

A p p e n d i x

for

GENESIS

A collection of Notes, Articles and Outlines
related to a study of The Book of Genesis

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CREATION vs EVOLUTION

I. CREATION IS GOD'S FIRST REVELATION OF HIMSELF TO US

- A. Rom.1:20 - *"For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities - His eternal power and divine nature - have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse."*
1. BEFORE WE CAN KNOW WHO WE ARE - we must know where we came from
 2. BEFORE WE CAN KNOW GOD AS OUR SAVIOR - we must know Him as our Creator
 3. BEFORE WE CAN RECEIVE THE BLESSINGS OF GOD'S GRACE - WE MUST FIRST HAVE FUNDAMENTAL FAITH
 - a) Heb.11:6 - *"And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him."*
- B. WE MUST RECOGNIZE GOD AS CREATOR BEFORE WE CAN RECEIVE HIM AS SAVIOR
1. Gen. 1:1 IS THE KEY - *"In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth."*
 2. The Bible doesn't attempt to prove the existence of God - it assumes it from the beginning.
 3. If we believe Gen. 1:1 we won't have trouble believing anything else
 4. If Gen.1:1 is true, then...
 - a) History is not a "haphazard conglomeration of chance events" which are leading nowhere
 - b) We do not have to live a helpless fatalistic existence or a lonely self-determined life.
 - c) God has a plan for man
 5. WHEN MAN DENIES GOD AS CREATOR - HE DENIES GOD!
- C. WHAT HAPPENS WHEN MAN DENIES GOD?
1. HIS THINKING BECOMES FUTILE
 - a) Rom. 1:21 - *"For although they knew God, they neither glorified Him as God nor gave thanks to Him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened."*
 - b) Ps. 14:1 - *"The fool has said in his heart; 'There is no God'."*
 2. HE MUST FIND ANOTHER EXPLANATION FOR EXISTENCE
 - a) Any explanation which excludes God is by its very nature vain and futile. - cf. def. of GOD-LESS
 3. EVOLUTION IS A PRIME EXAMPLE
 - a) Evolution: The theory that all forms of life on earth, including man, evolved from the same beginning through mutations and natural selection - i.e. random chance.

II. THE THEORY OF EVOLUTION

A. EVOLUTION IS OPPOSED TO THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

1. In his keynote address at Centennial Celebration of the publication of Charles Darwin's 'Origin of Species', Sir Julian Huxley said; "In the evolutionary system of thought there is no longer need or room for the supernatural. The earth was not created - it evolved. So did all the animals and plants that inhabit it, including our human selves, mind and soul, as well as brain and body. So did religion. Evolutionary man can no longer take refuge from his loneliness by creeping for shelter into the arms of a divine father figure whom he himself created."
2. "God . . . created a number of possibilities in case some of his prototypes failed-that is the meaning of evolution." - Graham Greene (1904-91), British novelist. Mr. Visconti, in *Travels With My Aunt*, pt. 2, ch. 7 (1969).
3. "We are the products of editing, rather than of authorship." - G. Wald (b. 1906), U.S. biochemist. "The Origin of Optical Activity," in *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, vol. 69 (1957).
4. Rom. 1:21-25 -²¹ *For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.* ²² *Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools* ²³ *and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.* ²⁴ *Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another.* ²⁵ *They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator - Who is forever praised. Amen."*

5. What about Theistic Evolution?

- a) It is a scapegoat for Christians who are intimidated by Evolution and have never checked out the truth of its assumptions

B. EVOLUTION IS A THEORY - NOT A SCIENTIFIC FACT

1. Theory = a well thought out speculation as to how we got here.

- a) No matter how many times they show "Cosmos" on TV, it remains a theory

2. No matter how "religiously" people believe in it - it is not a fact

- a) note: A Revolution Against Evolution? - "One morning I woke up and ... it struck me that I had been working on this stuff [evolution] for 20 years and there was not one thing I knew about it." The speaker - Dr. Colin Patterson, renowned paleontologist of the British Museum of Natural History and author of "Evolution". Giving a speech at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, he told how he had asked various people, 'Can you tell me anything you know about evolution, any one thing that is true?' 'The only answer I got was silence.' ... "So I think many people in this room would acknowledge that during the last few years ... you've experienced a shift from evolution as knowledge to evolution as faith. I know it's true of me ..."

