and time in which we receive more of the life-giving Spirit of the Son of God. We can imagine the twelve different characters, represented by the apostles of Christ and the sons of Jacob, partaking of the fruits of each month and eagerly awaiting the fruits of the month that corresponds to their character, which in a spiritual sense speaks of a more special encounter with God and His precious Son.



In the table we see that each of *the seven* events that occurred on the Sabbath is in complete harmony with its design as a day of freedom and rest. This is secondarily confirmed by the chronology itself. The duration of the month as exactly 30 days is confirmed especially by the two periods of 150 days when the water rises and falls.

These two 150-day periods fall on the indicated dates only when the month has exactly 30 days.

II. 4. The Year

*...and let them serve as signs and for seasons, and for days and years;
(Genesis 1:14)*

From the previous chapter, it became clear not only that the original month was exactly **30 days long**, but also that the original year was exactly **12 such months, or 360 days**. Since this period is associated with a complete rotation, it's no coincidence that the circle has **360 degrees**.

Another important regularity of the year is that it reflects the day. Just as the original year is made up of 12 natural/lunar months, so the daylight hours are made up of **12 natural/solar hours**. When the Lord Jesus tried to explain to His disciples that during His mission on earth He was protected by His Father until "the hour and the power of darkness" came (Luke 22:53), He expressed it this way:

"And when he heard that he was sick, he abode two days in the place where he was. Then after that saith he to his disciples, Let us go into Judaea again. His disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again? Jesus answered, **Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.**" (John 11:6-10)

With this expression, Jesus makes it clear that spiritual light is represented by the **12 hours of the day**, and night symbolizes the spiritual darkness in man. This idea is also expressed by the Son of God elsewhere in the following way:

"The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" (Matthew 6:22-23)

Here, darkness is associated with evil and error, but it also means death and non-existence:

"Yea, the light of the wicked shall be put out, and the spark of his fire shall not shine. The light shall be dark in his tabernacle, and his candle shall be put out with him. They shall drive him from light into darkness, and chase him out of the world." (Job 18:5-18)

"Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and **cast him into outer darkness**; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matthew 22:13)

It's no coincidence that people sleep and don't feel the time of night, as if it doesn't exist. The lack of hours at night, which are replaced by 4 watches, speaks of the dangerous characteristic of spiritual darkness as a time when the spiritual enemy sows his harmful seeds:

"The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: **But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.**" (Matthew 13:24-25)

From a time perspective, the dark period is not measured. It's a symbol of death and therefore will not exist in the new world (Revelation 21:25). In this way, and with this attitude, the time that should be counted in the day is only the **12 hours of the day**.

The Day-Year Principle in Scripture

This connection between the day and the year is also confirmed in the Scriptures through the measurement of human life. Note the way in which lifespan is presented in these texts:

"And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth: And the days of Adam after he had begotten Seth were eight hundred years: and he begat sons and daughters: And **all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years**: and he died. And Seth lived

an hundred and five years, and begat Enos: And Seth lived after he begat Enos eight hundred and seven years, and begat sons and daughters: And **all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years**: and he died..." (Genesis 5:3-8)

The lifespan of Adam's descendants is represented by the expression "the days amounted to X number of years." This formula is deliberately repeated over and over until the end of the genealogical record. What did the ancients know about the relationship between days and years? Later, we see how the Creator Himself speaks of the time of human age in a similar way:

"And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: **yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.**" (Genesis 6:3)

When the patriarch Jacob comes to Egypt and presents himself before Pharaoh, he also uses the formula in question:

"And Pharaoh said unto Jacob, How old art thou? And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, **The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years**: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage." (Genesis 47:8-9)

Finally, the prophetic application of the "day-year" relationship is significant. The very fact that in prophetic time scales, a day is equal to a year is significant. The twelve spies of Israel spent 40 days spying out the promised land, and at the end, ten of them declared that the land was unconquerable. Their unbelief would result in 40 years of wandering in the wilderness:

"And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, How long shall I bear with this evil congregation, which murmur against me? I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against me. Say unto them, As truly as I live, saith the LORD, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you: Your carcasses

shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me... **After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise.**" (Numbers 14:26-34)

This prophecy was completely fulfilled in terms of time—Israel spent 40 years in the wilderness, according to the number of days of their unbelief. The next place where the prophetic day-year principle is reflected is in the book of the prophet Ezekiel, regarding the Babylonian captivity of Judah and Israel:

"Thou also, son of man, take thee a tile, and lay it before thee, and portray upon it the city, even Jerusalem: And lay siege against it, and build a fort against it, and cast up a mount against it... Moreover take thou unto thee an iron pan, and set it for a wall of iron between thee and the city: and set thy face against it, and it shall be besieged, and thou shalt lay siege against it. This shall be a sign to the house of Israel. Lie thou also upon thy left side, and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel upon it: according to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon it, thou shalt bear their iniquity. For I have laid upon thee the years of their iniquity, according to the number of the days, **three hundred and ninety days**: so shalt thou bear the iniquity of the house of Israel. And when thou hast accomplished them, lie again on thy right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah **forty days: I have appointed thee each day for a year.**" (Ezekiel 4:1-6)

In fact, if we trace the use of the day-year principle in the apocalyptic literature of the Bible, we will see that it fully reflects the original duration of the day, month, and year. The period during which the church was persecuted by the papacy is presented in the following two ways:

"And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a **thousand two hundred and threescore days.**" (Revelation 12:6)

"And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a **time, and times, and half a time**, from the face of the serpent."
(Revelation 12:14)

In verse six, the period is represented as 1260 days, and in verse fourteen as "a time, times, and half a time," i.e., 3 ½ years. But the equality of these two expressions is possible only when the months are exactly 30 days long and the year 360 days long. Further confirmation is found in the next chapter of Revelation, where the same period is represented as the persecuting power of the papacy. But this time the period is measured in months:

"And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy... And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given him to continue **forty and two months**."
(Revelation 13:1-5)

Again, 42 months can only be 1260 days and 3 ½ years when the month is equal to 30 days. We can also see the same in Revelation chapter 11, where this period concerns the plight of the "two witnesses":

"And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot **forty and two months**. And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a **thousand two hundred and threescore days**, clothed in sackcloth."
(Revelation 11:1-3)

To be sure, the period in question is here represented by a new combination – 42 months, which equals 1260 days. These scales are not limited to Revelation. The book of the prophet Daniel also mentions this period in two places:

"And he [papal Rome] shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a **time and times and the dividing of time.**" (Daniel 7:25)

"And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a **time, times, and an half**; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished." (Daniel 12:5-7)

If we consider prophetic time in isolation from calendar time, we will fail to see that the former is a consequence of the latter, and therefore prophetic scales function on the basis of a time measurement, which we have here called original or authentic.

In the English Wikipedia, this "prophetic" or "apocalyptic time" of Scripture is associated with the time measurement practice of the Jews, borrowed from the Babylonians while the former were captured by Babylon in the 6th century BC. It should be noted that the prophecy was given in Babylon, and the Babylonian year consisted of twelve months of thirty days. That the prophetic year was not the ordinary year is not a new discovery. It was noticed sixteen centuries ago by Julius Africanus in his *Chronographia*, where he explains the seventy weeks as weeks of Hebrew (lunar) years, beginning with the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, the fourth year of the 83rd Olympiad, ending in the second year of the 202nd Olympiad; 475 Julian years equal 490 lunar years.¹²

And although the same article mentions the flood as an example of "twelve thirty-day months being used in ancient times, making a total of 360 days

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[1] "Prophetic Year." Wikipedia, Wikimedia Foundation, 2024, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prophetic_Year.

for the year,"¹³ this still does not make it possible to understand that this is the authentic astronomical time that actually operated in the antediluvian era. Within this authentic time, it was not necessary to periodically add a 13th month to align the lunar and solar years, simply because the two operated in complete harmony.

The Original Beginning of the Year

Finally, we will look at the original beginning of the year. Speaking of the Passover season in Egypt, the Lord says:

"This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the **first month of the year to you.**" (Exodus 12:2, KJV)

This month is called Aviv (Deuteronomy 16:1), and its significance is connected with a certain early ripeness of barley in Israel. This ripeness was to ensure that a few days after the Passover, there would be a sheaf of the new harvest to be "waved" before the Lord in the sanctuary (Leviticus 23:5, 11). Because of the changes after the flood, if at the end of the twelfth month of the barley harvest there was no ripeness "Aviv," an additional 13th month was added to arrive at the true agricultural and astronomical beginning of the original year, which was between late March and mid-April. We see that the evil powers have again changed the true beginning as with the day.

A remnant of the original year are the names of the months September, October, November, and December. In Latin, they come from the numbers 7, 8, 9, and 10. But these days, these months are two degrees ahead, so the year begins in midwinter instead of the natural beginning of spring.

¹³ Ibid.

II. 5. The Jubilee

And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you, and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family. (Leviticus 25:10)

The seven-day Sabbath principle continues in the annual division of time. Every seventh year in the calendar of God and His Son is a Sabbath:

"Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land which I give you, then shall the land keep a sabbath unto the LORD. Six years thou shalt sow thy field, and six years thou shalt prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof; But in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for the LORD: thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard." (Leviticus 25:2-4)

In order for the land to rest and man to receive the increased blessings of the Spirit of Christ in the seventh year, God so blesses the sixth year that it bears fruit for three years (Leviticus 25:21-22). The seventh year is also a time for the forgiveness of debts:

"At the end of every seven years thou shalt make a release. And this is the manner of the release: Every creditor that lendeth ought unto his neighbour shall release it; he shall not exact it of his neighbour, or of his brother; because it is called the LORD's release." (Deuteronomy 15:1-2)

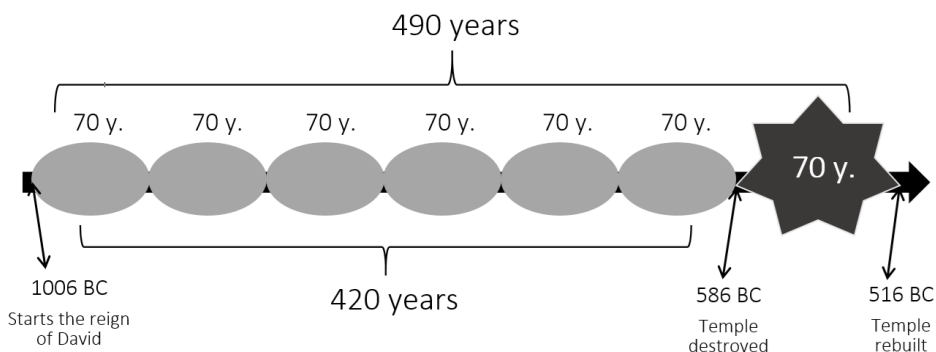
This limitation of economic slavery culminates in the Jubilee, which is the year after "seven Sabbath years," which is the fiftieth in a row (Leviticus 25:8-10). Its observance begins "on the tenth day of the seventh month," which is the "Day of Atonement," when the sins of all God's people are forgiven. Thus, the forgiveness of economic debts and the return of man to the land and its possession are only physical expressions of the Jubilee principle of spiritual and moral freedom. Jesus' words to Peter also speak of this extended application of the Jubilee principle:

"Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, **I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.**" (Matthew 18:21-22)

The formula expressed by Jesus is not accidental, because 70×7 is a great jubilee after the end of 490 years. We see a demonstration of such a jubilee at the time when Solomon's temple was destroyed and Israel was taken captive:

"And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king, and of his princes; all these he brought to Babylon. And they burnt the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof. And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia: **To fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years.**" (2 Chronicles 36:18-21)

If the land kept Sabbath throughout the 70 years of its desolation, this means that for a period of 6×70 years before that, it could not take its rest both because it was constantly being cultivated and because Israel continually committed iniquity in it. The land was so polluted that if the Jews were left in it any longer, nature would react destructively (Isaiah 24:5-6).

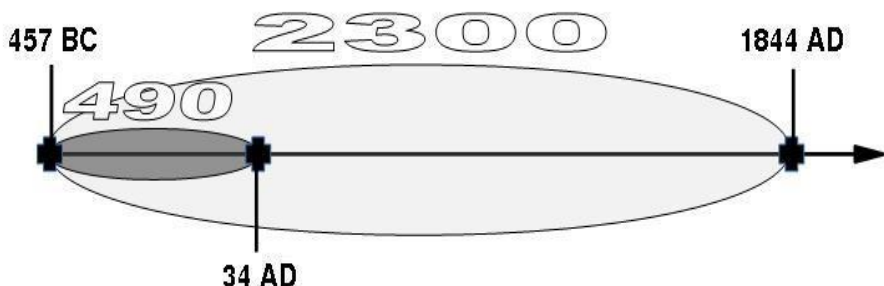


The Seventy Weeks Prophecy and Jubilee Cycles

Towards the end of the 70s, the prophet Daniel, who had understood from the book of Jeremiah that the captivity was about to end, began to pray fervently to God for the restoration of Israel (Daniel 9:1-20). He prayed for the mercy promised after the 70 years, but the answer he received amounted to another 70 x 7 years of grace for his people—the numerical expression of God's mercy:

"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times." (Daniel 9:24-25)

A new Jubilee period of 490 years marks God's long-suffering with ethnic Israel. At the end of that time, the Messiah (Christ) would come to "preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, and to proclaim 'the acceptable year of the Lord'" (Luke 4:18-19). This He would do by a life that fully reflects the beautiful, loving, and nonviolent character of our heavenly Father. We recall that the 490-year period of these 70 prophetic weeks is only part of the greater period of 2,300 years, which begins in 457 B.C. and ends in A.D. 1844.



According to the prophecy in Daniel 8:14, the restoration of the heavenly sanctuary would begin in 1844. But the restoration or cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary comes as a result of the building of God's temple on earth, which is composed of living foundations and stones:

"And are built upon the **foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone**; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." (Ephesians 2:20-22)

This temple is built according to the divine pattern of the character revealed by Jesus, and therefore, those who build themselves into it must know Him and be transformed according to Him:

"If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, Ye also, as **lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.**" (1 Peter 2:3-5)

But not only the temple must be built, but the entire city of Jerusalem must be built. As a structure, it has already been prepared by God, but the 144,000 who will inhabit it have not yet received the name of the Father in their foreheads (Revelation 14:1). This means that they have not reflected the faithful, nonviolent character of the Father as manifested by Christ on earth. The prophecy of the 70 weeks specifically calls attention to the time that would be needed to "restore and rebuild Jerusalem." Let us read this again:

"From the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be **seven weeks**, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times." (Daniel 9:24-25)

Seven prophetic weeks are set aside for the restoration. These are 49 literal years, which is one jubilee. Therefore, the restoration of the city

takes place in the period 457-408 B.C. If this is a type of the restoration of the heavenly Jerusalem, we can count 49 jubilees to see when it ends. But first it is necessary to clarify whether in the sequential counting of jubilees the 50th year is additional or included. There are two factors that can solve this problem. The seventy weeks of Daniel chapter 9, which are 490 literal years, lead up to the Messiah the Prince and are associated with freedom from sin. At the same time, they are also 10 jubilees of 49 years each. But this is possible only if the 50th year is also the 1st of the next jubilee cycle.

Jubilee Cycles Table

The next reason for counting jubilees in 49-year increments comes directly from the truth of the nonviolent nature of God. The laws of such a God are not arbitrary, but are a statement of natural principles for the well-being of all beings in the universe. We have already spoken of how the weekly Sabbath, as well as all other divine times based on the Sabbath principle, contain within themselves the opportunity for the outpouring of a greater measure of the Spirit of God, as shown in Numbers 28-29. In this case, maintaining the seven-month rhythm, so that the seventh year is always the same, is of great importance, because the other years would not contain this blessing. Let us illustrate this:

Jubilee cycles	Regular annual weeks The ranges of actual weeks for years: in <i>italics</i> (1–7) Jubilee years are in bold: 50						Sabbath weeks
1	Week 1 (Years 1-7)	2 (<i>8-14</i>)	3 (<i>15-21</i>)	4 (<i>22-28</i>)	5 (<i>29-35</i>)	6 (<i>36-42</i>)	7 (<i>43-49</i>)
2	8 (50-56)	9 (<i>57-63</i>)	10 (<i>64-70</i>)	11 (<i>71-77</i>)	12 (<i>78-84</i>)	13 (<i>85-91</i>)	14 (<i>92-98</i>)
3	15 (99-105)	16 (<i>106-112</i>)	17 (<i>113-119</i>)	18 (<i>120-126</i>)	19 (<i>127-133</i>)	20 (<i>134-140</i>)	21 (<i>141-147</i>)
4	22 (148-154)	23 (<i>155-161</i>)	24 (<i>162-168</i>)	25 (<i>169-175</i>)	26 (<i>176-182</i>)	27 (<i>183-189</i>)	28 (<i>190-196</i>)
5	29 (197-203)	30 (<i>204-210</i>)	31 (<i>211-217</i>)	32 (<i>218-224</i>)	33 (<i>225-231</i>)	34 (<i>232-238</i>)	35 (<i>239-245</i>)
6	36 (246-252)	37 (<i>253-259</i>)	38 (<i>260-266</i>)	39 (<i>267-273</i>)	40 (<i>274-280</i>)	41 (<i>281-287</i>)	42 (<i>288-294</i>)

7	43 (295-301)	44 (302-308)	45 (309-315)	46 (316-322)	47 (323-329)	48 (330-336)	49 (337-343)
8	50 (344-350)	51 (351-357)	52 (358-364)	53 (365-371)	54 (372-378)	55 (379-385)	56 (386-392)
9	57 (393-399)	58 (400-406)	59 (407-413)	60 (414-420)	61 (421-427)	62 (428-434)	63 (435-441)
10	64 (442-448)	65 (449-455)	66 (456-462)	67 (463-469)	68 (470-476)	69 (477-483)	70 (484-490)
Year 491 , the 50 th year of the 10 th Jubilee cycle							

Sabbath Year Illustration

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	32	33	34	35
36	37	38	39	40	41	42
43	44	45	46	47	48	49
50	51	52	53	54	55	56
57	58	59	60	61	62	63

The years in bold in the table are “natural Sabbaths,” and the 50th year is the first of the next Jubilee cycle. However, if we were to begin the next cycle in the 51st year instead of the 50th year, the next seventh year would be the 57th instead of the 56th, and that would mean getting out of the rhythm of the natural Sabbath years and missing out on the blessing of Christ’s Spirit of sonship. We choose to believe that the principles of God’s kingdom are natural, not imposed, because this is in harmony with His unchanging and true character (Hebrews 13:8).

We can now trace the time to the complete restoration of God’s city, beginning the 49th jubilee from the year that earthly Jerusalem was restored (408 BC). The 49th jubilee brings us to 1994 A.D.¹⁴ Then the

¹⁴ These calculations must take into account the absence of the zero year.

Jubilee of Jubilees begins, because it is the 50th Jubilee of 49 years! The time of this great Jubilee ends in the year 2043! The fiftieth year of this last Jubilee is the year 2044.

All of this tells us that we live in a time of unprecedented opportunity for an outpouring of God's Spirit to complete the work of rebuilding God's city of "living stones."

II. 6. The Millennium

For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it is past, or like a watch in the night. (Psalm 90:4)

That the completion of God's work in the transformation of 144,000 who reflect His character and the consequent Second Coming are soon to come is confirmed not only by the Jubilee periods but also by the millennial periods. Both follow the seven-day Sabbath principle. Regarding the millennial periods and the humanly delayed coming of Jesus, the apostle Peter writes:

"But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." (2 Peter 3:8)

Here Peter not only demonstrates how different the heavenly view of time is, but he also sets a precise scale for this difference. This scale reflects the principle expressed in the opening verse of this chapter. A principle reflecting the freedom which our merciful Father desires to give us from sin within a week of millennia, the seventh millennium being a Sabbath rest for the earth.

Chronology of Human History Based on Millennial Periods

Scripture reference	Year of creation AM	Significant events	Period of time	Year of the modern counting standard
	0	Creation	1656	3960 BC

Scripture reference	Year of creation AM	Significant events	Period of time	Year of the modern counting standard
Genesis 5-8:14	1657	The flood		2304
			427	
Genesis 11:10-12:4	2084	to Abraham aged 75		1876
			430	
Galatians 3:17 cf. Exodus 12:40 ¹⁵	2513	The Exodus from Egypt		1446
			40	
Exodus 16:35	2553	Entering the Promised Land		1406

¹⁵It is clear from the LXX that the 430 years also cover the wandering of God's people in Canaan, not just the oppression in Egypt.

Scripture reference	Year of creation AM	Significant events	Period of time	Year of the modern counting standard
			479+7	
1 Kings 6:1, 38	2992 - 3000	Beginning and end of the construction of Solomon's temple		967-959 ¹⁶

The final date of this chronology (2043) coincides with the final date of the jubilees of the previous chapter. The Father is the One who “reveals,” as the more accurate word in Matthew 24:36 is “the day and hour.” Whether this will be the year of the Advent, we cannot say for sure, because it is written that the days of tribulation will be shortened for the elect’s sake (Matthew 24:22).

We see the reality of human history in time as it is handed down by the divine authority of the Scriptures in stark contrast to the millions of years of evolution. This is a very short history compared to that which we have been taught in school. Thus viewed, human sinful history is subject to the

¹⁶ [The year for the beginning of Solomon's reign is generally accepted among chronologists to be ca. 970 BC](#)

seven-day Sabbath principle. And as a summary of all the divine times thus far considered, we can trace the Sabbath principle through them all.¹⁷

Divine Times Reflecting the Sabbath Principle

- **Seventh Day Sabbath** – Leviticus 23:2, 3
- **Seven days of unleavened bread** – Leviticus 23:6
- **Seven weeks until Pentecost** - Leviticus 23:15, 16
- **Feasts of the Seventh Month** – Leviticus 23:24-44
- **Seventh Year** – Leviticus 25:3, 4
- **Seven by seven years until the Jubilee** – 2 Chronicles 25:8-10
- **Seventh Millennium: Rest for the Earth** – Revelation 20:1-3

Human History as a Reflection of the Creative Week

This seven-week rhythm in time speaks of the re-creative work of God and His Son through the Spirit of the Son poured out more abundantly in these times. This gives us reason to view human history as a reflection of the creative week. Such a view confirms the concept that the redemption of the world is in fact its re-creation.

¹⁷ The exception to this table is the feasts, which we will examine in the last chapter of this part.

Creation Week	Human History (Millennium)	Correlating Events and Scriptures
<p>Day 1: God separated the light from the darkness, calling the light “good” (Genesis 1:3-5)</p>	<p>1st millennium: Adam eats of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good (light) and evil (darkness) (Genesis 3:6)</p>	
<p>Day 2: God separates the water above the atmosphere from the water below the atmosphere</p>	<p>2nd millennium: Human wickedness leads to a flood, manifested by the pouring out of the water above the atmosphere and the eruption of that below the atmosphere (Genesis 7:11, 12)</p>	
<p>Day 3: God causes the water to recede, allowing dry land to appear and produce fruit-bearing plants (Genesis 1:9-13)</p>	<p>3rd millennium: God parts the waters of the Red Sea for His people to pass through, and then settles them in the promised land to bear the fruit of His righteousness and thus have spiritual food of fruit for all mankind. God’s people are to be like fruit-bearing trees for all mankind</p>	

Creation Week	Human History (Millennium)	Correlating Events and Scriptures
	(Psalm 80:8, 9; Isaiah 5:1-7; 61:3; Mark 12:11-14)	
Day 4: God creates the heavenly bodies to light the earth (Genesis 1:14-18)	4th millennium: Christ comes to earth as the “Sun of Righteousness,” and His apostles are symbolically represented as 12 stars on the crown of the Woman (the Church) (Malachi 4:2; Revelation 12:1-4)	
Day 5: God fills the air and water with living creatures; the water produces “sea monsters” (Genesis 1:20-23)	5th millennium: Rise and dominance of the papacy, which is represented as a beast coming out of the sea (Revelation 13:1-10)	
Day 6: God commands the earth to produce “wild animals,” and then creates man in His image,	6th millennium: Protestant America is represented as “the beast that came up out of the earth” to cause “those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the	

Creation Week	Human History (Millennium)	Correlating Events and Scriptures
breathing into him “the breath of life” (Genesis 1:24-27; 2:7)	(earthly) beast” and to “give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast should even speak....” (Revelation 13:11, 14, 15). At the same time, at the end of this millennium, God's image of man is finally restored in the person of the 144,000.	
7th day: “And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had created; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had created.” (Genesis 2:2)	7th millennium: After the Second Coming of Christ, the earth lies desolate for 1,000 years, resting from the sins of mankind (2 Chronicles 36:20, 21; Revelation 20:1-8)	

Because of sin, human history reflects not only God’s good works of re-creation, but also man’s degradation to the level of “beasts.”¹⁸ These

¹⁸ Animals can also be seen in a positive sense as creatures higher than the plant world, which for their age again marked spiritual growth in the knowledge of God's

studies expand our understanding of the saving plan of our Creator and His Son. We see that They are tirelessly working to make us new creations in Christ:

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2 Corinthians 5:17)

"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." (Ephesians 2:10)

Now with this light on God's original times of the Father and the Son, we can proceed to the restoration of the Testament calendar.

character. For example, the promise of the conversion of the Gentiles is linked to the addition of purified animals to the people of God (Acts 10:9-17).

II. 7. The Calendar

And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, "Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, Concerning the feasts of the LORD, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are my feasts":
(Leviticus 23:1-2)

Now that we have the restored time units, we can trace the original calendar and reflect on its meaning.

"In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the LORD'S passover. And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the LORD: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread." (Leviticus 23:5-6)

Once the barley in Jerusalem was confirmed to be in the ripe state of Abib, the biblical year could begin. At the end of the 14th day, "between the two evenings" (between noon and sunset), the lamb was slain. At the same time in 31 AD, Jesus entered "the heart of the earth" to remain there "three days and three nights" (Matthew 12:40). This is the time from Thursday afternoon to early Sunday morning. But the Lamb Christ was slain "from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8).

Christ is constantly crucified to provide His life for beings whose spirit is at enmity with His, to give them a chance to be reconciled with the Father again. This is represented in each of the increasing number of sacrifices during the feasts. They increase because as God draws nearer to humanity by the increasing light of the knowledge of His character, our sinfulness is more and more revealed, and this multiplies the sufferings of Christ as He seeks to secure His life for us.

The decision made between God and His Son (Zechariah 6:13) that if humanity ever succumbed to Satan's deceptions, Christ would come to earth to redeem man from his enemy was made on that very day of Passover. It is also the day on which Abraham and God made a covenant:

"And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus?...

And, behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir... And he said unto him, I am the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it. And he said, Lord GOD, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it? And he said unto him, **Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon. And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not.**" (Genesis 15:2-10)

Abraham needed the shedding of blood to secure the forgiveness of sins, and hence the right to be an heir of God's generous promises. God showed condescension and entered into a covenant with His servant that reflected the customs of the heathen nations. He told Abraham to take the animals, but did not instruct him what to do with them. Abraham developed the natural extension of the enmity against God that resides in our nature by thinking that God required him to shed the blood of these animals (Romans 5:10). Thus all mankind thought that God required the death of His Son, that His justice might be satisfied, and then He might give us His promised blessings (Isaiah 53:4).

Exactly 430 years after the conclusion of this covenant, on that very day Israel came out of Egyptian slavery, again at the cost of shed blood:

"And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you... In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house... And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it... **And at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day**

it came to pass, that all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt." (Exodus 12:1-7, 41)

This is the same day that Abraham receives the assurance of a seed and an inheritance. Again, the slaughter of the lamb at Passover is only an outward expression of the invisible reality that Christ was crucified in Egypt for the redemption of His people:

"And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, **where also our Lord was crucified.**" (Revelation 11:8)

The evening that begins the 15th day through the 21st day are the seven days of unleavened bread (Exodus 12:15-20), which represent the freedom from sin (leaven) that comes as a result of appreciating the shed blood of Christ, touching our hearts to open ourselves to the cleansing action of His Spirit:

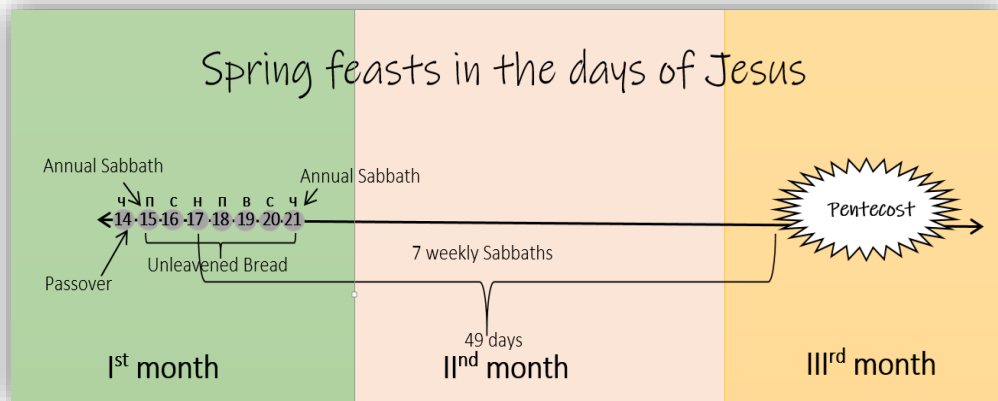
"Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. **For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:** Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." (1 Corinthians 5:6-8)

Christ, our Passover, allows His sacrifice to be made manifest on Calvary so that we may believe that justice has been satisfied and therefore we may receive forgiveness. But in fact, as we saw earlier, in that year (31 AD) the true Passover is the day before His crucifixion, when He makes the New Covenant with His disciples (Thursday).

The Feast of Firstfruits and Pentecost

The first sheaf of ripe barley is offered on the day after the first weekly Sabbath during the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

"Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest: And he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted for you: **on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it.**" (Leviticus 23:10-11)



This is the day after the weekly Sabbath. That is why on Sunday the High Priest Christ “moves” the first sheaf of the resurrected righteous before His Father in heaven:

"Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold... And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And **came out of the graves after his resurrection...**" (Matthew 27:50-53)

"Jesus saith unto her [Mary], Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, **I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.**" (John 20:17)

That is why he says: "When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive..." (Ephesians 4:8)

Representatives of this first sheaf of the barley harvest are revealed to us in Revelation, where in the Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary there are 24 elders (Revelation 4:4). They are a pledge of the resurrection of all the righteous at the Coming of Jesus, and therefore their number reflects the gathering of the patriarchs of Israel and the apostles of Christ - the entire people of God.

"But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." (1 Corinthians 15:23)

Weekly Sabbaths are counted to reach the 50th day, which is Pentecost:

"And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; **seven sabbaths shall be complete: Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days**; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the LORD." (Leviticus 23:15-16)

This peculiar jubilee of days is truly a time of deliverance and forgiveness for Christ's disciples. From the day of His resurrection until Pentecost, the apostles were able to follow the Son of God in faith into the Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary and receive the precious early rain of His Spirit (1 John 2:1; Acts 2). Thus the seven weeks leading up to Pentecost lead to a multiplied wheat harvest from 120 people (12 x 10) residing in a room on an upper level, who after receiving the rich measure of the Spirit of Christ converted thousands to the faith (Acts 1:14-15; 2:41, 47). This is actually the testimony of Jesus Himself through them, because God's word tells us that Christ in them confirmed the New Covenant for 3 ½ years and this is actually the Holy Spirit (Daniel 9:27 cf. Acts 3:19, 20).

The Autumn Festivals

The autumn feasts begin in the seventh month.

"Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation." (Leviticus 23:24)

These trumpets were to prepare the people for entering the Most Holy Place by faith, and six of them began to sound in the fall of A.D. 31 and ended on August 11, 1840, when the Ottoman Empire submitted to the authority of the Great Powers of Europe (Revelation 8:2-9:21) [1]. Unfortunately, the trumpets lasted too long, because during this entire period no people were prepared to follow Jesus into the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary for a better knowledge of God's character. In preparation for the sounding of the seventh trumpet, the people appeared who were given to understand the message of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary, although this came at the cost of great disappointment (Revelation 10). When the seventh trumpet sounded immediately after October 22, 1844, Jesus entered the Most Holy Place and shortly thereafter a group of believers finally followed Him for their participation in the final Day of Atonement for the appropriation of God's inheritance from His Son and His brothers and sisters (Daniel 7:9, 13, 14, 27 cf. Revelation 11:15-19).

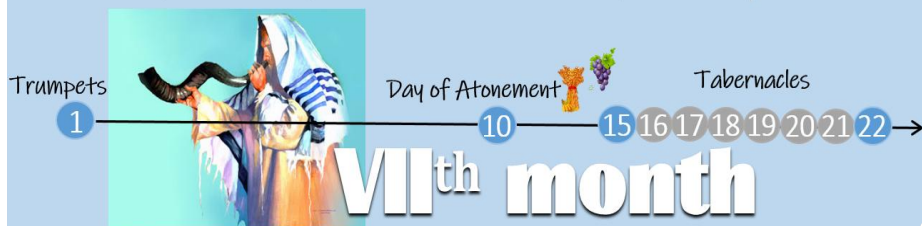
"Also on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement: it shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD."
(Leviticus 23:27)

This antitypical Day of Atonement continues to this day until a people of 144,000 fully reflect the true character of the Father, which has been misrepresented throughout history. Only then will the Feast of Tabernacles and the final harvest come:

"Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land, ye shall keep a feast unto the LORD seven days: on the first day shall be a sabbath, and on the eighth day shall be a sabbath." (Leviticus 23:34, 39)

The Day of Atonement marks the end of the agricultural year, when the last grain, symbolizing the perfected righteous 144,000 in number, and the grapes, symbolizing the wicked who have made their final decision, are gathered (Revelation 14:14-20 cf. Revelation 22:11). The Day of Atonement is over, the righteous are sealed with the latter rain of Christ's

Autumn feasts in the end of history



Spirit at the beginning of Tabernacles. They have reflected the character of the Father with the understanding that He never required the blood of His Son to forgive us, and thus the heavenly sanctuary is finally cleansed.

The wicked have rejected the last message of mercy and are left in the hands of Satan, who smites them with the plagues, convincing them that they are caused by God (Revelation 16:9). The wicked turn against the righteous and cast the blame for the plagues upon them. Thus the deadly Sunday law is issued.

Just as the wicked are preparing to kill the righteous, Christ comes and takes them to Himself in the air on the first day of Tabernacles to travel the seven days of the feast to the heavenly Jerusalem. After the millennium comes the last day of the feast.

III. The Treasury

*So I have looked upon You in the sanctuary, to see
Your power and Your glory. (Psalm 63:2)*

*Then I considered to understand this, but it was too
difficult for my eyes, until I entered the sanctuary of
God and understood... (Psalm 73:16-17)*

*O God, your way is in the sanctuary. Who is a god
as great as our God?
(Psalms 77:13)*

III. 1. The Treasury of the Covenant

*Then they said to Him, "Where is Your Father?"
Jesus answered, "You know neither me nor my Father.*

If you knew me, you would know my Father also.

*These words He spoke in **the treasury**, as he taught in the temple ...
(John 8:19-20)*

Now that we have the restored time units, we can trace the original calendar and reflect on its meaning.

The most precious truth that we should find in the temple of God, and which is of central importance to the knowledge of God, is expressed in the words of God's only-begotten Son in our main text: "If you had known me, you would have known my Father also." In this sense, the temple is the treasury or vault of the precious relationship between God and His Son, which is expressed in the eternal covenant or what we call in this book the Testament. An expression of the human relationship to this covenant is what is presented to us in an adapted form as the two tablets with the Ten Commandments of God's law. It is these that are kept in the innermost part of the Jewish sanctuary (Joshua 3:11).

The commandments contained in the ark should be seen as God's promises to all mankind. Promises that He fulfills through His Son if we will in faith allow His Son's Spirit to dwell in us and make us joint heirs with Him in the inheritance promised by the Father. Seen in this way, God's law is not a set of arbitrary rules of a supreme ruler, but reflects the very character of the Lawgiver and is therefore a law of love, freedom, and life (Deuteronomy 33:2-3; 1 John 4:8 cf. Romans 13:8-10; James 2:12; Romans 8:2). These sacred relationships of humanity with the Father and the Son are called "the bonds of the covenant" (Ezekiel 20:37). Unfortunately, humanity as a whole does not appreciate them:

"Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, **Let us**

break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us."

(Psalm 2:1-3)

The result of rejecting these loving relationships leads to conflict between people themselves:

"Therefore I will no more pity the inhabitants of the land, saith the LORD: but, lo, I will deliver the men every one into his neighbour's hand, and into the hand of his king: and they shall smite the land, and out of their hand I will not deliver them. And I will feed the flock of slaughter, even you, O poor of the flock. **And I took unto me two staves; the one I called Beauty, and the other I called Bands; and I fed the flock.**" (Zechariah 11:6-7)

The idea of sacred relationships, preserved in a holy abode for encounter with the Divine, we find as early as the time of Lucifer:

"Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire... **Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick;** therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee." (Ezekiel 28:14-18)

Here is the beginning of temple commerce. When the sacred relationship with God and His Son is violated by the introduction of a value system that is contrary to sacrificial love and uses God's gifts to trade and gain artificial value. The angels who followed Lucifer in his rebellion defiled these very relationships:

"And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." (Jude 1:6)

The Greek word translated "dwelling" in this verse also means "tabernacle" and is used by the apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 5:2 to refer to the bodies of believers in which God's Holy Spirit dwells. For newly

created humanity, such a dwelling place was the Garden of Eden, where the first human pair met their Creator, at the center of which was the tree of life and the river that divided into four main rivers to water the entire earth (Genesis 3:8-14).

Satan succeeded in persuading the people that the result of breaking God's law was divine punishment, instead of a natural result. The meaning of the words "in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:17) was changed in their minds to mean that God would destroy them if they partook of the tree of His knowledge. It was no longer seen that "the wages of sin is death" was the natural consequence of separation from the Source of life (Romans 6:23).

When men defiled their sacred relationship with God and His Son, they could no longer commune with their Creator directly. According to the sacrificial system they instituted, they slaughtered the Christ-symbolizing lamb outside Eden, the entrance to which was guarded by divine representatives, who were later incorporated into the ornamentation of the earthly sanctuary:

"So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, **to keep the way of the tree of life.**" (Genesis 3:24)

This "casting out" of man was, in fact, the natural result of his incompatibility with the heavenly abode because of the perverted conceptions of Adam and his wife concerning the character of God. They projected upon God their own condemnatory ideas, which they had received from the serpent, and were therefore unable to dwell in their original holy home. Like Satan and his angels, "there was found no place for them in heaven" (Revelation 12:8). Thus, in sacrificing animals outside Eden, they placed themselves in the same position as the Jews who sacrificed in the sanctuary court. "East of Eden" is exactly the same location as the sanctuary given to the Jews was to have (Ezekiel 8:16).

In this "courtyard of the temple" humanity spent more than 1600 years until the time of the flood, and the Garden of Eden, as a representation of

God's sanctuary, stood there all the time, encouraging worshippers to seek and restore that sacred connection that was once lost by their ancestors.

The sacrifice they offered was to speak to them of the “Lamb slain” through their sin “before the foundation of the world” because of the determination of God and His Son to continue to work for the salvation of humanity after the fall (Revelation 13:9). To revive the memory that in the Testament, the Son of God was predestined for their redemption from the slavery of the enemy through sin, in case they succumbed to his deceptions (1 Peter 1:18-20). To implant in their hearts the love and holiness of the filial Spirit of Jesus, in whom they could once again feel accepted/endowed and infinitely loved by God (Ephesians 1:4-6). To await the coming of the Son of God in human flesh to earth to reveal the truth about the character of our heavenly Father, who desires no sacrifice other than “a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart” and ears open to His words (Psalm 51:16-17; 40:6, 7 cf. Hebrews 10:5).

God allows His Son to come to earth and become a Sacrifice for the thinking of fallen man, so that he may believe that the “justice of God” has been satisfied and therefore receive forgiveness and mercy. God knows that the carnal mind sees the offering of the sacrifice as a propitiation of God’s wrath, but He uses this corrupt idea in such a way as to enable the sinner to realize that, since it is the Father who provides the Sacrifice (Leviticus 17:11 cf. John 3:16), He certainly cannot have enmity against sinners. Therefore, after the global flood, which mankind believes to have been directly caused by God¹⁹, we see the following scene that reflects this thinking:

"And Noah builded an altar unto the LORD; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, **I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth;**

¹⁹ This will be one of the stories we will examine in Part IV to make it clear that God did not cause the flood.

neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done." (Genesis 8:20-21)

It seems as if God was appeased by the sacrifice offered and decided no longer to curse the ground and kill the living creatures upon it. But, to be in harmony with His nonviolent character as revealed by His Son on earth, this statement must be understood as made by God in the time of Job:

"And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, **to destroy him without cause.**" (Job 2:3)

God did not consume Job, but as our Father and Ruler of the universe, He takes responsibility for all that He has permitted, as if He Himself had done it. Later, Abraham would continue to offer sacrifices on the altar (Genesis 12:7, 8; 13:4, 18) and because of his doubts about God's promises, he would be tested by this very pagan thinking:

"And they have built the high places... to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; **which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart.**" (Jeremiah 7:31)

After these events, God tested Abraham and said to him:

"...Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." (Genesis 22:1-2)

Then Israel, the people who came from Abraham, would in turn be tested for their unbelief in God's promises by the way they would perceive the sacrificial system:

"Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out

arm, and with great judgments: And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God... And I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage... And Moses spake so unto the children of Israel: but **they hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage.**" (Exodus 6:5-9)

After miraculously leading them out of Egypt, feeding them with manna and giving them water from a rock in the wilderness, God repeated His promises, adding that He would make them a kingdom of priests (Exodus 19:5, 6). But instead of accepting in faith that He would fulfill His promises to them, they declared that they would do everything that God had said (Exodus 19:8). Showing favoritism toward them, God directed the construction of a sanctuary modeled on the heavenly one (Exodus 25-40) and set apart the tribe of Levi to represent Christ's mediatorial priesthood before God (Leviticus 1-17). Unfortunately, they became so attached to the earthly sanctuary, completely forgetting that it was only a channel to the heavenly source, that they completely wasted the opportunity to connect by faith with the heavenly Priest, to understand the true meaning of all the services and thus be introduced and established in the heavenly realities, of which the earthly sanctuary was only a symbol (Exodus 15:17 cf. Hebrews 8:1, 2).

King Solomon (970-931 BC) transformed the sanctuary into a fixed structure and multiplied the ornaments of its interior, offering for the consecration of this temple 22,000 cattle and 120,000 sheep - a huge bloody sacrifice that does not recognize that our sins crucify the Son of God, but seeks the propitiation of the Deity (1 Kings 8:63). Confirming themselves in this pagan idea, some of the Israelites and even their kings themselves offered their own children:

"But he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, yea, and made his son to pass through the fire, **according to the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out from before the children of Israel.**" (2 Kings 16:2-3)

To this God responded with something that was supposed to shock them and show them why they would become slaves again, but this time to Babylon:

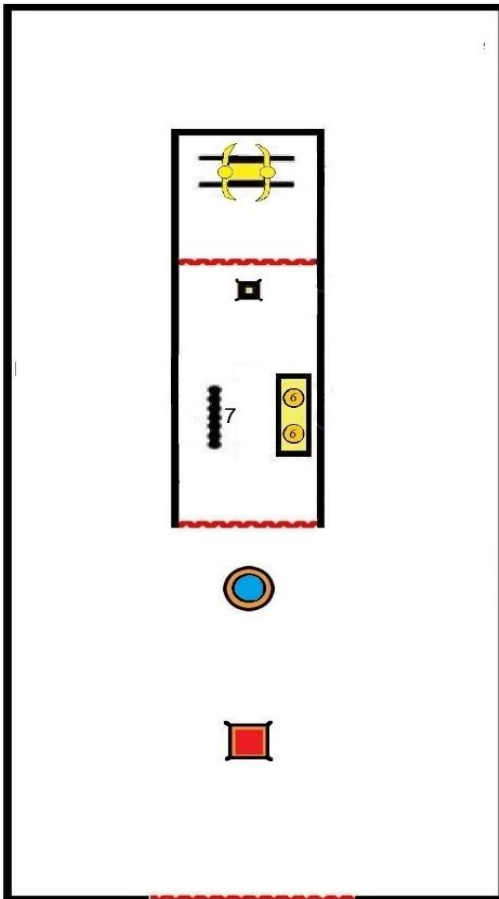
"For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices: But this thing commanded I them, saying, **Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people:** and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you. But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward." (Jeremiah 7:22-24)

The second temple, built after the captivity (516 B.C.), was smaller and did not receive the signs of the visible glory of God, so that the Jews could be directed to the value of heavenly realities and the beauty of God's character (Haggai 2:3). Unfortunately, this opportunity was also wasted, and when the Son of God Himself came into this temple—the full glory of God—they offered Him Himself as a sacrifice to their understanding of the Godhead. Therefore, God allowed this temple to be destroyed in A.D. 70, and for those who confirmed the covenant with Christ, the only visible temple was left: their own bodies—in which the Son of God could dwell by His Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19).

III. 2. The Universal Model

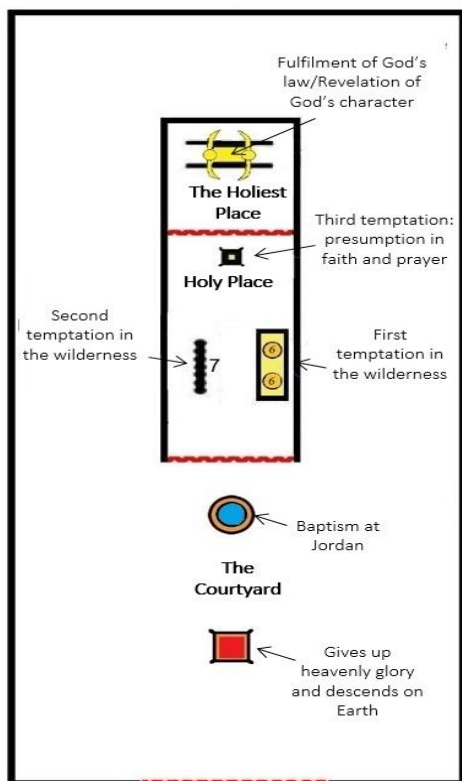
God, Thou way is in the sanctuary... (Psalm 77:13, KJV)

We will examine seven perspectives and applications of the sanctuary to establish its universal pattern. We begin with the Journey of Israel. They were led out of Egypt through the Passover, which represented the ransom price of Christ's sacrifice for freedom from the bondage of sin. This first step is represented by the **altar of sacrifice** in the sanctuary courtyard (Exodus 27:1-8).