- b) 1Cor.1:20 - "Where is the wise man? Where is the Scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?"

C. EVOLUTION IS POPULAR BECAUSE IT OFFERS AN ALTERNATIVE TO HONORING GOD AS CREATOR

1. D. M. Watson, a famous evolutionist, said:

- a) "The theory of evolution is a theory universally accepted not because it can be proved by logically coherent evidence to be true but because the only alternative, special creation, is clearly incredible." - Nature Magazine - 1924 - Vol.124, pg. 233

D. ACCEPTANCE OF EVOLUTION PRODUCES THE REJECTION OF ABSOLUTE VALUES .

1. H.J.Muller, an evolutionary geneticist, has said: "Any ethical system based on premises of absolute pronouncements will not usually be acceptable to those who view human nature by evolutionary criteria."

2. If life is just the result of random chance then there is no such thing as absolute values of right and wrong.

3. If it feels good - do it! If it serves our purposes - go for it!

E. LOSS OF ABSOLUTES LEADS TO THE EXALTATION OF MAN

1. THIS LEADS TO HUMANISM

- a) We cannot live with the despair of having no purpose - must exalt something to give us purpose - so we exalt ourselves.

- b) "When there are no absolutes by which to judge Society - Society becomes absolute." [cf. value of life]
(1) OR TO "SUPERHUMANISM" - WORSHIP OF "ENLIGHTENED SOULS", BEINGS WHO ARE "SPIRITUAL TRANSMUTATIONS" OF OURSELVES FURTHER ALONG THE PATH

2. WE WANT TO DESIGN OUR OWN RULES AND CONTROL OUR OWN DESTINY

- a) H.J. Muller [evolutionary geneticist] - "Through the unprecedented faculty of long-range foresight, jointly serviced and exercised by us, we can, in securing and advancing our position, increasingly avoid the missteps of blind nature, circumvent its cruelties, reform our own natures, and enhance our values."

- b) cf. "Dr. Jonas Salk's Formula for the Future" by Arianna Stassinopoulos [Parade Magazine - Nov. 4, 1984]

- (1) In 1960 Jonas Salk founded the Salk Institute with the aim of bringing together science, philosophy and art to help fulfill man's greater potential - an evolutionary step Salk believes is essential to human survival. "The brontosaurus became extinct, but it wasn't its fault, so to speak. If we become extinct, it *will* be our fault .. In order to survive, man *has* to evolve." ... "I think that goodness and nobility are genetically inscribed, but they need to be evoked. ..." "I now see that the major shift in human evolution is from behaving like an animal struggling to survive to behaving like an animal choosing to evolve. In fact, in order to survive, man has to evolve. And to evolve, we need a new kind of thinking and a new kind of behavior, a new ethic and a new morality. It will be that of the evolution of everyone rather than the survival of the fittest."