The crossing of the Red Sea is represented by the **laver**, which is the next object in the sanctuary court (Exodus 30:17-21). Having passed across the Red Sea, they now enter the Holy Place of the sanctuary. There in the wilderness they are fed with manna, represented by the **table on which were 12 loaves of bread** (Exodus 25:23-30). They are guided by the light of God's presence in the pillar of fire, represented by the **lampstand** (Exodus 13:21-23 cf. 25:31-40). They are prepared to enter the Most Holy Place, where the ark of God's law is, while at the foot of Mount Sinai, by prayer, represented by the **altar of incense** (Exodus 19:10-11; 30:1-10 cf. Revelation 8:3, 4).

The Sanctuary and the Life of Christ on Earth



The next perspective of the sanctuary concerns **Christ's life on earth**. From the very beginning, God and His Son deny themselves for the salvation of humanity, but the coming of Jesus into fallen humanity is directly linked to the true meaning of the sacrifice (Psalm 40:6, 7 cf. Hebrews 10:5) that is presented on the sacrificial altar.

The **laver** symbolizes His baptism in the Jordan River before entering the wilderness (the transitional room before the essence of His mission - the Holy One).

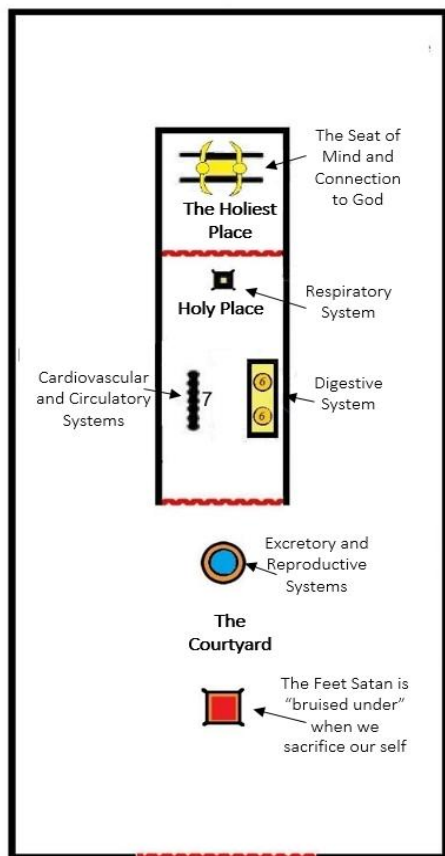
The **table of bread** refers to the first temptation that Jesus endured on behalf of spiritual Israel, who must feed not on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds from the

mouth of God (Matthew 4:4 cf. Deuteronomy 8:3).

The second temptation is represented by the **lampstand**, because believers are the "light of the world" that Jesus came to win, but now Satan offers it to him in exchange for a bow before him (Matthew 5:14-16 cf. Luke 4:4-8).

If Jesus had jumped from the Jerusalem temple, as Satan suggested in his third temptation, it would have been a bold act of faith and prayer for protection according to a promise that is valid only when it is according to the "ways" of God (Luke 4:9-12 cf. Psalm 91:11). After Jesus' victory in the wilderness, He could begin His mission of revealing the true meaning of God's law and the true character of His Father (John 17:4).

The Sanctuary and the Human Body



The third application of the sanctuary is seen in the **human body**.

The **sacrificial altar** is associated with the locomotor system and especially with the feet, which represent victory over Satan through self-denial and readiness to preach the gospel (Genesis 3:15 cf. Romans 16:20; Isaiah 52:7 cf. Ephesians 6:15).

The cleansing and regenerating water of the **laver** is reminiscent of the reproductive and excretory systems in the body (John 3:5 cf. Ephesians 5:26).

With the body facing forward, the right side belongs to the **digestive system**. It even has an organ called the duodenum, which resembles 12 loaves of bread.

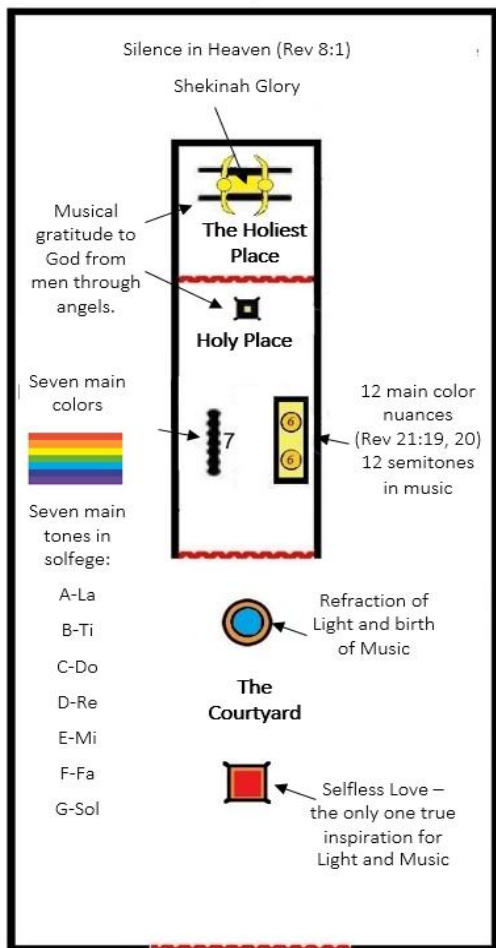
The light scattered by the **lamp** is connected to life and, respectively, to the blood pumped from the heart throughout the body (John 1:4 cf.

Deuteronomy 12:23).

The **altar of incense**, which symbolizes prayer, which is also called “the breath of the soul.” As the incense passes over the second veil and enters the most holy place, so the brain is irrigated by the oxygen inhaled.

In the Most Holy Place is the **brain**, which has two hemispheres, just as the law of God is divided into two tablets. It is there that communion with God takes place and the “writing” of His principles takes place (Hebrews 8:10).

The Sanctuary, Music, and Light



Music and light are the next perspective in the sanctuary.

The first step is again related to sacrifice and self-denial, which alone can produce music and light of good quality. The fire and light of God are activated on the **sacrificial altar**.

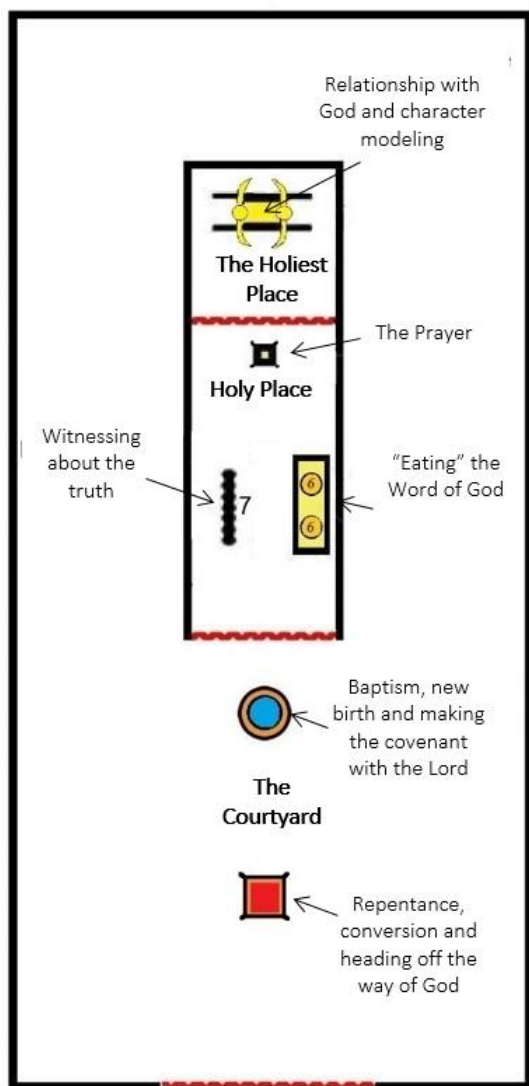
The **laver** is the step where light refracts through the watery capsule of the firmament, where the waters “praising” God (Genesis 1:7, 8 cf. Psalm 148:4). Singing and playing are done with moistened mouthpieces.

The elements of music and light are represented horizontally through the 7 branches of the **lampstand** and the **table with 12 loaves**.

The **altar of incense** is like a transmitter and loudspeaker of the finished “fragrant” product, which is directed to heaven, expressing the gratitude and

praise of creatures to their Creator, awakening the praise of the heavenly choirs. The organization of the singers and the interior in Solomon's temple demonstrates the application of music and the fruits of light (Exodus 25:34; 1 Kings 7:19; 10:12; 1 Chronicles 15:16, 19; 25:7; 2 Chronicles 5:13).

The Sanctuary and Personal Experience



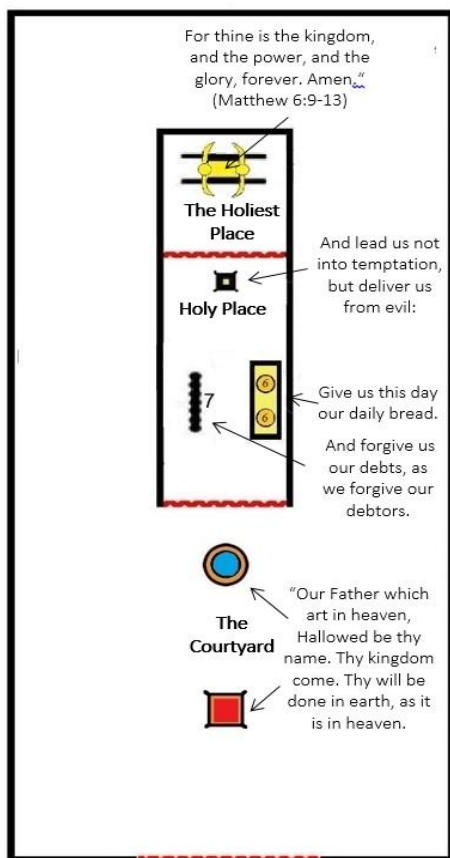
Personal experience can also be followed sequentially in the sanctuary. It begins with a response to God's goodness and love, which leads to repentance or the denial (slaughter) of the animal in us (Romans 2:4).

Next comes baptism, which is an expression of making a covenant with God and beginning a new life in Christ (1 Peter 3:21 cf. Colossians 2:12).

The period of growth is represented by the three steps in the Holy Place: (1) studying the Word (represented by the **table of bread**), (2) preaching and testifying to the truth, thus being a light to men (Isaiah 43:10) (represented by the **lampstand**), and (3) prayer, which brings us into the closest relationship with God, opening the heart to the working of the Spirit of Christ (represented by the **altar of incense**).

These three steps must be continually taken in order for us to grow and be prepared to receive the fullness of Christ through His Spirit, who seals us in the character of the Father (Ephesians 1:13; 3:19; 4:13, 30).

The Sanctuary and Prayer



The steps of **prayer** (Matthew 6:9-13) in the sanctuary are not so clearly seen, and yet, its principle application is there.

When we come to God in prayer, it is good to first remember that we stand before our heavenly Father, whose character is more wonderful than anything that can exist. This puts us in the right perspective of life and draws us from the earth, represented by the **sanctuary court**, to heaven. It also reminds us to express what it is good for us to be grateful to Him for.

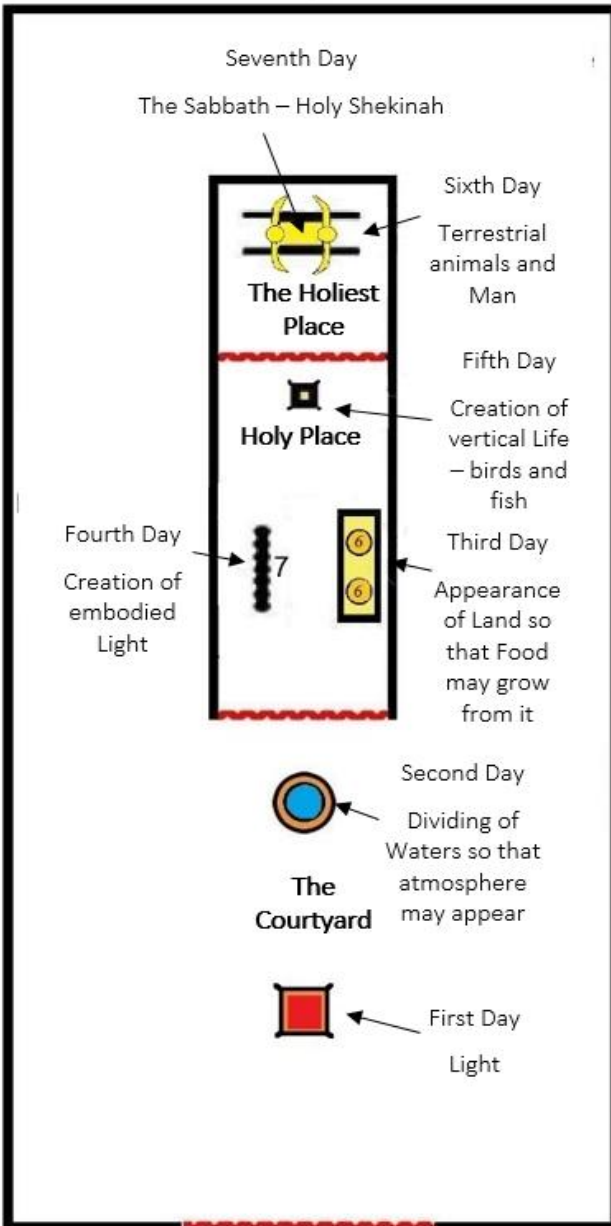
Interestingly, entering into the presence of God is connected to asking for our daily bread, which is directly represented by the **table of bread**. This includes physical food, of course, but even more so our ability to receive God's Word (Ezekiel 3:1). The power of the Spirit, represented by the **lampstand**, is especially necessary for our ability to forgive

those who have sinned against us (Revelation 4:5).

Our access to the Most Holy Place depends on our ability to overcome sin and our weaknesses through the filial Spirit of the Lord Jesus, and this is represented by the **altar of incense**.

This brings us to the final step, which is entering into the very essence of the kingdom of God, where Christ is revealed as God's power and might, and where we recognize the beautiful, non-judgmental, and non-violent character of the Father (Isaiah 53:1 cf. 1 Corinthians 1:24; Exodus 34:6).

The Sanctuary and World Creation



The final perspective of the sanctuary is the **creation of our world**. Just as God was the direct source of light on the first day, so the fire on the **sacrificial altar** came directly from Him (Genesis 1:3; Leviticus 9:24; 10:1).

When the priests washed their hands in the **laver**, they “parted” the water, just as it was parted on the second creative day to produce the atmosphere (Genesis 1:6-8).

On the third day, God again divided the waters, but this time horizontally, to make dry land appear, and commanded the earth to bring forth food, which is easily connected to the **table in the Holy of Holies** (Genesis 1:9-12).

The fourth day is again associated with light, but this time it is “embodied” in heavenly bodies, just as the light in the Holy of Holies comes from a **lampstand** (Genesis 1:14-18 cf. Exodus 25:37).

On the fifth day, God created living creatures in the water and in the air. This is life in the vertical, and it is reflected in the **incense altar**, whose smoke rises upward (Genesis 1:20-22).

The sixth day brings us into the Holy of Holies, where the culmination of the creative process is represented – the creation of man in God’s image/law. But on this day, land animals were also created, and on the ark were the representatives of the heavenly world. This shows the possibilities of free will. Until man chooses sin, he will descend to the level of animals, being ruled by animal passions. In the opposite case, he will rule over the animal world and rise to the level of angels (Genesis 1:24-27 cf. Luke 10:36). The same idea is represented by the fact that sometimes the cherubim are described as having animal faces and a human face (Exodus 25:19 cf. Revelation 4:7).

The seventh day is marked by the holy **Shekinah**, representing the divine presence (Exodus 25:22).

III. 3. "That I may dwell among them"

*And let them make a sanctuary for Me, to dwell among them.
(Exodus 25:8)*

The Sanctuary: Bridging the Divide Between God and Humanity

The **Garden of Eden** served as a sacred space, a sanctuary where the Creator met with His creation. However, **sin** erected an insurmountable barrier between humanity and God, distorting the divine character (Romans 7:11). The immediate aftermath of the Fall clearly illustrates this rupture. When the Lord approached for His customary meeting with Adam and Eve, their reaction revealed a complete break in their relationship:

"And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. And the LORD God called unto the man, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." (Genesis 3:8-10)

Notice that it was humanity's attitude toward God that changed, not God's attitude toward them. The expulsion from the Garden of Eden was the ultimate expression of this separation—humanity's inability to dwell directly in the divine presence. From that point forward, the **sanctuary** would become a profound symbol of God's desire to re-establish this relationship and fellowship with humanity. This was precisely the purpose stated to Moses when he received the instructions for its construction, as the key verse of that chapter clearly shows.

Challenging Misconceptions of God's Transcendence

Throughout sinful history, the separation between God and humanity has fostered theories that portray the divine as a distant, incompatible Being, or even an impersonal Energy. Some Scriptural texts are even interpreted

to suggest that God is so transcendent He is entirely inaccessible to human existence.

"For thus says the High and Exalted One, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in a high and holy place,..." (Isaiah 57:15a)

"God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." (John 4:24)

Such extreme, spiritualistic views of the Deity often stem from humanity's fallen state, denying the warm, intimate bond God desires to maintain with us through His only begotten Son. This can even lead to the misconception that God lacks emotions.

Does God Have Emotions?

Yes, God absolutely has emotions. Unpacking this truth, however, can be complex, touching upon the theological concept of God's **impassibility**. This doctrine, which has been a point of debate among theologians, suggests that God is incapable of suffering or being changed by involuntary passions.

The core concern behind this doctrine is valid: the Bible clearly states that God is not dependent on His creation in any way; He is truly **transcendent**. Therefore, He cannot be at our mercy, involuntarily affected by us, or vacillate in His reactions, thus being controlled by His creation. In other words, what He has created cannot torment

Him with suffering or force Him to feel anything.²⁰

These ideas about God's intangibility have led many theologians to believe that all biblical descriptions of God with a real image, body, or body parts are merely **anthropomorphisms**—expressions adapted for human understanding.

²⁰ <https://www.crossway.org/articles/does-god-really-feel/>

"Since we see that in the divine Scriptures very many things are said about God symbolically, with analogies taken from the body, we must know that it is impossible for us, men clothed with gross flesh, to understand or speak of the divine, high and immaterial actions of the Deity in any other way than through images, likenesses, and symbols corresponding to our nature. Therefore, what is said about God in a very bodily way is said symbolically and contains a very high meaning, since the Deity is simple and has no form."²¹

For example, "God's eyes, eyebrows, and sight" are understood to represent His all-seeing power and inevitable knowledge. "Ears and hearing" signify His favor and acceptance of prayer. "Mouth and speech" express His will, just as we use our own to communicate thoughts [2].

The Literal Sanctuary and a Personal God

The **biblical concept of the sanctuary** stands in direct contradiction to such purely symbolic interpretations. Our primary text reveals God's instruction to the Israelites: "Make a sanctuary for me, so that I may dwell among them." This instruction would make no sense if the dwelling were merely symbolic. The entire purpose of the sanctuary becomes meaningless if the Deity is truly that inaccessible to humanity. Consider how a nineteenth-century author articulated this:

"The coming of the bridegroom is in the marriage story. Our view is that there has been a change in the position and work of our literal High Priest in the literal Sanctuary in heaven, which is to be compared with the coming of the bridegroom to the wedding. This view is a perfect defense against spiritualism. We not only believe in a literal Jesus, who is the "Minister of the Sanctuary," but we also believe that the Sanctuary is literal. And again, when John says that he saw "one like unto the Son of Man" "in the midst of the seven

21 Anthropomorphism in the Bible - <https://stanielchristianin.com/forum/index.php?topic=304.15>

lampstands," that is, in the holy place, we do not know how to make the lampstand spiritual and the Son of Man literal. Therefore we believe that both are literal, and that John saw Jesus while he was the "Minister" in the Holy Place. John also has a vision of another part of the Sanctuary, which vision applies to the time of the sounding of the seventh angel. He says, "The temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his covenant." Revelation 11:19. Also, "the tabernacle of the testimony was opened in heaven" (Revelation 15:5). As this is an event that must occur at the sounding of the seventh angel, it cannot be fulfilled at any other time than at the end of the 2300 days. The most holy place, containing the ark of the ten commandments, is then opened for our great High Priest to enter and make atonement for the cleansing of the sanctuary. If we presume to say that there is no literal ark in heaven containing the ten commandments, we can only go a step further and deny the literal City and the literal Son of God." (James White, *The Parable*, p. 16, Paragraph 1)

It's also insightful to examine the views on the Deity held by an author who advocates for a literal understanding of the sanctuary:

"...As proof that God is a person, read his own words to Moses: 'And the Lord said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon the rock: and it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by thee, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand, while I pass by. And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shalt thou not see' (Exodus 33:21-23; 24:9-11). Here God tells Moses that he shall see his image (form). To say that God appeared to Moses and he saw his form, when He has no form, is to accuse God of supporting a falsehood by a kind of sorcery and deceiving his servant Moses."

"The prophet Daniel says: 'I beheld till thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of Days did sit, whose raiment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was as the flame of fire, and his wheels as burning fire' (Revelation 7:9). 'I beheld in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the

clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days; and they brought him before him...' Verses 13, 14."

"Here is a clear description of the actions of two personages, God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ. Deny their personality and there will be no definite idea in these quotations from Daniel Here we add the testimony of Christ. 'And the Father himself which sent me, he hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his form.' John 5:37..."

"What is God? He is a material, organized intelligence, possessing both body and parts. Man is made in his image." (James White, *The Personality of Godhead*, 1861)

Again, spiritualistic interpretations of the Godhead often lead to questions like, "Doesn't God just live in a box up there in the sky?" But this very mindset strips all of Scripture of any representation of heavenly realities. Consider the detailed biblical presentation of the new heavens and earth; if these are merely symbols, why are they described in such elaborate detail?

God's Intimacy: Dwelling Among Us

In fact, the very verse often used to suggest God is unknowable due to His sublimity has a remarkable continuation:

"For thus says the High and Exalted One, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, also with him who is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." (Isaiah 57:15)

Yes, our heavenly Father is indeed the great and exalted Ruler of the universe, but at the same time, He is intimately acquainted with all our difficulties and problems, sympathizing with us in a way no one else can. He expressed this unmistakably by allowing His Son to take on our fallen nature and come to earth, born like any other human child, to live our lives.

This perfectly embodies the **principle of the sanctuary**. Notice the following verse:

"In the beginning was the Word; and the Word was with God; and the Word was God.... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:1, 14)

The Greek word for "dwelt" here is *skēnoō* (σκηνώω), which sounds similar to "tabernacle," or sanctuary. Strong's dictionary defines it as: "to fix a tent or encamp, i.e. (figuratively) to occupy (as an estate) or (specifically) to live (as God did in the Tabernacle of ancient times, a symbol of protection and fellowship): - dwell."

The **incarnation of Jesus** most fully expresses the principle of the sanctuary. Even the very construction of the ancient tabernacle as a mobile structure covered with leather curtains reflects the body of our Lord who dwells among us. It's no coincidence that He declared:

"...Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, It hath been forty and six years in building this temple, and wilt thou raise it up in three days? But he spake of the temple of his body..." (John 2:19-21)

If we believe in Jesus, we too are built into this living temple, destined to live forever with God (1 Peter 2:4-5). Therefore, the same word describing Jesus' indwelling as a man on earth is used to portray the real and tangible presence of our God on our renewed earth:

"And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." (Revelation 21:3)

What aspects of God's dwelling with humanity do you find most compelling, and how does this understanding impact your view of faith?

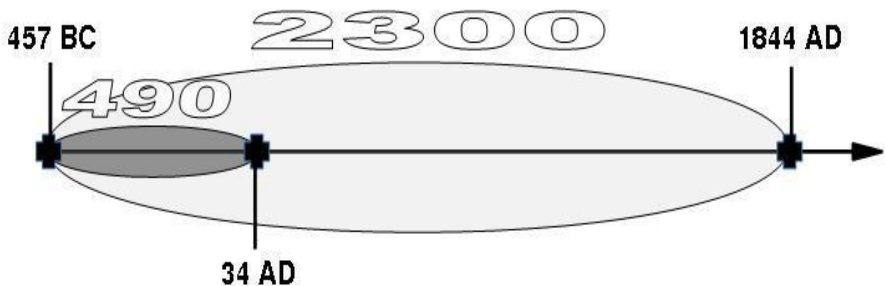
III. 4. The Daily and the Transgression of Desolation

*And the host was given up with **the daily** sacrifice for **the transgression** Then I heard a holy one speaking; and a holy one said to him that spoke, How long shall the vision be concerning **the daily** sacrifice and **the transgression that maketh desolate**, when the sanctuary and the host shall be trodden under foot? And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred evenings and mornings; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed. (Daniel 8:12-14)*

Understanding Prophecy: The "Daily" and the "Abomination of Desolation"

Our understanding of the **2300 prophetic days** (which translate to **2300 literal years**, based on Ezekiel 4:6) reveals two significant forces at play: the "daily" (or "constant") and the "transgression of desolation." As established in Part 5 of this series, this extensive prophetic period began with Artaxerxes I's decree to rebuild Jerusalem in 457 BC (Daniel 9:25).

These two forces, therefore, operated continuously throughout this long span, their influence culminating in the trampling underfoot of "**the sanctuary and the army**" (Daniel 8:13). This readily refers to the heavenly sanctuary and God's people, the central focus of the biblical narrative for such a prolonged period.



Identifying the Forces in Daniel 8

A brief look at Daniel 8 helps us identify these forces. The vision portrays kingdoms in a manner reminiscent of the sanctuary and its services:

- **Medo-Persia** is depicted as a ram with two horns (Daniel 8:3, 4, 20).
- **Greece** appears as a wild and proud he-goat (Daniel 8:5-7, 21), echoing the sanctuary services on the Day of Atonement (cf. Leviticus 16:5, 16). In the symbolic representation, the sanctuary and the people were cleansed for the sins committed throughout the year on this day.

Interestingly, these sacrificial animals in the vision display great aggression, particularly the goat. Following this, an even more ferocious power emerges, represented as a **little horn** (Daniel 8:9-12, 23-25). World history clearly shows this to be **Rome in its two phases: pagan and papal**. This interpretation is unambiguously confirmed by comparing this vision with other prophetic sections in Daniel and Revelation, as we will explore in Part V of this series.

One striking aspect at a macro level is that the first part of this great prophetic period is dominated by kingdoms led by **pagan religions**, while the second is characterized by **Roman Catholicism**, which, despite its Christian appearance, differs significantly from paganism. This allows us to easily associate the **"daily" with paganism** and the **"transgression of desolation" with the papacy**.

What are These Two Forces?

In many places in Scripture, the Hebrew word for "daily" or "constant" (תָּמִיד - tamid) is linked to the daily services in the sanctuary, such as burnt offerings and the constant presence of bread in the Holy Place. These were meant to be perceived as holy, reflecting **Christ's sacrifice for humanity**. However, when Israel began to view these sacrifices as a means of appeasing the Deity, they embraced paganism, and their iniquity multiplied (Isaiah 1:11-15 cf. Micah 6:6-8).

Another use of the Hebrew word for "daily" is found in this context:

I have spread out my hands all day long to a rebellious people, who walk in a way that is not good, following their own thoughts; a people who continually [Strong Heb. #8548, tamid] provokes me to my face, sacrifices in gardens, and burns incense on altars of brick; (Isaiah 65:2-3)

When Israel, God's "firstborn" among the nations, perpetuated paganism, the entire world was deprived of the example of true worship. Consequently, pagans felt justified in further establishing their cruel practices and false ideas about the Deity. **Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome** were the natural outcome of pagan dominance in the world due to the apostasy of God's people.

The End of Sacrifices and the Continued Abominations

When Jesus took on fallen human nature and came to Earth, putting to death within Himself the enmity of the natural man against God, He enabled people to see God's true character. This eliminated the need for sacrifice in the minds of believers who received Him:

Having destroyed the enmity in his flesh,... by the cross, having slain the enmity therein. (Ephesians 2:15-16)

... and in the middle of the week he will cause sacrifice and offering to cease;... (Daniel 9:27)

Despite a group of believers, through the apostles and their followers, beginning to grasp the significance of Christ's sacrifice as a means for humanity's reconciliation with God, they soon turned their gaze away from Jesus. This allowed paganism to continue its reign until the 6th century (2 Corinthians 5:18-19; Revelation 2:4).

And he [the Messiah] shall confirm the covenant with many for one [prophetic] week [27-34 AD], and in the midst of the week he shall

cause sacrifice and oblation to cease [31 AD]: and on the wing of abominations shall come one that maketh desolate,... (Daniel 9:27)

This text indicates that even after Christ's death, abominations would prevail, desolating or driving out the Spirit of Christ from human hearts. Further evidence that pagan abominations continued even at the dawn of the Christian era comes from Jesus' prophetic words concerning the Roman siege of Jerusalem in 70 AD:

Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains; (Matthew 24:15-16)

All Christians heeded this warning and managed to escape before Jerusalem was destroyed. However, the "crime of Christianity," in asserting the understanding that God's justice required the death of His Son, developed in the 4th and 5th centuries into the adoption of another god and false feast times.

And the army [of God's people] was given up with the daily sacrifice [paganism] because of the transgression. And he [papal Rome] cast down truth to the ground, and acted, and prospered. (Daniel 8:12)

By 508 AD, the Franks (pagans) had firmly sided with the papacy, leading to intense persecution of dissenting Christians. According to prophecy, this year marks the **birth of the "abomination of desolation,"** which would operate until 1798.

And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate is set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety [prophetic] days. (Daniel 12:11)

Paganism Assimilated by the Papacy

Paganism was assimilated by the papacy, and Christianity seemingly triumphed over it. But in reality, the pagan principle of appeasing angry

deities through sacrifice was incorporated into the ideology of official Christianity. This is the idea that God was reconciled to us through the death of His Son on the cross.

To intimate the necessity for such a thing is to bring a grave charge against the character of God. The idea has come into the Christian Church from the Papacy, which in turn brought it from Paganism, in which the only idea of God was of a being whose wrath must be appeased by a sacrifice." (E.J. Waggoner, *Present Truth* UK, Sept 21, 1893)

Just as the apostasy of the Jews led to the dominance of paganism, so the apostasy of Christianity led to the dominance of the papacy:

And out of him shall come up powers, which shall profane the sanctuary, the stronghold [the pagan capital of Rome], and shall take away the daily sacrifice [paganism], and shall set up the abomination that maketh desolate [the papacy]. (Daniel 11:31)

We can observe that the **"daily" (paganism)**, with its animal and human sacrifices, opposes the constant ministry of Christ as priest on behalf of the sinner. Meanwhile, the **"abomination of desolation,"** symbolizing the papacy, aims to prevent the completion of the adoption process of a whole people (144,000) on the great Day of Atonement. Of course, behind these processes is not any specific person, but **Satan**, who uses the tendencies of enmity in human nature to achieve his goals (Daniel 7:8-10, 13-14, 18, 26, 27 cf. Ephesians 2:2).

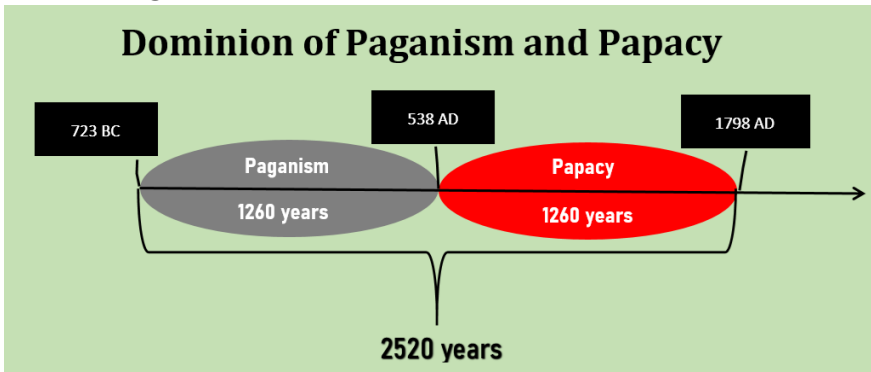
The Two Halves of the Prophetic Period

It's significant to note that the period during which paganism and the papacy ruled instead of God's true people is divided into two exactly equal parts. This is understood by considering that the time during which Israel suffered the consequences of her apostasy in the times of the Gentiles officially began with the scattering of her northern kingdom in **723 B.C.** (2

Kings 17:6-18). Had Israel been obedient, she would have been the head of the nations. In contrast, the Gentiles would rule for **7 prophetic times**:

And the LORD will make you the head, and not the tail, and you shall go upward only, and not downward, if you listen to the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you today, to observe and do them, (Deuteronomy 28:13)

The stranger... shall be the head, and thou shalt be the tail.... because



thou hearkenedst not unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which he commanded thee. (Deuteronomy 28:43-45)

...then I will also walk against you, and will smite you seven times for your sins. (Leviticus 26:24, King James Version)

These seven times equate to **2520 years**.

The Healing of the Deadly Wound and the End-Time Abomination

In **1798**, Pope Pius VI was captured by General Berthier's troops, and the papacy lost its state power. However, prophecy foretells that the papacy's deadly wound would heal:

And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death, and his deadly wound was healed: and all the earth wondered after the beast; (Revelation 13:3)

We are witnessing the fulfillment of this prophecy today. That is why Jesus foretells a manifestation of the abomination of desolation at the very end of time:

And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations: and then shall the end come. Therefore when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (whoso readeth, let him understand) (Matthew 24:14-15)

At the end of time, **Satan himself will impersonate Christ**, performing works similar to His, to deceive people into believing that He has changed the Sabbath to Sunday and thus **"mark"** all those who accept his beastly character (Matthew 24:5; Revelation 13:16, 17 cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:1-10).

III. 5. The Journey

Then I considered to understand this, but it was too difficult for my eyes, until I entered the sanctuary of God and understood ... (Psalm 73:16-17)

The Sanctuary: A Path to Understanding God's Character

The **sanctuary** serves as a profound guide to comprehending the **true character of God**. It illustrates the spiritual journey of individual believers, as well as that of an entire community or nation. This journey unfolds in three main stages, symbolized by the **courtyard, the Holy Place, and the Most Holy Place**. Each successive stage reveals a more accurate understanding of God's character. While this transformation occurs within the "inner man" until "**Christ dwells fully in the heart by faith**" (Ephesians 3:16-17), it is divinely mirrored in the celestial movements, where "**we have such a high priest (the Son of God), who is set down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty (God the Father) in the heavens, a minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man**" (Hebrews 8:1-2).

Any distorted perception of God's character becomes an **idol**, trapping both individuals and the community of believers in a diminished state of existence:

And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God,... (2 Corinthians 6:16)

In this sense, an individual's or community's approach to the **kingdom of God** is achieved by purifying the mind of the erroneous ideas Satan instilled in humanity at the Fall. This is why, when the Pharisees inquired about the coming of the kingdom of God, Jesus replied that it was already among them (Luke 17:20-21). On another occasion, when Jesus stated that God is one and the essence of the law is to love God and man, a scribe wholeheartedly affirmed this, adding that it was "**much more than all the burnt offerings and sacrifices.**" To this, Jesus responded by telling the scribe he was "**not far from the kingdom of God**" (Mark 12:28-34).

The Role of Sacrifice and the Covenant of Grace

Central to advancing the knowledge of God and moving toward His kingdom is how **sacrifices**, including the sacrifice at Golgotha, are understood. On two separate occasions (Matthew 9:10-13; 12:1-8), Jesus directed His listeners to the meaning of the following Old Testament text:

For I desire mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings. (Hosea 6:6)

God doesn't desire sacrifice; He yearns for us to **know Him**. So, why were animal sacrifices instituted, and why did Christ have to die? The answer lies in the next verse of Hosea:

But they, like Adam, transgressed the covenant, and dealt treacherously with me. (Hosea 6:7)

Adam's transgression of the covenant introduced such a fundamentally flawed and seemingly irreversible way of thinking about God's character that, although God does not desire the blood of animals or His Son's (Hosea 8:13), these sacrifices became **inevitable due to humanity's condition**. It was Adam who first offered a "sacrifice" in justifying himself to his wife and Creator with the words: **"The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat"** (Genesis 3:12). Christ's response to humanity, fallen into this sinful mindset, is the promise of the **covenant of grace**:

And I will put enmity between thee [the serpent] and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed [Christ]: he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. (Genesis 3:15)

When humanity fell into sin, there was nothing within them that was out of harmony with Satan. Consequently, all those born of him would be **"dead in trespasses and sins,"** and humanity would **"return to the dust from which he was taken"** (Ephesians 2:1 cf. Genesis 3:19). Accepting this divine promise by faith would bring Christ into the hearts of believers, represented by the symbol of the woman carrying the **Seed Christ** in her womb (Ephesians 3:17; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Revelation 12:1, 2). However,

Adam did not accept God's promise by faith, instead focusing his hopes for life on his wife and their descendants:

And the man called his wife's name Eve [life—the same word as the tree of life], because she was the mother of all living. (Genesis 3:20)

Refusing to acknowledge that his sin would bring death to him and his descendants, **"Adam covered his transgressions"** and **"hid his iniquities"** (Job 31:33). This decision left him outside the grace of the covenant. Therefore, God was compelled to institute the system of **animal sacrifices**, which would reveal to Adam that his sin was cutting off or crucifying Christ within him, making Christ **"the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world"** (Revelation 13:8). Adam was instructed to kill an animal, and God used its skins to clothe the man and his wife, further emphasizing the symbol (Genesis 3:21).

The Veil of Misconception

Only by accepting in faith that they had crucified Christ within themselves could Adam and his descendants cover their moral nakedness with the righteousness of Jesus (Revelation 3:17, 18). But by placing their hopes on Eve, humanity refused to accept the full reality of its fallen condition. Thus, God could only communicate with humanity as if through a mirror, according to the loveless **"copper" thinking** (1 Corinthians 13:1, 12, 13) that humanity had adopted from the serpent:

And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil... And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, knowing good and evil... (Genesis 3:4-5, 22)

Here, God is not using irony; the situation is profoundly tragic. He does not know evil as humans do, because He never participated in sin as Adam did. Through this **"mirror"** (Matthew 15:23-26; Psalm 50:21), God allowed humanity to express its sinful thinking undisturbed, so that as its negative

effects multiplied, humanity would yearn for the abundant grace of the rejected covenant.

And besides all this, the law came in so that the transgression might increase [be revealed]. But where sin increased [be revealed], grace did much more abound; (Romans 5:20)

All of God's people until the flood followed this path, symbolized in the sanctuary courtyard by the sacrificial altar and the laver, which were made of an inferior material—bronze or brass—an alloy created by Tubal-Cain, a descendant of the fratricide Cain (Genesis 4:22). This state is later referred to as the **Old Testament** by the Scriptures. That in this state humanity sees in God's word the reflection of its natural face (James 1:23), instead of God's (2 Corinthians 3:18), is also evident from the fact that the laver containing the water for washing reflects the face of humanity and is made of **"the mirrors of women"** (Exodus 38:8).

Pioneers of Faith and Enduring Misconceptions

Enoch, the seventh from Adam, was able to enter by faith into the inner sanctuary on his journey toward knowing God's character:

Enoch lived sixty-five years, and begat Methuselah. And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years...
And Enoch walked with God: and he was not: for God took him.
(Genesis 5:21-24)

As Enoch contemplated his firstborn son, he became increasingly aware of how a loving heavenly Father had given His precious, only-begotten Son for the sins of mankind. Thus, Enoch became a symbol of those who, at the end of time, would meet Christ without experiencing death. However, the collective mindset of God's people living up to the time of the flood prevented them from entering the heavenly sanctuary in faith. Perhaps this thinking is best represented by what Noah's father, Lamech, said:

And Lamech lived an hundred eighty and two years, and begat a son, and called his name Noah [rest], saying, This same shall bring us rest

from our work and from the toil of our hands, because of the ground which the LORD hath cursed. (Genesis 5:28-29)

In Lamech's view, it was God who cursed the earth, not the natural consequences of sin. Adam, and later Cain, also seem to have adopted a similar perspective when the Lord informed them of the consequences of their sin on the earth (Genesis 3:17-19 cf. 4:10-14). At this level of understanding, believers could only dwell in the sanctuary courtyard, where the Deity was supposedly propitiated by animal sacrifices.

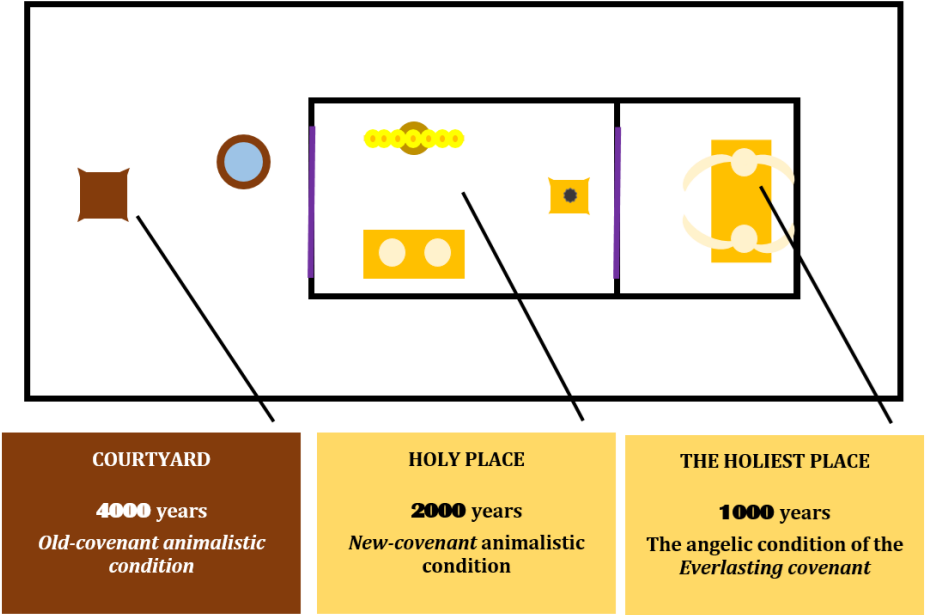
Abraham was also called to accept the promises of the covenant of grace concerning the **Seed Christ** and the inheritance of the whole earth (Galatians 3:16 cf. Romans 4:13). Yet, his doubt about the promises necessitated the continuation of animal sacrifices as an act of condescension on God's part (Genesis 15:1-11). This, in turn, ensured that his descendants would also be tempted to remain subject to servile notions of the Godhead (Genesis 15:12-21). In this doubtful state of the old covenant, however, Abraham and Israel could only inherit the land of the Canaanite peoples—a rather limited territory compared to the entire world (Genesis 15:18-21).

The fruits of the two covenants were further revealed through **Sarah and Hagar**, showing that Mount Sinai could only produce children of slavery who attempted to keep God's law on their own. In contrast, the **"heavenly Jerusalem"** is for those who have believed that God can call into existence in us that which is not, namely, the righteousness of Christ (Galatians 4:24-31 cf. Romans 4:17). Since Abraham had believed for 13 years that Ishmael was the promised seed, this indicated that even the birth of Isaac had not fully ushered him into the heavenly sanctuary (Genesis 16:16 cf. 17:1, 17, 18). Therefore, God tested him precisely regarding sacrifice, asking for his only-begotten son in the **"mirror"** (Genesis 22:1-18 cf. Jeremiah 7:31).

Finally, Abraham's faith grasped the promise because he decided that even after he had killed Isaac, God could raise him up to fulfill His promise (Genesis 22:5 cf. Hebrews 11:17-19). This enabled him to see the day of Christ from afar and thus enter God's sanctuary with joy (John 8:56). But his faith was still at the level of the **Holy Place**, where Christ's sacrifice is

considered as required by God, just as Abraham believed God required his son Isaac. An analysis of the Hebrew original of God's requirement of Abraham shows that His words could also mean an invitation to Abraham to go up with his son to worship on the mountain (Genesis 22:2 cf. Hebrew "offer" and "burnt offering").

Israel demonstrated the same unbelief in the promises of the covenant of grace, presumptuously declaring they would keep God's law themselves (Exodus 6:6-9; 19:5, 6, 8). This again necessitated the continuation of sacrifices. Instead of all Israel being priests and kings to other nations, demonstrating the excellencies of God's kingdom, the tribe of Levi was set apart to minister for them in an earthly model of the heavenly sanctuary (Exodus 19:6; Leviticus 1-8; Exodus 25:8, 40; Jeremiah 7:22). For 1,600 years, God invited them to enter the heavenly sanctuary by faith, but they could only live through the supposed atoning power of animal sacrifice. That is why, when the Son of God was born on Earth, they handed Him over to death with the idea that this would save their people (John 11:49, 50 cf. 19:7).



Entering the Most Holy Place

Only **Christ's disciples after His resurrection** were finally able to follow Him in faith into the heavenly sanctuary. On the cross, the new and living way into the **Most Holy Place** was revealed (Luke 23:44-46 cf. Hebrews 10:19, 20). The Father showed His willingness to give His Son to death for our sins. Yet, believers had to continue to walk the path from the Holy to the Most Holy Place. Although those who entered the Holy Place by faith received Christ and ate His flesh (His Word) and drank His blood (His Spirit), they still did not fully realize that **it was not God who required this sacrifice**:

he [Christ] has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. (Isaiah 53:4)

This profound realization comes only in the **Most Holy Place** of the heavenly sanctuary. Due to the apostasy of Christendom, such a people did not reach the Most Holy Place until **1844** (Daniel 8:14), but unfortunately, they did not remain there long enough. Now, a crucial question for us living in these last days is: What understanding of God's character will we embrace and participate in as we complete this journey into the heavenly sanctuary, so that the cleansing of our minds from all wrong ideas about our heavenly Father results in the cleansing of the upper sanctuary?

III. 6. Eternal priesthood

So also Christ did not take upon himself the glory of becoming a high priest, but he who said to him, "You are my Son, "Today I have begotten You"; as he says elsewhere: "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek." (Hebrews 5:5-6)

The Eternal Priesthood of Christ

Christ is a priest by virtue of His eternal birth from God. However, this priesthood was not fully manifested until His **resurrection from the dead**. Only then was there a people ready to follow Him by faith into the Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary (Acts 13:33, 38).

Within the ark of the covenant, located in the Most Holy Place, lay **Aaron's rod that budded**. This rod served as authentication of Aaron's priestly right during the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, who unlawfully claimed the priesthood (Numbers 1-17). This biblical account symbolizes the **vindication of Christ's priesthood** amidst the challenges posed by Satan and his servants. In the beginning, when Lucifer asserted his claim to Christ's position, God revealed to all of heaven the true standing of His Firstborn. Yet, the definitive vindication came after the resurrection of the Son of God—the spiritual "budding of the rod":

And when he brings the Firstborn back into the universe, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him." (Hebrews 1:6)

Melchizedek: A Type of Christ's Eternal Priesthood

Christ's priesthood is notably compared to that of **Melchizedek**, in contrast to the temporary nature of Aaron's priesthood (Hebrews 5:7).

For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings [Genesis 14:18-20] and blessed him; to whom also Abraham gave a tenth of

all; who, by interpretation, is called first king of righteousness, and afterwards king of Salem, that is, king of peace; without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like unto the Son of God, abideth a priest for ever. (Hebrews 7:1-3)

Inspired Scripture deliberately omits the parentage of Melchizedek and hints at his royal lineage to liken him to the Son of God, who is not bound by time but originates **"from everlasting"** (Micah 5:2). Although Jesus' eternal priesthood largely remained unrecognized until His resurrection, as the **Angel of the Covenant** (Malachi 3:1), He has consistently served as the great Mediator between God and His creation throughout all time. Hence, we read of Him in Psalm 110:

The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool." The Lord will send you the scepter of your strength from Zion; rule in the midst of your enemies. On the day of your power your people will be prepared with holy splendor; from the womb before dawn your birth will be like the dew. The Lord has sworn and will not repent: "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek." (Psalm 110:1-4, New International Version)

In the ongoing cosmic conflict between good and evil, God has appointed His Son, **Michael, the "chief prince"** (Daniel 10:13), as the one through whose mediation for humanity (Job 33:23, 24) He triumphs over the enemies of love and truth. His status as such a Mediator is confirmed by His origin **"before the day"** (Lucifer—Isaiah 14:12-14), when He was born of God. The mention of Him being a priest "after the order of Melchizedek" occurs approximately 1,000 years before His advent on Earth.

Christ's Incarnation: Assurance for Humanity

While Jesus, as mediator, **"is not for one"** (Galatians 3:20)—meaning His mediation benefits all—for our assurance, it was essential for Him to assume our sinful nature:

For it was fitting for him, for whom are all things [God the Father] and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the author of their salvation [His Son] perfect through sufferings. For both he who sanctifies [Jesus] and those who are sanctified [believers] are all from one [Father]; for which reason he is not ashamed to call them brothers, saying, "I will declare your name to my brothers,... And again, "Behold, I and the children whom God has given me." Since then the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise took part of the same things,... For indeed he did not help angels, but he helped the seed of Abraham. Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in all things, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted. (Hebrews 2:10-18)

Of course, this incarnation was necessary primarily for humanity, providing us with the assurance that Christ can empathize with us and aid us in all our struggles. However, God and His Son were no less aware of humanity's difficulties before Jesus lived on Earth as one of us (Isaiah 63:9 cf. Psalm 139:1-16). All this is for *our* assurance. In fact, Jesus' "**coming in the flesh**" by His Spirit has been a reality from the very beginning, and failing to recognize this fact is a hallmark of the antichrist (1 John 4:2, 3; 2 John 1:7).

Genealogical Evidence of Jesus' Incarnation

The truth that the Son of God assumed our fallen nature through a woman is corroborated by comparing the genealogical records found throughout the Old Testament with the lineage presented in Luke's Gospel, which traces **Mary's ancestry**. While Luke doesn't explicitly state it's Mary's lineage (perhaps due to the Jewish tradition of tracing lineage through the paternal line), he clearly indicates that Jesus was not a biological descendant of Joseph:

And Jesus himself, when he began to teach, was about thirty years of age, being, as was supposed, the son of Joseph, of Heli... (Luke 3:23)

The compelling power of these documents lies in the fact that the Jewish people did not accept Yeshua (Jesus) as the Messiah. Yet, Mary's genealogy, when compared to Old Testament records, unambiguously demonstrates that He was a descendant of both **Abraham and David**. Although the Jews attempted to refute this, Luke provides objective information:

Since many have undertaken to compile an account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, it seemed good to me also, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things about which you have been instructed. (Luke 1:1-4)

A comparison of Old Testament genealogies directly related to Jesus' lineage through Mary, alongside Joseph's lineage from the Gospel of Matthew (who was also a descendant of David), further confirms these truths.

Luke 3:23-38	1 Chronicles 1-3	Genesis 5:3-32, 11:10-32	Ruth 4:18-22	Matthew 1:1-17
1. God	—	God	—	—
2. Adam	Adam	Adam	—	—
3. Seth	Seth	Seth	—	—
4. Enos	Enos	Enos	—	—
5. Cainan	Cainan	Cainan	—	—

6. Mahalaleel	Mahalaleel	Mahalaleel	—	—
7. Jared	Jared	Jared	—	—
8. Enoch	Enoch	Enoch	—	—
9. Methuselah	Methuselah	Methuselah	—	—
10.Lamech	Lamech	Lamech	—	—
11.Noah	Noah	Noah	—	—
12.Shem	Shem	Shem	—	—
13.Arphaxad	Arphaxad	Arphaxad	—	—
14.Cainan	Cainan	Cainan	—	—
15.Shelah	Shelah	Shelah	—	—
16.Eber	Eber	Eber	—	—
17.Peleg	Peleg	Peleg	—	—
18.Reu	Reu	Reu	—	—
19.Serug	Serug	Serug	—	—
20.Nahor	Nahor	Nahor	—	—
21.Terah	Terah	Terah	—	—
22.Abraham	Abraham	Abraham	—	Abraham
23.Isaac	Isaac	Isaac	—	Isaac
24.Jacob	Jacob	Jacob	—	Jacob
25.Judah	Judah	Judah	—	Judah
26.Perez	Perez	Perez	Perez	Perez
27.Hezron	Hezron	—	Hezron	Hezron

28.Arni	Arni	—	Arni	Arni
29.Ammiadab	Ammiadab	—	Ammiadab	Ammiadab
30.Nahshon	Nahshon	—	Nahshon	Nahshon
31.Salmon	Salmon	—	Salmon	Salmon
32.Boaz	Boaz	—	Boaz	Boaz
33.Obed	Obed	—	Obed	Obed
34.Jesse	Jesse	—	Jesse	Jesse
35.David	David	—	David	David
36.Nathan	Nathan, Solomon	—	—	Solomon
37.Mattatha	—	—	—	Rehoboam
38.Menna	—	—	—	Abijam
39.Melea	—	—	—	Asa
40.Eliakim	—	—	—	Jehoshaphat
41.Jonam	—	—	—	Joram
42.Joseph	—	—	—	Uzziah
43.Judah	—	—	—	Jotham
44.Simeon	—	—	—	Ahaz
45.Levi	—	—	—	—
46.Matthat	—	—	—	Hezekiah
47.Jorim	—	—	—	—
48.Elizezer	—	—	—	Manasseh
49.Joshua	—	—	—	—
50.Er	—	—	—	Amon

51.Elmodam	—	—	—	—
52.Cosam	—	—	—	—
53.Addi	—	—	—	Josiah
54.Melchi	—	—	—	Jeconiah
55.Neri	—	—	—	—
56.Shealtiel	—	—	—	Shealtiel
57.Zerubbabel	—	—	—	Zerubbabel
58.Rhesa	—	—	—	—
59.Joannan	—	—	—	Abiud
60.Joda	—	—	—	—
61.Josech	—	—	—	Eliakim
62.Semei	—	—	—	—
63.Mattathias	—	—	—	Azor
64.Maath	—	—	—	—
65.Nagge	—	—	—	Zadok
66.Esli	—	—	—	—
67.Naum	—	—	—	—
68.Amos	—	—	—	Achim
69.Mattathias	—	—	—	—
70.Joseph	—	—	—	Eliud
71.Jannai	—	—	—	—
72.Melchi	—	—	—	Eleazar
73.Levi	—	—	—	—
74.Matthat	—	—	—	Matthan

75.Heli	—	—	—	Jacob
76.Joseph	—	—	—	Joseph
77.Jesus Christ	—	—	—	Jesus Christ

III. 7. The Atonement

And all things are of God, who reconciled us to himself through (Jesus) Christ, and gave to us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses to them,... (2 Corinthians 5:18-19)

The True Meaning of Atonement and Propitiation

The preceding text provides a definition of **propitiation**. In fact, the original Greek word for "**reconciliation**" (κατατλαγα - Strong's No. 2643) used here is translated in Romans 5:11 precisely as "atonement":

And not only so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the atonement.
(Romans 5:11)

According to our opening verse, this atonement is essentially **being reconciled to God** by understanding that He "**does not keep account**" of our transgressions. Since the very essence of God is **love**, a key characteristic of this love is that He "**does not keep account of the injury**" (1 Corinthians 13:5). This is why He is portrayed as one who "**looks on no transgression**" (Proverbs 19:11; Micah 7:18).

However, the sanctuary reveals that the path to this understanding is not straightforward. If God desires to save us, He must first address our false idea of justice—the belief that every sin must be punished. Let's recall its origin:

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

The man and his wife hid from the Lord's presence because Satan had successfully convinced them that their death would not be a natural consequence of their fall, but the result of divine execution. Then, when God questioned the man about his actions, we see Adam placing his guilt on his wife and, implicitly, on the Son of God:

And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. (Genesis 3:12)

Adam did not seek forgiveness from his Creator; instead, he shifted his guilt onto Him. He couldn't believe that God could forgive him without first punishing someone. Thus, satanic condemnation against the Son of God was manifested in humanity:

And the gift is not like the judgment that came by the trespass of one: for the judgment was by one [Adam] unto condemnation; but the gift is of many trespasses unto justification. (Romans 5:16, KJV)

It is this spirit of Adam that all mankind inherited, making Christ's sacrifice inevitable. When the Jews crucified Jesus, they were our representatives, representatives of all fallen humanity. Yet, even today, the cross is often perceived as an event in which Jesus was **"stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted"** (Isaiah 53:4).

Misconceptions of God's Justice

William Lane Craig highlights a common theological perspective:

Any biblically adequate theory of the atonement must include the concept of propitiation, that is, the appeasing of God's righteous wrath against sin. The source of God's wrath is His retributive justice, and so the appeasing of wrath is primarily a matter of satisfying it. How is the demands of divine justice satisfied? Biblically speaking, this is primarily accomplished, not as Anselm thought, by compensation, but by punishment. (William Lane Craig, *The Atonement and the Death of Christ*, Baylor University Press, 2020, p. 195)

Even when Jesus demonstrated on the cross that God did not desire the sacrifice of animals for the forgiveness of sins, sinful human thinking persisted in the idea that Christ now stood in the place of the animals. Throughout the Middle Ages, apostate Christianity became increasingly entrenched in these dark ideas about God's character. Consequently, just as people before the cross could not enter the Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary by faith for about 4,000 years, believers after Calvary lingered too long in the Holy Place and could not enter the Most Holy.

And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and it was said unto me, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein: but the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not: for it is given unto the nations, and they shall tread the holy city under foot forty and two months. (Revelation 11:1-2)

Although the Reformation challenged the Pope's supremacy and returned the Bible to the people, it was unable to fully break free from this mindset. The following words from the renowned preacher **Charles Spurgeon** describe the atonement without embellishment:

...we must measure the great redemption by the severity of divine justice. "God is love," ever loving; but my next proposition does not at all interfere with this statement. God is strictly just, unyieldingly severe in His dealings with humanity. The God of the Bible is not the God of some people's imagination, who thinks so lightly of sin that he passes it over without exacting any punishment for it... Learn, my friends, to look upon God as so strict in His justice as if He were not loving, and yet so loving as if He were not harsh. Neither does His love diminish His justice, nor does His justice, in the least degree, war against His love. The two things are sweetly bound together in the atonement of Christ. But, note, we can never understand the fullness of redemption until we first grasp the Bible truth of the vast justice of God. There was never an evil word spoken, nor an unrighteous thought conceived, nor an evil deed done, for which God will not punish one or the other. He will either have satisfaction from you or from Christ. If you have no redemption to gain through Christ, you

must forever lie paying a debt that you can never pay, in eternal misery; as surely as God is God, He would sooner lose His divinity than suffer one sin to go unpunished, or one particle of rebellion to go unavenged. You may say that this character of God is cold, stern, and harsh. I cannot help you with what you say on that subject; and yet (what I have said) is true. Such is the God of the Bible. (Charles Spurgeon, Concrete Redemption)

A New Testament Understanding of Atonement

Only those who had followed Christ into the Most Holy Place could transition from an Old Testament understanding of God's justice to one that reflected the true, merciful character of our heavenly Father. Although a small group followed Christ into the Most Holy Place after October 22, 1844, they did not remain there long because, like ancient Israel, they tried to keep God's law on their own. It was not until the late 19th century that a few who had accepted the message of Justification by Faith began to see the Atonement with New Testament eyes:

George Fifiel offers a profound perspective in his work, *God is Love*, chapter "Atonement":

The word "atonement" means union. Sin brought misery, and misery brought misunderstanding of God's character. Thus men began to hate God instead of loving Him; and in hating Him, the one Father, men also hated man, their brother. Thus instead of one family with one Father, men were separated from God and from one another, and kept in hatred and selfishness. There must be atonement. Atonement can only be made by God's revelation of His love, despite sin and sorrow, so that the hearts of men may be touched with tenderness; and delivered from Satan's delusions they may see how utterly and terribly wrong they have understood. The Divine and thus have despised the Spirit of his grace. In this way they can be led as returning brothers to the Father's house for blessed unity.

The atonement is not to appease God's wrath, so that men may dare to come to him, but it is to reveal his love, so that they may come to him. It is not Christ reconciling God to the world, but God in Christ reconciling the world to himself. It is nowhere said that God must be reconciled to us. He says, "I have not forsaken you, but you have rejected me." And Paul says, "I beseech you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God."...

Thus it is revealed that misfortune is not God's will and the result of his wrath, but it was the devil's will, the result of sin. The whole life of Christ, from the manger in Bethlehem to the cross of Calvary, was a life of pure, unadulterated love. But who was Christ? The word means "anointed." He was God's anointed, anointed with the Spirit of God to live God's life on earth. The angel said: "They will call him Immanuel, which means GOD WITH US."

Ah, yes! There were gods enough before Jesus came to reveal to a lost world the knowledge of the Father. In Egypt, they once said that it was easier to find a god than a man; so numerous were their gods. The problem is, none of them were "our Father." And none of them were "with us."... With us in the dark valley of death, for he "in like manner took part in the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. Ah, yes! He was "Immanuel," which being interpreted is, God with us."

How the lies of the devil flee when we see God revealed in Jesus Christ! How the alienated soul returns to its native home and becomes one with God! "Yea, the sparrow hath found a house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, by thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God." How wonderfully the new-born Paul preaches to the Athenian idolaters the truth that God is not far from each one of us!...

It is impossible now to dwell too long upon the death of Christ; and also upon the memory of his loving life, but these two must not be separated in our thought. Nothing earthly is more capable of inspiring the soul and raising it to noble effort than the self-

sacrificing, heroic death of the purely human hero; but this death is inspiring and becomes heroic only when it is taken in connection with life—with the circumstances which led to the death. So in the death of the divine Son of God; it is not death only, but life also; for Paul says, "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved through his life."

The death of Christ becomes significant only when considered in connection with his life of self-sacrifice, which led to and was the cause of his death. Thus death has the power to reveal the love of God so as to reconcile us to Him;...

In regard to the first I would say, God is love. Love and therefore God are most clearly revealed in Jesus Christ when we remember that in him, for our good, the divinity took upon itself human nature, with all its weakness and weariness, with all its passions and loves and longings and all its temptations. In fact, only in this way does Christ reveal God and is himself divine, because God is love.

The context of these reflections is **relationships**, not a legal process of justification. God is seen as our Father, who sends His Son for us so that we may live through Him. Thus, the blood of Christ on the cross is the way He gives us life, not a requirement of God so that He can forgive us:

But how is it that the shedding of blood, even the blood of Christ, can take away sins? Simply because the blood is the life. "For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul." Lev. 17:11. So when we read that without the shedding of blood there is no remission, we know that this means that no sins can be taken away except through the life of Christ. In Him is no sin; therefore, when He gives His life to a soul, that soul is at once cleansed from sin. (E. J. Waggoner, Present Truth, Great Britain, September 21, 1893.)

Our heavenly Father does not *require* the death of His Son in order to forgive, but **allows Him to be killed so that we may receive His life!** Otherwise, how could we **"wash our robes in the blood of the Lamb"** (Revelation 7:14)?! The grape juice and bread that Christ offers to His disciples during the Passover represent His life (John 6:54-57, 63). Therefore, He will drink this fruit in a **"new"** way with those who enter the Most Holy Place of His kingdom by faith:

And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat: this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it: for this is my blood of the covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom. (Matthew 26:26-29)

Those who insisted on taking Christ's words literally, that they must eat His flesh and drink His blood, eventually left Him and were left with the cruel number of the beast (John 6:66). But those who remained understood that He **"has words of eternal life"** (John 6:67, 68).

The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh comes... He will wash his garments in wine, and his robes in the blood of grapes. (Genesis 49:10-11)

IV. Seven dilemmas of true love

For we shall surely die, and are like water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again. And God does not take away life, but devises means, so that the outcast is not cast off from Him. (2 Samuel 14:14)

IV. 1. A look behind the curtain?

And there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. (Job 1:6)

The Book of Job: Unveiling God's Character

The Book of Job, widely considered the oldest book in the Bible, penned by Moses during his time in the Midianite desert, recounts the harrowing tale of a wealthy man from the East who, in a remarkably short period, loses his children, his vast possessions, and then his health. To compound his suffering, his friends arrive and, after a period of somber silence, begin to accuse him of being solely responsible for his calamities due to his own sinfulness. All these terrible events are presented to Job as direct acts of God.

While he [Job's servant] was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them: and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. (Job 1:16)

This was Job's own initial understanding of the origin of his misfortunes:

And he said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither. The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away: blessed be the name of the LORD. (Job 1:21)

However, for the reader of the book, the veil to the invisible realm is lifted, revealing the true forces behind these events:

And there came a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came among them. And the LORD said unto Satan, From going up and down in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a blameless and upright man, one that feareth God, and

escheweth evil? And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast thou not made a hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is in the earth. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon him put not thine hand. And Satan went out from the presence of the LORD. (Job 1:6-12)

It is crucial to remember that this heavenly conversation occurred before Christ came to Earth to fully reveal God's merciful character. While the conversation might *appear* as if God is drawing Satan's attention to Job and thus involving His earthly servant in the subsequent trials, the truth is that Satan was already poised to slander Job. God was simply anticipating his malicious intentions. It was not God, but Satan, who instigated all of Job's troubles; the Lord wisely permitted these events to unfold in order to strengthen His servant in the path of righteousness.

And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a blameless and upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? Yet holdest thou not his integrity, though thou incitest me against him, to destroy him without cause. (Job 2:3)

Notice how the Lord speaks of the calamities that befell Job as something He personally caused. What could be the reason for such an expression? I believe there are at least two possible explanations. First, as the supreme Ruler of the universe, only God can *allow* a certain event to happen, and in this sense, it is said that He almost did it Himself. However, God and Satan are not in collaboration, so this phrasing is simply a typical idiomatic expression of that era. The second reason God says He did these "bad things" is that ultimately, all authority and power belong to Him, and even Satan himself could do nothing without utilizing the power of Christ:

God has spoken once, and twice have I heard this, that power is of God. (Psalm 62:11)

For in him we live and move and have our being, as even some of your own poets have said, "For we are also his offspring." (Acts 17:28)

Misconceptions from Job's Friends

Just as in those ancient times, people, even believers in God, held significant misconceptions about His character. Should this surprise us, knowing the cunning enemy our heavenly Father faced? Here are some of the reflections on Job's situation from his deeply religious friends.

Eliphaz:

Remember now, who has ever perished innocently? Where have the righteous perished? As I have seen, those who plow deceit and sow trouble reap the same. By the breath of God they perish, and by the breath of his nostrils they are consumed. (Job 4:7-9)

A little further in Eliphaz's speech, we find the potential source of these reflections:

In the thoughts of the visions of the night, when deep sleep falls upon men, fear took hold of me, and I trembled, and all my bones shook. Then a spirit passed before my face, and the hairs of my body stood up [Satan]. He stood—but I knew not his countenance—as an image before mine eyes, silence, and I heard a voice: Can mortal man be more righteous than God? Can a man be purer than his Maker? He putteth no trust in his servants, and chargeth his angels with error: how much more so are they that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, and are crushed quicker than the moth! (Job 4:13-19)

The thoughts shared by this terrifying spirit are strikingly reminiscent of what Lucifer declared to the angels in the beginning. We know that even in heaven, Satan accused God of unjust rule and claimed His law could not be kept. These thoughts echo the same accusations.

Job's next friend, **Bildad**, insinuates that Job is a hypocrite:

So are the ways of all that forget God: and the hope of the hypocrite shall perish, and his confidence shall be cut off, and his trust a spider's web. (Job 8:13-14)

Despite Job's explanations that he sees no injustice in his life, and that he is characterized as righteous by God Himself (Job 1:8), Job's next friend, **Zophar**, becomes even more furious with him:

Shall not a man be answered in the multitude of words, and shall a man of many words be justified? Shall thy words stop the mouths of men? Shall thou laugh, and none shall put thee to shame? For thou hast said, My words are right, and I am clean in thine eyes. But that God would speak, and open his lips against thee, and shew thee the secrets of wisdom, for they are double wisdom! Know then that God will forgive thee many of thine iniquities. (Job 11:2-6)

It's no wonder that the persistence of this way of thinking throughout the centuries led the disciples to ask Jesus whose sin was it that a man was born blind—that of his parents or his own (John 9:2)? People's ideas simply left no other possibility for human misfortune than punishment from above for personal sin or that of one's ancestors. Job is further accused by his friends that his desire for justice from God threatens the integrity of God's authority, which, according to Eliphaz, is built on the fear of God:

Truly you destroy the fear of God and hinder prayer and meditation before God, (Job 15:4)

Elihu's Intervention and God's Response

Despite the increasingly serious accusations from his friends, Job continues to claim he sees no injustice in himself and that he needs to speak with God, who will provide an explanation for what is happening. Finally, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar give up, seeing that Job is unwavering in his righteousness. Then **Elihu**, the youngest of Job's friends, enters the scene and begins to speak angrily to him:

Who is like Job, who drinks up scorn like water, who goes in company with sinners and walks with wicked men? For he said, "It profits a man nothing to please God." Therefore listen to me, you men of understanding! Far be it from God to do evil, nor from the Almighty to do wrong! For he will repay a man according to his work, and will give to every man according to his ways. (Job 34:7-11)

Elihu's arguments are not fundamentally different, but unlike Job's other friends, he is much more accusatory and presumptuous.

Job speaks without knowledge, and his words are devoid of understanding. I wish Job would be tested to the end, because he answers like sinners. For he adds rebellion to his sin, claps his hands among us, and multiplies his words against God. (Job 34:35-37)

Elihu then supplements his arguments with facts related to God's creation and sustenance of life on Earth (Job 36:26-37:24). These are, of course, arguments rooted in **power**: since God created and rules all this, He must be acknowledged as righteous. But would He truly want His kingdom to be based on such grounds? Which is more important to God: His power or His character?

At this point, God intervenes in the conversation and, at first glance, seems to agree with Elihu and the rest of his friends:

Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Who is this that darkeneth my counsel with words without knowledge? Gird up now thy loins like a man, and I will question thee, and teach me: where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? shew it, if thou hast understanding? (Job 38:1-4)

God's speech to Job describes how He, as the Almighty, sustains the plant and animal world. It appears as if God's argument to Job is again about power. However, it must be taken into account that the text states God spoke to Job **"out of the whirlwind."** This "whirlwind" is the natural result of Elihu's turbulent thoughts. But if we are careful, we will see that God begins His speech with the question, **"Then who darkens my counsel with words without knowledge?"** This question refers not to what Job said, but

to Elihu's argument for power. God is implying that despite His omnipotence, there is someone who opposes His purposes.

Here, God is alluding to the enemy of God and humanity, whom we know as **Satan**. That is why, towards the end of His speech, He begins to describe proud creatures such as **Behemoth and Leviathan**, who are kings over all other creations (Job 40:15-41:34). Later, the prophet Isaiah will present the following prophecy about Leviathan:

In that day the LORD with his heavy, great, and strong sword will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, and Leviathan the twisting serpent; and he will slay the monster in the sea. (Isaiah 27:1)

The **"serpent running and writhing among the seas of nations"** is clearly the Devil (Revelation 12:9 cf. 17:15). Job somewhat understands this, for immediately after God finishes speaking, he says:

I know that You can do all things, and no purpose of Yours can be thwarted. You have asked, "Who is this that conceals counsel without knowledge?" So I spoke what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me that I did not know. Hear, I beg You, and I will speak. I will question You, and You teach me. I had heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You. Therefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes. (Job 42:2-6)

Job's three elderly companions are then rebuked by God for **"not speaking of me what is right, as my servant Job has."** (Job 42:7) To ensure they will be restored to God's favor, these three are instructed to present an offering and have Job pray on their behalf (Job 42:8). After they do so, God reverses Job's fortunes, and he receives double what he lost in his calamity (Job 38:10-15). Evidently, Job's first sons could not be preserved by Satan due to their wickedness, as Job's protective measures suggest (Job 1:4, 5).

But why does God say nothing about Elihu? Many people interpret this as proof of his innocence. However, the opposite is true. Because of his arrogance and conceit, Elihu finds himself in the unenviable condition that Jesus presents with the phrase **"those who are healthy have no need of a physician"** (Matthew 9:12). Jesus spoke these words to the Pharisees, who

accused Him of associating with sinners. They considered themselves righteous and therefore could not benefit from the Savior's healing power for soul and body (Luke 18:10-14). To them, He could only advise this:

But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice,' for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners (to repentance).
(Matthew 9:13)

IV. 2. The Flood

And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, and the creeping thing and the fowl of the air; for I repent that I have made them. (Genesis 6:7)

Reconsidering the Flood: God's Character and Human Choices

Did the Creator truly find Himself in a situation for which He was so unprepared that He regretted creating humankind? Or is this rather a reference to the profound sorrow of a God whose children are stubbornly and steadfastly walking the path of death?

But if their actions would naturally lead to death, then why does God state that He will personally destroy them from the face of the earth? Consider these similar expressions:

And, behold, I do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy from under heaven all flesh, wherein is the breath of life: everything that is upon the earth shall die. (Genesis 6:17)

For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and I will destroy from the face of the ground every living thing that I have made. (Genesis 7:4)

These texts have convinced most of humanity, including many Christians, that God personally drowned the people of that time. But if this was an act of divine execution due to their moral irresponsibility, then why should other living beings besides humanity also be drowned? This raises a crucial question: Is not sin inherently destructive enough that God has to kill to punish evildoers?

This question takes us back to the beginning of human history, when the first family received instructions regarding the tree of the knowledge of good and evil:

But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat of it, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die. (Genesis 2:17)

When the Creator declared this, did He mean that He would personally execute Adam and Eve if they ate from the tree? But doesn't Scripture itself teach that **death (and not God) is the natural consequence of sin?**

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23)

Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. (James 1:15)

If sin itself brings death, then why does God say that He will destroy both humans and animals in the flood? This seems to reflect not God's true character but rather the way *we imagine* Him. The very act of falling into sin meant accepting the serpent's lie that we "**will not**" die as a natural consequence of sin, but that God would be the one to try to execute us. Isn't this why Adam and his wife hid when they heard their Father's footsteps in the garden?

And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. And the LORD God called unto the man, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And God said unto him, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, that thou shouldest not eat? (Genesis 3:8-11)

By the phrase "**who told you,**" God suggests to Adam that someone is behind the perceived lies about His character. Now God is faced with an incredibly difficult and painful task. On the one hand, if He is to save them for eternity, the lives of the couple must be "artificially" maintained, thus giving them time to repent, for God had said that "**in the day**" they eat of it they would surely die, not only spiritually but also physically (Genesis 2:17). On the other hand, since Satan had deceived them that they would

not die at all, artificially prolonging their lives by **"crucifying" Christ within them** would support their false belief that they possess life of their own. But the truth is that to this day, as their descendants, all of humanity is only kept alive because **"the Lamb" was "slain from the foundation of the world"** (Revelation 13:8, NIV).

God could have tried to explain to Adam that what he believed was a lie, but in his then-current state, having deeply "swallowed" Satan's lies, humanity would not have believed. This compels God to speak to Adam at the level of his understanding, so that in time, he could see the absurdity of sinful thinking and seek the salvation of his Lord. This explains why after they ate the fruit offered by the serpent with the false belief that they would **"become like God, knowing good and evil"** (Genesis 3:5), God speaks as if this had genuinely occurred:

And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of Us, to know good and evil.... (Genesis 3:22)

God knows evil, but not from personal experience—He has never sinned. But not according to Adam's new thinking, which points to Christ as the culprit for what happened:

And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. (Genesis 3:12)

From now on, humanity would believe in a God who creates both good and evil:

I form the light and create darkness; I make peace and create evil. I, the LORD, do all these things. (Isaiah 45:7)

In reality, we are told that **"God is light, and in him is no darkness at all"** (1 John 1:5). But instead of directly contradicting deceived Adam and his descendants, at the cost of great suffering and long-suffering, He condescends to their level and gradually brings them to a correct view of Himself, as revealed only through His Son on Earth, who is called the Faithful Witness (John 14:8, 9 cf. Revelation 3:14). The life of Jesus of

Nazareth reveals that God never violated His own commandments of love, including the one that says **"Thou shalt not kill"**!

We can now see why God presents Himself in the flood story as the direct executioner of the death sentence upon sin. In the great controversy between Himself and Satan, He gives His enemy an equal opportunity to present his theory, and does not expose him verbally in the Old Testament Scriptures (except when unavoidable) until humanity itself is willing to return to a correct understanding of God's character. Even in the case of the deceitful serpent, the story is written in such a way that it is not clearly stated that this animal was used by Satan as a medium. Can we imagine how patient God and His Son must have been through the ages, and how much they must have suffered because of their misrepresentation, until humanity itself chooses to let the light of the knowledge of God's character shine upon them?!

The Sustaining Word and the Flood's True Cause

The life of people before the flood was sustained through Christ as the Word of God, who unites all the elements:

In the beginning was the Word; and the Word was with God; and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. (John 1:1-4)

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and by him all things hold together. (Colossians 1:15-17)

Jesus is able to sustain everything in the universe, but where sin is practiced and nurtured persistently and continuously, the Son of God gradually loses His right to continue to sustain that life before God's

enemy. That is why Peter gives us the following explanation of the flood process:

For they willfully ignore this fact, that by the word of God there were heavens from the beginning and an earth standing out of water and in the midst of water, through which the world that then was, being flooded with water, perished. (2 Peter 3:5-6)

The Word of God, Jesus, held the waters together as long as it was possible. Now do you see how these texts shed light on the process of the flood? It was not God who *caused* it, but the very iniquities of men that led to this watery explosion and the chaos that followed:

In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the springs of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of heaven were opened. (Genesis 7:11)

The Son of God, as the Word of God who sustains the elements, was completely cast out by those people. Therefore, speaking of this event, Christ does not mention any active participation of God:

For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so will the coming of the Son of Man be. (Matthew 24:38-39)

Even in the words of God in the story of the flood itself, some clues are left as to how it was accomplished:

And the earth was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God saw the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. (Genesis 6:11-12)

Here the emphasis is explicitly placed on the fact that the earth itself became filled with the sinful waves and vibrations of humanity. Regarding the consequences of humanity's sin on the earth itself and its natural reaction due to its organic connection with humanity, who was made from

it, Scripture clearly testifies in many places (see, for example, Genesis 3:17-19; 4:10-12; Leviticus 18:25, 28; 20:22; Isaiah 24:4-6).

That is why, when God says that He will **"destroy"** the antediluvian world, He involves the earth itself as a leading factor in this process:

And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them: and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth. (Genesis 6:13)

Again we may ask, "Is the earth to blame for having to be destroyed with the people?" Of course not. But notice that this text again emphasizes the idea that the earth itself **"became filled with violence through them,"** and therefore the natural result when God allowed this to happen would be that people would be destroyed **"together" or "through the earth itself."** We see something else in this text: How is it that **"the end of all flesh"** has come before God? Does this not tell us that God in His wisdom can judge how much more iniquity must accumulate or be introduced by its inhabitants in order to set in motion the processes of its "explosion"? We see the same idea presented earlier, when, on the occasion of the heirs of the believers being carried away by the descendants of the wicked Cain (Genesis 6:2), God says:

My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is also flesh; therefore his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. (Genesis 6:3)

Is this an arbitrary amount of time that God gives humanity before drowning them in His wrath, or is He rather foreseeing how long it will take for people to completely expel the Spirit of God from their hearts? Let Scripture itself answer this question:

Will you hold to the ancient path, which sinners have trodden, who were cut off before time, whose foundations the flood has swept away? They said to God, "Depart from us!" And what will the Almighty do to them? (Job 22:15-17)

This text makes it clear that it was not God who directly destroyed the antediluvian inhabitants, but their persistent embrace of sin that led to these global, deadly "floods." We are told that **"their foundations"** were swept away by the flood. Interestingly, after presenting His Sermon on the Mount, in which Jesus restores the true principles of God's law, He presents the following parable, which speaks precisely of the foundations on which humanity builds:

Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and does them will be likened to a wise man who built his house on the rock; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be likened to a foolish man who built his house on the sand; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat on that house; and it fell, and great was its fall. (Matthew 7:24-27)

If we want the edifice of our lives to be built on the Rock, it is wise for us to listen to the Savior's sermon. And here is what it tells us regarding killing:

You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust... Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect. (Matthew 5:43-48)

Here, the Son of God presents the true picture of His Father, one that is freed from the gloomy notions of a God who drowns His enemies.

IV. 3. When the breach opens

And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah, and he slew him, because he put forth his hand to the ark. (1 Chronicles 13:10)

Uzzah and the Ark: Understanding God's "Wrath"

At first glance, it appears that God personally struck down Uzzah for daring to touch the ark of His commandments. Let's examine the full context of this incident:

And David went up with all Israel to Baalah, to Kiriath-jearim, which belongeth to Judah, to bring up from thence the ark of God, the LORD that dwelleth between the cherubim, who is called by his name. And they carried the ark of God upon a new cart out of the house of Abinadab; and Uzza and Ahio drave the cart. And David and all Israel played before God with all their might, with songs, and with harps, and with psalteries, and with timbrels, and with cymbals, and with trumpets.

And when they came to the threshing floor of Hedon, Uzzah put out his hand to take hold of the ark, for the oxen stumbled. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah, and he struck him down, because he put out his hand to the ark. And he died there before God. And David was displeased because the LORD had made a breach on Uzzah; and he called the name of that place Perez-uzzah, to this day. (1 Chronicles 13:6-11)

It's important to note that only specific Levites (the Kohathite tribe) were permitted to carry the ark of God (Numbers 4:15; 7:9), and Uzzah was not allowed to touch it. However, as we shall see, this was merely the final transgression in a series of accumulated iniquities.

When the ark first came to the house of Abinadab, the people consecrated his son Eliezer as priest "to keep the ark of the Lord" (1 Samuel 7:1). But now, when David sought to bring the ark to his city, Eliezer was absent, and

two other sons of Abinadab are mentioned: Ahio and Uzzah (1 Chronicles 13:7). The parallel account in the Book of Samuel indicates that Ahio was chosen to be in charge after Eliezer:

And Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, were driving the new cart that carried the ark of God, with Ahio going before the ark, and Uzzah walking next to it. (2 Samuel 6:4)

Uzzah's heart was moved by a spirit of rivalry. When the oxen stumbled, **"Uzzah put forth his hand, and took hold of the ark"** (1 Chronicles 13:9). Uzzah had been harboring feelings of jealousy toward his brother Ahio because Ahio had been chosen to replace their brother Eliezer. The problem was not with the ark of God itself, but with the person who came into contact with it, for later in the story we read that:

The ark of God remained with the household of Obed-edom in his house three months; and the LORD blessed the household of Obed-edom and all that he had. (1 Chronicles 13:14)

Uzzah had accumulated unconfessed sins. At least two elements in the text indicate that he had lost God's protection. The biblical expression "the burning of God's wrath" signifies that after repeated appeals and entreaties to the sinner, met with a stubborn desire to follow a lawless course, God, with great reluctance and sorrow, allows the individual to face the natural consequences of their choices. We will consider several situations where "God's wrath" is said to have been manifested to understand what the Scriptures mean by this expression:

Understanding Divine "Anger" in Scripture

And Moses said unto the LORD, O LORD, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. And the LORD said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh man dumb, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? is it not I, the LORD? Now go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say. And Moses said, O

LORD, send, I pray thee, whom thou wilt send. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses, and he said, Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak. And, behold, he cometh out to meet thee; and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart. (Exodus 4:10-14)

Instead of accepting God's will, Moses attempts to negotiate. Eventually, it is stated that **"the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses,"** and as a result, God permitted Moses to have what he asked for, even though it was not the optimal choice.

And the mixed multitude that was among them lusted after flesh: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat?... And Moses heard the people weeping throughout their families, every man in the door of his tent: and the anger of the LORD was kindled greatly. And it was evil in the sight of Moses. And there went out a wind from the LORD, and brought quails from the sea, and let them fall upon the camp, a day's journey on this side, and a day's journey on that side, round about the camp, and two cubits upon the face of the ground. And the people rose up all that day, and all that night, and all the next day, and gathered the quails. He that gathered least gathered ten baskets. And they spread them out for themselves to dry round about the camp. (Numbers 11:4, 10, 31-32)

In this instance, after God had provided the Israelites with heavenly manna, some desired meat. They grumbled and complained as if God did not care for them. After the Lord's anger was said to have flared, the result was that He sent them a vast quantity of the quail they craved. Some became so greedy in misusing this meat that they brought about their own death. Their death is also described as a result of God's anger, but another part of Scripture clarifies that it was due to the consumption of spoiled meat:

And while the meat was yet between their teeth, and before it was chewed, the anger of the LORD was kindled against the people, and

the LORD smote the people with a very great plague. (Numbers 11:33)

...But they lusted in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert. And he gave them their desire, but sent [Strong's Dictionary Heb. 7971 – contains the meaning of allowed] leanness upon their souls. (Psalms 106:14-15)

In the next example, the Jews desire a king like other nations. Although this signified the end of direct divine leadership and was not the best for the people, God agreed, later stating of this event, "**I gave them a king in My anger**":

Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel to Ramah. And they said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now therefore make us a king to judge us like all the nations. But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the LORD. And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. (1 Samuel 8:4-7)

This has destroyed you, O Israel, because you have rebelled against me, against your own help. Where is your king now, that he might save you in all your cities? Where are your judges, of whom you said, Give me a king and princes? I gave you a king in my anger, and took him away in my wrath. (Hosea 13:9-11)

This incident again defines the manifestation of God's wrath as God's **permission** for people to obtain what they desire, even when it is not beneficial for them. In fact, God Himself defines His wrath this way when He says:

And in that day my anger shall be kindled against them, and I will forsake them, and hide my face from them; and they shall be devoured, and many evils and sorrows shall come upon them. And

the people shall say in that day, Are not these evils come upon me, because my God is not among me? But I will surely hide my face in that day for all the evil that they have done, in that they are turned unto other gods. (Deuteronomy 31:17-18)

The captivity of the Jews resulted from their persistent sin, which drove God's protecting presence away from them. An example of such a case is found a little later in their history:

And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served the Baalim, and forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which had brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and worshipped them, and provoked the LORD to anger. So they forsook the LORD, and served Baal and the Ashtoreths. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he delivered them into the hand of spoilers, which spoiled them; and he delivered them into the hand of their enemies round about, so that they could no more stand before their enemies. (Judges 2:11-14)

These verses vividly describe the mechanism of the **"wrath of God,"** which is not a human loss of balance and self-control, but rather God's sorrowful allowance for His people to follow their own destructive paths.²² There are many other examples in the Old Testament where we see that the **"wrath of God"** functions as the process described above (Judges 2:11-14; 1 Kings 14:15–16; Psalm 78:58–62; Psalm 106:40–41; Isaiah 54:8; Jeremiah 7:15, 19–20, 29; 2 Kings 24:1 cf. 1 Chronicles 21:1).

The definition of the Lord's wrath is similar in the New Testament:

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness;... Therefore God gave them up to uncleanness in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among

²² The Hebrew word for anger (אַף, *af*, Strong's Dictionary Heb. No. 639) also means rapid breathing due to grief.

themselves... For this reason God gave them up to vile passions: for even their women exchanged natural use for that which is against nature. And likewise also the men, leaving natural use with women, burned in their lust one toward another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the due penalty of their error. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them up to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting,... (Romans 1:18, 24, 26-28)

It is clear that Scripture consistently presents this process of leaving individuals to the consequences of sin as a manifestation of God's wrath. This clearly demonstrates that Uzzah lost his protection by stubbornly pursuing his lawless ways. When this state is reached, the unrepentant individual is left to the "mercy" of Satan.

The "Breach" of Uzzah

The next element confirming this interpretation is found in the second verb used for the killing of Uzzah:

And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah, and he smote him, because he put forth his hand to the ark. And he died there before God. And David was displeased, because the LORD had smitten him." [Strong's Dictionary No. 6555 and No. 6556] Uzzah, and called that place Perez-uzzah, which is its name to this day. (1 Chronicles 13:10-11)

In the original Hebrew, there are two verbs here, designated in Strong's Dictionary with corresponding numbers 6555 (פָּרַץ, *parats*) and 6556 (פָּרַץ, *perets*). Here is their meaning:

- **No. 6555:** פָּרַץ (Transliteration: *pārats*) - Primary root; to open (in many uses, direct and indirect, literally and figuratively): - X out, (make) a **breach**, escape, **break**, breaker, take out, enter, overflow), burst (expand), force, disperse, grow, raise, open, press, urge.

- **No. 6556:** פָּרַץ (*perets*) - From Hebrew No. 6555; **breach** (literally or symbolically): - break an opening, knock out (inward), X, opening.

These verbs clarify that because of his unrepentance, Uzzah's protection was **breached**. He was thus placed in a situation where God's law, contained within the ark, revealed his sin. Because he did not repent of it, Satan demanded access to his life to destroy him, creating the impression that God had done it directly (Luke 12:20). It is possible that David understood something of this process, for he named the place "**Perez-uzzah**," which in the New International Version (derived from the original languages) is rendered as follows:

And David was displeased because the Lord had made a breach upon Uzzah: and he called that place The breach of Uzzah, unto this day. (1 Chronicles 13:11)

What does the story of Uzzah tell us about the character of our heavenly Father? It shows us that He is truly like His nonviolent Son, and there is no darkness in Him. It also reveals how the devil clothes God with the violent qualities of his own character to make us unwilling to be with God. The time has come for these deceptions to be fully exposed.

IV. 4. The Plagues in Egypt

And I will stretch out my hand, and smite Egypt with all my wonders which I will do in the midst of it: and after that he will let you go. (Exodus 3:20)

The Plagues of Egypt: A Reflection of Christ's Crucifixion

How can the plagues in Egypt be explained in light of the truth about the nonviolent character of our heavenly Father, as it radiates from the life of His Son on Earth? Let's begin by noting that, according to Scripture, **Christ was crucified in Egypt**:

And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. (Revelation 11:8)

This verse refers to the "two witnesses" and then adds that their Lord was crucified in the same place (Egypt). How is this possible? In fact, the Scriptures tell us that the killing of the Son of God due to sin began **from the foundation of the world**:

And all who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (Revelation 13:8)

Why is Christ "**the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world**"? This is because Lucifer's rebellion had already begun in heaven, and soon after, humanity joined in. Have we ever considered the immense cost to God and His Son to tolerate lawlessness in the universe? To their pure and sensitive hearts, it was torture and slavery:

...But you have burdened me with your sins, and you have wearied me with your iniquities. (Isaiah 43:24)

This is how the Father and the Son feel at the sight of human wickedness. After all, these wicked acts are performed by the power of God, for no one has any inherent power, not even Satan:

...for he himself gives to all life and breath and all things... for in him we live and move and have our being; (Acts 17:25-28)

Acknowledge the power of God!... (Psalms 68:34)

God has spoken once, and twice have I heard this, that power is of God. (Psalm 62:11)

The actions of all intelligent beings are carried out by the power of God. This also applies to the most serious crimes. There is no such thing as independent power; only the will of the person is independent, but the power itself belongs to God. In this way, we can more easily grasp how Christ was "crucified" from the very beginning of sin.