F. SO MAN ENDS UP DEPENDING ON HIMSELF FOR SALVATION

III. PROBLEMS WITH EVOLUTION

- A. THE SCIENTIFIC LAW OF CAUSE AND EFFECT: FOR EVERY EFFECT THERE IS A CORRESPONDING CAUSE.
1. An intelligible universe suggests an intelligence that caused the universe, and the presence of individual personalities in the universe imply that the First Cause must be a personality.
 2. Most evolutionists simply ignore this contradiction.
 - a) Dr. Hudson Hoagland, then Pres. of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences said: - "But man himself and his behavior are an emergent product of purely fortuitous mutations and evolution by natural selection acting upon them. Non-purposive natural selection has produced purposive human behavior." - "It is another illustration of our fantastic luck that oxygen filters out the very bands of ultraviolet light that are most devastating to nucleic acids and proteins, while allowing full penetration of the visible light needed for photosynthesis. If it had not been for this semipermeability, we could never have come along."
 3. NOT 'FORTUITOUS MUTATIONS' or 'FANTASTIC LUCK' IT'S GOD'S DESIGN!
 4. cf. also the freezing qualities of water "Conceptual Physics"
 - a) "Increase the temperature of any common liquid and it will expand. But not water at temperatures near the freezing point; ice cold water does just the opposite! Water at the temperature of melting ice, 0oC or 32oF, contracts when the temperature is increased. This is most unusual. It continues to contract until it reaches a temperature of 4oC or 39.2oF. With further increase in temperature the water then begins to expand; the expansion continues all the way to the boiling point, 100oC. The result of this odd behavior is that water has its smallest volume and greatest density at 4oC."
 - b) "This behavior of water is of great importance in nature. If the greatest density of water were at its freezing point, as is true of most liquids, then the coldest water would settle to the bottom and ponds would freeze from the bottom up, with a destruction of marine life in winter months. But this doesn't happen because the densest water that settles at the bottom of a pond is 4 degrees above the freezing point. Water at the freezing point is less dense and so ice forms at the surface. ... So, before any ice can form, all the water in a pond must first be cooled to 4 degrees Celsius."
- B. THE 2ND LAW OF THERMODYNAMICS: EVERYTHING DETERIORATES AND WEARS OUT ALL BY ITSELF. THE UNIVERSE IS CONSTANTLY GETTING MORE DISORDERLY.
1. Rom. 8:20-21 - *"For the creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by it's own choice, but by the will of the One Who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God."*
 2. Evolution assumes simplicity evolving into complexity but this is only possible if there is already in existence a complex 'coded plan' containing a design [cf. a seed], but where did the design come from? - The Designer!
 - a) note: The DNA molecule and the enzymes are both extremely complex systems, and each is necessary for the others existence. There is no known way they could have both evolved from simpler chemicals
 - b) Dr. Haskins, a President of Carnegie Institute said: "Did the code and the means of translating it appear simultaneously in evolution? It seems almost incredible that any such coincidence could have occurred, given the extraordinary complexities of both sides and the requirement that they be coordinated accurately for survival. This puzzle would surely be interpreted as the most powerful sort of evidence for special creation."
- C. LACK OF EVIDENCE [not lack of publicity]
1. EVOLUTION REQUIRES TRANSMUTATION: ONE FORM [SPECIES] OF LIFE EVOLVING INTO ANOTHER FORM
 - a) This has never been observed! cf. Fruit-fly experiment
 - b) Since transmutation has not and is not now being observed, an additional assumption is made by evolutionists - the process goes so slowly that it is not observable within the time-span available for human observation.
 - (1) This is simply an attempt to hide the weaknesses of evolution behind an imaginary veil of "millions of years" [cf. the Emperor's New Clothes]
 - c) If this assumption is true, then the evidence will be found in the fossil record

2. THE FOSSIL RECORD

- a) If evolution is true, then the evidence for it ought to be found in the fossil record if it is to be found anywhere.
- b) The simple fact is: No fossil evidence has been found!
- c) After studying the subject for 40 years, Professor N. Heribert-Nilsson of Lund University, Sweden summed up his conclusions this way:
 - (1) "It is not even possible to make a caricature of evolution out of paleobiological facts. The fossil material is now so complete that the lack of transitional series cannot be explained by the scarcity of the material. The deficiencies are real, they will never be filled."
- d) This has simply caused modern evolutionists to insert more unproved assumptions into the theory looking for new veils to hide behind.
 - (1) One of these new assumptions is that there were isolated periods in which "explosions of evolutionary activity" occurred so rapidly that they were not contained within the fossil record.

D. WE MUST REALIZE THAT EVOLUTION IS ONLY A FUTILE SPECULATION RESULTING FROM MAN'S REFUSAL TO ACKNOWLEDGE GOD.

1. Rom. 1:21, 25 - "For although they knew God, they neither glorified Him as God nor gave thanks to Him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened." ... "They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator - Who is forever praised. Amen."
2. D. M. Watson: "The theory of evolution is a theory universally accepted not because it can be proved by logically coherent evidence to be true but because the only alternative, special creation, is clearly incredible."
3. Robert Jastrow, director of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies and professor of astronomy and geology at Columbia University, in an article condensed in Reader's Digest.
 - a) "Science ... asks, What cause produced this effect? Who or what put the matter and energy into the universe? Was the universe created out of nothing, or was it gathered together out of pre-existing materials? And science cannot answer these questions, because, according to the astronomers, in the first moments of its existence the universe was compressed to an extraordinary degree, and consumed by the heat of a fire beyond human imagination. The shock of that instant must have destroyed every particle of evidence that could have yielded a clue to the cause of the great explosion. The scientist's pursuit of the past ends in the moment of Creation.
 - b) This development was unexpected by all but the theologians. They have always accepted the word of the Bible: In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. But we scientists did not expect to find evidence for an abrupt beginning because we have had, until recently, such extraordinary success in tracing the chain of cause and effect backward in time.
 - c) Now we would like to pursue that inquiry further back in time, but the barrier seems insurmountable. For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries."