But how was He specifically crucified in Egypt? We find the answer in the two signs God gave to Moses concerning his mission:

And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they [the Israelites] will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The LORD hath not appeared unto thee. Then the LORD said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod. And he said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from the presence of it. And the LORD said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand, and took it, and it became a rod in his hand: that they may believe that the LORD God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee. And the LORD spake unto him further. (Exodus 4:1-5)

God performed the miracle of the rod turning into a serpent not only to reassure the Jews but also to illustrate the process of their deliverance from slavery in Egypt. The **rod is a symbol of Christ**, who is the power of God (Genesis 49:10 cf. 1 Corinthians 1:24). The dropping of the rod and its fall to the ground signifies that the power of God in Christ is, in a sense, separated from Him. The turning of the rod into a serpent signifies that **Satan would use this power to inflict the plagues**, because the Egyptians rejected God's entreaties through Moses. That is why it was through this

same rod that the initial signal for each of the plagues, except the last, was given (Exodus 7:17; 8:5, 16; 9:23; 10:13, 23).

The next miracle God gave to Moses also reveals the mechanism of the plagues through the crucifixion of Christ, but in a different way:

And the LORD said unto him, Put now thine hand into thy bosom. And he put his hand into his bosom: and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous, as white as snow. Then he said, Put thy hand into thy bosom again. And he put his hand into his bosom again: and when he took it out of his bosom, behold, it was restored as his other flesh. (Exodus 4:6-7)

The Son of God, as the **right hand of God**, becomes "leprous" because His power is used for actions that do not reflect His merciful character. Leprosy also causes insensitivity, which is the state Jesus is forced into when He sees His power used to harm His children.

The Plagues as a Consequence of Hardened Hearts

The crucifixion of Christ by the hardened Egyptians and by Satan was revealed in the plagues themselves. Through Joseph's recent sojourn in Egypt, they had received abundant light regarding the love of the true God and had witnessed His good dealings with them during the seven years of famine (Genesis 37; chs. 39-45). The famine itself was an indicator that, due to their wickedness, Egypt was increasingly falling under the power of Satan. But in His great mercy, Christ sent them help through Joseph and saved them from starvation. Soon after, however, the new Pharaoh turned his back on this glorious past and commanded his servants to enslave and oppress the Hebrews (Exodus 1:8-11).

God loved both the Hebrews and the Egyptians, for both were His children. With pain, our heavenly Father was compelled to abandon the Egyptians to the destructive designs of Satan. Each subsequent rejected request gave more and more rights to the evil powers. Thus, concerning the seventh plague, we read:

Behold, tomorrow about this time there will be a very heavy hail, such as has not been in Egypt since it was founded until now. Now therefore send now, and gather your livestock and all that you have in the field; for the hail will fall on every man and every beast that is found in the field and does not come home, and they will die. And he who feared the word of the LORD among Pharaoh's servants made his servants and his livestock go home; but he who did not take the word of the LORD to heart left his servants and his livestock in the field. Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be hail throughout all the land of Egypt, on man and beast and every herb of the field throughout the land of Egypt." And Moses stretched out his rod toward heaven, and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and fire ran down to the ground. And the LORD rained hail on the land of Egypt. And there was hail and fire running through the city, very severe hail, such as had not been in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. And the hail struck down throughout all the land of Egypt everything that was in the field, both man and beast; and the hail struck every herb of the field, and broke every tree of the field. Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, was there no hail. (Exodus 9:18-26)

Although it is stated as if God personally struck the Egyptians, the mechanism of this plague is revealed in the Psalms:

He gave their cattle over to hail, and their flocks to lightning. He poured out on them the fierceness of his anger, his fury, his indignation, and the plague of evil angels. (Psalm 78:48-49)

God's angels are not "angels of evil," for they reflect the loving character of Christ. As we will see in chapter six, even when they appear to be sent to destroy wicked people, the unfolding of the process shows that they do not use violence or destroy any human being.

Although a large "mixed multitude" came out of Egypt with the Jews, those who chose to persist in their iniquities became a kind of ransom before Satan for the salvation of God's people:

And a great mixed company went up with them, as well as very much livestock—sheep and oxen. (Exodus 12:38)

For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. I gave Egypt as your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for you. (Isaiah 43:3)

Of course, as mentioned earlier, this redemptive process was only possible because of the life of the Son of God. Even nature itself illustrated this during the plagues:

The 10 Plagues	The Cross of Christ
1. The serpentine rod is raised to strike the water, which turns to blood.	The bloody sweat in the garden. His betrayal by Judas and the men who came with him to seize Him with clubs (Luke 22:44; Matthew 26:49).
2. Frogs	They represent the lies by which Christ's judgment was secured (Matthew 26:60 cf. Revelation 16:13, 14).
3. Lice	The death sentence of Caiaphas (Isaiah 51:6; Matthew 26:65).
4. Biting flies	The accusatory words during the trial. The mocking and spitting, and the insults that were heaped upon Christ (Matthew 27:30).

The 10 Plagues	The Cross of Christ
5. Livestock	The bull represents the sacrificial animal that was going to death (John 19:16; Matthew 27:31).
6. Boils	The very piercing of Christ (Matthew 27:35, John 19:18).
7. The City (referring to the hail, which damaged crops and structures in the city/land)	The smiting of the firstfruits (Exodus 9:31; 1 Corinthians 15:23).
8. The Locusts	The mocking and stripping of Christ – the green tree. The insults and mockery of Christ on the cross (Matthew 27:39-44; Luke 23:31).
9. The Darkness	The Dark Hours of Christ - from the 6th to the 9th hour. "Jesus cried out, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?'" (Matthew 27:45, 46).
10. The Firstborn	The firstborn of God was killed on the cross (Matthew 27:50; Colossians 1:15-18).

It remains to be seen how the firstborn sons of the Egyptians, who refused to hide under the blood of the lamb, perished. Again, at first glance, it seems as if Jehovah Himself is striking them down:

[the Lord] will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; (Exodus 12:12)

But a little further down, the Lord reveals the mechanism of this destruction, in which He plays only the role of **Protector**, not destroyer:

For the LORD will pass through to strike the Egyptians, and when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to come into your houses to strike you. (Exodus 12:23)

Who is this destroyer who destroyed not only the Egyptians, but also the Jews and all others who lost God's protection because of their persistence in sin and rebellion?

Neither murmur ye, as some of them murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer [Gr. the serpent] (1 Corinthians 10:10)

Can we now, like the Galatians, see Christ clearly presented before us as crucified in Egypt?

O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ has been clearly portrayed as crucified? (Galatians 3:1)

Paul wrote his letter to the Galatians, a people who were not personally present at the crucifixion of Christ in Jerusalem, yet he says that He was clearly portrayed to them as crucified. So, indeed, Christ is clearly portrayed to us as crucified in Egypt.

IV. 5. Who is behind "If"?

And Moses said, Hereby ye shall know that the LORD hath sent me to do all these works, and that I do not do them of myself: If these die the death of all men, or if they are rewarded as all men are rewarded, then the LORD has not sent me. But if the LORD does something new—if the earth opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that belongs to them, and they go down alive into Sheol—then you will know that these people have despised the LORD. (Numbers 16:28-30)

Divine Justice and Human Misconceptions: Lessons from Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and Elijah

This text presents a selection of stories about the wandering Israelites in the desert, who constantly complained about the Lord and His appointed leaders. Here, they have reached the climax of their rebellion, in which three men—Korah, Dathan, and Abiram—begin to accuse Moses of manipulating the people. Here is the context of the story:

Then Korah the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, the sons of Reuben, took up their positions against Moses, and with him two hundred and fifty men of the children of Israel, princes of the congregation, who were called of the congregation, men of renown. And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, That ye have gone far enough: all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them. Why then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD? (Numbers 16:1-3)

In their arrogance, these individuals went so far as to present reality in a completely distorted way. They claimed the people were holy, that Moses and Aaron had appointed themselves over them, and that they had led Israel out of a land "flowing with milk and honey" into a desolate land (Numbers 16:14). The spirit of rebellion infected the entire society.

Then Moses was very angry and said to the LORD, "Do not look with favor on their offering! I have not taken one donkey from them, and I have not harmed any of them!" (Numbers 16:15)

It's understandable that Moses felt personally offended. After all, wasn't he the very man who had endured all their complaints and whims and constantly interceded for them before God? And now, instead of gratitude, they spat in his face.

And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, Get you up from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment. And they fell upon their faces, and said, O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, if one man shall sin, wilt thou be wroth with all the congregation? (Numbers 16:20-22)

Contrary to what many believe, here God is trying to evoke the intercessory Spirit through Moses and Aaron so that He may have the right to oppose the destroyer (Satan) who is demanding the lives of the rebels and all who have joined them. The effect is achieved when Moses and Aaron intercede for the people, but along with the execution of the judgment, Moses is tempted to defend his position as God's chosen leader:

And Moses said, Hereby ye shall know that the LORD hath sent me to do all these works, and that I have not done them of mine own self: if these die the death of all men, or if they be visited after the manner of all men, then the LORD hath not sent me. (Numbers 16:28-29)

God had once warned the prophet Samuel not to take the Israelites' complaints as a personal affront, telling him that they had rejected God from being king over them, not Samuel (1 Samuel 8:4-7). So now, although the accusations were directed at God's representatives, they were truly directed at God Himself, who had led them out of Egypt, with Moses and Aaron merely as intermediaries in the process. Moses, however, succumbed to the temptation to defend his identity as God's chosen one, and we can imagine how easy it must have been for a man under such pressure and responsible for a constantly discontented people.

His expressions **"if these die,"** and **"if they are rewarded,"** indicate that he is responding to the call of the kingdom of power, of which Satan is the ruler. We can see how even the Son of God Himself was tempted in this direction. At His baptism in the Jordan River, He heard God's words, **"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"** (Matthew 3:17), but a little later, during the temptations in the wilderness, Satan said to Him, **"If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread"** (Matthew 4:3). Do you see the magnitude of the problem of trying to prove your identity and value through external displays of power? This is the call of the kingdom of power. And Christ shows how it should be answered: **"It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God'"** (Matthew 4:4).

Jesus thus shows that we do not need to try to prove our worth, for God is the One who cares for His children. He has endowed us with every blessing in the Beloved (Ephesians 1:3, 6). Against the backdrop of this revelation of our true worth in the Son of God, Moses' intention stands out as a clear response to the call of the kingdom of power. This opens the door for Satan to intervene to present the case as if God Himself were killing these people:

But if the LORD does something new— if the earth opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that belongs to them, and they go down alive into Sheol—then you will know that these men have despised the LORD. And it came to pass, when he had spoken all these words, that the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, and their households, and all the men of Korah, and all that belonged to them. They went down alive into Sheol, and the earth closed over them, and they perished from among the congregation. (Numbers 16:30-33)

The Prophet Elijah and the Fire from Heaven

The next great figure who succumbed to the temptation to prove his identity through displays of power was the prophet Elijah. Called by God at a time when the northern kingdom of Israel was at its lowest spiritual point under wicked King Ahab and his wife Jezebel, who had killed God's prophets and brought a total of 850 of her prophets of Baal and Asherah into Israel (1 Kings 16:29-34; 18:19). Elijah appeared before the king and announced that **"there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except at my word"** (1 Kings 17:1). For 3 ½ years, no rain fell on the land. During this time, the prophet was miraculously fed and protected by God (1 Kings 17:3-16). At the end of this period, he returned and commanded the king to gather all Israel to Mount Carmel, as well as Jezebel's prophets. Then he challenged them to prove that Baal was the true God, but after their meaningless and humiliating rituals failed, it was Elijah's turn to prove that Jehovah was the true God.

He repaired the altar of God, placed the sacrifice, and commanded the Israelites to pour water all around the altar. Then he spoke these words:

LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel! Let it be known this day that You are God in Israel, and that I am Your servant, and that at Your word I have done all these things! Answer me, LORD! Answer me, that this people may know that You, LORD, are God, and that You have turned their hearts back to You! Then fire fell from the LORD and consumed the burnt offering, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces, and said, The LORD, He is God! The LORD, He is God! (1 Kings 18:36-39)

Elijah expected his prayer to be answered by fire from heaven, not only to make it clear who the true God was, but also to confirm that he was His prophet. Here again we have a connection with the desire to prove identity through displays of power. Elijah believed that he was the only surviving prophet of God, and in such a situation, relying solely on God was indeed very difficult (1 Kings 18:22).

After this spectacle, Elijah ordered all the false prophets whom he personally killed to be brought to him (1 Kings 18:40). None of them repented of their sins, and God allowed Elijah's sense of justice and desire for vengeance to remove these men from the midst of Israel, so that they would not continue to perpetuate idolatry in the land.

Now Elijah told the king that rain was coming and he went to Mount Carmel to pray to God for it. Ahab went home and told his wife what Elijah had done to her prophets. It is not difficult to imagine that the wicked queen was furious at this news and sent word to Elijah that the next day she would do to his life the same thing he had done to her prophets. The hitherto fearless prophet was terrified. The use of the sword leads to fear of the sword. He fled into the wilderness and begged God to take his life because he felt that he was **"no better than his fathers"** (1 Kings 19:4). Apparently, deep down he sensed that something was wrong in the reformation.

God graciously sent an angel who provided him with food twice to prepare him for his long journey to Mount Horeb, the place where God gave His commandments to Israel through Moses (1 Kings 19:8 cf. Deuteronomy 4:10-13). The journey lasted 40 days, reflecting the time Moses spent in the presence of the Lord (Exodus 24:18). When he arrived at the mountain, Elijah spent the night in a cave, and then the Word of the Lord came to him:

What are you doing here, Elijah? And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts; because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword. I only am left, and they seek my life to take it away. Then he said, Go out, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD: but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake: but the LORD was not in the earthquake: and after the earthquake a fire: but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a sound as of a still breath. And it came to pass, when Elijah heard it, that he covered his face with his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the

cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, saying, What doest thou here, Elijah? And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword. I only am left, and they seek my life, to take it away. And the LORD said unto him, Go, return... and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah anoint thee to be prophet in thy room. (1 Kings 19:9-16)

God's merciful character takes the lead in the manifestation of power, and Elijah was expected to simply trust God rather than seek Him to answer Him with fire. Elijah failed to fully understand the lesson, and so he responded exactly as he had said at the beginning. He was instructed to anoint Elisha as his successor, who would receive a **"double portion"** of Elijah's spirit, more accurately revealing the Father's true character in his mission and his attitude toward his enemies (2 Kings 6:20-23 cf. Matthew 5:43-48).

Yet in His mercy the Lord rewarded Elijah soon afterward by taking him to heaven in a chariot of fire (2 Kings 2:1-12). The prophet served God faithfully according to his conscience in a time of terrible spiritual decline and ignorance concerning the character of the true God.

Before being taken to God, however, Elijah again called down fire from heaven—this time on 102 people:

Then the king sent to him a captain of fifty with his fifty. And he went up to him, and, behold, Elijah was sitting on the top of the hill. And he said unto him, O man of God, thus saith the king, Come down. And Elijah answered and said unto the captain of fifty, If I be a man of God, let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And there came fire down from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty. And the king sent unto him again another captain of fifty with his fifty. And he spake unto him, O man of God, thus saith the king, Come down quickly. And Elijah answered and said unto them, If I be a man of God, let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And the fire of God came down from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty. (2 Kings 1:9-12)

Did you notice again the self-identifying "if" that opened the door for Satan to tarnish God's character? It is not surprising then that the Son of God would rebuke his disciples who invoked this incident to take revenge on the Samaritans:

And [Jesus] sent messengers before his face, who went and entered a village of the Samaritans to make ready for him. But they did not receive him, because his face was set for Jerusalem. When his disciples James and John saw this, they said, "Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?" But he turned and rebuked them, saying, "You do not know what kind of spirit you are of; for the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." (Luke 9:52-55)

At this point, we can easily see who more accurately represented God's character: Elijah or the Son of God. Let us open our hearts to His Spirit, for thus the still, small voice of God's character will be revealed in our lives, which is better and more effective than all the elements and manifestations of power:

Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the LORD of hosts.
(Zechariah 4:6)

IV. 6. Sodom and Gomorrah

Then the LORD rained down on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven. He destroyed those cities and all the surrounding area, all the inhabitants of the cities and the plants of the land. (Genesis 19:24-25)

Reinterpreting the Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah: Divine Wrath or Natural Consequence?

At first reading, it seems clear that the Lord directly rained fire from heaven on Sodom and Gomorrah. But we must follow the rules for interpreting the Bible that God has revealed in it itself:

Search in the book of the LORD, and read: none of these shall be missing, neither shall they lack her mate: for my mouth hath commanded, and his Spirit hath gathered them together. (Isaiah 34:16)

For [the Lord] gives commandment upon commandment, commandment upon commandment, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little. (Isaiah 28:10)

All the texts on a subject must be gathered and synchronized to ensure we haven't misunderstood the specific story. As we saw in the story of Job, God can speak of Himself as the direct perpetrator of destruction without actually being one (Job 2:3). And Job's own servant reports what happened as "fire from God fell from heaven" (Job 1:16), when the book clearly identifies Satan as the source of that fire.

Let's now examine in detail what happened in Sodom and Gomorrah:

The whole land is burned with brimstone and salt, so that it is neither sown nor grows, and no grass grows on it, as when the Lord overthrew {HStrong 4114} Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim, in his anger and in his wrath. (Deuteronomy 29:23)

When Moses describes the fate of those cities, he uses two verbs, translated here as "destroy" and "overthrew." While the first (Heb. 4114, *mahpêkâh*) tends to mean destruction, the second (Heb. 2015, *hâphak*) means something different:

Heb. 2015 הפחך *hafak*: primary root; to turn or turn; by implication to {change} overturn {return} pervert: - X {became} {changed} {come} be {turned} {give} make [bed] throw away ({-overturn}) {pervert} {withdraw} {overturn} turn ({again} {aside} {back} in {back} every way).

This word sheds light on the method of destruction, which is associated with a kind of reversal or overturning. The text also says that the Lord did this reversal "in his anger and in his wrath," which, as we saw earlier, Scripture defines as the **hiding of His face** (Jeremiah 33:5). Sodom and Gomorrah were "left" to "reap what they had sown." On that day, the same fate befell two other cities, Admah and Zeboiim.

How can I give you up, O Ephraim? How can I forsake you, O Israel? How can I make you like Admah, and set you like Zeboiim? My heart is turned within me, all my mercies are aroused. (Hosea 11:8)

Thus, it becomes clear that the inhabitants of these cities brought this calamity upon themselves:

The expression of their faces testifies against them; they declare their sin like Sodom, they do not hide it. Woe to their soul, for they have done evil to themselves! (Isaiah 3:9)

To understand how the iniquity of these cities returned upon them, we will use the key to God's mystery—the cross of Christ:

And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom declaring unto you the mystery of God: For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. (1 Corinthians 2:1, 2)

The natural person often thinks that for God to be willing to forgive our sins, Christ must be smitten by Him on the cross. This is because they see in God's law not the character of God, but their own natural face (James 1:23).

And He [Christ] Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. (Isaiah 53:4)

The truth is that, like the plagues in Egypt, Christ, the power of God, was **crucified in Sodom through the very sins of the people there:**

And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. (Revelation 11:8)

Christ is crucified in the lives of all the inhabitants of these wicked cities because they chose to use His power for the basest of purposes. Like the flood, the waves of the iniquity of these people accumulated in the earth and atmosphere to the point where they could no longer be contained. Therefore, when Jesus speaks of the flood and the judgment upon Sodom and Gomorrah, He does not mention His Father or Himself as their direct cause:

"...They were eating, drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise, as it also happened in the days of Lot; they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building. But on the day that Lot went out of Sodom, fire and brimstone rained down from heaven and destroyed them all... (Luke 17:26-30)

The sins of Sodom and Gomorrah accumulated in the earth and atmosphere, preparing the ignition of the natural elements.

The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof: for they have transgressed the laws, they have not kept the commandment, they have broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore the curse hath

devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are found guilty: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned up, and few men are left. (Isaiah 24:6-7)

Similar processes develop in the practice of sexual depravity such as that in Sodom and Gomorrah, and for this reason, the Lord reveals that the land itself "**vomited out**" the Canaanites (Leviticus 18:25-28). The laws of the land, which God had given for good, thus became an instrument for the self-destruction of criminals.

The Cry of the Earth and the Nature of Destruction

God felt the vibrations of the defiled land, and this explains why He heard a cry coming from the land of Sodom and Gomorrah:

And the Lord said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous, I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me: and if not, I will know. (Genesis 18:20-21)

The tremors of the iniquity of Sodom and Gomorrah became a loud cry in the ears of our Creator. By the drastically changed vibrations of the earth beneath those cities, God sensed that something very disturbing was happening and that these people were about to bring about their own end, through their iniquity, without even suspecting it, and He came down to try to help them. How terrible must this cry of depravity and iniquity of Sodom and Gomorrah have been to the sensitive heart of our Father, when, like the murder of the one righteous Abel, which caused the earth to echo, it caused God to say this to Cain:

Genesis 4:10 What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground.

Do we sense the suffering of the Father and His Son in these words? The tremors of one man's iniquity painfully reach their hearts, and what storm can the accumulated and concentrated wickedness of the population of

five cities cause? The scriptures inform us that oil deposits were located in the area of these cities:

Now the Valley of Siddim was full of tar pits, and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled and fell into them, and the rest fled to the mountain. (Genesis 14:10)

The following archaeological information can give us more insight into how those cities were destroyed by their own wickedness:

The Bible gives a detailed description of the disaster that befell the Cities of the Plain. In this description are two Hebrew phrases and a Hebrew word that must be considered in order to understand the event: *goprit vas* (the material that fell on the cities, Gen. 19:24), *hapak* (what happened to the cities, v. 25), and *kitor haqibsan* (what Abraham observed, Gen. 19:28). The word *goprit* is a foreign loanword, most likely derived from the Akkadian *ki/ubritu*, meaning sulfur oil (**black brimstone**) (Gentry 1999). The word accompanying *goprit*, *us es*, simply means "and fire." In other words, the material that fell on Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities of the plain (except Zoar) was a **burning petroleum product**. The term *hapak* means to overturn or overthrow. When Abraham looked down at the place of desolation, he saw smoke rising from the land of the plain, *kehitor haqibsan*, "like the smoke of a furnace"... ²³

This explains why Amos and Peter say that the Lord destroyed the land of Sodom and Gomorrah:

I overthrew your cities, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and you were like a brand plucked out of the fire. Yet you have not returned to me, declares the LORD. (Amos 4:11)

²³ <http://www.biblearchaeology.org/post/2008/04/The-Discovery-of-the-Sin-Cities-of-Sodom-and-Gomorrah.aspx>

Likewise, if He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction, turning them into ashes, He made them an example to those who would later practice ungodliness. (2 Peter 2:6)

The destruction occurred when the Son of God could no longer groan in pain under the burden that the Sodomites had imposed on creation. But how are we to explain what the angels said to Lot?

For we will destroy the place, because the outcry against it has become so great before the LORD that the LORD has sent us to destroy it. (Genesis 19:13)

The Lord wanted to give these people one last chance before they destroyed themselves, and He did this by sending angels. The light that the Lord gave to the Sodomites through Lot was largely overshadowed by his compromising adaptation to the culture of these people. For example, in an attempt to save his guests, he was willing to give his daughters to these wicked people.

And the two angels came to Sodom in the evening. And Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and when Lot saw them, he rose up to meet them, and bowed himself with his face to the ground, and said, Behold, my lords, turn aside, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and tomorrow ye shall rise up, and go on your way. And they said, Nay; but we will tarry all night in the street. But he urged them, and they turned aside unto him, and went into his house. And he made them a feast, and baked unleavened bread, and they did eat. But before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both young and old, all the people, from every quarter of the city, compassed the house round. And they cried unto Lot, Where are the men which came in unto thee this night? Bring them out unto us, that we may know them. And Lot went out to them at the door, and shut the door after him, and said, I pray you, my brethren, do not so wickedly: behold, I have two daughters, which have not known man; let me bring them out, and do unto them as ye see fit: only unto these men do nothing; for that is why they came under my roof. (Genesis 19:1-7)

We notice that because the angels came to Sodom in the form of men, the Sodomites revealed the corruption of their evil hearts by seeking sexual relations with them. The blindness that came upon them was a warning to repent and stop doing this. Their refusal to repent brought them to the climax of their guilt, and this condemned the city. **No hand was laid upon the city—the very defilement of the city destroyed them.**

For the punishment of the iniquity of the daughter of my people is greater than the punishment of the sin of Sodom, which was overthrown in a moment, without hands. (Lamentations 4:6)

The angels knew that their merciful call to repentance to the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah would turn them (Heb. 2015, *hâphak*) completely and thus lead to their destruction, but at this last critical moment, they had to give them this final chance to repent before they had crossed the line beyond which they would have lost the ability to do so. Other cases in which God's angels appear to destroy people are explained in a similar way (2 Kings 19:35; Acts 12:23).

The Lord waited for them, grieved for them, until the last chance for repentance disappeared:

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some count slowness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

This means that when Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed, there was no one who could have come to repentance. They are the ones who no longer heard the voice of mercy, because God could not send them any more light to help them.

This event in Sodom and Gomorrah is set as a model for the way the judgments will come after the thousand years, which we will examine in the next chapter:

Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, in like manner as they gave themselves over to fornication, and went after

strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. (Jude 1:7)

IV. 7. The End of the Wicked

And they [the wicked] went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down (from God) out of heaven, and devoured them. (Revelation 20:9)

The Consuming Fire: Reconciling Divine Judgment with God's Nonviolent Character

For many people, the description of the fiery judgment after the thousand years in Revelation is the final, irrefutable proof that God directly kills. A superficial reading of Scripture, especially when combined with a text like Revelation 14:11—"And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, which worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name"—can easily lead to the conclusion that God not only kills, but also that hell will last forever.

However, the greatest contradiction in an interpretation that presents God as a direct executioner of the wicked in a fiery hell is the very life of Jesus Christ. Christ came to fully reveal the character of His Father, and when we look at His life on Earth, we can know for certain what God is like:

Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known me, Philip? He who has seen me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show me the Father'?" (John 14:9)

I have glorified you on the earth: I have finished the work which you gave me to do.... I have manifested your name to the men whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. (John 17:4, 6)

While on Earth, Christ did not kill anyone. Whatever event is described in Revelation chapter 20, it cannot be in conflict with the revelation that the Son of God gave about His Father while on Earth. With this in mind, we will

examine the factors that contribute to the events of Revelation 20:7-10, as described throughout the Bible. Several interrelated factors are involved in the process of final destruction:

1. **The Word and the Mirror of Nature:** The Scriptures tell us that God (1) created the world by His Word, (2) continues to sustain it by that same Word, and (3) that Word is His only begotten Son (Psalm 33:6, 9; John 1:1-3, 14; Colossians 1:15-17). If everything "holds together" through the Son of God, this means that without the constant operation of His power, complete chaos would ensue. But sin disrupts the order maintained by this power.
2. **The Relationship Between Man and the Earth:** Adam, as the master of earthly creation, is in an organic connection with it:

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth... (Genesis 1:26)

After Adam fell into sin, the Earth and everything on it began to reflect his rebellion against God. This explains phenomena such as animal predation, poisonous and weedy vegetation, etc.

And unto the man he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth unto thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. (Genesis 3:17, 18)

The Earth and everything on it are a mirror of humanity. When man sins, nature reflects this in an unerring way, embodying the principle of "what you sow, so shall you reap."

3. **The Mirror of the Law:** The same process that led to the flood of water will also lead to the flood of fire after the thousand years.

Just as the first was caused by the crucifixion of the living Word of God, so the second will be caused by a similar process.

For they willfully ignore this, that by the word of God there were heavens and an earth standing together out of water and in the midst of water, by which the world that then was, being deluged with water, perished. So also by the same word the heavens and the earth that are now are kept in store for fire, reserved unto the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. (2 Peter 3:5-7)

The Final Judgment: Consequences of Sin, Not Divine Infliction

When the wicked are resurrected after the thousand years, God and His Son are revealed to them in all their glory (Revelation 20:11, 12). As the living Word of God, Jesus is the embodiment of the principles of God's law of love. But this same love, which works salvation for all repentant sinners, proves to be a "smell of death" to the wicked:

But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us makes manifest the fragrance of the knowledge of Him in every place. For we are to God a sweet aroma of Christ in those who are being saved and in those who are perishing. To the one we are a fragrance of death leading to death, but to the other a fragrance of life leading to life. And who is able to do this? (2 Corinthians 2:14-16)

Note that it is not love that changes its qualities, for it is the same fragrance to both classes of people, but its effect depends on the person before whom it is revealed. This process is explained by the fact that when the wicked see God as He is—absolute unselfish love—in the light of that presence, their sins are revealed in all their hideousness. Their self-deception is swept away by the pure light of truth, and thus the deadly results of sin are brought upon them, confirming that **"the wages of sin is death"** (Romans 6:23). If God were the direct source of this death, then the verse would say that God's wages for sin is death. But God is not the source of death. Therefore, by allowing sin to burn the wicked, death itself ceases to exist:

And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. (Revelation 20:14)

If God were the direct perpetrator of the judgment, then death would be immortalized in God. But we know that in our heavenly Father there is no darkness at all:

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. (James 1:17)

And this is the message which we have heard from him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. (1 John 1:5)

Our loving Father gave His precious Son over to a death that came for our sins—a death from which His Son would never have been resurrected if He had committed even one sin. He did this so that we could be treated as His Son deserved, that is, live forever. But because God does not force anyone to accept the substitutionary death of His Son, there will be a second death:

And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and 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 out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire: which is the second death. (Revelation 20:11-15)

This text comes right after the description of the fire consuming the wicked, which is the subject of our consideration. It is an explanation of these verses, for it repeats the event, but in a different way. This shows that the judgment comes from the manifestation of the character of the One seated on the great white throne. It is also important to note that

those who receive the judgment are called dead (although they are resurrected), and this is so because they are **"dead in trespasses and sins"** (Ephesians 2:1, 2, 5). Therefore, their judgment is simply a manifestation of what has already happened to them spiritually. Death and hell are also cast into the lake of fire, which means that the judgment could not have been carried out directly by God; otherwise, in His person, death would have been immortalized instead of being cast into the lake of fire.

And if any man hear my words, and keep them not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. (John 12:47-48)

So too, after the thousand years, the wicked perish from spiritual suffering upon full realization of the nature of their sins in the face of God's wonderful character, and the burning of their bodies in physical fire is only an outward expression of this.

In Revelation 20:7-9, Satan persuades the wicked to attack the golden city, the New Jerusalem, where the redeemed are, and inspires them with his own spirit of hatred against Christ. The countless soldiers of this army prepare to take the city, ignoring its open gates. Their conduct fully proves that they would never repent.

By a life of rebellion, Satan and all who join him place themselves so out of harmony with God and His true character that His very presence proves to them a consuming fire. As Paul wrote, quoting Deuteronomy 4:24: **"For our God is a consuming fire"** (Hebrews 12:29). The glory of Him who is love will destroy them. But what is the glory of God?

Then Moses said, "Show me, I pray thee, thy glory." And the Lord said to him, "I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and will proclaim before thee the name of the Lord; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." (Exodus 33:18-19)

And the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood there with him, and proclaimed the name of the Lord (character). And the Lord went before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth. (Exodus 34:5-6)

God's glory is His loving character. It is God's nature of perfect love. His goodness is what consumes the wicked. The manifestation of God's holy and merciful character exposes sin in its true nature and completely releases its destructive nature:

Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to the wrath of God; for it is written, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says the Lord." Therefore, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by doing so you will heap burning coals on his head." (Romans 12:19, 20)

How do we read this text? Is God here teaching us not to do evil to our enemies because we are taking away His opportunity to do so? If something we do is evil and God does the exact same thing, does the evil thing suddenly become good? But Jesus tells us that God requires us to treat those who hate us with love, because in doing so we show that we are God's children, doing His will and reflecting His character (Matthew 5:42-48).

To the redeemed, the manifestation of God's *agape* character is a savor unto life; but to the rest, these scenes are a consuming fire that will torment their souls just as deeply as they have allowed sin to penetrate them, and just as closely as they have known that glory but have chosen to turn their backs on it. Here is shown the source of the suffering of the wicked. When God spoke of the fall of Lucifer, He showed whence this spiritual fire came.

You have defiled your sanctuaries by the multitude of your iniquities, by the unrighteousness of your trade: therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of you, which shall devour you, and I will reduce

you to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that see you.
(Ezekiel 28:18)

In the beginning, this fire was lit in the heart of Lucifer through his wickedness, but after the millennium, the presence of Him who is love and light will fully manifest it:

Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death, and jealousy is cruel as hell: the burning thereof is a fiery flame, a flame of fire that burneth. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the rivers drown it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would be utterly despised.
(Song of Songs 8:6-7)

The fiery love from our Father's presence will draw out all of Satan's unholy passions, and that fire will reduce him to ashes, as well as all others who have been grafted into him through sin (Malachi 4:3).

...Who among us can dwell with devouring fire? Who among us can dwell with everlasting burnings? (Isaiah 33:14)

Most of Christendom would answer that the wicked are the ones who live in "eternal burnings." But let Isaiah continue, answering his own question in the next verse:

He who walks uprightly and speaks uprightly, who despises the gain of violence, who shakes his hands from taking bribes, who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed, and shuts his eyes from seeing evil.
(Isaiah 33:15)

Those who have accepted Jesus and His righteousness will live in the eternal fire of God's love.

V. The Prophecy

Therefore we hold the prophetic word more firmly, and you do well to pay attention to it as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the daystar rises in your hearts.

(2 Peter 1:19)

V. 1. The Son of God and the Metal Image

Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner. This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes'?... And whoever falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, and on whomever it falls, it will crush him." (Matthew 21:42, 44)

Daniel's Prophecy: Earthly Kingdoms vs. The Kingdom of God

The book of Daniel, chapter 2, takes us to "the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar" (Daniel 2:1), which historians believe was 605 B.C.E. The king has a stirring dream but forgets it. He calls his advisors and astrologers and demands not only an interpretation but also that they tell him what the dream was (Daniel 2:1-4). They admit their inability to do so, and in his anger, the king issues a death decree against all the wise men, including Daniel (Daniel 2:5-12). Daniel asks the king for a reprieve and prays with his friends about the problem (Daniel 2:13-18). The answer comes in the form of a night vision, for which Daniel thanks God (Daniel 2:19-23).

Daniel was brought before the king and told him his dream. The king was amazed. He had dreamed of a magnificent image with body parts made of different metals: a head of gold, breasts and shoulders of silver, a belly of copper, and legs of iron (Daniel 2:31-33). However, the feet with their 10 toes were a mixture of iron and clay (Daniel 2:33). Then, in the dream, the king's attention was drawn to a stone that was cut out of a large mountain and "struck the image on its feet of iron and clay and crushed them" along with all the other elements of the image (Daniel 2:34, 45). A magnificent sight, but what did all this mean?

Now that Daniel had revealed the king's dream, Nebuchadnezzar was prepared to trust the interpretation. Daniel explained that the metal parts represented kingdoms:

- **Head of Gold:** Babylon (605-539 B.C.E.)
- **Breasts of Silver:** Medo-Persia (539-331 B.C.E.)

- **Belly of Bronze:** Greece (331-168 B.C.E.)
- **Two Legs of Iron:** Rome — the Western and Eastern empires (168 B.C.E. - 476 A.D.).

Next came spiritual Rome (the papacy), which enjoyed the "iron" power of its predecessor but introduced the fragile religious element of church power (Jeremiah 18:6). The division into two factions is also manifested here between the Western and Eastern Churches. The ten toes represent the "fragmented" Europe — the result of the invasion and raids of the barbarian tribes during the great migration of peoples (Daniel 2:36-43). And then the appearance of the stone from heaven is explained as the rise of the kingdom of God in the place of the world empires (Daniel 2:44, 45).

The four principal kingdoms of the Earth are represented by metals in descending order of value: gold, silver, copper, iron. This is an eloquent way to demonstrate the moral fall of the nations who rejected God's call. That is why in the divine temple the gradation in the knowledge of God's character is reflected by the same metals, but in ascending order of value (from copper to gold). The path from the court to the Most Holy Place of the sanctuary reflects a movement toward a truer understanding of God's character as revealed through the life of His Son on Earth.

The stone cut out "without hands" is the Lord Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:20), "whose origin is from eternity" (Micah 5:2) and whose Father (the mountain, Daniel 2:45) is the eternal God (Ephesians 3:14). Thus, the relational (family) kingdom of God is presented in contrast to the metals wrought in a proud image, measuring their value by power.

It is no coincidence that the head of the metal image is Babylon. Thus, all other kingdoms are an extension of it and are driven by the same ideology. In Satan's kingdom, value is determined by power and achievement (Ezekiel 28:17; Luke 22:24-30). Therefore, success leads to pride, and failure to despair or depression. Nimrod, the founder of Babylon, introduces a new system of government and values:

"And Cush begat Nimrod. He began to be a mighty one on the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the LORD; therefore it is said, Even

Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD. He reigned first over Babylon, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. From that land he went forth into Assyria, and built Nineveh, and Rehoboth-Ir, and Calah, and Resen between Nineveh and Calah (the same is the great city)." (Genesis 10:8-12)

With the establishment of the kingdom of Nimrod, the whole ancient world entered a new historical stage. The Oriental tradition, which made this soldier the **first to wear a royal crown**, points to a fact of greater importance than the mere adoption of a new ornament in dress, or even the conquest of a province. His reign introduced the world into a **new system of relations between ruler and ruled**. The authority of the previous rulers rested on the feeling of kinship, and the acceptance of power by the chief was a form of **parental control**. Nimrod, however, was the supreme ruler of a territory and a people, precisely in proportion as they were its inhabitants, regardless of personal relations. Hitherto there had been tribes — extended families — society; now there was a nation, a political society — a **state**. (A. T. Jones. The Empires of the Bible. 1904, p. 51)

This insight clearly shows the contrast between the family (stone) kingdom of God and the power-based governments of earthly kingdoms. These are two types of kingdoms with completely different value systems. In the kingdom of God, value is determined by the blessing role of the father (Proverbs 17:6), who is the image of God (1 Corinthians 11:7a), and the strength of his authority over children is determined by the submission of the wife, who is the glory of the man (1 Corinthians 11:7b; Ephesians 5:22), just as Christ is the glory of the Father (Hebrews 1:3).

The Cornerstone and the End of Earthly Kingdoms

Jesus' parable of the wicked tenants (Matthew 21:33-46) tells of a landowner who planted a vineyard and leased it to tenants while he traveled abroad. When the time came for the harvest, the landowner sent his servants to gather the fruit. But they were met with hatred and

violence. Later, he sent other servants, but they were treated similarly (Matthew 21:34-36).

"Last of all he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will be ashamed of my son at least.'" (Matthew 21:37)

But they decided to kill him and seize his inheritance. It is easy to guess that the householder in this parable represents the Father, the cultivators are the religious leaders of Israel (Matthew 21:45, 46), and the vineyard is the people themselves, who were expected to bring forth the fruits of righteousness (Isaiah 5:1-7). The servants are God's prophets who were sent in ancient times to hold the religious leaders accountable for the moral fruitage of the people, but were killed at their command. The Son, of course, is Christ, the only begotten of God (John 3:16, 18). Interestingly, at the end of the parable, the Son of God again compares Himself to a stone, and this is the very text with which we began:

"Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner. This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes'" (Matthew 21:42)

The reason our world cannot continue to exist as it is is because it has rejected its original foundation.

... And whoever falls on this stone will be broken, but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder." (Matthew 21:42, 44)

When we commit ourselves to living the Christian life, we "fall upon this Stone" and our proud self dies. Then, like Paul, "it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the body I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20, King James Version). The sonship of Christ is represented by the prophet Zechariah through the symbol "Shaken" and again "Stone," through which iniquity will one day be "cleansed" (Zechariah 3:8-9). This is done through the sacrifice of Christ, and therefore the description given by Zechariah includes the fact that this stone has seven eyes, which is a direct reference

to the slain Lamb who alone has the authority to open the book of earthly history (Revelation 5:1-9).

So, according to this prophecy, we are before the very end of Satan's kingdom of power - the time of a divided Europe, when the fragile foundation of this world will be "broken" and replaced by the true cornerstone. For if the proud image dreamed of by the king of Babylon represents the temple of this world, then it cannot stand for eternity, since its builders have neglected its very foundation - the only begotten Son of God:

And when Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi [where the pagan temple of the god Pan was situated, the vestibule of which was called the "gates of hell"], he asked his disciples, saying to them, "Who do men say that the Son of Man is?" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist; others, Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets." And he said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I say to you, that you are Peter, and on this rock [not the sinful Peter, but the Son of God] I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I will give unto thee the keys [Christ's teachings] of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. (Matthew 16:13-19)

When we accept and live the true family principles and teachings of the kingdom of God, implanted in us by the Spirit of the Son, we build our lives on an unshakable foundation, and no storm can topple such a church or individual:

So then you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole

building, framed together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God through the Spirit. (Ephesians 2:19-22)

The prophetic message in Daniel chapter 2 invites all of us to become subjects of this eternal kingdom, which is based on true love. A love that, in the days of eternity incomprehensible to us, gave birth to a Son endowed with all the dignity of divine qualities and perfection. A love that then agreed to tear Him from Her womb to send Him to Earth to show us how much She loves all of humanity and desires to save us and preserve us for eternal life.

For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light, because their deeds were evil. (John 3:16-19)

Refusing to accept our heavenly Father's invitation would lead to the natural consequences described in the second part of this verse:

"...but on whomever the stone falls, it will crush him." (Matthew 21:44)

The falling of the stone is the approaching Second Coming of Christ, which the Scriptures present as follows:

For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be... Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. (Matthew 24:27-31)

For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words. (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18)

If we choose to reject Heaven's invitation to a new life and remain in our sins, it will make us so incompatible with the kingdom of Heaven that we will not be able to endure the loving presence of Christ when He returns to this Earth. It is not He, but our own guilt awakened in His loving presence that will destroy us (2 Thessalonians 1:9). Therefore, now is the time to respond to the adopting influence of Christ's Spirit, which is preparing us to live forever in our true homeland.

V. 2. The Son of Man and the Beasts

I said in my heart, God will judge the righteous and the wicked, for there is a time for every purpose and for every work. I said in my heart, "This is because of the work of the sons of men, that God may test them, that they may see that they are beasts without God." (Ecclesiastes 3:17, 18)

Prophecy and Judgment: From Earthly Kingdoms to Divine Justice

In Daniel 7, the same kingdoms are foretold as in Daniel 2, but from the perspective of the cruelty and rapacity of fallen human nature, contrasted with that of the Son of Man, who elevates humanity by descending to its level (Daniel 7:4-8 cf. 7:13). Created "a little lower than the angels" and above the beasts, humanity was called to spiritual and moral growth, equating it with the angels (Psalm 8:5; Genesis 1:28 cf. Luke 20:36). But the degradation of the Fall has in no small measure lowered us to the level of the animals, making us "children of wrath" (Ephesians 2:3). Therefore, we are invited to turn and "put on" Christ, the new Man (Ephesians 4:24), for though in Adam we died to sin, in Christ we shall live to righteousness:

For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead has come through a man. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all will be made alive. (1 Corinthians 15:21-22)

Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned, according to the transgression of Adam, who is a type of the One to come. But the gift is not like the transgression; for if by the offense of the one many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to the many. And the gift is not like the judgment that came by the offense of the one; for the judgment came by the offense of the one to condemnation, but the gift came by the offense of many to justification. For if by the offense of the one death reigned by the offense of the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life

by the One, Jesus Christ. So then, just as by one offense condemnation came to all men, so also by one righteous act justification came to all men and life. For as by the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also by the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous. (Romans 5:14-19)

Here, Daniel himself dreams a vision, and so besides the many similarities with the dream of the pagan Nebuchadnezzar, there are also differences that provide information about the fate of God's people at the end of time. The authority of all nations will be given to them through the Son of Man, because they have allowed God to shape them in His image:

I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven one like a Son of Man came and came to the Ancient of Days; and they brought Him before Him. And there was given to Him dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not pass away, and His kingdom is a kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.... These great beasts, which are four, are four kings that shall arise out of the earth. But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever and ever.... I beheld when this horn made war with the saints and prevailed against them, until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High, and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom... And he (the little horn) shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and law; and they shall be given into his hand for a time, and times, and half a time (1260 literal years); But the judgment shall sit, and his dominion shall be taken away, to consume and to destroy it. And the kingdom, and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him. (Daniel 7:13, 14, 18, 22, 27)

This concept is also confirmed by the description of the first beast (Babylon), which **"was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: and when they**

beheld it, his wings were plucked, and he was lifted up from the earth, and was made to stand upon two feet as a man, and a man's heart was given unto him" (Daniel 7:4). This is the experience of the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 4). He has much light about the true God, but at first he rejects it. Because of his megalomania, he goes mad, and for seven years he lives like the beasts of the forest. When he finally looks up to the God of heaven and gives Him glory (reflects His character), his reason is restored, and he is restored as a man and as a king (Daniel 4:34-37).

In place of the four metals of the image, four ferocious beasts come out of the sea of nations in succession (Daniel 7:3-7). And in accordance with the structure of creation, we find that **"the fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly;"** had **"great iron (like the fourth metal) teeth, with which it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the rest with its feet;"** and **"it was different from all the beasts that were before it..."** (Daniel 7:7). The cruelty of Rome is proverbial. After all, it was precisely she who tortured and killed Christ, and then His followers.

This fourth beast is said to have ten horns on its head (Daniel 7:7b), which easily connects to the ten toes on the image's feet—the nations that formed modern Europe after the fall of Rome. The sixth element is a "little horn" that rises up from among the 10, removing three (Daniel 7:8).

These three are the Heruli, Vandals, and Ostrogoths, who maintained the so-called "Arian heresy" in opposition to the later accepted "orthodox" Trinity – the power deity that fights against the family principle of the kingdom of God. When people worship such a deity, they cannot overcome their "beastly" nature, because the Trinity lacks the pattern and Spirit of true sonship. (This topic is extensive and covered in a separate book titled *Life Matters*, available on fatheroflove.info)

This little horn is the papacy, which is described as an imitator of the new man, because **"he had eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things"** (Daniel 7:8). For this reason, he is also called **"the man of sin"** (2 Thessalonians 2:3). His activity is described as follows:

"I saw the same horn making war with the saints and prevailing over them. ... He will speak great words against the Most High, and will

wear out the saints of the Most High, and he will think to change times and laws; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time." (Daniel 7:21, 25)

The papacy was established in power in 538 AD, thanks to the support of Emperor Justinian II. As the text shows, its rule lasted for 3 ½ prophetic times, each of which was equal to the biblical year of 360 prophetic days, for a total of 1260 prophetic days, which equaled 1260 real years (Ezekiel 4:6). This brings us to 1798, when the papacy lost its power to the troops of General Berthier. Throughout this medieval period, it persecuted and exhausted "the saints of the Most High" and succeeded in changing God's appointed times—the seventh-day Sabbath and its extension into all the other seven times (Genesis 1:14; Leviticus 23 and 25).

Both the doctrine of Sunday and that of the Trinity are a sign of the authority of spiritual Rome:

"Question: Do you have any other way to prove that the Church has the authority to establish rules for holidays?

"Answer: If she had not such authority, she would not have done what all modern religious men agree with her;—she would not have substituted the observance of the seventh day Sabbath for the observance of the first day of the week Sunday—a change for which there is no scriptural authority."

"Question: Do you observe other necessary truths that are taught by the church but are not clearly stated in Scripture?

"Answer: The doctrine of the Trinity—a doctrine, the knowledge of which is certainly necessary to salvation, but is not clearly proved and set forth in Scripture, in the Protestant sense of private interpretation (Review and Herald, August 22, 1854; quoted from Doctrinal Catechism)."

The Heavenly Judgment and Divine Character

In response to the actions of the little horn, a completely relevant transaction appears to be taking place in Heaven:

"I beheld till thrones were cast, and the Ancient of Days did sit, whose raiment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was as the flame of fire, and his wheels as burning fire. A river of fire issued and flowed before him; ten thousand times ten thousand ministers ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: and the judgment seat was opened, and the books were opened.... I beheld in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days; and they brought him before him.... I beheld the same horn, and he made war with the saints, and prevailed against them, until the Ancient of Days came, and and judgment was given in the saints of the Most High, and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.... But when the judgment was set, they shall take away his dominion, to consume and destroy it unto the end." (Daniel 7:9, 10, 13, 21-22, 26)

The event described here must have begun sometime after 1798. Since it comes in response to the actions of the "little horn," it must be a procedure according to the principle **"with what judgment you judge, so you will be judged,"** and **"with what measure you measure, it will be measured to you"** (Matthew 7:2). This means that this heavenly process reflects the actions of the papacy, but does not give a clear picture of the divine character. You will remember the text quoted at the beginning of this chapter, that in this respect visions are like a parable and do not give a clear picture of the Lord (Numbers 12:6-8). Therefore, the Father's throne is here represented as "flames of fire," and its wheels, "a flaming fire." Similarly, "in the eyes of the children of Israel" God's glory (character) appeared "as devouring fire" (Exodus 24:17). Thus, the papacy is met with the fire of condemnation, which it itself used to burn thousands upon thousands of "heretics" according to its own judgment (Revelation 2:20-23).

The books were also opened before the papacy (Daniel 7:10) to determine whether it had rightly judged the saints of the Most High, who in this justification process become the inheritance of the Son of God or His Bride

(Psalm 2:7, 8 cf. Revelation 19:6-8). This process is very similar to the way Christ justified the woman caught in adultery by the judgmental Pharisees:

"They said to him, 'Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. Now Moses in the Law commanded us to stone such women. What do you say?' They said this to test him, so that they might have something to accuse him of. But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with his finger. [The books are opened], not paying attention to them [but He did not speak]. And when they continued asking Him, He straightened up and said to them, "Let any of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." And He stooped down again and wrote on the ground. And when they heard this, and were convicted by their conscience, they went out one by one, beginning with the oldest ones, even to the last. And Jesus was left alone with the woman standing in the midst. When He straightened up and saw no one except the woman, He said to her, "Woman, where are your accusers? Has no one condemned you?" She answered, "No one, Lord." Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go, and from now on sin no more." (John 8:4-11, NIV)

Christ wrote their specific sins on the ground (Jeremiah 17:13), but He did not utter a single word of condemnation, for He judged no one (John 8:15). In the judgment described in Daniel chapter 7, the One seated on the throne also said nothing. This is so "for the Father judges no one" (John 5:22). The Father and the Son "look not on transgression" and "tend to iniquity" (Micah 7:18; 1 Corinthians 13:5). Their judgment is successful because their character is so pure, loving, and self-sacrificing that it fully exposes the condition of the accusers, and as a result, "their consciences bear witness against them."

V. 3. The Prince against abominations

And he said, Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the latter time of the indignation: for the vision pertaineth unto the time appointed for the end. (Daniel 8:19)

In Daniel 8, two years after his prophetic dream, Daniel received another vision in the **third year of the reign of Belshazzar**, the last ruler of the Neo-Babylonian kingdom (Daniel 8:1). In this vision, animals (a ram and a goat) are again involved, but this time they are **ritually clean and are associated with the service in the sanctuary** (Leviticus 11:3; 16:5). This shows that the Atonement process will now be viewed not as a judgment (as in Daniel 7) but as a **cleansing of the sanctuary from the sins of the people**.

The **ram with the two horns** symbolizes Medo-Persia, and the **goat with the prominent horn** is Greece ruled by Alexander the Great (Daniel 8:20, 21).

One of the ram's two horns (Persia) was higher than the other and came up later (Daniel 8:3). This represents the two nations, the Medes and the Persians, with the latter coming to power later but exalting themselves above the Medes. As for the goat, after the breaking of its prominent horn (Alexander), four other horns appeared, which are his four generals, dividing Alexander's empire among themselves. Cassander received Greece and the neighboring countries. Lysimachus took over Asia Minor. Seleucus received Syria and Babylon, and Ptolemy Egypt.

Rome, in its two phases—pagan and papal—is represented by **"a little horn that grew exceedingly toward the south (Egypt), toward the east (Syria), and toward the glorious land (Judea)"** (Daniel 8:9). The conversion of Judea into a Roman province and the subjugation of its leaders is described in verse 10, and the rebellion against Christ Himself is spoken of in verse 11 and confirmed in verse 25 by the angel's explanation.

The ram is characterized by **"puffing up himself with pride,"** the he-goat **"exalted himself exceedingly"** (Daniel 8:4, 8), and the little horn **"grew exceedingly"** and **"magnified itself even to the army of heaven"** and

"magnified itself even to the Prince of the host" (Daniel 8:9-11). So, the moral degradation that in Daniel 2 was represented by cheaper metals is in Daniel 8 indicated by increasing pride, haughtiness, and arrogance (Proverbs 16:18). All this is in the context of paganism (Psalm 74:3, 10, 23), which constantly needed to offer sacrifices to its gods to appease them (Psalm 50:8-23). Even the Jews themselves handed Christ over to the Roman authorities for such motives (John 11:49-50 cf. 19:7).

The transition to the papal phase of Rome is described as follows:

"...and by it (the papacy) the daily sacrifice (paganism) was abolished, and the foundation of the sanctuary was overthrown (the capital was changed from Rome to Constantinople). And the multitude was given, with the daily sacrifice, through transgression, and it (the papacy) cast down truth to the earth, and it worked and prospered." (Daniel 8:11-12, YLT)

The word "sacrifice" does not exist in the original. This helps to understand that "constant" is a noun, which does not occur as such anywhere else in Scripture except in this book (Daniel 8:11, 12, 13; 11:31; 12:11) and therefore refers to **paganism**, not to the service of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary as many think. The words "was taken away" (Hebrew word No. 7311 in Strong's Dictionary is the verb "ruum," which is repeated in the text) in relation to paganism means that it was elevated and assimilated by the papacy.

"... though it [the Scriptures] have much to say about the necessity of man being reconciled to God, it never once hints at such a thing as the necessity of God being reconciled to man. To point out the necessity of such a thing is to make a serious indictment of the character of God. The idea came into the Christian church from the papacy, which in turn brought it from paganism, in which the only idea of God was as a being whose wrath must be appeased by sacrifice." (E. J. Waggoner, Present Truth, Great Britain, September 21, 1893, p. 386, Paragraph 7)

In this sense, paganism and papacy appear as the **two abominations**²⁴ (Daniel 9:27) that are detestable to our heavenly Father because they desolate the hearts of people who close themselves to God's action (Daniel 8:13). The first abomination seeks to appease the gods through animal or human sacrifices, while the second presents the sacrifice of Christ as the means that appeases God's justice and appeases His wrath against us.

In 677 BC, when King Manasseh was taken captive by the Babylonian ruler (2 Chronicles 33:11), the **"seven times" of Leviticus 26 began**. Jesus called this period **"the times of the Gentiles"** (Luke 21:24). Because of their apostasy and idolatry, which is a misunderstanding of God's character, Israel would be oppressed for 2,520 years, including the Christian church, which breaks the same covenant. This is the time during which spiritual Babylon would rule over God's people. It is no coincidence that Nebuchadnezzar spent 7 times as a beast in the forest. In their individual application, these seven times are 7 literal years, but in the collective history of mankind, of which Babylon became the head in place of Israel, these seven times are the same 2,520 years during which the highest ideal of the nations could not surpass that of forceful ("beastly") Babylon (Deuteronomy 28:13, 43, 44).

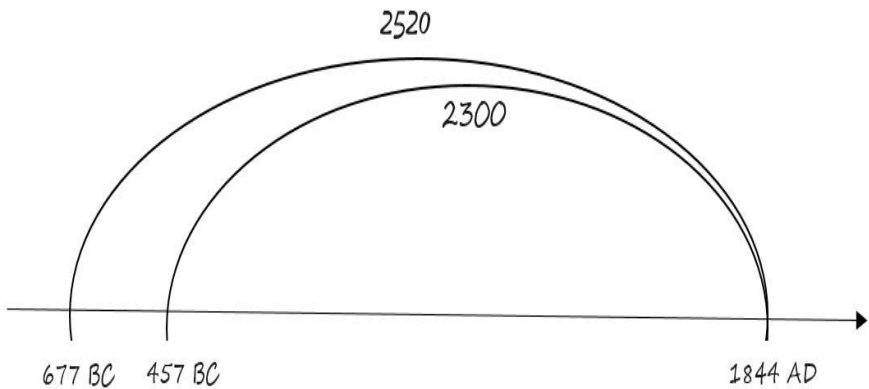
"The "seven times" in Nebuchadnezzar's dream were fulfilled in seven years... This is also a matter of history and an allegory or pattern for God's people because of their pride and arrogance, when they refuse to be reformed by God, and claim the power and will to do these things themselves, they, like Nebuchadnezzar, were to be driven among the beasts of the field (meaning the kingdoms of the world) until they knew the greatness of God... As a personal history and example, this was fulfilled in seven years; but as it is also a prophecy, it will be fulfilled in seven prophetic times, which will be 7

²⁴ In the Hebrew original, the horn is once in the masculine gender, when it denotes state power, and once in the feminine gender, when it represents church power.

times 360 years, which is 2520 years;..." (Miller's Works, vol. 2, pp. 261, 262)

Prophetic Timelines and the Cleansing of the Sanctuary

Adam was the head before he sinned, but after his authority was usurped, God tried to restore it through His people. And when His people also failed, Babylon came in its place (Genesis 1:26; Exodus 4:22; Daniel 2:37, 38).



Within this longest period are **2,300 years**, at the end of which the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary begins, when Millerites in faith follow Christ into the Most Holy Place to learn the truth about the character of the Father:

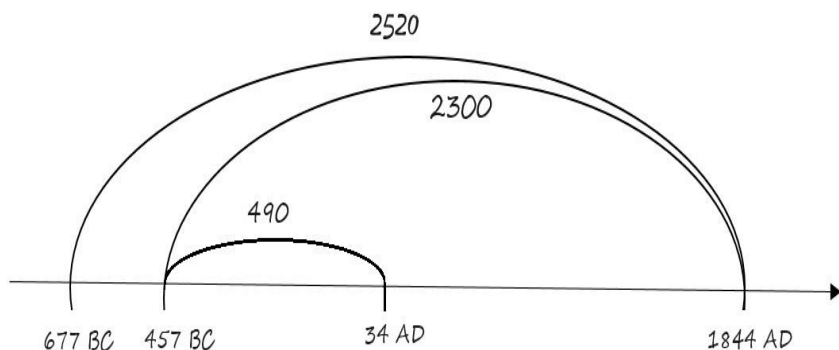
"Then I heard a holy one speaking; and another holy one said to that one who spoke, How long shall the vision be concerning the daily sacrifice (paganism) and the transgression of desolation (papacy), when the sanctuary (in heaven) and the multitude (God's people) shall be trampled underfoot? And he said to me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." (Daniel 8:13-14)

The starting point for this period is given to Daniel later, when he prays for his people regarding the end of their 70-year captivity (Daniel 9:1, 3-19 cf. Jeremiah 25:11, 12; 29:10). While he is still praying, Gabriel comes quickly to reveal to him that God's mercy to his people is seven times greater (70×7) than what he has prayed for (Daniel 9:24 cf. Matthew 18:21, 22). These **70 prophetic weeks equal 490 actual years of grace for the Jews**. Of these, 49 years are allotted for the building of their temple (Daniel 9:25), and another 444 to reach the time when the Messiah-prince will officially begin his mission (Mark 1:14, 15), which would consist of the following:

"...to finish sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy place." (Daniel 9:24)

The **sealing of vision and prophecy** refers to the verification of the vision of Daniel chapter 8 by the fulfillment of the prophecy of the 490 years, which are "**determined**" in the sense of "cut off" from the great period of 2300 years (Daniel 9:24).

Thus, with Daniel, we can learn that the beginning of the 2300 years coincides with that of the 490 years. This beginning the angel announces with the words "**know and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem...**" (Daniel 9:25). From Ezra 6:14, we learn that the decrees of three Persian kings were necessary to complete this work. The last, **Artaxerxes I**, issued such a decree in the seventh year of his reign (Ezra 7), which is **457 B.C.** We can now place the two periods, 2300 and 490 years, on the time line:



The first thing that strikes you is that the end of the 2300 years coincides with the end of the 2520 years! Therefore, the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary, which the two heavenly beings are talking about (Daniel 8:14), is connected with the weakening of Babylonian domination over God's people, which gives them the opportunity to gather again as a spiritual community (Isaiah 11:10, 12).

The Atonement and Christ's Ministry

This longest period of Miller's prophetic studies in Daniel 8, which ends in 1844, is called the **end of the indignation** (Daniel 8:19). Here the connection between Christ's life and death on Earth and the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary, which took place 18 centuries later, is clearly seen. When He died on Calvary as **"the Lamb as if slain"** (Revelation 5:6), Christ met humanity at the beginning of its spiritual journey to know God (the altar of sacrifice in the sanctuary court), where it had unfortunately lingered for about 4,000 years. Through His sacrifice, He **"draws all men unto himself"** (John 12:32), because it corresponds to the serpent's false system of justice that we have adopted (John 3:14, 15).

There is a strange idea prevalent in the world, and even in the so-called Christian world, that justice and mercy are opposite qualities, and that they cannot be manifested in the same person at the same time ... This is a very unfortunate idea. It represents God as changeable. But the fact is that He cannot deny Himself and does not change. (E. J. Waggoner, Present Truth, United Kingdom, February 23, 1893.)

Once offered in the visible world (Hebrews 7:27), Christ's sacrifice fully satisfies our notions of justice (Psalm 85:10), and we can continue to follow Christ in faith to His sanctuary in heaven (Hebrews 8:1, 2; 9:11, 12).

But the services in the sanctuary were of two kinds: **daily and annual** (Hebrews 9:6-7). Throughout the year, the Jews came to confess their sins and symbolically transfer them onto the animal sacrifice, which pointed to **"the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world"** (John 1:29). Then

they slaughtered the animal, and its blood was brought inside the first compartment of the sanctuary, called the Holy Place (Leviticus 4:5-7). Thus, sins were symbolically accumulated in the sanctuary through the blood. Once a year, on the 10th day of the 7th biblical month (September-October), the **Day of Atonement** (Leviticus 16; 23:27, 28) or also called **Yom Kippur (Day of Judgment)** was held.

The annual service in the heavenly sanctuary began on **October 22, 1844**, when the Son of God entered the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary to reveal to a prepared people the truth of His law, which is the copy of His character. The process of transformation that is to prepare the bride for the coming of the Bridegroom depends on the extent to which this people reflects the light that comes from the Most Holy Place:

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

Let us rejoice and be glad, and give him glory: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready: and it was granted unto her to array herself in fine linen, bright and clean: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. (Revelation 19:7-8)

May the Father help us not to delay this process any longer!

V. 4. Michael and the kings of the earth

And the head of the kingdom of Persia is standing in opposition in front of me [for] twenty-one days, and behold, Michael, first of the chief heads, has come to help me,... Daniel 10:13a (SLT)

"....I (Gabriel), therefore, was no longer needed there with the kings of Persia." Daniel 10:13b (Bulgarian Protestant Translation 1940)

Daniel 10: The Unseen Battle and Divine Intervention

In Daniel 10, the curtain separating the visible from the invisible world is drawn back, allowing Daniel to grasp **future events impacting God's people** (verse 14). He learns of an ongoing spiritual battle against evil forces attempting to manipulate the Persian kings. This conflict is so intense that even the Son of God, **Michael, "the first of the princes,"** intervenes (verse 13, Young's Literal Translation). Bearing the military name Michael, meaning "Who is like God," this isn't a physical confrontation with swords and spears. As 2 Corinthians 10:4-5 states, "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, for we are casting down reasonings and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ." Yet, this spiritual warfare mirrors the combative nature of the kings described in chapter 11.

Despite the intensity of this unseen conflict, **love governs this divine kingdom**. This is why Daniel is addressed as "the beloved" (Daniel 10:11). The angel also refers to Michael as "your prince" (Daniel 10:21) and "the one who stands in behalf of the sons of your people" (Daniel 12:1). This imagery evokes kinship and family relationships, contrasting the cruel earthly kings with Michael, the **Prince of Peace** (Isaiah 9:6). Jesus is called a "prince" rather than a "king" to denote His position in relation to God the Father, the Great Ruler of the universe (John 14:28; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28).

Daniel 11: From Medo-Persia to Papal Rome

Like the third prophetic section, Daniel 11 begins with the **Medo-Persian kingdom**. Darius the Mede (v. 1), the central figure in Daniel 6 and a representative of the ram's lesser horn (Daniel 8:3), "son of Ahasuerus" (Daniel 9:1), received the kingdom at age sixty-two (Daniel 5:31). However, it was the Persian king **Cyrus who conquered Babylon**, a conquest foretold over 150 years prior (Isaiah 45:1-6 cf. Ezra 1). By Cyrus's time, Persia had become the more dominant of the two nations, prompting the angelic prophecy to focus directly on the Persian kings.

The text predicts that after Cyrus, **three more kings will rise**: Cambyses, Pseudo-Smerdis, and Darius Hystaspes (Daniel 11:2). It then states, "The fourth shall be more rich than all; and when he shall be strong through his riches, he shall stir up all against the kingdom of Greece" (Ibid.). **Xerxes** is identified as this fourth and final Persian ruler to oppose Greece, leading an immense army of 5,283,220 men.

The bold king who reigns with great power and acts according to his will is **Alexander the Great** (verse 3). Following his death, his power is divided among his four generals, bypassing his direct heirs (verse 4).

The Kings of the North and South

This marks the beginning of the conflict between the **King of the North (the Seleucid kingdom)** and the **King of the South (the Ptolemaic kingdom)**. These kingdoms, founded by Alexander's generals Seleucus and Ptolemy, exert significant historical influence until 47 BC, when Rome assumes dominance (Daniel 11:5-17). The following table summarizes their key wars and interactions:

Verse	Years	Events
5	282 BC - 281 BC	Seleucus I Nicator, Ptolemy I Soter

Verse	Years	Events
6	253 BC - 246 BC	Two wives - Laodicea kills Berenice
7-9	246 BC - 222 BC	The Revenge of Ptolemy III Everget
10	225 BC - 222 BC	Two brothers - Antiochus III the Great, Seleucus III Ceraunus
11	221 BC - 217 BC	Antiochus III the Great, Ptolemy IV Philopater
12	217 BC - 204 BC	Ptolemy IV Philopater, 14-year peace treaty begins
13	217 BC - 204 BC	Antiochus III Magnus, 14-year peace treaty ends
14	204 BC - 200 BC	Rome on Stage - Antiochus III, Philip V, Ptolemy V Epiphanes
15	200 BC - 198 BC	Siege of Sidon - Antiochus III the Great, Siege of Aetolia, Leading Egypt

Verse	Years	Events
16	65 BC - 63 BC	Siege of Jerusalem - Pompey of Rome, Antiochus XIII Asiatic
17	48 BC - 47 BC	Siege of Alexandria - Julius Caesar, Cleopatra VII, Ptolemy XIII

Pagan Rome and the Messiah

The subsequent section (verses 18-29) outlines the history of **Pagan Rome** in relation to God's people and the Messiah.

Verse	Years	Events
18	47 BC - 45 BC	Rome (Four battles - Pharnaces II of Pontus, Africa, Spain)
19	45 BC - 44 BC	Rome (The Death of Julius Caesar - Marcus Junius Brutus, Gaius Cassius Longinus)
20	44 BC - 14 AD	Rome (Augustus Caesar - Luke 2:1-2, the whole world must be taxed)
21	14 AD - 37 AD	Rome (Tiberius Caesar - Luke 3:1, vile man)

Verse	Years	Events
22	14 AD - 31 AD	Rome (Jesus Christ - Daniel 9:25-27, The Prince Messiah)
23	161 BC - 134 BC	Rome (Alliance with the Jews - 1 Maccabees 8)
24	31 BC - 330 AD	Rome (360 years - kings bequeath their kingdoms to the Romans)
25-27	31 BC – 30 BC	The final conquest of Egypt by Augustus Caesar, through the cessation of the war waged against Mark Antony, Caesar's brother-in-law, and Cleopatra, the queen of Egypt, to whom Mark Antony had become engaged.
25	31 BC	Rome (Battle of Actium - Augustus Caesar, Mark Antony, Cleopatra)
26	31 BC - 30 BC	Rome (Battle of Alexandria - Augustus Caesar, Mark Antony, Cleopatra)

Verse	Years	Events
27	30 BC	Rome (certain time - Augustus Caesar, Mark Antony)
28	30 BC - 70 AD	Rome (Two Returns of Rome - Egypt and the Siege of Jerusalem by Titus)
29	330 AD - 476 AD	Rome (Constantine - Constantine II, Constantius, Constans, Barbarians)

Papal Rome: The Successor

The next section (verses 30-39) provides a detailed prophecy of **Papal Rome**, the successor to pagan Rome, reigning until the end of time (1798).

Verse	Years	Events
30	439 AD - 538 AD	Rome (Arian Controversy - Genseric, the Vandals, Justinian, Catholic Councils)
31	496 AD - 538 AD	Rome (The French king Clovis definitively sided with Nicene Christianity in 508 and fought against the enemies of the papacy. This marked the transition from paganism to "converted paganism,"

Verse	Years	Events
		from the "Daily" to "the Abomination that causes desolation." By 538, the three Arian tribes of Heruli, Vandals, and Ostrogoths had been destroyed.)
32	300s AD - 1300s AD	Rome (Waldenses and Albigenses)
33	1300 AD - 1700 AD	Rome (The Great Reformation)
34	1620 - 1691 AD	Rome (Puritans of England)
35	538 AD - 1798 AD	Rome (1260 years of papal supremacy)
36		First called "the King" because he occupies the position of the king of the north, but as a spiritual kingdom. This is the fifth kingdom of Daniel 2 ch. composed of iron - the state and clay - the church.

Verse	Years	Events
37		Rejection of the worship of the true God of the prophets and apostles.
38	4th-6th centuries	Introducing a new deity – the Trinity.
39		...whose definition is power.

The Time of the End (After 1798)

The final part of Daniel 11 (verses 40-45), leading up to Michael's raising (Daniel 12:1), addresses the **time of the end**, starting after 1798.

Verse	Years	Events
40	1798 – present day	The French Revolution stripped the papacy of its power, but it continues to rule through its representative – the false prophet – Protestant America (Revelation 13:11-13 cf. 16:13).
41	present-day-future	The New Jerusalem in the new promised land (America) is attacked, and a national Sunday

Verse	Years	Events
		law is issued (Revelation 13:15-17). The call to "come out of Babylon" is heeded by God's beloved people (Revelation 18:4).
42	After 1989	The Eastern Bloc, which embodied the ideals of the French Revolution, collapses.
43	these days	Conquering the resources and peoples of the King of the South. Modern Rome becomes three-headed – the coalition of the dragon (United Nations), the beast (papacy), and the false prophet (Protestant America).
44	near future	The 144,000 proclaim the final message of mercy, instilling fear in the King of the North.
45	near future	Armageddon and the worldwide deadly Sunday law (Revelation 13:17 cf. 16:13, 14, 16; 17:12-14).

When those who have rejected the last message of mercy attack God's people, emboldened by the Sunday decree, the **time of probation ends**.

Everyone will have made their decision, and the Son of God will return to Earth (Daniel 12:1a). This is also when Satan gains complete control over the unrighteous (Daniel 12:1b).

Before the Second Coming itself and the general resurrection of the righteous (1 Corinthians 15:22, 23), a **partial resurrection** occurs: faithful bearers of the last message to the world are raised (Daniel 12:2, 12 cf. Revelation 14:6-12, 13). Those resurrected "to shame and everlasting contempt" are the avowed enemies of Christ and those who condemned Him to death (Daniel 12:2 cf. Matthew 26:63-64; Revelation 1:7). However, they do not seize this opportunity to repent. This is not the general resurrection of the unrighteous, as they are resurrected 1,000 years after the Second Coming (Revelation 20:1-5).

The removal of the "Daily" happened 30 years before 538 AD (Daniel 12:11 cf. 11:36), marking the end of God's indignation against Israel (723 BC – 1798 AD).

V. 5. The Sealing

After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, so that no wind would blow on the earth or on the sea or on any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living God; and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was given to harm the earth and the sea, saying, "Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees until we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads." And I heard the number of them which were sealed, an hundred forty and four thousand, sealed out of all the tribes of the children of Israel:.. After this I looked, and, behold, a great multitude, which no man could number, of every nation, and kindred, and people, and tongue, stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palm branches in their hands: and they cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb (Revelation 7:1-4)

Revelation: The Christian Church Through the Ages

In the fifth prophetic section, Jesus takes John into the **Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary** (Revelation 4-5). There, he's shown the dramatic future of the Christian church (Revelation 6) until God's people are sealed at the end of time (Revelation 7). This narrative was already revealed to John through the messages Jesus gave to the **seven churches in the Roman province of Asia**: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea (Revelation 2-3). These messages, intended for the literal churches in John's day, also represent **seven distinct periods of the Christian era**, detailing the church's challenges and triumphs in each (Revelation 1:19).

It's no coincidence that Jesus introduced Himself to John as the one who sustains the light of these seven churches or lampstands, reminiscent of the **seven lampstands in the Holy Place** (Revelation 1:13, 16, 20).

"And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God." (Revelation 4:5)

This refers to the **Spirit of God the Father**, whom John sees seated on the throne:

"And behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardius stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like an emerald." (Revelation 4:2-3)

Around the throne are **24 other thrones** where John sees elders standing. These elders are resurrected with Jesus as the **"firstfruits" of the spiritual harvest** (Revelation 4:4 cf. Matthew 27:50-53; Leviticus 23:10, 11). They are faithful men of God, martyrs from ancient times, who sympathize with God's people on earth and serve as a pledge for the great harvest of resurrected righteous ones at Jesus' second coming (1 Corinthians 15:23).

The **sea of glass** before the throne (Revelation 4:6) is where those who will participate in the great Exodus from spiritual Egypt on Earth will stand. This Exodus began with Christ's death but will culminate in the appearance of the **144,000 sealed with the Father's true character** (Luke 9:30, 31 cf. Revelation 15:2-4; 14:1; 7:1-4). They too will be redeemed as firstfruits but will not experience death (Revelation 14:4b).

The Four Cherubim and the Gospels

In the midst of the throne and surrounding it, John sees **four cherubim** who play a leading role in human history (Revelation 6:1, 3, 5, 7 cf. Ezekiel 1:5-27; 9:3a):

"The first living creature was like a lion, the second living creature was like a calf, the third living creature had a face like a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle." (Revelation 4:7)

These figures represent both **Christ's merits**, by which He will guide His people through the tumultuous events of the first four seals, and God's **adaptation and merciful condescension** to His people's needs during times of apostasy. Similarly, the **four Gospels are tailored to all types of people**:

- **Matthew** writes to the Jews, descendants of Noah's son Shem, symbolized by the **lion**.
- **Mark** writes to the servant of servants, Ham, symbolized by the **ox**.
- **Luke** writes to the Greeks, descended from Japheth, represented by the human face of **reason and humanism**.
- **John** elevates his readers through the high divine flight and perspective of the **eagle**.

Here are the thoughts of two commentators on this subject:

"The lion represents the church in the days of the apostles, when they went forth bold as lions, preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the world. The ox represents the church in a state of subjection and persecution, under the Roman emperors Nero, Domitian, and others, when they were delivered up to slaughter, and were slaves to the Roman power. The face of a man signifies the state under which the church lived in the days of Constantine and his successors, when the kingdoms of the world, represented in prophecy as beasts, were more or less under the control of the church and its ambitious clergy, as beasts are under the power of man; and when the church united with the state, and became haughty, imperious, and proud, like man. The face of the eagle represents the church in the state, when antichrist began to persecute and devour the true children of God, and her divine Master gave her two eagle's wings, that she might fly into the wilderness, where she should be nourished for one thousand two hundred and threescore days, or a time, times, and half a time: This gives us the four principal features of the church as it appeared to the world after its establishment on the earth..." (Works of William Miller, vol. 1, p. 122, Paragraph 1)

"In His life on earth Christ combines these four natures. He is the Lion of the tribe of Judah, of whom it is prophesied: "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come." As lawgiver and ruler, Christ represents the kingly

nature of the Father... In the Gospels, Matthew begins with the genealogy showing Christ's right to the throne of David... Mark, in his account of the life of Christ, presents the servant side. The second person was that of the calf, or ox—the servant of man... Christ is both the slain lamb and the priest who serves in the sanctuary. He bore the sins of the world in His body upon the cross, and the weight crushed Him to death... Every animal under its burden, every overburdened child of God, is a reminder of Christ becoming the servant of men... The Gospel of Luke portrays the humanity of the Son, giving the account of that part of His life's work which most strongly engages the mind of man... The keen eye of the flying eagle is taken to represent the searching gaze of Him whose eyes, like a flame of fire, "run to and fro through the whole earth, to slay them whose heart is perfect toward Him." Among the various writers, the beloved disciple, John, saw the character of Christ portrayed as the glorious Word, equal with the Father in power and glory... He [John] portrays the divine character more fully than any other writer. This is represented by the eagle flying in the sky. {Stephen Haskell, The Story of the Prophet on Patmos, p. 98, Paragraph 2}

The Seven Seals and Church History

The first four seals are similarly depicted by four different horsemen. Parallel to the history of the church as conveyed in the messages to the seven churches, the seals unfold historically as follows:

Seal	Church & Years	Meaning
1. "And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four	Ephesus (33-100 AD) Revelation 2:1-7	The pure apostolic church sets out to conquer, but a spirit

Seal	Church & Years	Meaning
<p>living creatures say as with a voice of thunder, Come (and see)! And I looked, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow: and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer." (Revelation 6:1-2)</p>		<p>of condemnation stifles its first love.</p>
<p>2. "And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, Come (and see)! And another horse went out, a red one: and power was given to him that sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword." (Revelation 6:3, 4)</p>	<p>Smyrna (100-313 AD) Revelation 2:8-11</p>	<p>Persecutions and bloodshed are permitted, restraining spiritual decline. The blood of martyrs becomes the "seed" for the "germination" of more believers.</p>

Seal	Church & Years	Meaning
<p>3. "And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, Come and see! And I looked, and behold a black horse: and he that sat on him had a pair of scales in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and hurt not the oil and the wine." (Revelation 6:5-6)</p>	<p>Pergamum (313-538 AD) Revelation 2:12-17</p>	<p>Instead of entering the promised land, the church allows an enemy into its midst, leading to idolatry and spiritual adultery.</p>
<p>4. "And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see! And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And</p>	<p>Thyatira (538-1798 AD) Revelation 2:18-29</p>	<p>Moral decay during the union of church (Jezebel) and state (Ahab). Elijah announced a 3 ½ symbolic year period of spiritual drought (1 Kings 17-19 cf. Luke 4:25).</p>

Seal	Church & Years	Meaning
<p>power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with pestilence, and by the beasts of the earth." (Revelation 6:7-8)</p>		
<p>5. "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And there was given unto every one of them a white robe: and it was said unto them, That they should rest yet a little season, until</p>	<p>Sardis (1798-1844 AD) Revelation 3:1-6</p>	<p>The Protestant Reformation remains unfinished; therefore, only a few will follow Christ in faith into the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary in the coming period, seeking blessing, not vengeance for their persecutors.</p>

Seal	Church & Years	Meaning
<p>the number of their fellow servants and brethren, that should be slain as they were, should be fulfilled." (Revelation 6:9-11)</p>		
<p>6. "And I saw when he had opened the sixth seal; and, behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the whole moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when shaken of a mighty wind; and the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled up; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the</p>	<p>Philadelphia (1844-1856 AD) Revelation 3:7-13</p>	<p>The Lisbon Earthquake (1755), the Dark Day (1780), and the Great Fall of Stars (1833) are signs of Protestantism's decline and the approaching Advent. On October 22, 1844, Christ entered the Holy of Holies of the heavenly sanctuary, spiritually followed by Adventists.</p>

Seal	Church & Years	Meaning
captains, and the rich, and the strong, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" (Revelation 6:12-17)		
7. "And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour." (Revelation 8:1)	Laodicea (1856 – Present) Revelation 3:14-22	The Overcomers of Laodicea are sealed with the true character of God.

The condemnatory spirit that developed in the early apostolic church significantly delayed believers' deeper understanding of God's character, which would have prepared them to become heirs of the Son of God. This

"seed of condemnation" fully matured and manifested itself in the third period, with its deadly fruits afflicting humanity for nearly two millennia. While the Reformation began promisingly, the contentment of its leaders with the light they received hindered further progress. It wasn't until the first half of the nineteenth century that a people emerged who responded to the spirit of Elijah and advanced to the next stage of knowing God.

Unfortunately, even the zeal of this latter people is now showing signs of spiritual indifference and a cold legalistic spirit. The final stage presents the greatest challenge, as the spiritual decline is at its lowest, yet the call is the highest. The True Witness urges all Laodiceans to embrace His victory and be sealed with the true character of His Father.

V. 6. The Trumpets

And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets. (Revelation 8:2)

The sixth prophetic section begins with the presentation of seven angels, ready to sound seven trumpets (Revelation 8:2). Yet, before this occurs, John is shown "another angel" in the Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary. This angel is given a large quantity of incense to add to the prayers of all the saints, offered on the golden altar that stands before the throne (Revelation 8:3). The altar of incense is intrinsically linked to the culmination of the atonement process, as typified by the annual service described in Leviticus 16. Thus, the trumpets act as a warning, signaling preparation for the great and global Day of Atonement, which commenced on October 22, 1844 (Leviticus 23:23-32; cf. Revelation 8:5). The table below details the original historical fulfillment of the seven trumpets.

8:7	8:8, 9	8:10, 11	8:12	9:1-11	9:13-11:14	11:15-19
trumpet 1	trumpet 2	trumpet 3	trumpet 4	trumpet 5 Woe	trumpet 6 Woe	trumpet 7 Woe
Goths Alaric 395 AD	Vandals Genserich 428-468 AD	Huns Attila 434-453 AD	Barbarians Odoacer 476 AD	Muhammad Arab expansion 7th-12th centuries	Turkish expansion of Islam 13th-19th centuries; Removal of 7,000 titles in France (being 1/10 of spiritual Babylon)	The kingdom of the world becomes the Lord's and His Anointed's <u>before the</u> <u>Second</u> <u>Coming</u>
Destruction of the Western Roman Empire				Destruction of the Eastern Roman Empire and negative		Opening of the Most Holy Place of the

Interpreting the Fifth and Sixth Trumpets

Josiah Litch (1809-1886) interpreted the Fifth and Sixth Trumpets, specifically predicting the decline of the Turkish Empire on **August 11, 1840**, echoing Byzantium's past dependence on Turkey. He explained:

"The first prophetic period found in the chapter [9] is in the 5th verse; that 'they must be tormented [those who do not have the seal of God in the papacy's perverted truths about the Sabbath and the true God - Rev. 9:4] five months.'... Five [prophetic] months... equal **150 years**. For 150 years the locusts (or warlike armies of horsemen) which came out of the smoke [of Muhammad's delusions] to spread his religion were to torment certain people.... 'And they had a king over them,...' The beginning of the five months, therefore, is when these armies had one king over them, of the character above described... Osman, the founder of the Ottoman or Turkish Empire.... This empire was established in **1299 A.D.** 'And on the 27th day of July, 1299, Osman first invaded the territory of Nicomedia,' to begin his attack on the Greek empire. (See Gibbon's *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*).

Beginning in 1299, the 150 years would end in **1449 A.D.** In this year, John Palaiologos, the Greek emperor, died, leaving no children to succeed him. His brother, Constantine Dracos, was to succeed him. However, for some reason, despite being a time of peace, he sent ambassadors to the Turkish Sultan Amurath to ask for permission before ascending his brother's throne. Having received it, he took over the government. From that time on, the Greek emperor reigned only with the permission of his mortal enemy."

The Sound of the Sixth Angel

"...Hitherto, they (the Turkish forces led by Islam) had been confined to tormenting the Greeks without politically killing them. But from that moment on, they had to kill – politically kill that nation.... The duration of their dominion over the Greek empire is limited to 'one hour,' 15 days; 'one day,' one year; 'one month,' 30 years; and 'one year,' 360 years; a total of **391 years and 15 days**. If the time for the beginning of the periods was at the first attack of the Ottomans against the Greeks, July 27, 1299, then the whole period would end in **August 1840**... on **August 11**; the very day that Rifat Bey arrived in Alexandria." (Josiah Litch, *Address to the Public and Especially to the Clergy*, pp. 113-124)

When Turkey's capitulation to the Great Powers of Europe occurred on this date, it significantly boosted public confidence in biblical prophecies.

The Open Book and the Most Holy Place

In Revelation 10, John symbolically represents those who "ate" the "open book" of Daniel and, after the **Great Disappointment**, entered the Most Holy Place. Their purpose was "to finish the mystery of God, as he declared through the prophets," which is "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27). The full realization of this process hinges on whether Jesus' life on Earth is seen as the complete and final testimony to God's character. As long as the violent judgments in Scripture are interpreted as direct divine intervention, believers cannot reflect God's true nonviolent character, preventing the emergence of a people with His name on their foreheads (Revelation 14:1).

Just as the apostles, after their disappointment, followed Jesus in faith into the Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary, so too did the small remnant of apostate Christianity, after their disappointment on **October 22, 1844**, follow Christ in faith into the Most Holy Place. A new door was opened for them to gain an entirely new understanding of the true God and His Son (Revelation 3:7, 8). There, they saw the ark of God containing the two

tablets of the Ten Commandments (Revelation 11:19). They realized they had been observing a false Sabbath instead of the **Fourth Commandment**. They also understood that the dead are in a sleep-like state, awaiting awakening in the resurrection (John 11:11-14, 24). This realization helped them grasp that there is no eternal hell for the wicked, but a punishment proportionate to their sin, after which they will cease to exist (Obadiah 1:16; Malachi 4:3).

Apostasy and Further Light

Unfortunately, Adventists did not long follow this increasing light. Like ancient Israel, they attempted to keep God's law on their own. This turned their eyes away from Jesus, the source of their love, leading them to lose their original fervor and soon fall into the foretold "**Laodicean**" condition of "**lukewarmness**" (Revelation 3:14-22). The advancing truths began to sound to them as incomprehensible "thunders" rather than a clear voice from heaven (Revelation 10:3, 4; cf. John 12:28, 29). This undesirable condition was first recorded in **1856** (*Testimonies*, vol. 1, ch. 33 and *Preface*, paragraph 9).

That same year, Hyrum Edson (1806-1882), the man who first followed Jesus in faith into the Most Holy Place on October 23, 1844, provided further insight into the "**seven times of the Gentiles**" (**2520 years**). This prophecy confirmed the 2300-year period of Daniel 8:14 and the identity of the Adventist people as the remnant to be gathered after the scattering of ancient Israel. The reaction to his study came seven years later, in **1863**, when Adventists presented a new prophetic chart that no longer contained the "seven times of the Gentiles." That same year, the movement was restructured into a church organization, indicating it would spend more time on Earth than originally expected.

This first apostasy was followed by more severe ones, and Adventists themselves entered a period symbolizing the "seven times." For **126 years (1863-1989)**, the remnant people were subject to spiritual Babylon. This period symbolically represents 2520 years and their half of 1260 years during which the Advent people suffered a spiritual drought as a result of

their apostasy. These symbolic 3 1/2 years of spiritual drought and famine represent the time when the prophet Elijah was hidden from the sight of Israel.

The Two Witnesses and Latter Rain

The next chapter, Revelation 11, presents the story of the **"two witnesses"** (Revelation 11:4; cf. Zechariah 4). They represent both the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments and the people who are their living bearers (2 Corinthians 3:2, 3). It's also noteworthy that the two witnesses share characteristics with Moses and Elijah, whose spirit is to prepare people for the Lord's coming through the manifestation of the true God and His law (Revelation 11:6; cf. Malachi 4:4-6). For 3 ½ prophetic years of spiritual drought, they are clothed in sackcloth of mourning (1260 real years) due to the apostasy of the Christian church (Revelation 11:3, 6; cf. James 5:17). However, as we've seen, this period is symbolically applied to the remnant people, because they too, unfortunately, began to worship the modern Baal (the Trinity) and to close themselves off to further light on God's law and His non-violent character.

The cruelties and superstitions of apostate Christianity in the Middle Ages gave rise to extreme secular attitudes in Europe, first manifesting at the state level in the atheistic and rationalist ideology of the **French Revolution (1789-1799)**. This is the "beast" coming out of the "abyss" to wage war against the Word of God and kill it (Revelation 11:7). It was then that the papacy received its "deadly wound" in **1798**, when General Berthier's troops took Pope Pius VI captive (Revelation 13:5, 3). Thus, in her fury, France equated apostate Christianity with the Bible, treating both under a common denominator.

The atheistic ideology of the French Revolution, emphasizing humanistic brotherhood and equality, later transformed into the ideology of communism, with the USSR as its focal point. The two witnesses again "prophesied in sackcloth" during this period, due to Adventism's apostasy. But in **1989**, the Eastern Bloc and the Iron Curtain fell. Moses and Elijah reappeared in the ranks of God's people – the Adventists – and began to

sound a loud alarm about the danger they were in. Twelve years later, the result of their reform came – the first drops of the "**latter rain**" began to fall.

"And upon every high mountain and upon every high hill there shall be rivers and streams of water in the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall. [**September 11, 2001 - New York - World Trade Center**]. And the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the LORD bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their stroke." (Isaiah 30:25-26)

This was the light of the **Third Angel** (Revelation 14:9-12), which had been withheld for so long due to the spiritual bondage of Babylonian commerce.

"Come, and let us return to the LORD, for he has torn [allowed the natural consequences of our rebellion to come upon us], and he will heal us; he has struck, and he will bind us up. After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will raise us up, and we will live in his presence. Let us know, let us press on to know the LORD! His appearing is as sure as the dawn; he will come to us like the rain, like the latter rain that waters the earth." (Hosea 6:1-3)

The Lord attempted to revive the Adventist people in **1888** through the messages of Elders A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner, and later in the **1950s** through those of missionaries Robert Wieland and Donald Short ("in two days"). However, it was predicted that only after **2001**, as a result of the reforming work of the spirit of Moses and Elijah, would His people be awakened again to new life and the completion of the mission. After the revival of the two witnesses (Revelation 11:11-12; 1989), the trumpet of the last **Seventh Angel** began to sound, announcing the "third woe," which, like the first two, falls through Islam on the modern stronghold of Christianity in America (Revelation 11:14-15).

The date 9/11 is encoded in the numerical designation of the verse that describes this religion as "destroyer" – **Revelation 9:11**. If in 1844, through the beginning of the Day of Atonement, the process of legalizing the citizenship of all deceased co-heirs of the Son of God was started, then

with the coming of the messages after 2001 about the true God and Father, the spiritual fullness of His law in the feasts, and the revelation of His non-violent character, the legalization of the citizenship of the living co-heirs of the Son of God was started. These advanced messages represent the finally decoded seven thunders of Revelation 10.