*"For this is what the LORD says—He who created the heavens,
He is God; He who fashioned and made the earth, He founded it;
He did not create it to be empty, but formed it to be inhabited—He says:
"I am the LORD, and there is no other."
Isa. 45:18*

*"Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things,
and for thy pleasure they are and were created."*

Rev. 4:11

THE GAP THEORY

One widely held opinion, known as the “gap theory” is that the primeval creation of Gen. 1:1 may have taken place billions of years ago, with all the geological ages inserted in a tremendous time gap between Gen. 1:1 and 1:2. The latter verse is believed by these expositors to describe the condition of the earth after a great cataclysm terminated the geological ages. This cataclysm, which left the earth in darkness and covered with water, is explained as a divine judgment because of the sin of Satan in rebelling against God. Following the cataclysm, God then “re-created” the world in the six literal days described in Gen. 1:3-31.

I. W. G. Heslop - ‘Gems from Genesis’ [Kregal] - excerpts:

- A. “God created all things good and to be inhabited. There was no waste and no darkness and no sin and no disorder and nothing void. ... Lucifer, who was the chief of the Sons of the Morning, was placed over the fair and wondrous and luminous earth and anointed to be the Chub who should rule the kingdom and empire for God. ... He decided and determined in his heart that would go up and usurp the place and position of Christ. ... Not only was Lucifer stricken with divine judgment because of his rebellion, but his empire and kingdom, THE EARTH with its ATMOSPHERE, was also smitten by the judgments of God. ... The beautiful earth became a waste and void and God Almighty wrapped a dense impenetrable mantle of darkness around the globe. ... Gen. 1:1 describes the original creation. Gen. 1:2 describes the first dreadful cataclysm. Darkness and waste and chaos are always the result of sin. This was in the Eternity past. The problem of sin was thus on God’s hands long before the race was created in the Garden of Eden!” [pgs. 17-19]
- B. “Genesis 1:1 is the only original, full, complete, true account of Creation. Genesis 1:3 to the end is dealing with RESTORATION and NOT with CREATION. In the beginning God created the earth ... good, orderly, not a waste, chaos, void. He created it out of nothing and created it to be inhabited. The prophets Jeremiah and Isaiah and Ezekiel clearly indicate that the earth had undergone a catastrophic change as the result of the sin and rebellion of angels and the consequent judgments of God. The earth bears the marks of such a cataclysmic upheaval.” [pg.20]
- C. “The six days work of Genesis ! was not created by restoration. It did not take God six days to create. He created in the beginning. It took six days to restore the earth to its original condition and then climax the restoration by the creation of man.” ... “All the ages required by Science are in the first verse. “In the beginning God created the earth” NOT 6,000 years ago, but in the beginning.” [pg.21]
- D. “It is not necessary to suppose that the life germ of all seeds perished in the judgments of Genesis 1:2. When light was spoken into the darkness of the ruined earth now restored, the earth would bring forth as described in verse 11.” ... “Sun and Moon. The two great lights mentioned in verses 14-16 were made to appear and NOT created on the fourth day. A different word is used which does not imply an original creative act as in verse 1. The Sun and Moon of verse 16 were made visible or made to appear, having already been created in verse.” [pg. 23]