Symbolic Representations in Revelation

The story of the woman persecuted by the dragon (Revelation 12), who gave birth to Christ, is the textual center of Revelation. It refers first to the time from the **1st to the 19th century**, and then to that of the remnant itself after **1844**. Thus, during the time of the first sounding of the seventh angel, the trumpets are repeated until its last sounding, following the pattern for the capture of Jericho (Joshua 6:3-5). In chapter 13, the figures Satan uses at the end of time appear: the sea beast with the healed wound (**1st-10th centuries**), which is the "resurrected" papacy, and its advertising agent – Protestant America (**11th-15th centuries**), which works to impose the mark of the beast – the false Sabbath (**16th-18th centuries**). In this symbolism, the papacy appears as the "only begotten son" of the dragon, Satan, for whom he attempts to find a wife, imitating God's plan for the Bride of Christ.

V. 7. Plagues or Rain

And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them is filled up the wrath of God.

(Revelation 15:1)

In the light of all Scripture, God's "anger" or "fury" are those final moments when the sinner has made a final decision to live independently of his Creator and He is forced with sorrow to leave him to the consequences of this choice.

And in that day shall my anger be kindled against them, and I will forsake them, and hide my face from them; and they shall be devoured, and many evils and sorrows shall come upon them. And the people shall say in that day, Are not these evils come upon me, because my God is not among me? (Deuteronomy 31:17)

We are told that during these seven plagues, "the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power, and no one was able to enter the temple" (Revelation 15:8). On the great Day of Atonement, everyone has made their decision. Therefore, humanity is completely polarized, with a small group no longer needing Christ's mediation with the Father because they have realized that the Father Himself loves them (John 16:26, 27; cf. Revelation 15:2-4), and the great crowd having rejected the divine message of mercy. Satan now has complete control over them and over the elements. The plagues strike like the trumpets, but in whole, not in part (Revelation 16).

In Revelation 17:1, one of the angels who brings the plagues invites John to see what the fate (judgment) of the harlot Babylon will be. This means that the time that will be discussed in this chapter is in preparation for the pouring out of the plagues. Then John sees the harlot in a wilderness - the same one that is discussed in chapter 12. This also shows that the time is after 1798 (Revelation 12:6, 14). The harlot is riding a scarlet beast because Satan's dream of finding a bride for his son has already become a reality. However, in this regard, the harlot (the church) has a leading role. Her

story here can be viewed in two ways - globally or as the three phases of Rome.

Its global history spans 8 kingdoms:

Here is needed the understanding that has wisdom: the seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits. They are also seven kings, of which five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain a little while. And the beast that was, and is not, is himself the eighth, and is one of the seven, and goes into perdition. And the ten horns that you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but they receive authority as kings for one hour with the beast. They have one mind and give their authority and power to the beast. These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with him are called, chosen, and faithful. (Revelation 17:9-14)

This description corresponds to the 8 empires that encompassed Babylon's global power. The first four are the literal kingdoms of the book of Daniel: Babylon (606-539 BC), Medo-Persia (539-331 BC), Greece (331-168 BC), Rome (168 BC - 476 AD). The following four kingdoms are their spiritual counterparts: the Medieval Papacy (spiritual Babylon (538-1798 AD), Republican-Protestant America, the United Nations (represented by the 10 horns), and modern Rome, which is a triple coalition of the United Nations (the 10 horns of the dragon), the beast (the "resurrected Papacy"), and the false prophet (America)—Revelation 16:13, 14, 16.

The angel tells John that five have already fallen and the sixth is now, which means that the vision shows the time after 1798 before the appearance of the Threefold Coalition, which imitates God's heavenly trio of the Father, His Son, and their holy Spirit. The seventh, which has not yet come, but when it does come must remain but a short time, are the 10 horns of the United Nations, which receive power along with the resurrected papacy for one prophetic hour (15 days) and are therefore said to have but a short time. The eighth king is the resurrected papacy and is therefore said to be of the seven. According to this perspective, the full resurrection of the

papacy is still in the future, and since 2001, when the angel's messages of Revelation 18:1-3 came, the harlot has been spiritually judged.

After Babylon has been fully exposed by the message of the Father's true character as revealed by His Son on earth, the time comes for the final consummation of the wedding of Christ with His Bride (Revelation 19). If it were up to the Lord alone and He disregarded the free will of men, all would be saved and would participate in this wedding as guests or as the Bride herself. But since true love gives the right to choose, each will receive the reward for which he has chosen and worked (Revelation 22:12).

Therefore, at the coming of Christ, all will receive their rewards, but to the wicked His fragrance will be of death, but to the righteous of life (2 Corinthians 2:14-16). The problem is not with the fragrance, but with its recipients. That is why the wicked are said to partake of a supper. But instead of this supper being at the Lord's wedding table, it is actually the eating of their corpses by the birds of the air (Revelation 19:17-21). This is why the picture of the capital of the saved is presented to John again by one of the angels holding the seven plagues (Revelation 21:9-22:6). For all the righteous, Christ is presented as coming as a Prince on a white horse to take His Bride (144,000) with all the wedding guests (Revelation 19:7, 8, 11).

But, for the finale of this wedding to take place, one last work remains to be done – Taken to heaven, the righteous will spend 1000 with God and His Son, during which time they will consider the fates of all the lost (including Satan and the demons), in order to fully realize the reasons for this fate of theirs (Revelation 20:1-6 cf. Psalm 149:6-9 cf. 1 Corinthians 6:3). It will be seen that God and His Son have indeed done everything possible for their salvation, but the free choice of each person is crucial.

At the end of the 1000 years, Christ resurrects the wicked so that each of them may realize how much they are loved by their Creator and how much He suffers for their decision. They are seen to choose again to fight against God's government, which conclusively proves that no matter how many opportunities they were given, they would still choose the path of death. The love of their Creator awakens their guilt as never before, and they

experience it as a consuming fire that causes suffering far greater than any physical fire could cause (Revelation 20:7-10).

All realize that the Father has indeed been not only just but also exceedingly merciful from the beginning to the end of sinful history (Revelation 20:11-15 cf. Philippians 2:10-11). After the earth is consumed by the physical fire accumulated by the sins of billions of wicked people, comes the eternity of the renewed heavens and earth, in which eternal righteousness will dwell (2 Peter 3:3-13).

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth;... And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And he shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. (Revelation 21:1-4)

VJ. Final proclamation

And I saw another angel flying in midheaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people. And he said with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

And another angel, a second, followed behind, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, she who made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

And another, a third angel, followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, He also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed undiluted 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 ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, nor anyone who receives the mark of his name.

Here is needed the patience of the saints; of those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

(Revelation 14:6-12)

WT. 1. The Everlasting Gospel

And I saw another angel flying in midheaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people. (Revelation 14:6)

The Everlasting Gospel: From Creation to Covenant

The good news of **God's covenant with His Son**, and our privilege to be part of Jesus' inheritance, has been revealed to fallen humanity in various ways throughout history. Even nature itself, as God's creation, "preaches" this gospel:

"But I say, have they not heard? Of course they have: 'Their voice has gone out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world.'" (Romans 10:18)

Here, the apostle Paul quotes Psalm 19 to show that the **witness of nature** ensures the gospel is proclaimed "in all the world" and even "to the ends of the universe." Let's look at the broader context of this powerful witness:

"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims the work of his hands. Day after day pours forth speech, and night after night shows forth knowledge—without speech, without words, and their voice is not heard. Their fame has gone out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world." (Psalm 19:1-4)

God's Revelation Through Scripture

Despite this universal witness, in His desire to reach His alienated children, God continued to speak to them tenderly through the testimony of **special revelation**. During the first two millennia of human history, this testimony was passed down orally from generation to generation. However, as humanity's moral degradation diminished its ability to retain the saving message, God began to inspire men to record the messages of the

Testament for future generations. Of the Jews, it is said that the same good news was brought to them as to the Christians:

"For the gospel came to us as well as to them; but the word they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it." (Hebrews 4:2)

The oldest written record was given to Moses about 3,600 years ago in the **book of Job**. It tells the story of a wealthy and righteous man from ancient times who endures immense hardships, first losing his property and children, then his health. To top it all off, his friends accuse him of having sinned, claiming these troubles are divine punishment. In parallel with Job's experience, the book reveals the true reasons for his terrible sufferings:

"And there came a day when the sons of God [representatives of other worlds] came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan [the usurper of Adam's authority] came among them. And the LORD said to Satan, 'From going up and down in the earth, and from walking up and down in it' [Satan is about to raise the question of Job, but God preempts him]. And the LORD said to Satan, 'Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?' So Satan answered the LORD and said, 'Does Job fear God for nothing? Have You not made a hedge around him, and around his house, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the earth. But now, stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face!' And the LORD said to Satan, 'Behold, all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on his person.' So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD." (Job 1:6-12)

Satan declares that Job serves God not out of love, but out of self-interest. His ultimate aim, as at the beginning, is to prove that God's law is unenforceable. He is permitted to destroy all of Job's property and his descendants, who, by their persistence in sin, had deprived themselves of divine protection. Job's reaction is profound:

"Then Job arose, tore his robe, and shaved his head; and he fell to the ground and worshiped. And he said: 'Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.' In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong." (Job 1:20-22)

Although unaware of Satan, "who darkens" the counsel of his Creator (Job 42:3), Job does not renounce his friendship with God. But then Satan raises another argument in the divine council:

"And Satan answered the LORD and said, 'Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life. But stretch out Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will surely curse You to Your face!' And the LORD said to Satan, 'Behold, he is in your hand, but spare his life.'" (Job 2:5-6)

Then Satan struck Job with terrible boils and sores all over his body. God and His Son did not desire Job to endure these horrors, but the fears and doubts of this man of God made it inevitable:

"For the thing I greatly feared has come upon me, and what I dreaded has happened to me." (Job 3:25)

Job's experience would ultimately lead him to trust his Creator even more, establishing him in God's love, so that all his fears would be banished:

"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment. But whoever fears has not been made perfect in love." (1 John 4:18)

The goal was achieved, and Job himself testifies to this at the end of the story:

"...So I spoke what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know... I will question you, and you teach me. I had heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You. Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." (Job 42:3-6)

In the end, God rebuked Job's friends for not correctly representing His character, and Job was compensated with even more property, numerous offspring, and a long life.

The Misunderstood Character of God

There is a reason why the **book of Job was the first of the Holy Scriptures to be written**. The Lord provides a glimpse beyond the visible world so that people can understand that the bad things that befall them are not punishment from God, as Satan would have them believe. However, despite this testimony, people quickly forgot this precious light and lived with the idea of cruel deities who required sacrifices to appease their anger. Even God's people, Israel, to whom the Holy Scriptures were entrusted, could not fully emerge from the darkness of a distorted understanding of God's character. Too often, they saw Him as themselves rather than as He truly is.

"You did these [various sins], and I kept silent; You thought that I was just like you; but I will reprove you and set them in order before your eyes." (Psalm 50:20-21)

Their persistence in sin did not allow them to acquire pure spiritual vision. The ability of spiritual perceptions is directly dependent on a person's morality:

"With the merciful You will show Yourself merciful; with a blameless man You will show Yourself blameless; with the pure You will show Yourself pure; and with the perverse You will show Yourself froward." (Psalm 18:25-26)

We just quoted that the gospel was presented to the Jews, but they did not accept it as a whole due to unbelief. Throughout their history as a chosen people, God worked with them, coming down to their level, so that despite their general unbelief, individuals, both among them and among the nations, could be blessed. For this reason, their civil laws often

reflected their harsh characters rather than God's mercy toward the sinner:

"And I also gave them statutes that were not good, and judgments by which they could not live." (Ezekiel 20:25, KJV)

The entire liturgical system of commandments and ordinances was interpreted by the Jews according to their own understanding. Their sins prevented them from seeing the face of the Son of God, who alone infallibly reflects the character of God:

"But if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this world has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them." (2 Corinthians 4:3-4)

Until the coming of Jesus to Earth, the Jews saw in the Holy Scriptures only a reflection of their own natural face:

"For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man looking at his natural face in a mirror." (James 1:23)

The Old and New Covenants

God allowed the Jews to have a relationship with Him that Scripture calls the **Old Covenant**. In this relationship, instead of believing God's promises to make them a kingdom of priests and to give them the heavenly Canaan, they promised God that they themselves would keep His commandments. God allowed this process to develop so that the law could reveal their inability to live righteous lives in their own strength and then seek Him as a Savior:

"Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more." (Romans 5:20)

This approach of God is called in Scripture the **ministry of death** because it completely "kills" humanity's hope that they can live a righteous life independent of their Creator:

"Who has made us able ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. But if the ministry of death, written and engraved on stones, was glorious,... how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious?" (2 Corinthians 3:6-8)

Both ministries, the **New and the Old Covenant**, operate in harmony. First, the diagnosis of our sinful condition is made through the law, and then grace is received from the Spirit of our Savior to live a righteous life. In this sense, these two ministries are not two ages, as is often thought, but two experiences – the law leading to the gospel. This is illustrated in the story of Abraham in his relationship with his wife Sarah and her Egyptian maidservant Hagar:

"Tell me, you who desire to be under the law [to keep it without the Spirit of the Son of God], do you not hear what the law says? For it is written that Abraham had two sons: one by a bondwoman and one by a freewoman. But the one by the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and the one by the freewoman through promise, which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar; for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children—but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all." (Galatians 4:21-26)

In their collective experience, the Jews never managed to fully enter into the ministry of the New Covenant. Even when the Son of God came to Earth in person, they not only failed to embrace the light but hated Him and handed Him over to the Roman authorities to be brutally killed. They refused to have the veil removed from their sight.

"But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains at the reading of the Old Testament, not being taken away, because it is taken away in Christ.... Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Corinthians 3:14-18)

Those who trust in God's promises are children of promise, and the Spirit of the Son of God works in them to show them the true character of God and to portray it within them. The Christian church began in this way, but soon believers turned their eyes from Christ and began to focus on the shortcomings and erroneous beliefs of others.

"I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; and you have perseverance and have endured for My name's sake, and have not become weary. Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love." (Revelation 2:2-4)

Although the first centuries of persecution somewhat arrested this process, the beginning of the Middle Ages found the church in great apostasy. For more than 12 centuries, a thick darkness of ignorance concerning the true God and His Son covered the whole world. Even the forerunners of the Reformation and the Reformation itself were unable to completely dispel this darkness. In the **19th century**, the eternal good news of God's Covenant with His Son and His brothers and sisters would begin to pierce the thick clouds of superstition and error. The Old and New Testaments would be seen as subject to one "everlasting covenant" (Isaiah 24:5; Hebrews 13:20). The first angel of Revelation chapter 14 would speak with a "loud voice."

WT. 2. The Beginning of Wisdom

And he said with a loud voice, Fear God...! (Revelation 14:7)

Understanding Fear and God's Character

Fear is a powerful motivator in many life decisions. Yet, the first angel commands us to **fear God**, not anything else. Jesus conveyed a similar message to His disciples:

"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 killing, has authority to throw into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear Him." (Luke 12:4-5, KJV)

Jesus initially presents our Heavenly Father as having the power to cast into hell. However, He immediately adds:

"Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings? And not one of them is forgotten before God. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not be afraid, you are of more value than many sparrows." (Luke 12:6-7)

If we don't grasp Jesus' full meaning, we might think He's contradicting Himself—first commanding fear of God, then assuring us not to be afraid because of our inherent value. This seemingly paradoxical statement reflects the **two-step process of the two covenants**. Jesus' initial command aims to awaken His listeners to life's true priorities. However, this statement doesn't fully reflect the character of God, for it is written that "there is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear" (1 John 4:18). Jesus also implies that His initial statement belongs to the **Old Covenant ministry**, as seen in Matthew's account:

"What I tell you in the dark [Greek: 'obscure'], speak in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops. Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; but rather

be in fear of him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."
(Matthew 10:27-28)

Jesus' words, like many others in God's Word, are not meant to portray God as harsh or cruel. The first angel's command, bringing the everlasting gospel while telling us to fear God, addresses us in a state where we can only be reached through the "ministry of death." However, the exhortation to "fear God" carries a very specific meaning in Scripture:

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding." (Proverbs 9:10)

The **fear of the Lord** is merely the **beginning of wisdom**; it's the starting point in knowing God. And the very wisdom of God, as we saw earlier, is His **only begotten Son**. Let's recall the texts that communicate this:

"Does not wisdom cry out? Does not understanding lift up its voice?... I was set up from eternity, from the beginning, before the earth was founded. When there were no depths, when there were no springs abounding with water, I was brought forth. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills I was brought forth, when He had not yet made the earth, the fields, or the first dust of the world." (Proverbs 8:8, 23-25)

"But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God... But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption." (1 Corinthians 1:24, 30)

Therefore, the first angel begins by calling us to **accept Christ as the literal Son of God, born in eternity**. This aligns with what is found on the foreheads of those sealed in the end times:

"And I looked, and, behold, the Lamb stood on Mount Zion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his name, and his Father's name written in their foreheads." (Revelation 14:1)

God is the Father of Christ, and Christ is the Son of God. They are the only ones we should properly worship. The apostle Paul clarifies this when he speaks against idolatry:

"For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth, as there are gods many and lords many, yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through Him." (1 Corinthians 8:5-6)

The Monotheistic Nature of God

God's Word teaches us to believe in **one God**, not in three persons. Some interpret the Spirit of God as a third person because He is said to be grieved (Ephesians 4:30) and can be deceived (Acts 5:3). However, this only shows that the Spirit of God is not merely a force, but manifests the very person of God and Christ (Romans 8:9-11). Such interpretations also overlook that when Jesus speaks of "another Comforter," exclusively in the Gospel of John chapters 14-16, He presents **in the form of a parable another way in which He Himself will manifest to His disciples** (John 14:17, 18, 23; cf. 16:25). Only in this sense can the Spirit of the Son of God be called the third person of the Godhead.

The reason Jesus spoke to them in this way was that they were not yet able to accept the invisible, spiritual essence of the divine being (John 16:16-19). The Greek word for Comforter (παράκλητος) appears only four times in the New Testament. The first three refer to the Spirit of God, and the fourth to our Advocate with the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ. This is no coincidence, for He is our Comforter. Only the Spirit of the One who has experienced all the problems of our earthly life can provide us with effective comfort. Moreover, nowhere in God's Word is there any instruction to pray to or exalt the Spirit of God. Since Lucifer was the third in authority in heaven after God and Christ, he would be delighted if we worshipped a third person whom we consider to be a god. However, due to the falsehood of this teaching, such worship goes to Satan and gives him the opportunity to enslave those who believe it.

The religion of the Bible is **completely monotheistic**. Although Jesus possesses the fullness of the Godhead, this doesn't make Him a second God, for He received this from His Father. There is only one "from Whom," i.e., Source. The Son of God Himself testifies to this:

"As He was going out into the way, one came running, kneeling before Him and asking Him, 'Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?' So Jesus said to him, 'Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God.'" (Mark 10:17-18)

Does Jesus mean that He is not good and that only the Father is good? Of course not. But here He clearly shows that the **source of goodness is the only God, His Father**. The man comes to Jesus with a vital question: "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Before answering, Jesus directs his listeners to what is truly important for eternal life—**knowing the one who is the only Source of true goodness**. The man thinks eternal life is related to his actions, but Jesus points out that the essential thing is to intimately know the true God, who is the source of righteousness, and then the works will naturally follow:

"And this is eternal life: that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent." (John 17:3)

The Father is "the only true God." As we have seen, the first angel calls upon us to clarify the true identity of God as Father and to accept His Son, which is the beginning of wisdom. The result of this will be the abandonment of sin, for "the fear of the Lord is the hating of evil" (Proverbs 8:13). In this light are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge:

"For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and for all who have not seen my face in the flesh, that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." (Colossians 2:1-3, King James Version)

The **relationship of the Father and the Son** provides the key that unlocks the door to true knowledge and heavenly wisdom. When we understand this relationship, the Scriptures will reveal the harmony of truth "as it is in Jesus," God's only begotten Son. In subsequent sections of this book, we will repeatedly apply this divine model of their relationship to clarify difficult questions.

The Literal Meaning of "Only Begotten"

Let us remember that from the very beginning, Lucifer and the angels who followed him decided to obscure the fact that Jesus was the **only begotten Son of God**. In my personal life, this obfuscation persisted for years through a metaphorical understanding of the word "only begotten," where Christ was viewed as unique and one of a kind, but not as literally born of God. I didn't realize that such a Christ, who possessed everything of Himself, corresponded to my own ideas of a power-based divinity.

After studying the **three angels' messages of Revelation 14:6-12**, I decided to present my research findings to a group. While explaining my understanding of the "three-in-one" Godhead, I was asked what the term "only begotten" meant in the Bible's "golden verse," John 3:16. I assumed the questioner considered Christ to be a created being, so I pointed to verses affirming His divinity. At the time, I didn't realize the crucial distinction between Jesus being a self-existent God the Son and a created being. This discussion prompted me to investigate the matter in detail. I learned that the early bearers of the angel's message in the **1840s believed in God and Christ as literal Father and Son**.

After a few months, I recognized the need for clear and consistent rules for studying the Bible that God had laid down within it. A proper approach to interpreting Scripture requires that every concept be taken literally until it is impossible to do so. For example, when Scripture speaks of a woman clothed with the sun and standing on the moon, this clearly cannot be taken literally (Revelation 12:1). But when it tells of a woman who had a flow of blood for 12 years and spent all her money on physicians until she found Christ, we have no reason not to take this as a literal historical event.

So what about the word "**only begotten**" in relation to Jesus? Is it necessary to interpret it metaphorically? Is it impossible for God to beget a Son, that is, to produce Him from His own nature? Of course not. The Greek word for "only begotten" (μονογενής, *monogenes*) has the following definition in Strong's Dictionary:

- **μονογενής, ἐς [Strong's Greek] No. 3439**
- *monogenesis*, from No. 3441 and No. 1096; only-begotten, e.g. sole: only (born, child). See Gr. No. 3441 see Gr. No. 1096

Let's see how this word is used in the New Testament. It occurs in 9 places:

Scripture Reference	Translation	Meaning
Luke 7:12	"...and behold, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother,"	Only born child
Luke 8:42	"For he had an only daughter , about twelve years old, and she was dying."	Only born child
Luke 9:38	"And behold, a man from the crowd cried out, saying, 'Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my only child .'"	Only born child
John 1:14	"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only	Only born child

Scripture Reference	Translation	Meaning
	begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."	
John 1:18	"No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son , who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him."	Only born child
John 3:16	"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son , that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life."	Only born child
John 3:18	"He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God ."	Only born child
Hebrews 11:17	"By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac; and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son ;"	The only born child of his true and lawful wife.

Scripture Reference	Translation	Meaning
1 John 4:9	"In this was manifested the love of God toward us, that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him."	Only born child

In each of these nine instances, the word "only begotten" refers to an only born child. Thus, Scripture itself confirms the literal meaning of this concept. The following promise is for all of us who believe this precious truth:

"Grace, mercy, and peace will be with us from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love."
(2 John 1:3)

WT. 3. Giving glory

... and give Him glory ...! (Revelation 14:7)

The Glory and Character of God

The **glory of God is His character**. This profound truth is evident in God's conversation with Moses when Moses expressed a desire to see His glory:

"Then Moses said, 'Please show me your glory.' And the LORD said to him, 'I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim before you the name of the LORD; and I will be merciful to whom I will be merciful, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.'" (Exodus 33:18-19)

In response to Moses' request, God stated He would reveal His goodness, His Name, and His mercy. These are indeed different, yet uniformly positive, traits of His character. Interestingly, He doesn't explicitly mention justice and righteousness in this list. This isn't because God lacks these qualities; rather, it suggests that what is truly glorious about Him is His **goodness, mercy, and love**. Could it be that justice and righteousness are so intrinsically woven into His love, mercy, and goodness that they are implicitly included? Let's consider what Scripture says:

"Righteousness and judgment are the foundation of Your throne; mercy and truth go before Your face." (Psalm 89:14)

The Hebrew parallelism in this passage implies that the first two qualities are explained by the latter two. This equation suggests:

- **Justice = Mercy**
- **Judgment = Truth**

Further confirmation comes from Moses' second encounter on Sinai:

"And Moses hewed two tables of stone like unto the first: and Moses rose up early in the morning, and went up unto mount Sinai, as the

LORD commanded him, and took in his hand the two tables of stone. And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. And the LORD passed before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness, and truth." (Exodus 34:4-6)

The **invitation to give glory to God** is an invitation to be transformed into His character, which will naturally lead to true obedience to His law. This is not merely promising to keep the letter of the law, as the Israelites did before quickly turning to worship a golden calf (Exodus 32:4). Giving glory is a process of deeply knowing God and reflecting His true character as revealed through His Son on Earth:

"Philip said to Him, 'Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.' Jesus said to him, 'Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; and how can you say, "Show me the Father"?'"" (John 14:8-9)

Here, we see how the profound truth of Christ's heavenly origin is intrinsically linked to the accurate testimony of God's character. Only a Son who is **born of the very nature of God**, as the only begotten Son of God, can fully reveal exactly what His Father, God, is like. This is the primary reason why the enemy of our souls seeks to obscure this crucial fact:

"But if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this world has blinded the eyes of unbelievers, lest the light of the gospel of the glory [character] of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine upon them... For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory [character] of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (2 Corinthians 4:3-6)

It follows that in God's character, righteousness or justice is manifested in mercy, just as His judgment is manifested in truth. Whence, then, comes the understanding that, when the Son of God was crucified, mercy and

justice "met"? If they are one in God, why then should they be joined together at Calvary?

"Surely His salvation is near to those who fear Him, that glory may dwell [His character be made manifest] in our land. Mercy and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." (Psalm 85:9-10)

You'll recall that it was **Satan who created a new system of justice**, asserting that every sin must be punished and that without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. This is how he convinced one-third of the angels to join him, declaring that he understood God's law and that if they returned to their Creator, He would not forgive them. Since then, in the minds of angels, and later in the minds of humans, mercy and justice have been perceived as separate. Thus, Satan distorted God's character. But, as we have seen, God's justice is intrinsically expressed in mercy. Here are practical examples from Scripture:

"Judge the poor and the orphan with righteousness, and do justice to the afflicted and needy." (Psalm 82:3)

"And you shall swear, 'As the LORD lives,' in truth, in justice, and in righteousness; and the nations shall be blessed in Him, and in Him shall they glory." (Jeremiah 4:2)

The result of God's justice is mercy for those in need. Why, then, did Christ have to die on the cross? Couldn't God simply tell us that He forgives us? That is impossible, for until justice, as we understand it, is satisfied, we will never truly believe in His forgiveness. How great is the love of our Heavenly Father and of the Lord Jesus, who agreed to endure the horrors of the cross so that we might truly believe we are redeemed and forgiven.

This is why God is sometimes portrayed in Scripture as angry and in need of propitiation. But the apostle Paul tells us that this is a **fallen human way of reasoning**:

"But if our unrighteousness commends the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unjust when He inflicts wrath? I speak after the manner of men." (Romans 3:5)

Christ: The Faithful Witness to God's Character

The Son of God knew that His testimony of the Father would be obscured, especially in the last stage of the church's history. Therefore, in His message to the church, He introduces Himself this way:

"To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God." (Revelation 3:14)

Jesus serves as a **faithful and true Witness** to His Father's character because only He knows Him fully and can fully reveal Him. The reason for this is implied by the words "The beginning of the creation of God." To understand what these words mean, we connect them with another similar text:

"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers—all things were created through Him and for Him." (Colossians 1:15-16)

Jesus is the **beginning of God's creation** because He is the **Firstborn Son of God**, through whom the Father created all things.

Many people readily claim to have no problem believing that God and Christ have identical characters. However, if we read biblical accounts of divine judgments associated with violence and attribute this directly to God's character, we demonstrate that we haven't truly accepted the Son of God's testimony about His Father. Therefore, all instances of God's judgments on sinners must be re-examined and harmonized with the life of Jesus Christ on Earth.

To see and reflect the Father's glory as revealed in His Son, we are invited to be diligent students of the Bible, harmonizing all its texts to make it clear that the **Father indeed acts as His Son in all emergencies**. In the third part of this testament, we will examine seven types of events associated with divine judgments that seem to contradict Christ's life on Earth. We must do this to convince ourselves that God never uses violence and deadly force against those who oppose Him, just as Jesus never killed or condemned a person while He was on Earth.

This is profoundly important because we are told that we are transformed according to the character of the God in whom we believe:

"But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord [character], are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Corinthians 3:18)

This is an irrevocable spiritual law. We must be sure that Jesus' words in the Sermon on the Mount about His Father are eternally valid and cover the time when judgments such as the Flood, Sodom and Gomorrah, and many others were fulfilled.

"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven. For He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brothers only, what more do you do? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Be perfect, therefore, just as your Father in heaven is perfect." (Matthew 5:43-48)

Is the Father's perfection truly expressed in His love for His enemies and His doing only good to them? And is this truly the main reason for us to be like that, as His children? Look at how this part of Jesus' sermon is conveyed by Luke:

"But to you who hear I say, love your enemies; do good to those who hate you; bless those who curse you; pray for those who mistreat you. To the one who strikes you on one cheek, offer the other also; and from the one who takes away your coat, do not withhold your tunic either. Give to everyone who asks you; and from the one who takes away what is yours, do not demand it back. And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise. For if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive back, what credit is that to you? For even sinners lend to sinners to receive as much back. But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the ungrateful and evil. Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful." (Luke 6:27-36)

Here, the Father's perfection is equated with **mercy**. This means that to be perfect, we must be merciful like Him. Is He really so merciful that He turns the other cheek when struck? Does He lend when He knows He will not be repaid? Does He do good to those who hate Him? Or does His patience run out at one point, leading to expressions like these in His anger:

"And the LORD said, 'I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, and the creeping thing and the fowl of the air; for I repent that I have made them.'" (Genesis 6:7)

How are we to understand this and how does it harmonize with the preaching of Jesus? Remember, we must know this if we are to bear the Father's name on our foreheads (Revelation 14:1). Only then can we see in God's law, which contains the commandment "Thou shalt not kill," the beauty of a character that is freely offered to us. When we understand that the life of the Son of God on Earth is indeed the exact reflection of the Father, we find the key to reflecting the true glory of the Father and receiving His seal.

The first heralds of the angel's message in the mid-19th century realized that the "eternal fire" in which those who had rejected God's and His Son's saving invitation would burn could not, in fact, last forever. They felt that such an understanding of the texts relating to the fate of the wicked cast a dark shadow on the character of God. Little did they realize how far-reaching the implications of such a view of divine judgments were.

WJ. 4. The Hour of His Judgment has come

"...for the hour of His judgment has come...!" (Revelation 14:7)

The Hour of God's Judgment: Unveiling His Character

When we genuinely **understand and accept God's character** as revealed through His Son on Earth, we grasp the true nature of the judgment the angel proclaims. The angel declares that "the hour of His judgment has come." But when are the **three angels' messages of Revelation 14:6-12** proclaimed? To understand this, we need to trace earlier prophecies.

Revelation 14 begins by describing the **144,000 sealed** in contrast to those marked with the **mark of the beast** from Revelation 13. Revelation 12 speaks of the battle between the **dragon (Satan working through Rome)** and the **woman (the church)**. Regarding the church's escape during the Middle Ages, we read:

"And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days... And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent." (Revelation 12:6, 14)

This prophetic period of **1260 days** is also expressed in verse 14 as "a time" (1 prophetic year), "times" (2 prophetic years), and "half a time" (1/2 prophetic year). Assuming a prophetic month of 30 days (as before the Flood, which seems to have affected its length – Genesis 7:11, 24; cf. 8:4), then 3.5 times equals $360 + 360 + 360 + 180 = 1260$ prophetic days. During this same period, the **beast of Revelation 13** persecutes God's people and speaks proudly and arrogantly against God:

"And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months... It was

granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them..."
(Revelation 13:5-7)

These **42 prophetic months x 30 days** also equate to 1260 prophetic days. And how long is one prophetic day?

"And when you have accomplished these, then lie again on your right side; you shall bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days; I have appointed each day for a year." (Ezekiel 4:6)

Therefore, **1260 prophetic days equal 1260 literal years**. This is the period during which the woman (church) is persecuted. The **dragon of Revelation 12** represents Rome in all its seven forms of government: royal, consular, dictatorial, triumvirate, decemvirate, imperial, and papal. That's why it has crowns on its seven heads (Revelation 12:3). It persecuted God's church during the Middle Ages through its **papal form of government**.

This government itself is also represented by the **beast of Revelation 13:1-8**, for it is said that the dragon (pagan Rome) gave his authority to the beast (papal Rome, Revelation 13:2). The period of the woman's persecution begins in **538 AD**, when the papacy's power was established. The foretold period of 1260 years takes us to **1798**, when Pope Pius VI was captured by Napoleon's troops, and the papacy lost its temporal power, thus receiving a "deadly wound" (Revelation 13:3). And this is how Revelation 12 concludes:

"Then the dragon was enraged at the woman, and went to make war with the rest of her offspring..." (Revelation 12:17)

This occurs sometime after 1798, as the woman had already spent 1260 years in seclusion. Therefore, the **first angel's message of Revelation 14:6, 7** begins to be proclaimed sometime after that year.

Daniel's Prophecies and the Heavenly Judgment

Scripture provides further confirmation in **Daniel chapter 7**, which we considered previously. After the four world empires of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and pagan Rome pass away, the "little horn" (the papacy) appears. Later in the same chapter, we read of the time of its rule:

"He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High... And they shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time." (Daniel 7:25)

This is again the same **1260 years that end in 1798**. After the rule of this power, the **heavenly judgment** is described:

"I watched till thrones were put in place, and the Ancient of Days was seated... His throne was fiery flames, and its wheels a burning fire; a fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him... The court was seated, and the books were opened." (Daniel 7:8-10)

This judgment arises as a reflection of the false system of justice practiced by the papacy throughout the Dark Ages. The movement that began in the 19th century to proclaim the first angel's messages of Revelation 14:6, 7 often perceived God's glory and the "river of life" as a consuming fire, rather than as the benevolent presence of God and His Son through Their Spirit (Exodus 24:17; cf. Revelation 22:1). This portrayal of judgment aligns with the **Old Covenant's "ministry of death" through the law**, which must come so that sin may "come alive" and our self may "die" to the hope that we can keep the law independently (Romans 7:9). Only then will we be able to see the true nature of the judgment as described in the next chapter of Daniel.

In **Daniel chapter 8**, the symbols differ, but they point to the same event. Daniel sees a **ram with two horns**, representing Media and Persia (Daniel 8:3, 4, 20). Then a **he-goat** is brought against the ram, and "it struck the ram and broke its two horns" (Daniel 8:7). This he-goat represents the Grecian empire, with its prominent horn being Alexander (Daniel 8:21). After his sudden death, four horns, representing his generals, rise in his place (Daniel 8:22). "In the latter part of their reign" (Daniel 8:23), Rome

rises, initially manifesting in its pagan phase, which the prophecy calls the "daily" or "permanent" (Daniel 8:9, 12). This power slaughters some of Judea's leadership, rises against Christ Himself and kills Him, and then cruelly persecutes His followers (Daniel 8:10-12).

Then Rome enters its **papal phase**, described here as the "transgression that causes desolation" (Daniel 8:12). It eliminates paganism by assimilating it into Christianity. A heavenly being then asks:

"How long will the vision of the daily sacrifice and the transgression that causes desolation last, when the sanctuary and the army will be trampled underfoot?" (Daniel 8:13)

The answer to this question provides the length of the period leading up to the heavenly judgment proclaimed by the first angel of Revelation 14:6, 7:

"And he said to me, 'For two thousand three hundred evenings and mornings; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed.'" (Daniel 8:14)

These **2300 prophetic days are 2300 literal years**. Their beginning is given to Daniel in the next chapter:

"Seventy weeks are determined [Hebrew: cut off] for your people and for your holy city... From the going forth of the word to restore and to build Jerusalem..." (Daniel 9:24-25)

These **70 prophetic weeks are 490 actual years**, covering the time of ethnic Israel as the chosen people until the coming and rejection of the Messiah. Because they are "cut off" from the larger 2300-year period, this reveals that their beginning coincides with that of the larger period.

Three successive decrees of Persian kings led to the complete restoration and rebuilding of Jerusalem. The last decree of Artaxerxes II was issued in 457 B.C. (Ezra 7:1, 13-26). Ezra set out with the king's decree from the Persian capital of Susa and arrived in Jerusalem in the fifth biblical month (August/September, Ezra 7:9). Two months later, the decree was issued on the tenth day of the seventh biblical month, which is Yom Kippur, meaning Day of Judgment. From here, 2,300 years take us to A.D. 1844, when the

actual Day of Judgment in heaven, of which the first was only a symbol, began.

At that time the **Millerite movement** proclaimed the first angel's message, saying that on **October 22 of that year**, the date of Yom Kippur in 1844, Christ would return to the Earth for judgment. When this did not happen, great disappointment followed, similar to that of Christ's disciples, due to their misunderstanding of the coming of the kingdom of God. They, like the Millerites, expected a powerful kingdom led by Christ, who would destroy the enemies of Israel and make them the greatest nation in the world. Therefore, Jesus warned them:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy." (John 16:20)

When Christ was scourged, mocked, and crucified, the disciples were grieved. So when Jesus did not return on **October 22, 1844**, the Millerites were mocked and suffered great sorrow. But just as the disciples rejoiced exceedingly after the resurrection of Jesus, so those who looked for the Second Coming of Christ saw the light of hope in the realization that their calculations were correct, but the cleansing of the sanctuary was not a cleansing of the Earth, but a **cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary**, which was actually the beginning of the **heavenly judgment**. Up to that time the Son of God had ministered in the Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary, but now He entered the Most Holy.

The Nature of God's Judgment

The judgment prophecy of Daniel 7 is written in Aramaic, while the vision of the cleansing of the sanctuary is in Hebrew. This arrangement of the book shows that we, like Daniel, are invited to look beyond the literal picture of the vision (the mirror) to see the true image of our Heavenly Father. Of Him, the Son of God says:

"For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son." (John 5:22)

Our Heavenly Father judges no one. Each individual determines their own judgment based on their attitude toward the testimony the Son of God has given of Him on Earth. The phrase "the hour of His judgment" should be understood as the time when humanity is invited to **judge what God is like, based on the testimony of His Son:**

"They (the defendants) demonstrate that the work of the law is written on their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, while their thoughts accuse or else excuse them, on the day when God will judge the secrets of men through Jesus Christ according to my gospel." (Romans 2:15-16, Revised Edition)

"God forbid! But let us let God be true, and every man a liar, as it is written: 'That You may be justified in Your words, and may overcome when You are judged.'" (Romans 3:4, New Testament, modern translation)

When Jesus was on Earth, He clearly showed the nature of God's judgment and how vastly different it is from our human ideas, which are often fueled by Satan's false system of justice:

"You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one." (John 8:15)

"And if anyone hears My words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. He who rejects Me and does not receive My words has one who judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day." (John 12:47-48)

The story of the **woman caught in adultery** provides a perfect model of a trial (John 8:3-11). This model illustrates how the judgment generally proceeds. The scribes and Pharisees condemn the woman according to Satan's false system of justice. The Son of God allows this process to "kill" the self by the letter of the law by remaining silent and writing on the ground the specific sins of the accusers, which is analogous to opening law

books in a courtroom. He then tells them that to be qualified to execute judgment on the woman, they must be sinless.

"And they, when they heard this, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one..." (John 8:9, King James Version)

They condemn themselves because their condemnation of the woman and their distorted belief about God's character preclude mercy for themselves. Only "mercy triumphs over judgment" (James 2:13). Jesus then asks the woman if anyone has condemned her, igniting a spark of hope that she might be justified. When she replies that no one condemns her, the Son of God declares that He does not condemn her either.

Thus, from the very nature of the judgment in the cases of these living men, at the time of the message, when "the hour of His judgment is come," it is evident that there is no long process of examining and balancing the records; but it is a simple recognition of the condition of each man, as a condition of his own choosing. — A. T. Jones, *The Great Nations Today*, p. 243, Paragraph 2

WJ. 5. The Seal of the Creator

and worship Him who made heaven and earth and the sea and the springs of water ! (Revelation 14:7)

The Sabbath: A Sign of God's Character and Rest by Faith

This part of the first angel's message closely echoes the **Fourth Commandment**:

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. You shall not do any work on it... for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day." (Exodus 20:8-11)

After the disappointment of 1844, those who faithfully sought Christ entered the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary and discovered the **Ten Commandments** there. They realized that the antichrist had altered the Fourth Commandment, shifting its observance from Saturday to Sunday. Such a change aligns with Satanic sophistry, which seeks to present God's law as arbitrary.

Those earnestly looking for Christ's return understood the significance of this commandment, yet, like the Israelites of old, they initially attempted to keep God's law through their own strength. Between 1888 and 1893, the Lord sent them the profound message of receiving the **righteousness of Christ by faith**. Here's how the Sabbath was then understood in light of this message:

"The Sabbath has the living image of Jesus and the presence of Jesus Christ in it... He has set it for man, and the man who believes in Jesus Christ can take it from there.... No matter how much of the presence of Christ is with him, when he comes on the Sabbath day, there comes to him an additional presence of Christ." (A. T. Jones, *The*

Third Angel's Message - Sermon 20 - The Spirit of Christ Through the Sabbath, March 2, 1893)

If the Sabbath brings an **additional presence of Christ**, then it truly is God's chosen means of **sealing His people in the image and character of our Heavenly Father**:

"I also gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between them and Me, that they might know that I am the LORD who sanctifies them."
(Ezekiel 20:12)

Through the Sabbath, God invites us to experience the very principle of **justification by faith**, teaching us to rest from our works and not to rely on them for our salvation. Instead, through the righteousness of Christ, the Sabbath becomes a **rest of faith and gratitude** through which we receive His Spirit of peace:

"For thus says the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel: 'In returning and resting you will be saved; in quietness and confidence will be your strength.' But you would not." (Isaiah 30:15)

If we correctly understand and accept the first angel's message, the outcome will be that we keep God's commandments **through the faith of Jesus**:

"Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus." (Revelation 14:12)

The natural person lacks such faith because they do not truly know the Father and cannot fully trust Him. In this sense, the Son of God is the **Author (Originator)** of faith—the first to manifest it perfectly and the only one through whom we can all possess it:

"Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of faith," (Hebrews 12:2)

Unlike us, Jesus has perfect trust in His Father and constantly delights in following His will:

"I delight to do Your will, O my God, and Your law is within my inward parts." (Psalm 40:8)

Even at the creation of our world, we see the manifestation of this overflowing delight from the heart of the Son of God:

"When [God]... laid the foundations of the earth—... I rejoiced before Him always, I was glad in His circle..." (Proverbs 8:22-31)

Every Sabbath, Christ invites us to be filled with His delight, which stems from the words of His Father: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Luke 3:17).

"And on the seventh day God... rested from all His work which He had created and made [Father and Son enjoy]. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it,... [they invite us to partake of their delight every Sabbath]." (Genesis 2:1-3)

"If... you call the Sabbath a delight, the holy day of the LORD, honorable; and honor it, not doing your own ways, nor seeking your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words, then you will delight yourself in the LORD..." (Isaiah 58:13-14)

There is immense joy in the fact that the One through whom God created the world, and who knows Him in fullness, desires to impart to us His delight in resting in His bosom every Sabbath. This day is not when Jesus evaluates His creative achievements, but a piece of eternity into which we enter by resting from the worldly principle of gaining value through achievement and by hearing God's words of blessing to us through Jesus:

"All things have been delivered to Me by My Father; and... no one knows the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him. Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." (Matthew 11:27-30)

Nothing has hindered the accessibility of this living rest in the grateful Spirit of the Son of God except unbelief and blindness to this blessing:

"For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them [the Israelites]; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it. For we who have believed do enter that rest... although His works were finished from the foundation of the world." (Hebrews 4:2-3)

Although God and His Son completed the creative week, God's power to **restore His image in fallen humanity** has not ceased. It is especially manifested through the Sabbath. Hence, when Jesus healed the man who had been paralyzed for 38 years, He said that His Father **continues to work on the Sabbath** (John 5:17). E. Waggoner, one of the two prominent preachers of justification by faith in the late 19th century, clearly shows the connection between the creative work of God and His Son in the beginning and its continuation in the redemption of the world:

"Here [in the first angel's message] is presented before us clearly the fact that the preaching of the gospel consists in the preaching of God as the Creator of all things... So the preaching of the everlasting gospel is the preaching of Christ—the creative power of God, through whom alone salvation can come. And the power by which Christ saves men from sin is the power by which He created the worlds." (E. J. Waggoner, *The Everlasting Covenant*, pp. 21-23)

The "waves of the Word" by which the Father created the elements continue to reverberate throughout all time based on the **sevenfold principle**. This same Sabbath principle, as a time to receive more of the Christ Spirit of trust in God, restorative power, and delight, extends beyond the weekly Sabbath. **Leviticus 23** presents a whole series of God's appointed times:

"Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'The feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, My feasts, are these: Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation. You shall do no work on

it; it is the Sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings.' [list of all feasts follows]" (Leviticus 23:2-3)

In the Lord's list of appointed times, the Sabbath is placed first. This is because these feasts follow a **divine pattern, source-channel, relationship**, being shaped by the relationship of the Father and His Son.

The true Sabbath experience, in which we receive by faith the Spirit of the Son, is possible only when we understand the **harmonious relationship of law and gospel**—a theme made clear by the two preachers, Jones and Waggoner. A divine source-channel pattern also exists between the Ten Commandments and the Book of the Law (Deuteronomy 31:26). We are called to keep God's law with all its commandments, statutes, and judgments, not as servants, but as **sons and daughters, through the Spirit of the Son of God**.

Restoring the Sabbath and the Feasts

"Remember the law of Moses, My servant, which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments [the book of the law]. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. And he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers,..." (Malachi 4:4-6)

The Lord reveals to us the increasing abundance of the Spirit of Christ, promised at the appointed times, in the book of **Numbers, chapters 28 and 29**. There are given the exact measures of the sacrifices, the flour and the oil. These offerings are not accidental, but symbolize the **Spirit of the Son of God**. The removal of sins from the hearts of believers and from the heavenly sanctuary on the Day of Atonement, which began in 1844, is connected with the **reception of refreshment by the presence or Spirit of the Son of God**:

"Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the

Lord, and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was appointed for you..." (Acts 3:19-20)

Receiving the Spirit of Christ in fullness guarantees remaining in God's house, because:

"And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever." (John 8:35)

Through the system of pagan and spiritual Rome, Satan plotted to **change the Sabbath and the feasts** in order to deprive God's people of the filial Spirit of our Lord Jesus:

"And... he shall persecute the saints of the Most High; and shall intend to change times and law: Then the saints shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time." (Daniel 7:25, KJV)

Emperor Constantine was the first to declare **March 7, 321 AD**, the "Day of the Sun" (DIES SOLIS) – Sunday – a Roman day of rest:

"All judges and citizens and artisans must rest on the 'WORTHY DAY'. Peasants may be permitted to go out to work, as it may be the most suitable day for sowing corn or planting vineyards." (Philip Schaff, *From Constantine the Great to Gregory the Great, 311-600 AD*, p. 380)

Sunday is still associated with the Sun in Germanic languages: Sunday (English), Sonntag (German), Zondag (Dutch), Søndag (Danish), etc.

The **restoration of the full Sabbath** in the time before the final crisis on Earth is foreshadowed in the history of Israel's exodus from Egypt:

"Then Moses and Aaron went in and told Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD God of Israel: "Let My people go, that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness." ' And Pharaoh said, 'Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, nor will I let Israel go.' So they said, 'The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Please let us go three days' journey into the desert and sacrifice to the LORD our God, lest He fall on us with pestilence or with the sword.' Then the king of Egypt said to them, 'Moses and

Aaron, why do you take the people from their work? Get back to your labors!' " (Exodus 5:1-5)

Those who presented the first angel's message after the mid-19th century failed to complete the Sabbath reform in its true experience of justification by faith and its fullness in the annual Sabbaths of the feasts. The reform was consequently postponed for a long time.

As Moses restored Sabbath observance and called for the observance of a feast before Israel's exodus from Egypt, so at the end of time, those who look for the Second Coming of Christ will **restore the Sabbath principle and its extension into the feasts**. This provides the land rest from "famine, sword, and pestilence," and places them "under the shadow of the Almighty, and no plague shall come near them" (Psalm 91:1, 10). They are sealed with the special mark of God in the Sabbath, for it is not an arbitrary commandment as an expression of divine sovereignty, but a **channel of the increased supply of the Spirit of Him who is the true Son**.

VI. 6. The Fall of Babylon

And another angel, a second, followed behind, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. (Revelation 14:8)

*Then I saw another angel [the fourth] coming down from heaven, having great authority; and the earth was lightened with his glory . He cried out with a loud voice, saying, “ Babylon the great prostitute is fallen, is fallen , and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hateful bird; for all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication , and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich from the abundance of her luxury. And I heard another voice from heaven saying, “ Come out of her, my people, that you may not share in her sins, and that you may not receive of her plagues .”
(Revelation 18:1-4)*

The Everlasting Covenant and the Fate of Babylon

We have established that ancient Israel and Christians are not subjects of two different covenants, but rather a people called to transition from Old Covenant to New Covenant thinking, thereby embracing by faith the promises of the **one everlasting covenant**. Therefore, the history of both Jews and Christians presents the Israel of God as suffering the consequences of transgressing this eternal covenant:

"But if you will not listen to Me... and break My covenant, then this is what I will do to you [natural consequences]:... I will set My face against you, and you will be slain before your enemies; those who hate you will rule over you, and... I will punish you seven times more for your sins." (Leviticus 26:14-16)

This sevenfold suffering of consequences represents a period of **seven prophetic "times"**, each equal to 360 actual years, totaling **2520 years**. The first period of 3.5 times (1260 years) illustrates the dominance of

paganism, while the second shows the power of the papacy. God's original plan for Israel was for them to be the head of the nations, through whom the entire Earth would be blessed:

"And the LORD shall make you the head and not the tail; you shall be above only, and not beneath, if you obey the commandments of the LORD..." (Deuteronomy 28:13)

However, the consequences of breaking the covenant would turn Israel into a tail:

"The stranger... shall be the head, and you shall be the tail."
(Deuteronomy 28:43-44)

It was through this process that **Babylon became the "head of the nations"** in place of Israel, leading to Israel's enslavement:

"You, O king [Nebuchadnezzar], are a king of kings... You are this head of gold." (Daniel 2:37-38)

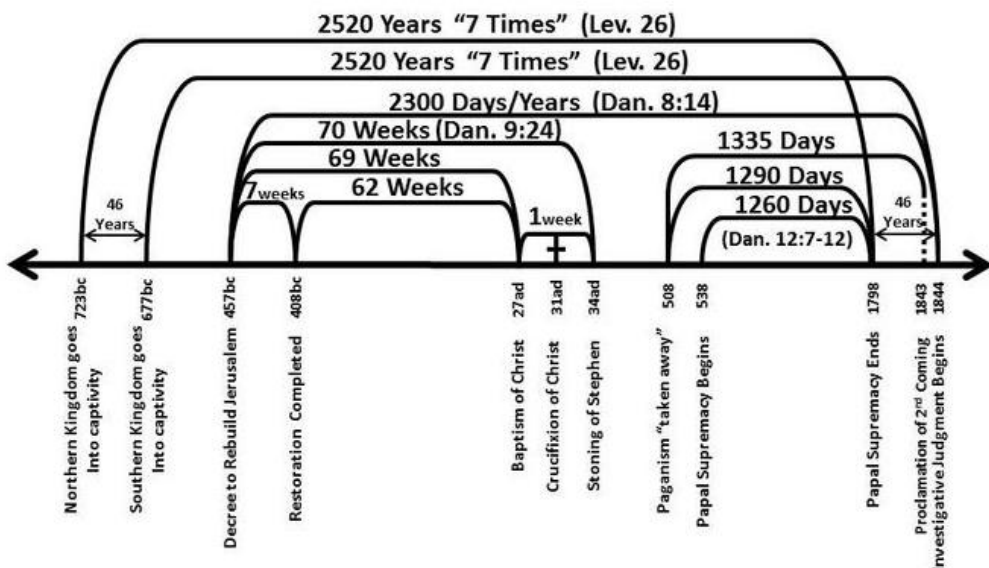
Babylon, represented as the golden head, is followed by kingdoms of decreasing value in the metallic statue: silver, copper, and iron (Daniel 2:31-33). This degradation reflects the diminished understanding of God's character among these pagan nations due to their wickedness, despite having the opportunity to benefit from divine knowledge. The history of these empires is also presented in Daniel 7 through the appearance of hideous and cruel beasts.

Since Babylon is the "head of the image," all subsequent kingdoms are merely its extensions. The era of Babylon's total power coincides with Israel's punishment, as shown in the judgment upon the Babylonian ruler Nebuchadnezzar. He was transformed into a beast and lived in the forest for "seven times" (7 literal years), which, in relation to the full sweep of Babylonian power, represents **2520 years**. A similar symbolic value is found in the numerical sum of the words written on the wall of Babylon on the night of its conquest by the Persians. The coded phrase "mene, mene, tekel, upharsin" prophesied the end of ancient Babylon (Daniel 5:26-28), but collectively, it reveals the power of spiritual Babylon. Mina ("mene" in

Aramaic) equals 50 shekels (tekel). "Upharsin" means halving the value of the basic measure (mina). Thus, the value of the phrase in shekels would be: Mene (50 shekels) + Mene (50 shekels) + Tekel (1 shekel) + Upharsin ($\frac{1}{2}$ Mina = 25 shekels) = 126 shekels. According to Ezekiel 45:12, one shekel is twenty gerahs, so $126 \times 20 = \mathbf{2520}$.

Term	Value (Shekels)	Meaning/Context
Mene	50	Aramaic for "numbered" or "counted"
Mene	50	(Repeated for emphasis)
Tekel	1	Aramaic for "weighed"
Upharsin	25	Aramaic for "divided" or "halved" (half a mina)
Total	126 shekels	Symbolic representation
Total in Gerahs	2520 gerahs (126 x 20)	Prophetic fulfillment

In this global scheme of Babylonian power, Belshazzar symbolizes the original king of Babylon, Lucifer (Isaiah 14:3, 12-14). The announcement of his fall was made at Calvary when the same hand that wrote the condemning letters on Belshazzar's wall also tore the veil of the temple at



Jesus' death (Daniel 5:5; cf. Mark 15:38). The Persian king Cyrus, who symbolizes Jesus (Isaiah 45:1), conquered Babylon by diverting the

Euphrates River, thereby bypassing its otherwise impenetrable wall. The Lord promised him that He would help him:

"break in pieces the gates of bronze and cut the bars of iron, to give you the treasures of darkness and hidden riches of secret places..."
(Isaiah 45:2-4)

Again, the bronze gates and iron bars symbolize the false ideas about God through which Satan held people (treasures and riches) captive to his kingdom. The tearing of the veil in the Jewish temple at Jesus' death, which separated the holy from the Most Holy, corresponds to this spiritual tearing and represents the opening of a way to the truth of the Father's loving character (2 Corinthians 5:14, 18). Thus, Christ's death secured the end of the Babylonian kingdom, an end that would finally come when a people would reflect the glory of that character (Revelation 14:1). Symbolically, this is represented as follows:

"Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared." (Revelation 16:12)

In this context, the "kings from the rising of the sun" are the 144,000, who fully reflect God's non-violent nature.

As illustrated, depending on whether it refers to all of Israel and Christendom or specifically to the southern kingdom of Judah and those awaiting the second coming, the period of 2520 years ends in **1798 or 1844**, respectively. The first date marks the political capitulation of the papacy with the capture of Pope Pius VI by Napoleon's troops. The second is the culmination of the 2300-day prophecy (Daniel 8:14), when those awaiting the Second Coming witnessed by faith the Son of God's entry into the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary [1].

This understanding is found in the **Second Angel's message**, proclaimed in the summer of 1844, a message connected with the fall of Babylon, which then manifested in the rejection of the "Soon Coming of Christ" message. Samuel Snow (1806-1890), who presented significant insight in the summer of 1844 that became known as the "Midnight Cry" from the parable of the ten virgins (Matthew 25:1-13), established the significance and application of these prophetic periods, thereby reinforcing the certainty of the message concerning Babylon's fall. This message profoundly awakened the entire waiting movement. They became the inheritors of the covenant with Israel, who were then, as predicted, being gathered again from their dispersion (Leviticus 26:43-45; cf. Isaiah 11:11). Their high calling was to restore the complete system of truth (Isaiah 58:12).

The Complete Fall of Babylon and the Everlasting Gospel

Unfortunately, the exposure of Babylon in 1844 was only partial and could not lead to its final destruction. The **complete fall of Babylon** cannot occur until there is a people on Earth who reflect the non-violent character of the Father as represented in the life of Jesus. Only such a life upholds all of God's commandments, and it will be manifested in the 144,000

(Revelation 7:1-4; cf. 14:1). When the everlasting gospel is thus revealed, then the "abomination that brings desolation" through the false system of justice and the claim that God's law cannot be kept will also be fully exposed. Therefore, when Jesus speaks of the preaching of the gospel at the end of time, He indicates that the abomination will still be active:

"And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come. Therefore, when you see the abomination of desolation,..." (Matthew 24:14-15)

Babylon will fall completely when the **First Angel's Message** is understood and preached within the context of the **everlasting gospel**, which proclaims:

- **The harmonious relationship of the Old and New Testaments** according to the divine pattern of source and channel (1 Corinthians 8:6) brings the believer to the Eternal Covenant (Hebrews 13:20).
- **The fear of God** is the beginning of His Wisdom, Christ as the begotten Son, who guarantees God's pure love (*Agape*), which does not seek value but invests it (Proverbs 8:12, 22-30; 1 Corinthians 1:24; 1 John 4:9-11; 2 John 1:1-3).
- **Giving glory to God** is a reflection of the true, non-violent character of our Heavenly Father, precisely as revealed by His Son on Earth (John 17:3, 4). God's judgment is the time when we are invited to enter into the fullness of the adoption process, through the Spirit of God's Son, where we realize that "there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1). This is because the Father condemns no one but respects each person's choice to judge themselves according to their own conception of His character. Thus, God's love casts out all fear, and we can have confidence in the day of judgment (1 Corinthians 13:12; John 5:22; 1 John 4:15-18; 2 Timothy 4:7, 8).
- **The Sabbath and its extension into the feasts** is a transition from time to eternity, for it brings us an increased measure of the

presence of God and His Son. In these times, we hear more clearly the Father's voice proclaiming us as His delight in His Son and are refreshed by the Spirit He breathes upon His Son through these words (Leviticus 26:2; 23:1-3; Luke 3:17; Matthew 11:25-30; Exodus 31:17).

- We have **no innate righteousness, life, or immortality**. Our worth is determined not by our works, achievements, or failures, but by our relationship with the One to whom it was said while in human form, "Thou art My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Luke 3:17, Tyndale).

The Scriptures predict when this full proclamation of the First Angel begins, identified with the angel of Revelation 18:1-4:

"And upon every high mountain and upon every high hill [places of worship] shall be rivers and streams of water [of God's Spirit] in the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall [September 11, 2001 – The Fall of the World Trade Center]. Moreover the light [truth] of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days,..." (Isaiah 30:25-26)

The two proclamations of Babylon's fall by the second and fourth angels correspond to the twofold cleansing of the Jerusalem temple at the beginning and end of Christ's mission (John 2:13-16; cf. Matthew 21:12-14). Temple commerce has been a problem since Lucifer rejected the worship of the only begotten Son and introduced the lie about an innate source of life and worth (Ezekiel 28:16, 18). Temple commerce is only possible outside the identity and worth we possess as sons and daughters of God (1 Corinthians 4:7).

By introducing a false system of justice that demands punishment for every sin, Satan begins his "blood trade" in God's temple. Those with limited knowledge of God's character mistakenly believe that God requires blood to reconcile with them and forgive them. But does God *need* to reconcile with us?

"To suggest the necessity of such a thing is to make a serious indictment of the character of God. The idea came into the Christian church from the papacy, which in turn brought it from paganism, in which the only idea of God was that of a being whose wrath must be appeased by sacrifice." (E. J. Waggoner, *Present Truth*, Great Britain, September 21, 1893.)

"...Christ is set forth as a sacrifice for the remission of our sins... Of course, the idea of propitiation or sacrifice is that there is wrath to be appeased. But notice especially that **it is we who demand the sacrifice, not God**. He provides the sacrifice. The idea that God's wrath must be appeased in order that we may obtain forgiveness finds no basis in the Bible,..." (E. J. Waggoner, *The Justice of Mercy*, *Present Truth*, Great Britain, August 30, 1894.)

The blood of Christ satisfies the Old Testament concept of justice, but in the eternal covenant, it is the very **life and Spirit of the Son of God** (Leviticus 17:11; cf. John 6:54, 63), the pure "wine that gladdens the heart of man" (Psalm 104:15), and it completely immunizes against the intoxicating wine of the harlot (Revelation 17:4; cf. 18:3).

VT. 7. God's love in the flames of hell

And another, a third angel, followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, which worship the beast and his image, neither any man that receiveth the mark of his name. Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.
(Revelation 14:9-12)

Worshipping the Beast and Receiving Its Mark

Worship of the beast signifies embracing or aligning with the papacy's ideology, which fundamentally misrepresents the identity and character of the Godhead. The **image of the beast** is created by humans under the persuasion and pressure of the earthly beast (Protestant America), also referred to as the **false prophet** (Revelation 13:11-13; cf. 16:13):

"And [Protestant America] deceives those who dwell on the earth by the means of those signs which he was given power to do in the sight of the beast [the papacy], telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived. He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed."
(Revelation 13:14-15)

The **image of the beast** is precisely the same union of church and state that characterized the Roman Church during the Middle Ages. Through this alliance, the church "rides upon the kingdom" to achieve its violent objectives (Revelation 17:3, 6). However, this pattern will now encompass

the entire Earth. The subsequent actions of the image of the beast are described as follows:

"He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is six hundred and sixty-six."
(Revelation 13:16-18)

The **mark of the beast** is what the third angel of Revelation 14:9-11 warns us against. Its nature is clear, as it is a counterfeit of the seal of God. If God's seal involves the Father's name being impressed on believers' foreheads through the full Sabbath, which is the designated time for an increased outpouring of the Son's Spirit, then the mark of the beast represents the satanic, cruel, and cunning character—which can, nevertheless, appear righteous—stamped by the observance of the false Sabbath and its associated pseudo-Christian holidays.

Indeed, Satan has the prerogative to breathe an increased measure of his spirit upon those who reject the light of the everlasting gospel. And if the Sabbath embodies the principle of **justification by faith** and rest in the bosom of Jesus, then **Sunday becomes the sign of justification by works**, fueled by the energies of the satanic spirit:

"And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works." (2 Corinthians 11:14-15)

It is thus entirely natural that the **name [character] and the number of the beast** are connected with this justification by works. The number **666** is derived from the numerical correspondences of the Greek letters ΧΞϚ (Chi, Xi, Stigma). The first corresponds to 6, the second to 60, and the third to 600. This is a deliberate counterfeit of the **heavenly trio** composed of God, His only begotten Son, and their omnipresent Spirit. Their number is **777**,

which can be found in the first book of the Bible—Genesis. There, we find a parallel with the history of the righteous and the wicked, as described in Revelation.

Parallels in Genesis and Revelation

Genesis chapters 3-5 are mirrored in Revelation chapters 12-14. The main characters in both texts are the **Woman, the Serpent (Dragon), and their offspring**. The sequence in these structures leads to the conclusion that just as Cain receives a mark in Genesis 4 after manifesting as a descendant of the serpent, and in Revelation 13 all inhabitants of the Earth who worship the beast (representing the serpent) receive a mark, so we should find a numerical expression of God's seal in Genesis 5 that corresponds to the sealing of the 144,000 in Revelation 14.

| Genesis | Revelation |

In this section, we'll explore the implications of worshiping the beast, which means embracing or agreeing with the papacy's ideology that fundamentally misrepresents the identity and character of the Godhead. The image of the beast is a human creation, formed under the persuasion and pressure of the earthly beast, identified as Protestant America, also known as the false prophet (Revelation 13:11-13; cf. 16:13):

"And [Protestant America] deceives those who dwell on the earth by the means of those signs which he was given power to do in the sight of the beast [the papacy], telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived. He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed."
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The **mark of the beast** is the subject of the third angel's warning in Revelation 14:9-11. This mark is easily identifiable as a counterfeit of the **seal of God**. If God's seal involves the Father's name being impressed on believers' foreheads through the **full Sabbath** (the designated time for an increased outpouring of the Son's Spirit), then the mark of the beast signifies a cruel and cunning satanic character—which can, nevertheless, appear righteous—stamped by the observance of the **false Sabbath** and its associated pseudo-Christian holidays.

Indeed, Satan has the prerogative to breathe an increased measure of his spirit upon those who reject the light of the everlasting gospel. And if the Sabbath embodies the principle of **justification by faith** and rest in the bosom of Jesus, then **Sunday becomes the sign of justification by works**, fueled by the energies of the satanic spirit:

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Prophetic Parallels: Genesis and Revelation

Genesis chapters 3-5 are mirrored in Revelation chapters 12-14. The main characters in both texts are the **Woman, the Serpent (Dragon), and their offspring**. The sequence in these structures leads to the conclusion that just as Cain receives a mark in Genesis 4 after manifesting as a descendant of the serpent, and in Revelation 13 all inhabitants of the Earth who worship the beast (representing the serpent) receive a mark, so we should find a numerical expression of God's seal in Genesis 5 that corresponds to the sealing of the 144,000 in Revelation 14.

Genesis	Revelation	Description
Chapter 3	Chapter 12	The woman tempted by the serpent / The woman and the dragon
Chapter 4	Chapter 13	Mark on the seed of the serpent / Mark on the worshipers of the beast
Chapter 5	Chapter 14	Seal on the seed of the woman / Sealing of the 144,000

It is no wonder then that in the lineage of the righteous, we find a man who died at the age of **777** (Genesis 5:31). The interesting thing about this man, Lamech, is that he was the father of Noah. He named his son in the

belief that "this one will bring us rest from our work and from the toil of our hands because of the ground which the LORD has cursed" (Genesis 5:29). The name **Noah means rest**. This signifies God’s rest from sin. Lamech believed his son was the promised Savior (Genesis 3:15). In a sense, Noah did indeed prove to be the savior of a remnant of the human race by building the ark. In the flood story, we also find the number seven in three distinct places, connected with sealing in God’s protection through His Spirit²⁵:

Genesis Reference	Event	Numerical Significance
Genesis 7:16, 10	Sealed in the ark for 7 days	God's protection during the Flood
Genesis 8:10	Sending a dove in 7 days	Seeking confirmation of receding waters
Genesis 8:12	Sending the dove in another 7 days	Confirmation of the Earth drying

Thus, we understand that the number of **God (7), His Son (70), and their Spirit (700)** is related to the complete Sabbath's sealing role through rest:

²⁵ The dove sent out by Noah returned with an olive branch in its beak. In the Bible, both the dove and olive oil symbolize God’s Spirit (Zechariah 4:3, 6; Luke 3:21, 22).

"For thus says the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel: 'In returning and resting you will be saved; in quietness and confidence will be your strength.' But you would not." (Isaiah 30:15)

We associate the number 7 with the Father because He is the original source. The number 70 speaks of the multiplication of that source through the Son of God, and 700 speaks of the multiplication and globalization of their power through their Spirit. The **false trio** follows a similar pattern:

"And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty." (Revelation 16:13-14)

The **dragon, who is Satan**, is the source and imitates the Father. The **beast**, which resembles the dragon and has received all its power from him, is the papacy, manifesting the dragon's character in the visible world. The **false prophet** is a counterfeit of the Spirit of Prophecy, the primary divine gift by which Jesus' testimony to God's non-violent character is multiplied (Revelation 12:17; cf. 19:10). Protestant America, through the instrument of **spiritualism**²⁶, globalizes the power of the papacy, which itself makes claims to divinity akin to those of the Son of God:

"The Pope is of such great dignity and so sublime that he is not merely a man, but as it were God and the vicar of God." (Ferraris' *Ecclesiastical Dictionary*)

"All the names which are applied to Christ in the Scriptures, by virtue of which it is established that He is above the church, are the same

²⁶ The Satanic doctrine of the hidden divinity of humanity, innate life, immortality, and worth independent of God. In America, it manifests in many ways, most popularly through séances with supposed spirits of the deceased, who are, in reality, deceptive demons.

applied to the pope." (*On the Authority of Councils*, Book 2, Chapter 17)

"The Pope and God are one and the same, so that he has all power in heaven and earth." (Pope Pius V, quoted in Barclay, Chapter XXVII, p. 218, "*Cities Petrus Bertanus*")

It is no wonder, then, that this institution's teaching supports **justification by works**, for its leader, who represents the developed version of the doctrine and serves as an example to all believers, is one who can purportedly rely on himself for righteousness. The number **6** expresses precisely this, as it lacks the final seventh element of the relationship with God manifested on the seventh day. By choosing to reject the message of the fuller Sabbath, people are deprived of the Son of God's rest in the arms of His Father during these times, resulting in them having "no rest day or night."

The Consequences of False Worship and God's Character

The remainder of the third angel's message declares the consequences of false worship in a way that challenges God's non-violent character like no other text in Scripture. Let us recall this text:

"He also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed undiluted in the cup of His indignation, 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 ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name." (Revelation 14:10-11)

This is a perfect statement of the Old Testament "ministry of death," designed to awaken the degraded generation at the end of time. However, it does not fully reflect the truth of God's character until it is read through the revelation of the Son of God in the Gospels. In the mid-19th century, those who looked for the Second Coming of Christ realized that the wicked's torment could not last forever, for that would misrepresent God's character. How cruel it would be for a human life of sin to suffer for an

eternity. Therefore, they showed that the words used for eternity in the original do not necessarily mean punishment that will never cease, but rather a fire that will not cease until it has finished its burning work.

However, this is only part of the problem concerning God's character. The question isn't just whether the wicked will suffer according to the magnitude of their sins, but also whether their torment and death originate from Him whose essence is love. This also relates to whether sin has inherent destructive properties, or if God must actively execute sinners. The word translated "**brimstone**" (Greek: *theion*) in the third angel's message, connected with the torment of the wicked, actually unlocks the true nature of punishment in light of the everlasting gospel:

- **θειον (theion, in connection with theios – having to do with the deity)**
 - **Definition from Strong's Dictionary:**
 1. sulfur
 2. divine incense

This "brimstone" is, in fact, the **spiritual fire of the loving divine presence**. In this presence, believers will live for eternity in indescribable delight:

"The sinners in Zion are afraid; trembling has seized the wicked: 'Who among us can dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us can dwell with the everlasting burnings?' He who walks uprightly and speaks uprightly, who despises the gain of violence, who shakes his hands from taking bribes, who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed, and shuts his eyes from looking at evil—" (Isaiah 33:14-15)

What destroys the wicked is not God Himself, but their **own sins**, for which they have refused to repent. Consequently, guilt fully awakens within them while they are in the loving presence of God and His Son (Ezekiel 28:18). God has not ceased to offer His beautiful "wine," symbolizing the delight of His Son. But the wicked experience it as torment and perceive it as God's

wrath, because God has finally acceded to their desire to withdraw from Him, which is the biblical definition of His wrath (Deuteronomy 31:17).

"God is everywhere. His presence, and that alone, sustains the universe. It is evident, therefore, that those who are left to their own choice to be eternally separated from the Lord have no other place but utter annihilation.... 'For the day of the Lord is near upon all nations; as you have done, it shall be done to you; your reward shall return upon your own head. For as you have drunk on My holy mountain, so shall all the heathen drink continually; yes, they shall drink, and swallow down, and be as though they had not been.' Obadiah 15:16. This is the reaping of the fruit of their own way, namely, the rejection of the presence of the Spirit of God." (E. J. Waggoner, *Present Truth*, United Kingdom, February 23, 1893.)

The **overcomers** of the beast, its image, and its number—the **144,000**—have grasped the true meaning of the Three Angels' Message and have an experience compared to singing a "new song." This song proclaims that they have seen God's judgments as perfectly just, in a way that others cannot see them and therefore cannot sing this song (Revelation 14:3; cf. 15:2-5). We are all invited to be part of this number. Will you respond to the invitation?

WJF. Legacy Philosophy

*And if children, then heirs—heirs of God
and joint-heirs with Christ;... (Romans
8:17)*

WJ. 1. Identity Wars

For who makes you different from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? But if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it? (1 Corinthians 4:7)

The Human Quest for Significance: A Heavenly Perspective

The fundamental human dilemma—our sense of **identity** and significance—is deeply connected to the questions, "Does anyone really care about me?" and "Am I worth anything?" To understand how these questions became ingrained in the human psyche, we must return to the very beginning.

Suddenly, Eve found herself gazing at the forbidden tree. "Why did God forbid us to eat from that tree?" she wondered. Its fruit appeared so tempting, inviting her closer. A voice then emanated from the tree. Seizing his opportunity, Satan tempted her through the serpent: "Did God really say, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?" Satan simultaneously drew Eve into a dispute and sowed doubt in her mind regarding the literal meaning of God's Word. In the realm of debate and logic, Eve stood no chance against Satan. Furthermore, the weapons of deception and darkness were still unknown to her, making it clear that the contest would be devastatingly short if Eve signaled her willingness to engage by speaking.

"We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden," Eve replied, "but God has said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" Eve accepted the challenge, repeating God's words, but she was now in grave danger. Her curiosity, combined with Satan's open challenge, left her unprepared for his startling declaration: "You will not surely die."

Satan's insidious message was: "Eve, you don't need to worry about what anyone says; you have life within you. You can do whatever you want and you won't be harmed because you possess intrinsic life. You are never

going to die. As long as you return to this tree to 'recharge your batteries,' you'll always be fine."

The concept Satan presented to Eve, and through her to Adam, contained the seed of the curse that now afflicts all of Adam's children—the **struggle for significance**. The idea of "You shall not die" shattered their sense of complete dependence on their Heavenly Father. It attacked the very foundation of their individual identity, and consequently, their value as children of God. Why couldn't Adam and Eve simply recognize their mistake and return to their original position of complete dependence? I wish it were that simple, but the consequences of embracing (even for a second) the concept of "you shall not die because you have power within you" have an immediate effect, preventing a return to that initial joyful state of fellowship with God.

Seeing his victim paralyzed, Satan then delivered his victorious blow with devastating precision: "For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

Notice Satan's implication. When they ate of that fruit, their eyes would somehow be opened to a higher state of existence. The idea here is not only that you have power within you, but that the material universe contains powerful objects which, once possessed, can make us even more powerful. Welcome to the material world.

In Genesis 3:4-5, Satan is in full evangelistic mode, seeking to convert people to his new utopian kingdom. He offered a kingdom promising power and contentment to all who accepted it, based on two core principles:

1. **You possess an innate life that makes you completely independent of any external benefactor or authority.**
2. **Our environment consists of people, objects, and things that, if possessed or connected with, can make us stronger, more enlightened, and more satisfied with life.**

When it comes to understanding the source of life, the Bible leaves no room for doubt (Colossians 1:16-17; cf. Acts 17:24-28). Everything we see

and perceive, and even the unseen, was created and is now sustained by Jesus Christ. The life force that flows through the Son of God holds the entire universe together.

God's Immeasurable Value for Humanity

"Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Therefore do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows." (Luke 12:6-7)

Jesus is explaining the principles of His kingdom. In these verses, we find the formula for what makes people significant within this kingdom. What gives them value? If these questions aren't important to you, then this text won't resonate much, but I have yet to meet someone who doesn't struggle with issues of **self-worth**.

Jesus presents the value of two sparrows in human terms. In an earthly sense, these sparrows are of little worth. Jesus then creates a contrast, stating, "Not one of them is forgotten by God." The implication is that because God remembers the sparrows, they are therefore incredibly precious in the kingdom of God. Jesus expands on this idea by emphasizing how much more God values us than sparrows: "Even the very hairs of your head are all numbered." If that isn't direct, intimate, and personal, then what is? Do you know anyone who cares so much about you that they would count the hairs on your head? Then comes the core message: "Do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows."

Can you see how **significance is gained in the kingdom of God**? It comes from the simple realization that God is constantly thinking of us with love. We are unequivocally on His mind. He gives us life, makes our hearts beat, and actively pours His love into our lives so that we can rejoice. He bestows upon us precious gifts, talents, and abilities for our own satisfaction and joy, and for our service to others. Herein lies the secret of the kingdom of God—the secret of significance. This is the key that unlocks the enslaving kingdom of inferiority and depression. Do you have the courage to believe

it? While we're still on this topic, do you know how much God thinks about you? Read these words:

"Many, O Lord my God, are Your wonderful works which You have done; and Your thoughts toward us cannot be recounted to You in order; if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered." (Psalm 40:5)

If our worth is determined by God's loving thoughts for us, then this text tells us that we are **priceless**, because His plans and thoughts for us are more than we can count or express. How does it feel to be priceless?! What's even better is that our value to God is not based on how good or bad we are, but on His immeasurable love for us. This is truly wonderful news, and I am profoundly grateful for it.

The Father first speaks to the human race in Matthew 3:17. From the beginning of time until Jesus' baptism, God communicated with us through His Son. In the fullness of His inherited divinity, Jesus is Jehovah, who parted the Red Sea, whose thunders echoed over Mount Sinai, and who led Joshua into the promised land (1 Corinthians 10:1-4). At Christ's baptism, the Son of God is already Emmanuel—God with us—as one of us. Now the Father speaks for the first time, and His words carry profound meaning (as they always do), for it is here that God sets forth the essence and nature of His kingdom: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." God could have introduced His Son in many ways, such as, "This is the Creator of heaven and earth," or "This is your King, obey Him." Instead of announcing His Son's identity in kingly and rulerly terms, He does so in familial terms. If we analyze this statement, we will notice the following:

1. **"This is My Son" = Identity**
2. **"Whom I love and in Whom I delight" = Value**

In the kingdom of God, **significance and worth are determined by our relationship with Him**. This stands in stark contrast to Satan's kingdom, where significance and worth depend on our successful performance and accomplishments, judged by ourselves and others. In God's kingdom, He is

our Father, and we are His children. This is our identity. In Him, we are known by **Whom we belong to** rather than by what we do. The fact that God loves us as His children, constantly showers blessings upon us, constantly thinks of us, and desires to be close to us gives us an incredible sense of **self-worth**. "Fear not, for you are of more value than sparrows."

In God's kingdom, our identity and worth are as permanent as God Himself—eternal and unchanging. Regardless of our successes and failures, our relationships remain constant, and our dignity is assured. In Satan's kingdom, our worth is as uncertain as the stock market was after September 11, 2001. Can we be sure that we will always be successful? Can we be sure that the people around us, from whom we seek encouragement and support, will always applaud our efforts? Hardly! Let those who have ears to hear understand that the wise person builds their house on a rock, not on shifting sand.

The Law of Relationship and the Origin of Sin

To preserve our personal identity and protect us from a life of despair, discouragement, inferiority, and death, God has placed at the heart of His kingdom a law that **protects relationships**. It concerns two types of relationships: the relationship between us and our Heavenly Father, and the relationship among ourselves as brothers and sisters in God's kingdom.

"Jesus said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the great and first commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." (Matthew 22:37-40)

These two great commandments are designed to preserve our identity and worth as children of God. Of course, they are simply a summary of the **Ten Commandments**. Have you ever viewed the Ten Commandments as vital tools for protecting yourself from losing your self-worth? In the kingdom of God, the Ten Commandments are understood in the context of relationships. If you break these relationships, you destroy your identity,

and when you do, death is ready to devour you. There is nothing arbitrary about God's statement that "the wages of sin is death." Sin (defined in 1 John 3:4 as the breaking of the law) destroys our identity and worth. When identity and a sense of worth are lost, the soul begins to crave death. This is precisely why **depression and suicide** are among the biggest problems in society today. The root cause is sin. Can you see why God hates sin so much? Sin is the destroyer and thief of our identity and value as children of God, and that is why God is determined to destroy it.

The Bible says in Revelation 12:7, "And there was war in heaven." When we read this verse, we may be tempted to think that this was a war between two kings and their kingdoms, but this war was the **severing of God's family**. Can you imagine when God created Lucifer and tenderly held His new son? God shared His very heart and soul with this angel. He showed him nothing but love and gave him the privilege of serving in the highest levels of His family government. But now this child of His was spewing words of anger and rebellion.

If you could have asked Lucifer before his rebellion, "Who are you?" he would have told you with calm confidence and assurance, "I am the son of God, and He loves me." But when Lucifer rejected his Father, and you asked him the same question, "Who are you, Lucifer?" what would he have said? He no longer had an identity; he had destroyed it. From that moment on, no matter what identity he tried to create for himself, he could never, ever fill the void and sense of loss he experienced when his relationship with his Heavenly Father was severed.

Because Satan has rejected relationships as the basis of self-worth, he could never establish a kingdom based on relationships. He has only one option left: become known by what you do instead of who you belong to. Satan's kingdom is a kingdom of **power and fulfillment, of pleasure-seeking**. Its central theme is to be accountable to no one and to care only for those who will be of use to you.

Of course, this kingdom is doomed because the life-giving force that sustains it belongs to a living being, and one day the guilt of rejecting Him will crush the lives of those who stubbornly refuse to acknowledge their identity as children of God. It is doomed because nothing can take away

the pain and loss that comes from rejecting that identity. Here we learn the truth of the statement, "There is no peace to the wicked."

Before the creation of the human race, the Father and the Son had a very serious conversation, something the Bible calls a "counsel of peace." This is the very heart of the **Covenant**. A plan was then laid out for what would happen if the human race chose against Them. Now was the time to act. Who could measure God's suffering? Would He allow His Son to be the substitute for Adam and Eve and pay the consequences of their choice? Would He allow His Son to take upon Himself their unworthiness and hopelessness, carrying them to the grave? Would He allow His Son to suffer a complete loss of identity and separation from His sonship, which would tear the words from His heart, "Why have You forsaken Me?" Yes, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life..." (John 3:16).

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Vol. 2. The Blessing

and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matthew 3:17)

Overcoming Inferiority: Jesus, Our Sonship, and God's Blessing

We've explored the development of the satanic kingdom in the human heart and how Satan manipulates us through our **sense of inferiority**. For Jesus to break this power, He had to eliminate this sense of inferiority. He needed to re-establish our identity as children of God and defeat the false identity assumed through Satan's lies from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Jesus' life can be summarized by these words:

"And He who sent Me is with Me; the Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him." (John 8:29)

No matter what Satan attempted, he could not shatter Christ's sense of dignity and confidence. Christ held to His sonship with an unyielding determination that astonished even the prince of darkness. Satan must have been furious at his fruitless efforts to lead Christ into sin. At last, someone could stand against him! After four thousand years of success with every person who had ever lived on the planet, Satan threw himself in vain against the rock-solid wall of a human soul confident in his sonship to God. **Sonship was the key to victory**. Sonship was the surest bulwark against the flood of inferiority drowning humanity, and therefore, sonship had to be the focal point of the conflict between Christ and His assailant.

The town of Nazareth was abuzz with excitement. News of John the Baptist spread quickly. The forerunner of the Messiah had come, and when the news reached the humble carpenter's shop, Jesus knew it was time to glorify His Father. He laid down His chisel and saw, embraced His mother, and set out for the Jordan.

Jesus was confident in His sonship, but the upcoming conflict in the wilderness would test Him as no human had ever been tested before. The gates of human sorrow would open upon Him like a breached dam. Jesus had to stand against the full force of human unworthiness and remain unshaken. If He could stand firm, then for the first time, someone would break the chains of Satan's lies. The spoils of this victory would become the inheritance of all who believe in Him.

The battle in the wilderness was fundamental to the work of the cross. What good is an offer of forgiveness if the human soul cannot break the chains of its inferiority? What good would the most beautiful revelation of love be if no man, woman, or child had the strength to accept this gift? None! Inferiority and worthlessness had to be conquered first, and the spoils of victory placed into the hands of humanity, so that all might be empowered to accept the matchless gift of the cross and truly believe that God loves and forgives them.

The Father knew what was coming, and He would strengthen His Son's hand for the battle—not through a mighty display or an armed army, for neither of these could meet the coming enemy. God offered His best weapon: **the strength that comes from their relationship with each other.** When Jesus emerged from the water and the dove descended, the heavens opened, and Jesus heard His Father's clear voice: "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased." These words were the sharpest sword the Father could give His Son to face the battle. Secure in His Father's WORD, He would defeat the insidious enemy and break the chains of sin for us, chains we could never break on our own.

The significance of this statement runs deeper than many realize. The fact that God accepts a member of the human race offers incredible hope for the rest of us. Through Jesus, God reaches out to each one of us and tells us that we are His beloved children. If we ever hope to accept the gift of the cross, we must first hear these precious words: **"You are My beloved child, in whom I am well pleased."** There is no other way to approach the cross than by the bridge of a solid conviction of our sonship (and daughtership) to God. Any other path would lead to legalism or the justification of sin.

These words from heaven must have angered Satan. They reminded him of something he once was but no longer was—a son! It was a reminder of his worthlessness and emptiness. But pride does not die easily, so Satan prepared to unleash his barrage of temptations upon Jesus in the wilderness.

The Bible record states that Jesus "was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan." Who could have truly grasped the depth of this conflict? The whole universe held its breath as Satan struck blow after blow at the Son of God. If Jesus had failed here, we would all have been crushed by the chains of our worthlessness. Jesus was our only hope, piercing the darkness.

At a time like this, I simply have to pause and reflect on Him. What can I say? My heart overflows with joy and gratitude for the determined and unwavering efforts of this mighty Prince to help us in our dire situation. It's like a father or mother rushing into a burning house to save their child. He was almost mentally crushed by Satan, yet He did not give up His Sonship. This Man makes something deep inside me cry out, "I must be worth something." No one would do that if they truly didn't care! I tell you, this love draws me in an irresistible way.

When Jesus was at His most vulnerable moment—tired, hungry, and lonely, all the conditions that tempt humanity to compromise—Satan got to the heart of the matter: "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become loaves of bread." What else would the test be if not sonship? Jesus wasn't told how long He would be in the wilderness; the record doesn't state He was informed it would all be over in forty days. Jesus was still there, and no ravens were coming to feed Him, no manna falling from heaven. Could He have misunderstood the voice from heaven? "Your Father wouldn't have you remain in this condition. Do something," Satan whispered.

Satan used appetite, attempting to break Jesus' faith in His Father's Word. Forty days prior, the Father had said, "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased." If Jesus had turned stones into loaves, He would have expressed doubt in God's Word, and that doubt would have been enough to confuse His identity. Furthermore, Jesus was being asked to do

something to prove His identity. The requirement that Jesus turn stones into loaves to prove who He was served as a direct gateway into Satan's kingdom—where identity is gained through fulfillment and achievement.

How many of us have fallen into the trap of **proving our worth by what we accomplish**? Pressured to show we have what it takes to reach the top, neglecting sleep, rest, and most of our leisure and Bible study time, staying late at the office and missing vital family time—just to get a promotion or a bonus. Why do we push ourselves so hard? I believe that in many cases, we are responding to the challenge: "If you are a son or daughter of God, do some great work and prove it."

Because deep down we carry that insecurity factor passed down to us from Adam and Eve, we are an easy target for needing to fabricate spiritual and mental "fig leaves" to cover ourselves with. The insecure person will always respond to challenges to their identity, while the secure person won't even bother. That is precisely why Jesus had to enter the wilderness of temptation. The human family needed someone who could demonstrate that he believed he was a child of God simply because God said so, rather than trying to prove it by what he did.

The Blessing of Parenthood and God's Law

The pure religion of the elders and fathers in the church involves visiting orphans and widows and speaking to them the Father's words. It is their duty to tell them that the Father loves them and that they are precious to Him. This is what keeps a person pure from the world. This is the principle of blessing, which reveals one of the key qualifications for an elder in the church:

"One who rules his own house well, having his children in subjection with all reverence. For if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?" (1 Timothy 3:4-5)

If a man doesn't know how to bless his wife and children, how can he care for and bless the church? Being a child of Abraham takes on a whole new meaning in the context of blessing:

"I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." (Genesis 12:2-3)

The disruption of the father-son relationship often develops as a real trauma experienced when the father dies. The importance of a child knowing their father's approval is revealed again and again, as is the child's desire to share with their father what has happened in their life and how they feel.

This experience is expressed in Scripture through the following biblical passage:

"Children's children are the crown of old men, and the glory of children is their fathers." (Proverbs 17:6)

The key word connecting children and their fathers is "glory." Let's examine how the Bible uses this word elsewhere to understand its meaning:

"Thus says the LORD: 'Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, nor let the mighty man boast in his might, nor let the rich man boast in his riches; but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight,' says the LORD." (Jeremiah 9:23-24)

The word "glory," used here, denotes beauty, charm, precious stones; it can also denote something you boast about. In a direct sense, the word **glory symbolizes value**.

We could easily read the above passage as follows: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, nor the mighty man glory in his might, nor the rich man glory in his riches; but let him who glories, glory in this, that he

understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord, who exercises lovingkindness, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight," says the Lord. This is the wisdom of Proverbs 17:6; a child's worth is tied to the heart of his father. Why is this so? The father represents the source of life and establishes the vital biblical principle of worth through the **relationship to origin**. The earthly father is a picture and symbol of the Heavenly Father.

When we consider that all love and all life come from God, it's not too difficult to understand that our earthly fathers are channels of blessing that allow God's love to be poured into our hearts, developing a sense of meaning and purpose in our lives. This is the primary purpose of a father: not just to impart physical life, but also to impart emotional and spiritual life, simply by being there for his children and providing them with regular reminders of how important they are to him.

The relationship between husband and wife pictures the relationship between Father and Son. Included in this image is the all-important process of **blessing**. The biblical principle of leadership is actually an opening of the door to blessing. Notice this important biblical passage:

"But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God." (1 Corinthians 11:3)

Here we see a channel of blessing that flows from the Father to the Son and from the Son to the husband and wife. Just as the Son of God needs the blessing of His Father, so a wife needs the blessing of her husband. We will discuss this matter in more detail, but for now, suffice it to say that I have not met a wife who is in a close relationship with her husband without being encouraged and strengthened by his tenderness and appreciation. I have asked many women how important it is to them to be affirmed and encouraged by their husbands. I have not met one who did not want or appreciate this.

It is also important that the flow of blessing be passed on to the children. As I mentioned earlier, the glory of the children is the father. It is extremely important for children to know that their fathers love them and are pleased with them.

Blessing is a wonderful privilege. This principle can be extended (though not as forcefully as with a natural father) to grandparents, relatives, and even pastors and administrators in authority. A person of authority and position can bring us a blessing.

Vol. 3. The Return of Elijah

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. And he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse. (Malachi 4:5-6)

The Source of Divinity: Relationship vs. Innate Power

When we attempt to prove Christ's inherent equality with the Father, whose methodology are we adopting? Who introduced the concept of determining value based on power? Wasn't it Satan in the Garden of Eden? God clearly tells us:

"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways," declares the LORD. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." (Isaiah 55:8-9)

It's not God's thoughts that lead people to attribute divinity—and consequently, value—to His Son based on **innate power**. Rather, these are the thoughts of His enemy. Since the kingdom of God is founded on relationships, shouldn't we value Christ according to His **relationship with His Father**, instead of attempting to prove His value and divinity by His inherent power? Doesn't the Bible plainly tell us that Christ received everything through relationship?

"God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than theirs." (Hebrews 1:1-4)

"Having become so much better than the angels, as the name which He has inherited is more excellent than theirs" (Hebrews 1:4). The Son is to inherit the Father's name, titles, and possessions. Whatever titles belong to God the Father, they belong equally to Christ. They are His by right. By birth, He is "the heir of all things." The apostle Paul writes of the glorious appearing "of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13). The Father Himself addresses the Son as God, saying to Him, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever" (Hebrews 1:8). As E.J. Waggoner stated in *Present Truth*, October 24, 1895:

"Therefore it is further written of Him that He is 'made so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.' This more excellent name is the name 'God,' which in the eighth verse is given by the Father to the Son: 'Unto the Son He [God] saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.'" (A.T. Jones, *The Consecrated Path to Christian Perfection*, p. 14, 1905).

The Bible clearly tells us that Christ's excellent name is by inheritance—that is, through His relationship with His Father. Let him who has ears to hear, hear.

The Son of God was **eternally begotten of the Father** (John 3:16; John 1:1). He proceeded from and came from the Father (John 8:42). He is the exact representation of His Person (Hebrews 1:2-3), and therefore it was given to Him to have life in Himself, as the Father has life in Himself (John 5:26).

At this point, many exclaim, "You're saying Christ isn't eternal!" Christ is certainly eternal because He was established from eternity. The word "eternity" (in Hebrew) refers to a point or time veiled or beyond the mind's comprehension. He came from the time of eternity—a time beyond human understanding. Therefore, there was never a time when Christ was not in intimate communion with the Father, because the only time we comprehend began "In the beginning," beyond which we have no concept of time. But that is not what makes Christ precious or divine; it's simply

that He is the express image of the Father's being and has inherited all things.

Freed from the enslaving principle of trying to prove divinity through innate power, we are at liberty to interpret the Bible passages as they are written. The key idea here is that the authority and power Christ possessed were **given to Him by His Father**. It was the equality the Son possessed in the relationship that enabled Him to possess equality in power and position—not the other way around. Christ doesn't need to prove His lineage to be considered equal. His relationship with His Father and His Father's Word are sufficient.

The Wilderness Temptation: Relationship vs. Power

The battle between Christ as the Son of God by attitude versus being the Son by innate power is revealed clearly at Jesus' baptism and temptation in the wilderness.

In Matthew 3:17, the Father says, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Christ was approved by His Father simply by His **relationship**. When Satan came to Him in the wilderness, he demanded that Christ prove His divinity by His **innate power**. Christ absolutely refused to do this. Yet, every time we try to prove that Christ is equal to God by His innate power, it's like trying to turn stones into loaves of bread to satisfy Satan's request!

God is the one who determines who and what is divine. Only He has the right to determine this; humans have no right to impose their ideas of divinity on God. Such imposition encourages idolatry.

The spirit of the prophet Elijah returns in these last days to show that the Father is the **source of life** (Jeremiah 2:13). This life flows from the Father and through the Son to the entire universe. This is clearly revealed in 1 Corinthians 8:6:

"For us there is only one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through Him."

When we compare the above passage with another in Ephesians, the picture becomes even clearer:

"There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to 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." (Ephesians 4:4-6)

It is clear that one God is the Father, and one Lord is Jesus Christ. Some have tried to refute this by arguing that if Jesus is the one Lord, then the Father is excluded from being Lord. This reasoning again stems from the independent thinking rooted in the concept of innate source of life. Jesus is Lord because Lordship originates from the Father. The Son inherited this Lordship and performs this office in the name of the Father. The attempt in the above verses to establish a co-eternal Trinity creates confusion and an incorrect approach to the text.

John 5:26 tells us that as the Father has life (original, unearned, unearned), so He has given to the Son to have life (original, unearned, unearned) in Himself. So, it is innate in the Son, but the Father has given it to Him as part of His inheritance. We do not possess this by inheritance, but we can receive it from the source of life through a relationship with Christ.

The framework of understanding that allows for the clearest reading of Scripture and the most universal application is the most correct position. The Trinitarian position requires us to limit the meaning of passages and regularly assigns symbolic meanings to texts to make them fit. Here are some examples:

1. Limiting Proverbs 8 to the personification of wisdom.
2. Limiting the meaning of the term "born" to the incarnation.
3. Limiting the meaning of the passage in John 5:26 (that Christ was given to have life in Himself) until the incarnation.
4. Using the concept of "one" in a symbolic, not a literal sense.
5. Viewing the roles of the Father and the Son more symbolically than literally.

The same principles are used by Sunday keepers to reject the Sabbath:

1. Limiting observance of the Ten Commandments to the Old Testament.
2. Viewing the Sabbath rest only as something symbolic, not as something that has a literal meaning.
3. Limiting grace to forgiveness and denying the victorious Christian life.

Can't we embrace the entire Bible without all these limits and restrictions placed upon it because of the serpent's lie? One can only live by every word of God, not by small parts of it based on fatal assumptions.

The True Nature of Christ's Reign and Satan's Rebellion

When we allow the Bible to be read literally in a relational context, the idea of the Son being literally the **only begotten Son of God** becomes completely natural.

"Therefore he said: 'A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. And he called ten of his servants, delivered them ten minas, and said to them, "Do business till I come." But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, "We will not have this man to reign over us."' (Luke 19:12-14)

In this parable, Jesus tells the story of a nobleman who went to receive a kingdom. The nobleman, of course, is Christ. The subjects of the kingdom sent the message—"we do not want this man to reign over us." This story accurately reflects the attitude of Christendom. We do not want the Son of God to reign over us if He is in any way less powerful in His own right than the Father. This message is simply an echo of the essence of the Great Controversy. Notice the following:

"How you have fallen from heaven, O bright star [Lucifer], son of the morning!... You said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven; I will

exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit also on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High!" (Isaiah 14:12-14)

The only one truly *like* God is His Son. This text suggests that Lucifer considered the exaltation of God's Son an injustice to him. But what Satan considered an injustice was not considered by Christ as something to be held onto (Philippians 2:6). For Christ accepted His Father's Word and believed that He was equal to the Father simply because God said so. He accepted His Father's inheritance. He did not need to turn stones into loaves. Lucifer's reasoning was that if Christ could be exalted to equal authority with God, then so could he. When God revealed that this was impossible, he refused to worship Christ as the Son of God (Hebrews 1:6). In response, he essentially said: "I will not have him reign over me, for he is not fully divine in himself."

Satan never challenged the Father's supremacy; he said, "I will be like the Most High," not above Him. He could see that the Father possessed power **in and of Himself**, but because God had given this without measure to His Son and in all its fullness, Satan thought it unfair and refused to submit. Before the entire heavenly family, Satan shamelessly expressed his displeasure that Christ should be preferred to him—to be in such confidential counsel with God, while he remained uninformed of the result of their regular consultations.

When Satan tempted Adam and Eve, he attacked the very point he considered unfair. He told them that they would never die and that they had life within them. In effect, he was telling them that they had a **fulfillment-based equality with Christ**.

This conception of an innate source of life, as we have previously observed, changes our understanding of divinity from one that is inherited to one that has its own origin. Since humanity now almost universally believes itself immortal, as Christ is immortal, then, in order for Christ to be considered God, He must have a higher position than man. The only place in which humanity can place Christ is as an innate equal to the Father.

Because of the distortions of the doctrine of the immortality of the human soul, Christianity is left with no choice but to cry out, "We will not have this man reign over us. He is not truly divine." By insisting that Christ attained the possession of power *of Himself*, we are effectively destroying the personality of Christ. Thus, His true position is obscured. This is Satan's plan.

Both Trinitarianism and Arianism arose from the assumption that divinity is attributed only to self-originated Beings. Arianism destroys the divinity of Christ while Trinitarianism destroys His personality. Satan does not care which side we take—in either case, the person of Christ is lost, and He ceases to be the Son of God revealed in Scripture. And if the true Christ is lost, then with Philip we may lament, as he said to Christ, "How can we know the way?"—the true way is lost.

I am so grateful that God has truly sent the spirit of Elijah in these last days to "turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to their fathers." He has led us to listen to the testimony of the apostles and prophets to accept the true God and His begotten Son. Thus, the spirit of Elijah helps to restore the channel of blessing that comes from the Father and through the Son is spread to all structures (family, church, and civil) that obey Him.

Vol. 4. The Divine Pattern

*For to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things,
and we for him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things,
and we through him. (1 Corinthians 8:6)*

The Divine Pattern: "From Whom" and "Through Whom"

Everything we receive in this life comes to us through a **divine pattern**. This pattern is revealed through the persons of the Father and the Son, originating "from whom are all things" (the Father) and flowing to us "through whom are all things" (Christ). As recipients of these blessings, it is vitally important to clearly discern the distinct personality and individuality of each person within this divine pattern.

"God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high." (Hebrews 1:1-3)

"For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted to the Son also to have life in Himself;" (John 5:26)

The Bible clearly reveals the Father as the great source of all things and the Son as His exact image, having received all things from Him. Since the Son has received all things from His Father and is His exact image, the only way we can distinguish them in our minds is by accepting that the Son came from the Father, inheriting all things from Him. His inheritance is the secret to preserving the distinct personality and individuality of each. His inheritance also clarifies and highlights the "From Whom" and "Through Whom" sequence of the divine pattern.

As we read Scripture, we find several examples where the "From Whom" and "Through Whom" pattern is replicated. Some of these examples

overlap due to the cascading nature of God’s blessings flowing through multiple vessels.

Source – From Whom	Channel – Through Whom	References
Father	Son	1 Cor. 8:6; 1 Cor. 11:3; Heb. 1:1-3
Husband	Wife	Gen. 3:16; 1 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:25; 1 Pet. 3:1
Father	Mother	Ex. 20:12; Eph. 6:1; Col. 3:20
Mother	Children	1 Tim. 2:15
Christ	Husband	1 Cor. 11:3
Christ	The Church	Eph. 5:25
Prophet	Priest	Ex. 4:16; Lev. 8:36
Elder/Pastors	Flock	1 Pet. 5:2; 1 Thess. 5:12,13

Source – From Whom	Channel – Through Whom	References
King/Ruler	Subjects/Citizens	Rom. 13:1-3; 1 Pet. 2:13, 14
Bible	Pastor/Elder	2 Tim. 4:2; 1 Pet. 5:2

The more thoroughly this pattern is followed, the more blessings will flow to us and our families. For example, when we honor our fathers and mothers, we are promised long life. When we honor with love those above us, we are blessed by their preaching of the Word and their exhortations to a life of godliness.

In addition to the direct blessings of joy, happiness, and companionship that flow to us through this divine pattern, there are also protective blessings. In all cases, the one "Through Whom" things come has both the protection and authority of the one "From Whom" things come. As an example of how much protection a child can have, we see that:

1. The child is protected by the mother,
2. Who is protected by her husband,
3. Who is protected by the police,
4. Which is protected by the government,
5. Which is ordained by God.

Taking this in a spiritual direction, we see that:

1. The father is admonished by the elders or the pastor,
2. Who are subject to the Word of God,
3. Which is written by the prophets,

4. It was given and is still given by Christ,
5. Who received it from His Father.

The more we align ourselves with positions that reflect the divine pattern, the greater the protection, blessing, peace, and joy we experience.

The key principles of the Father's plan are that:

1. All things are received through a channel, not directly from the Father.
2. All things are modeled after the Father and His Son.

Satan's Corruption of the Divine Pattern

Satan's rebellion introduced concepts that destroyed this divine model. According to the heavenly order, Lucifer was originally under the authority of Christ, who was under the authority of His Father.

Scripture tells us how Satan desired to change the divine pattern:

"How you have fallen from heaven, O bright star, son of the morning!
How you are cut down to the ground, you who trampled the nations!
You said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit also on the mount of assembly, on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High!'" (Isaiah 14:12-14)

In these texts, we see a being who does not seek to be under the protection and care of the divine model, but rather seeks to **be like**, i.e., to reflect, the Most High. Originally, this meant that Satan wanted to be made equal to Christ, rather than under His authority, so that he could report directly to the Father without being accountable to Christ. Through the divine model, the Father stepped in to protect and defend His Son and revealed the relationship He had with all creation. Christ did not defend Himself or speak in His own defense; all this was done by the Father. Satan rejected the Father's command to worship and honor His Son and then desired to be just like the Most High.

Our worship of God is based solely on our reading of God's Word. Our knowledge of Him comes to us through what He has revealed to us, through His Word, and through what He has created. Our understanding of who God is and our worship of Him while we live in this sinful world occurs solely in the mind. If we deviate from the clear statements of Scripture, our minds will immediately fall into idolatry. Satan's goal is to get us to go beyond the Word to perceive God in our minds in some form other than the divine model. Thus, he removes our protective fence and gains more access to control, possess, and destroy us.

Note that Satan desired to become exactly like the Most High. By a cunning process, Satan deceived the Christian world into making Christ exactly the same as the Father. While the Christian world worships God through its various denominations, the figure conceived as the second person of the Godhead is often a formulation of Satan. By representing Christ as absolutely identical with the Father in every respect, Satan confuses the human mind through the **law of indistinguishability**. That is, when two things possess exactly the same qualities and can no longer be clearly distinguished separately, by the loss of their individuality, they become one mysterious unity.

The central purpose of Satan's strategy to strip us of blessing and protection is to corrupt our minds regarding the divine pattern. He tries to seduce us by giving the one who is "Through Whom" the same attributes as the one who is "From Whom." We are seduced by what appears to be a desire for personal exaltation in the channel, but in reality, the opposite is happening. As the one who was originally "Through Whom" becomes more and more "From Whom," we are less and less able to see the difference until all that is left is two, or even three, "From Whom." This leads the mind to a state of collapse, thus opening the door to the mystical. This simple and subtle process is the secret of abominable spiritual degeneracy.

There is abundant evidence to show where this distortion of the divine model occurs. Consider the following examples:

Catholicism:

Catholicism elevates the words of the priest to be equal to the words of the prophets contained in the Bible. Through this process, the word of the Roman bishop completely takes the place of the Scriptures. Here is an example:

"The Pope has the power to change times, to annul laws, and to dispose of all things, even concerning the commandments of Christ."

- *Decretal De Translat. Episcop. Cap*

Protestantism:

In response to this perversion, Protestantism restored the Word as the sole authority for conscience. However, Satan then succeeded in perverting this process by stripping all authority from the pastors and leaders of the church. Everyone reads the Bible for themselves, which is right, but everyone also feels completely free, whenever they want, to denounce and overthrow the position of the leaders. Satan doesn't care which direction you take, as long as you miss the divine pattern of "From Whom" - "Through Whom." The network effect of Protestantism constantly splits and divides, leaving behind a vulnerability to every wind of doctrine and every rise of charismatic leadership.

The examples above reveal the distortion of the prophet/priest concept in the divine model. Let us take this to another level, where the concept of man/woman is distorted in relation to priesthood or pastorate.

The Priesthood:

Satan has again pushed Catholicism in one direction and Protestantism in the other. Satan has influenced the Catholic Church to give absolute power and control to male priests, causing untold sorrow and misery to women. He has then influenced the Protestant churches to elevate the role of women through a positive desire and to give them a voice in the church, granting them the same position as elders and pastors. This has led to an accelerated cascading effect in the acceptance of marriage equality, which has caused the mind to fuse the two parts of the divine pattern, pushing the male and female units into a unisex mindset.

As every reflection of the divine pattern becomes confused and misleading, the "Through Whom" elements emerge from the protection of their "From Whom" correspondence, being released through "enlightened equality." Satan can then enter and harm our children, our wives, our churches, our pastors, our governments, and our entire world.

Observation of Western society should show us that every aspect of the divine model has been distorted, and therefore all levels of protection have been cruelly overridden by evil.

The natural Adventist response when seeing the perversion of truth is to use the Protestant approach of taking the sword away from the leaders of the church, blaming them for the degradation. Satan is pleased when this work is carried out; he knows it also violates the divine pattern and will continue to hinder the churches from being blessed.

When, in civil, church, and family society, leaders demand that those under them obey rules that conflict with one's personal conscience, we should not obey. But most leadership situations do not involve a direct order to violate one's conscience, but rather instances where leaders fail to faithfully fulfill their own role. There are some biblical examples of such cases. Joseph served his pagan master faithfully and did his best to bring blessing to his household. In Hannah's case, when Eli rebuked her for being drunk, she meekly replied, "No, my lord," and explained her situation. She did not turn to rebuke the priest for allowing his sons' loose conduct and causing difficulties with the sacrifices. Even though David was anointed by Samuel to replace Saul, David was unwilling to raise his hand to remove Saul. He did not want to touch the Lord's anointed.

These and other cases show that apostate leadership should be approached respectfully and appealingly, not rebelliously, always beseeching God to bless the leaders concerned and help them carry out their duty properly.

WJ. 5. The Sabbath more fully

Oh, that you had paid attention to my commands! Then your peace would have been like a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea!
(Isaiah 48:18)

The Master Builder and the Sabbath Blessing

Imagine being one of the angels who witnessed the **Master Builder** speak this world into existence (John 1:1-3; Hebrews 1:1-2). The Son of God is the **Word of God**, the very thoughts of God made accessible to our senses. As Revelation 19:13 states, "His name is The Word of God." All the creative power of the Father was given to His Son to speak the world into being (Matthew 28:18; John 8:28).

When Christ spoke His Father's words, the world came to life. As the grass, trees, and flowers emerged from the earth by the spoken Word, the Father turned to His Son and affirmed, "This is good, Son." The book of Proverbs records the Son's words reflecting that moment:

"...when He laid the foundations of the earth, then I was His master worker; I was His delight day by day, rejoicing always before Him."
(Proverbs 8:29-30)

Every day of creation, the Son of God felt His Father's delight in Him. The Son delighted in His Father's blessing through the creative process. With each passing day, the joy and delight shared by the Father and the Son increased. As they watched Adam and Eve marvel at the creation around them, the Father and Son felt immense joy in the gift they had so generously bestowed. Together, they reveled in their **agape love**. Finally, the Sabbath arrived, and as the Father surveyed His creation—the mountains, valleys, streams, and all living things—He joyfully declared to His Son, "You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

On that day, the Son of God was blessed by His Father as **Lord of the Sabbath** (Luke 6:5). The Spirit of the Most High rested upon Him, and the Son rested and was refreshed (Exodus 31:17). The Hebrew word for

"rested" (שָׁבַת, *shavat*) means "to breathe in spirit." This breathing into the Son signified the Father's delight in His Son. The Son responded to His Father with adoration and reverence for having given Him everything (John 3:35; John 17:4-7). The blessing God placed on the Sabbath, recalled each week, is that very refreshment experienced by the Son through His Father's delight.

"And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made." (Genesis 2:3)

Every Sabbath, on the seventh day, the Father's breath rests upon the Son of God in remembrance of the delight He felt in His Son at the close of the creative week. Those who are in Christ receive this blessing, becoming heirs of it through Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:3-5).

The greatest spiritual blessing we can receive in Christ is to know that we are **loved by the Father**. By faith, we envision the Father embracing His Son with fatherly delight, kissing Him with fatherly affection, and declaring, "You are My Son, in whom I am well pleased!"

"No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him." (John 1:18)

What else could the Son of God experience but complete and perfect rest in this spoken blessing? Is there anything more desirable than to be in the bosom of the Father and to know—with absolute certainty—that you are loved and that He delights in you? This is the full work of the gospel:

"For to us [Christians], as well as to them [Israel], good news has been preached... For we who have believed do enter that rest, as God has said, 'As I swore in My wrath, "They shall not enter My rest!"' although His works were finished from the foundation of the world. For He has spoken somewhere about the seventh day in this way: 'And God rested on the seventh day from all His works.'" (Hebrews 4:2-4)

The work of creation and the work of redemption are one and the same. Both lead us into the Father's arms, to be embraced by Him and to experience in Him complete rest and joy. This experience is available to each of us through the Lord Jesus Christ, and as each seventh day arrives, we can enter into that same rest that Christ experienced from the foundation of the world. Each Sabbath, we can taste in greater measure the Father's delight in us, through His Son. Jesus took upon Himself our humanity, our "flesh and blood" (Hebrews 2:14). The words spoken to Jesus at the Jordan River, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," embrace all humanity. God spoke to Jesus as our representative. With all our sins and weaknesses, we are not rejected as worthless. "He has made us accepted in the Beloved" (Ephesians 1:6, KJV).

This is the blessing contained in the Sabbath. It is the refreshing and renewing of the bonds of love between us and our Father, through Christ. Each Sabbath deeply inscribes upon our souls the name (character) of the Father, by the breath of His mouth. How precious is the Sabbath day to God's children!

The Sabbath and the Double Portion of Christ's Presence

The lesson Jesus presented in the feeding of the 5,000 was to help prepare the Israelites for their participation in the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Every morsel of bread in the Jewish economy was intended to teach this all-important lesson regarding the life found only in Christ.

This truth gives meaning to the food and drink offerings that were presented with the daily sacrifices, as well as on the Sabbaths, New Moons, and Feasts. We emphasize the idea that every breath we take and every food we eat is a channel for the **life of Christ**. The power of Christ is what is received through these elements. This has been the case since the foundation of the world. In the sacrificial system, we see how this truth was to be explained and understood (Numbers 28:2): "Command the children of Israel, and say to them, 'You shall be careful to offer to Me My offering at its appointed time, My bread for My offerings by fire, for a sweet aroma to Me.'"

The bread spoken of here is the food offering, a mixture of flour and oil, baked on the altar of sacrifice with the sacrificial animal. Now, let's consider the offering for the daily sacrifice (Numbers 28:3-6). Every day, morning and evening, a lamb was offered. Christ revealed Himself in John 6 as the **bread of life**. The unleavened bread made of flour and oil was a channel that pointed to the life available through Christ. How did this true bread come down from heaven? It came through the offering of Christ's life for the world. How was this acknowledged in the daily service? Through the offering of the lamb. Therefore, the offering of the lamb was an acknowledgment that Christ's life was given so that the Holy Spirit could be received. Does this add new meaning to the Lord's Prayer: "Give us this day our daily bread"?

Every morning and evening, the bread offered as a daily sacrifice symbolized the true bread that came down from heaven, and Christ's ability to do this was symbolized daily by the death of the lamb. When we pray, "Give us this day our daily bread," are we thinking of the true bread of God that comes down from heaven, or only of physical bread? It is especially interesting to note what happens to the offerings on the Sabbath day.

Numbers 28:9-10: "On the Sabbath day you shall offer two lambs of the first year without blemish, and two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mingled with oil as a grain offering, and their drink offerings; this is the burnt offering for every Sabbath, besides the continual burnt offering and its drink offering."

On the Sabbath day, the sacrifice and food offering were doubled. The vital question is: Why was everything doubled on the Sabbath? Again, we are reminded that every loaf of bread and every drop of oil is a channel through which the life of Christ comes to us. The literal visible food and drink pointed to the spiritual food and drink that came down from heaven to earth through Christ. Paul expressed this:

1 Corinthians 10:1-4: "Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, all

ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ."

When Moses struck the rock and water came out, they had access not just to physical water, but to the life of Christ. Water alone could not keep them alive; the Spirit of Jesus kept them alive. That is why all of them drank this spiritual drink, not just the righteous. Therefore, the Sabbath brings us **additional portions of the presence of Christ**. Is this what is reflected in the difference between the daily offerings and the Sabbath offerings? There is a double portion of the flour and oil offerings. Doesn't the larger amount of offering tell us that a greater gift of the Spirit is being offered to us on that day? Knowing that there are additional blessings on the Sabbath and that this blessing is more than just the Spirit of Christ, the Sabbath teaches us that God has appointed times when the presence of Jesus is closer to us than at other times.

The key to understanding the Sabbath is to recognize that there are special times when Christ draws near to us. This truth is reflected in the difference between the daily and Sabbath offerings. Once we understand this principle, we are ready to see something very beautiful (Leviticus 26:2-4). To remember the Sabbath means that the Lord has special seasons of refreshment that He has appointed. To honor the sanctuary means to remember the great cost to our Father and the Lord Jesus to provide these gifts for us. When we remember the Sabbath and honor the sanctuary, the rain will fall in its appointed season, and the earth will flourish.

We remember that the rain and the food are channels through which the life of Christ is given to us. The greater the abundance, the more evidence there is that the life of Christ is imparted through these channels. When we pour out our hearts in gratitude for these gifts, then we are in a position to receive more of them. When we glorify the Lord of the Sabbath for the double portion of His Spirit, this rain will not fall *around* us, but will fall *upon* us, and we will grow in grace. Whether he knows it or not, every person on earth benefits from the daily offering of Christ. As we noted earlier, God makes His rain fall on the righteous and the unrighteous. All receive daily provision, but only those who respond to God's call through

His law will receive the **additional blessings** found in the Sabbath and other specific appointed times.

The wonderful thing about this Sabbath truth is that the river that springs from the sanctuary becomes deeper as it flows along its course.

Ezekiel 47:1-4: "Then he brought me back to the door of the house; and behold, water was flowing out from under the threshold of the house eastward, for the face of the house was toward the east. And the water was flowing down from under the right side of the house, south of the altar. Then he brought me out by the way of the north gate, and led me around by the way outside to the outer gate, the way that faces east; and behold, water was flowing out on the right side. And the man went out toward the east with a measuring line in his hand. And he measured one thousand cubits, and He led me through the water; the water came up to my ankles. Again he measured one thousand and led me through the water; the water came up to my knees. Again he measured one thousand and led me through the water; the water came up to my waist."

We see that after the river emerged from the temple, it became deeper and deeper. The clue to where the river flows to deepen is in the previous chapter: "And the people of the land shall worship the LORD at the entrance of this gate on the Sabbaths and on the New Moons" (Ezekiel 46:3-8, 11).

The amount of offerings increases as one moves from daily to Sabbath, from Sabbath to New Moon, and then to the feast times. To illustrate how the river deepens as it flows from the daily gifts of the Spirit to the Feast of Tabernacles, we will provide the measure of flour and oil. We will not list all the weekly and New Moon offerings, but only the progression from the daily sacrifice to the last feast of the calendar. The most interesting thing about this river is that whatever it passed through, it brought life and healing.

Ezekiel 47:9: "And it shall be that every living thing that moves, wherever the rivers go, will live. There will be a very great multitude

of fish, because these waters go there; for they will be healed, and everything will live wherever the river goes."

The Sabbath gives us the principle of the increasing amount of Christ's presence. If we continue in this pattern with the other appointed times, we see that the waters are getting deeper and deeper. Notice again that Ezekiel went back to the end of the river at a distance of four thousand cubits, and there were trees everywhere.

Ezekiel 47:7: "When I returned, there, along the bank of the river, were very many trees on one side and on the other."

Here is the secret of the **river of life**. When we follow the refreshing times and seasons of the Lord; when we walk in the law of the Lord and remember His statutes and judgments, then we open our hearts by faith to become trees planted by the waters of the river.

"But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night. He will be like a tree planted by streams of water, that yields its fruit in its season and its leaf does not wither; and whatever he does will prosper." (Psalm 1:2-3)

WTT. 6. God's Non-Violent Character

...And God does not take away life, but devises means, so that the exile may not remain rejected by Him. (2 Samuel 14:14)

Reconciling God's Character: Love and Judgment

After reading certain Bible texts, many people begin to doubt whether they will be saved and if heaven would truly be a good thing (Genesis 6:7; Deuteronomy 29:23; Isaiah 13:9; Psalm 78:47-51; Revelation 14:9-11). These are just a few examples that speak of the Lord's fierce anger and the millions of people seemingly killed by God after He "could no longer contain His fierce anger." Add to this puzzle the instruction God gave to Moses when Israel was gathered at Mount Sinai:

"And you shall set bounds for the people all around, saying, 'Take heed to yourselves that you do not go up into the mountain or touch its border. Whoever touches the mountain shall surely be put to death. No hand shall touch it, but he shall surely be stoned or shot with arrows; whether man or beast, he shall not live.' When the trumpet sounds a long blast, they shall come up to the mountain." (Exodus 19:12-13)

What was the reason for this instruction?

"Now Mount Sinai was completely in smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly. And the sound of the trumpet waxed louder and louder. Moses spoke, and God answered him by voice. Then the LORD came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mountain. And the LORD called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up. Then the LORD said to Moses, 'Go down and warn the people, lest they break through to gaze at the LORD, and many of them perish. Also let the priests who

come near the LORD consecrate themselves, lest the LORD break out against them.'" (Exodus 19:18-22)

An uninformed reader might easily conclude that God struggles to control His anger and needs to take extreme measures to protect people from His fiery nature, which could erupt and destroy them if they're not careful. How do we reconcile these biblical accounts with the following statements?

"The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, 'The LORD, the LORD, a God compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.'" (Exodus 34:6)

"The LORD appeared to me from afar and said, 'Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you.'" (Jeremiah 31:3)

These two sets of texts seem to be in complete conflict. Is it important to resolve this tension? If we don't, we risk living in constant fear of a vengeful God ready to explode and kill us, or, conversely, we might mentally "kill" God by choosing to believe He doesn't exist. Or, we might assume that because God is love, He will simply save everyone, embodying the typical "from the thorn of the hawthorn" fallacy. While denying the existence of an inconsistent and tyrannical God is perfectly understandable, are we sure we have the correct interpretation, and is it possible we're missing part of the story?

It's a self-evident reality that we can only draw conclusions from the information we possess. It's a natural human weakness to jump to conclusions before gathering enough information. As the wise Solomon tells us:

"To answer a matter before one hears it, it is folly and shame to him." (Proverbs 18:13)

"The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but he who heeds counsel is wise." (Proverbs 12:15)

Understanding this question requires patience so that the pieces can be carefully assembled. As the prophet Isaiah wrote:

"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. 'For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,' says the LORD. 'For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.'" (Isaiah 55:7-9)

Before we can truly appreciate God's character, we must acknowledge that we have inherited a natural tendency to misunderstand Him. That's why His thoughts and His methods often seem mysterious and confusing to us.

"For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so." (Romans 8:6-7)

"But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (1 Corinthians 2:14)

The carnal (or natural) person twists God's words to turn them against Him. He does this because his heart is at war with God and His commandments. Remember, Satan began his conflict with God by attempting to "improve" and "support" His government.

Lucifer attributed the disharmony he caused in heaven to God's government. He declared that all evil resulted from divine administration, claiming his main purpose was to improve Jehovah's ordinances. When Adam and Eve accepted his words through the serpent, they inherited his hostility toward God. That's why they hid from Him in the garden when He came to them. We see this hostility toward God reflected in a natural distrust of human government. The implicit attitude is to believe that government intends to harm us. While this is true in many cases, it's also true that societies often foster this expectation in their children, sometimes predetermining the characteristics of their future leaders.

One way people try to resolve the tension between a loving and a vengeful God is by assuming that God is normally loving, but in extreme circumstances, He briefly changes His mind to restore harmony to the universe. This act is considered "strange"—an anomaly for an otherwise loving God. However, such an act seems quite natural to us. To tolerate suffering at the hands of another for a time, then explode in rage and anger to destroy that person, is perfectly normal for humanity and not strange at all.

So then, does God do something "strange" to Himself that is "natural" to us? Does He become like humans to deal with His enemies? That in itself is strange. Christ called Satan "a murderer from the beginning" (John 8:44). Is God's final act at the end of time to become a murderer? If a person kills another, he is considered a murderer for the rest of his life. Once involved in the act of murder, it becomes part of his character. He may repent, feel sorrow, and seek forgiveness and a change of ways, but he still killed and is thus known as a murderer. How does this affect the eternal God—the One who never dies? If God is personally responsible for the deaths of millions, then by definition, He is a murderer; it becomes part of His character and personality. Once He raises the knife and lights a fire under the bodies of men, His character becomes that of a murderer. How can it be said that the last enemy to be conquered is death, if death sits on the throne? Does not death then triumph? When the saved inhabitants of the universe see a picture of God as one who raises a mighty hand against His enemies to personally slay them, might He not resolve to do so in the future? And if death reigns on the throne in the face of God, will not the sight of such a God transform us into the same image? Doesn't this bring us to the very heart of the human dilemma: **we die because we see death in the God in whom we believe?** Consider this carefully. We are changed by what we behold:

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

What do we see when we look into the eyes of the Lord by faith? Do we see death in His Person? Do we see a sword in His hand, raised to cut down

rebels? Then, seeing this, we too will do likewise. Like the Israelites in the wilderness, who believed that God wanted to kill them, we too die because we believe in a God of death and destruction. Have we not inherited this from our first parents? How did they interpret the following words?

"But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." (Genesis 2:17)

Do we read this with the idea: "If you touch My tree, I will kill you!" or could the same be understood as: "By choosing to act outside My will, you believe that I do not have your best interests at heart, and since I am your only life (Deuteronomy 30:20; Colossians 3:4), by turning away from Me, you are turning toward death." The wise person expresses it this way:

"But he who forsakes me (sins against me) wrongs his own soul; all who hate me love death." (Proverbs 8:36)

By twisting the meaning of God's words in the garden—making them imply that God would kill the offender—humanity has enthroned death and empowered its author, Satan, with power over the universe. Every time we attribute to God the desire to kill, we ensure our own destruction, for by looking, we are changed. That is exactly what happened to Israel.

"And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, 'Oh, that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or oh, that we had died in this wilderness! Why has the LORD brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should become victims? Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?'" (Numbers 14:2-3)

"How long shall I bear with this evil congregation who murmur against Me? I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel which they murmur against Me. Say to them, 'As I live,' says the LORD, 'just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will do to you: Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness, all of you who were numbered, according to your entire enrollment, from twenty years

old and above, who have murmured against Me.'" (Numbers 14:27-29)

Every sinner carries within himself the consciousness that he is worthy of death.

"And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve death, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them." (Romans 1:28-32)

Deep down, we know that as sinners, we are worthy of death, and our self-destructive lives reveal this. But in our rebellious minds, we attribute death to a work done by God.

"But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death." (James 1:14-15)

Rather than accepting that our sin causes death, we choose to believe that God causes death, and so we can harbor resentment toward Him and become judgmental (depraved) in our minds. When a person refuses to accept that death is entirely the result of his own works, he shifts the act of destruction from himself to God. This way of thinking actually creates a false god in our minds—an idol. Thus, we enthrone this idol in our minds and pass this idolatry on to the next generation so that they too can worship death and die. God is the author only of **life**. Satan is the author of **death**.

"You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning..." (John 8:44)

"O sons of men, how long will you turn my glory into dishonor? How long will you love vanity and seek lies?" (Psalm 4:2)

"And this is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all." (1 John 1:5)

"In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." (John 1:4)

God destroys no one. Those who are destroyed have destroyed themselves. Whoever suppresses the convictions of conscience sows the seeds of unbelief, and these will bring forth a sure harvest. God does not stand before the sinner as an executioner of the sentence for the crime committed, but leaves the rejecters of His mercy to themselves to reap what they have sown. Every rejected ray of light, every despised or disregarded warning, every indulged passion, every transgression of God's law, is a seed bearing its sure harvest. Constantly repelled, the Spirit of God is at last withdrawn from the sinner, leaving him without any power to control the evil passions of his soul, and without any protection from the malice and enmity of Satan.

Vol. 7. The Judgment of the Living

For we must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. (Romans 14:10)

The Spirit of Christ and True Freedom

Without the Spirit of Christ crying, "Abba, Father," within the heart, the soul remains enslaved, ruled by external forces. Due to inherent insecurity, the unconverted person feels compelled to control others, inadvertently inviting control over themselves. This mindset inevitably fosters a society that leans towards totalitarianism, even while individuals may outwardly protest against it. Without the inner compulsion of Christ's love, a "kingdom of God" devoid of the Spirit will inevitably be ruled by leaders who resort to punishment to compensate for the absence of love-inspired obedience.

The world we inhabit is a reflection of humanity's choices in response to Christ's tender, self-sacrificing love. Two thousand years ago, as a race, we were given a vision of God that could have completely transformed our understanding of justice and our fundamental motivation for living. However, in the fourth century AD, Christianity merged with the state, forming a universal imperial church. This system relentlessly sought greater power to regulate the thoughts and beliefs of its subjects, adapting whatever form of government was necessary. This mirrors humanity's innate desire for power as a means to feel secure. As a result of advancements in technology, education, and social engineering, we now live in the most sophisticated surveillance and tracking environment the world has ever known.

From Augustine to Aquinas to the modern concept of Santa Claus, the societal need for "naughty or nice" lists and the fear of punishment have been universally reinforced. If the idea of coercing people into Christianity was instilled in our minds as divinely desired, how would that affect our understanding of God's judgment? How would it color our reading of Scripture? Didn't God warn Adam and Eve that they would die if they ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? The books of Moses are

replete with instructions regarding punishments for wrongdoers in Israel. It seems logical that disobedience would invite the threat of punishment.

What punishment awaits those who do not follow the rules commonly cited by Christians? The Catholic Catechism states:

"Jesus often speaks of 'Gehenna' as the 'unquenchable fire' reserved for those who refuse to believe and repent throughout their lives; a place where both soul and body can be lost. Jesus solemnly declares that 'He will send His angels, and they will gather... all evildoers and throw them into the fiery furnace,' and that He will pronounce the judgment: 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire!' Church teaching affirms the existence of hell and its eternity." (From *Christian Views on Hell*, Wikipedia)

The threat of eternal suffering in the flames of hell serves as the ultimate external coercion to compel obedience to God's law and order. By its very nature, the threat of such tortures and punishments demands observation, assessment, and judgment to determine whether a person is worthy of eternal life with the God of heaven or eternal damnation in hell. With such a context, it is easy to read the Bible through this lens. Consider Daniel 7, for example:

"I watched till thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, its wheels a burning fire; A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, and the books were opened." (Daniel 7:9-10)

These images depict a colossal courtroom scene where all surveillance data is collected, and each person faces their respective reward or, more likely, punishment. This is the serious side of the Santa Claus story. We are no longer dealing with the lenient standards by which we judge children; we are confronting an Almighty God whose standards are infinitely high. Daniel 7 presents a vision of God, not arriving in a reindeer-drawn sleigh, but with fire erupting from His majestic throne, surrounded by a heavenly entourage, poised to bring death to the wicked.

We might turn to Jesus for comfort, yet then we read His words and tremble:

"But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned." (Matthew 12:36-37)

This system, therefore, inherently requires supervision, judgment, condemnation, and death. The question that must be asked is: Can this system of justice create a fear-free society? If God is by nature the architect of death and the supreme sovereign who inflicts death, then is He not by nature the personification of death? If God watches our every action and judges it against His divine standard to see if we measure up, how can there ever be a place where His subjects are free from the horror of death? God becomes eternally associated with judgment, condemnation, and death. But then, what do the following statements mean?

"For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son," (John 5:22)

"You judge according to the flesh; I [Jesus] judge no one." (John 8:15)

"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it does not seek its own, it is not easily angered, **it keeps no record of wrongs.**" (1 Corinthians 13:4-5, NIV)

These three passages directly challenge ideas of justice and judgment based on the threat of death. Jesus tells us that neither His Father nor Himself judges, condemns, or punishes anyone. The great chapter on love in the Bible states that love keeps no record of wrongdoing. God is love, and this perfect love of God "casts out" or removes all fear (1 John 4:8, 18). Are we sure we understand God's justice correctly? How can we explain and harmonize these Bible texts with many others that seem to say the

opposite? How can love not keep a record of sin when the judicial system, as we have understood it, requires such a process?

Humanity's Judgmental Heart and God's True Nature

If God and His Son do not judge anyone, then why is the world full of judgment and condemnation? Why do people judge others so much, and where did it all start? "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate" (Genesis 3:12). Adam judged God to be guilty of creating a woman who tempted him to go in the wrong direction. It is evident that Adam blamed God for his actions. Adam believed that God had come to end his life as punishment for what he had done.

The spirit of the accuser [Satan] entered Adam's heart, and he judged, accused, and condemned the Son of God for creating Eve as his tempter. It was through Adam that the spirit of judgment and condemnation came into the world. Adam did not ask God to forgive him; he did not believe that his sin could be forgiven. Unlike Noah, Adam had not yet found favor in the eyes of God (Genesis 6:8). Adam was full of accusation and unbelief (the spirit of Satan), not repentance and faith (the spirit of Christ). The apostle Paul expresses this profound truth:

"And the gift is not like the judgment that came through one [Adam] who sinned; for the judgment came through one [Adam] to condemnation, but the gift came through many offenses to justification." (Romans 5:16, KJV)

Adam imagined God as a Being who judges, condemns, and punishes. He perceived things that way because he himself had done so in his mind toward God. He:

- Condemned God as dishonest;
- He condemned Him as worthy of death.

To imagine these things about God simply meant that when he saw God, what he wanted to do to God, he now imagined God would do to him. This leads us to an important principle:

False perceptions of significant people in our lives act like a mirror when we come into their presence and interact with them.

We see this principle in Cain. After Cain killed his brother, he feared that others would want to kill him (Genesis 4:14). We see it in Jesus' story of the prodigal son. When he returns to his father's house after squandering everything, his system of justice doesn't allow him to believe he can continue to be a son (Luke 15:19). Though in a different way, the older son also sees himself as a servant because he has done all the work in the house as such, and therefore feels his father's generous and forgiving treatment of his brother is unfair (Luke 15:28). Both needed a true understanding of their father's character.

Our Father and our Savior do not record things to punish us; they record things to **remain in intimate relationship with us**. Our lives are continually in Their hands, and thus They keep a perfect record of our lives in Their hearts to preserve. The record of our lives, which is placed in the heart of Christ, is also made by us. He allows us to write the record in His heart, and thus we are inscribed in the palms of His hands. Therefore, it is true that God has a perfect record of our lives, but it is not recorded, as we often think, for the purpose of observation, judgment, and punishment. It is recorded because when one loves another, He constantly watches over him, cares for him, and thinks of him.

This is why Christ read the hearts of the men who came into His presence with the woman caught in adultery. He was able to read the record in their hearts and awaken their consciousness of it. When they came into His presence, they could not hide or blot out that record from their memory. What Christ wrote on the earth was only a repetition of what He had written in their hearts with the finger of God, and which they themselves had already signed with their consent. It is for this reason that when God opens books in heaven, He reaches out to the hearts of humanity. He does not need physical books, such as we use today, for His law is not physical but spiritual; it deals with matters of the heart and mind as they are manifested in the flesh. God does not watch us to judge and condemn us, but He watches over us with love, thinks of us every day, and longs to bless us. Thus, the record is kept in His heart.

God meets us at the brazen altar; an altar made of alloy, crafted by the son of Cain. Our Father never desired sacrifices, but He permitted them to

show us what we are by nature. We have believed that God needed to be appeased before He could forgive us, and we would not believe that we were forgiven until blood was shed. This is a terrible, pagan idea; yet, we have not realized it. It has seemingly increased our sinfulness through these sacrifices, while simultaneously, through this "brazen," man-made idea, convinced us that we can be forgiven.

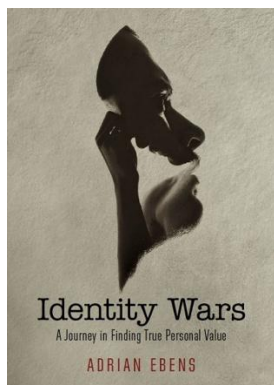
The context of the judgment of 1844 is a reaction to the accusations brought against God's people by the little horn, which had Satan's throne as its seat. God's judgment is actually a **vindication of His people** against the accusations of Satan through the church leaders. The Jewish leaders condemned the woman caught in adultery and brought her to Jesus to hear the case, but Jesus turned the judgment back on them. Similarly, after the church had condemned so many people to death, the Ancient of Days turned the judgment back on the church. Who saw mercy in the presence of Jesus and who left feeling condemned? Who sees mercy in the judgment of the Ancient of Days at the end of time and who sees himself condemned?

For those who have the faith of Jesus to see the goodness of the Father through the eyes of His Son, God's judgment is not God executing judgment *upon* God's people, but rather Him **defending them** from the accusations brought against them by Satan through church leaders. God allows this judgment to take place because He reveals what is in the hearts of God's people as Satan tests them through his agents. Do God's people trust God through this trial, or do they refuse to trust Him to see them through this fiery trial? The last church is Laodicea, whose name means "judgment of the people"—it is the church of judgment. The human legacy of judgment and condemnation reaches its climax in this church. God sends a message to the world at this time, announcing that the judgment has begun. God is represented as occupying the supreme seat of judgment, so that He has access to the life records of all who profess faith in Christ.

How do people perceive this judgment? It depends on how they understand the character of God. If they view God as a prosecutor who sifts through records to weed out the unworthy, then naturally they will

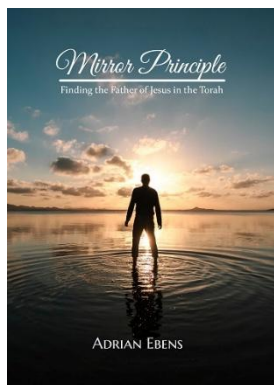
project such a character onto their dealings with their fellow human beings. This church judges itself to be "rich and prosperous"; it considers itself superior to others. We are truly able to say that the Sanctuary can be cleansed. All the "blood" can now be removed from the Most Holy Place, because God does not require these things for atonement. But it is true that He had to show them to us and expose our sinful hearts, so that we might repent of accusing others and seeking atonement sacrifices to remove our guilt. Seeing God as one in whom there is no "darkness" or death, we are now ready to reflect the image of One who is the sole source of life. Before the perception of such light, judgment could only deal with the dead. But such worship, which sees God only as life, has the power to initiate judgment upon the living.

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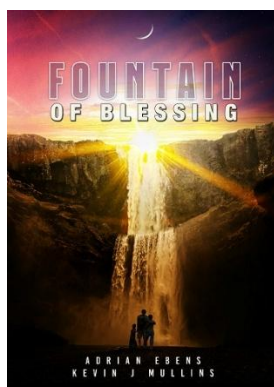
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Identity Wars is a journey of self-discovery. It is an invitation to learn of your value in a purely relational context. Our lives are bombarded with a constant drone of messages telling us that success only comes from proving to ourselves and the world that we have what it takes, that we have the right stuff. This book invites you to learn the true nature of the war we are in - an identity war of what defines our value and worth.



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Entering into God's REST through the Channels of His Appointed Times

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