II. W. Pink - 'Gleanings in Genesis' [Moody] - excerpts:

- A. "We do not know whether the primitive heaven and earth were created a few thousands, or many millions of years ago. We are not informed as to whether they were called into existence in a moment of time, or whether the process of their formation covered an interval of long ages. The bare fact is stated: "In the beginning God created," and nothing is added to gratify the curious." [pg.9]
- B. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," and we cannot believe that these creations were worthy of Himself, that they reflected the perfections of their Maker, that they were exceedingly fair in their pristine beauty. Certainly, the earth, on the morning of its creation, must have been vastly different from its chaotic state as described in 1:2 "And the earth was without form and void" must refer to a condition of the earth much later than what is before us in the preceding verse. It is now over a hundred years ago since Dr. Chalmers called attention to the fact that the word "was" in Genesis 1:2 should be translated "became," and that between the first two verses of Genesis 1 some terrible catastrophe must have intervened. That this catastrophe may have been connected with the apostasy of Satan, seems more than likely; that some catastrophe did occur is certain from Isa. 45:18, which expressly declares that the earth was not created in the condition in which Genesis 1:2 views it." [pg.10]
- C. "As to how long an interval passed before the earth "became" a ruin, we have no means of knowing; but if the surmises of geologists could be conclusively established there would be no conflict at all between the findings of science and the teaching of Scripture. The unknown interval between the first two verses of Genesis 1, is wide enough to embrace all the prehistoric ages which may have elapsed; but all that took place from Genesis 1:3 onwards transpired less than six thousand years ago." [pg.11]

III. Gap Verses

- A. "23 I looked at the earth, and it was formless and empty; and at the heavens, and their light was gone. 24 I looked at the mountains, and they were quaking; all the hills were swaying. 25 I looked, and there were no people; every bird in the sky had flown away. 26 I looked, and the fruitful land was a desert; all its towns lay in ruins before the LORD, before his fierce anger." (Jer 4:23-26).
- B. "9 The grave below is all astir to meet you at your coming; it rouses the spirits of the departed to greet you--all those who were leaders in the world; it makes them rise from their thrones--all those who were kings over the nations. 10 They will all respond, they will say to you, "You also have become weak, as we are; you have become like us." 11 All your pomp has been brought down to the grave, along with the noise of your harps; maggots are spread out beneath you and worms cover you. 12 How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! 13 You said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. 14 I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High." (Isaiah 14:9-14).
- C. "1 See, the LORD is going to lay waste the earth and devastate it; he will ruin its face and scatter its inhabitants--" (Isaiah 24:1).
- D. "18 For this is what the LORD says--he who created the heavens, he is God; he who fashioned and made the earth, he founded it; he did not create it to be empty, but formed it to be inhabited--he says: "I am the LORD, and there is no other." (Isaiah 45:18).
- E. "12 "Son of man, take up a lament concerning the king of Tyre and say to him: `This is what the Sovereign LORD says: "You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. 13 You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone adorned you: ruby, topaz and emerald, chrysolite, onyx and jasper, sapphire, turquoise and beryl. Your settings and mountings were made of gold; on the day you were created they were prepared. 14 You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones. 15 You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you." (Ezekiel 28:12-15).

- IV. The main purpose of the gap theory has been to try to harmonize the Biblical chronology with the accepted system of geological ages by placing them in this “gap” and letting the geologists have “all the aeons they want.” However, there are serious problems with the “gap theory”.
- A. GEOLOGICAL PROBLEMS: The gap theory doesn’t accommodate the geological ages as it purports to do. The system of geological ages is based completely on the assumption of uniformitarianism [the belief that physical processes have always functioned in the past essentially as they do at present], which precludes any worldwide cataclysm such as is required by the gap theory. As a result, no geologist accepts the gap theory, or any other theory requiring a global cataclysm, if he also accepts the geological ages. Why? Because the geological age system depends on the supposed evolutionary succession of the fossils preserved in the sedimentary rocks of the earth’s crust. A cataclysm of such dimensions as to leave the earth inundated with waters and with darkness covering the face of the deep would obliterate the sedimentary crust and all its fossils, and thus would leave no evidence of the “geological ages” which the gap theory is supposed to accommodate.
 - B. THEOLOGICAL PROBLEMS: The fossil record speaks clearly of a world in which suffering, disease, and death were universal realities. If that world existed prior to the supposed pre-Adamic cataclysm, then it existed before the sin of Satan which brought on the cataclysm. That would mean that suffering and death existed for a billion years before the sin of Satan and the subsequent sin of Adam.
 - 1. However, the Bible says that death came into the world only when Adam brought sin into the world. Rom. 5:12 “... *sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned*”, (1Cor. 15:21). This contradicts the assumption in the gap theory that death existed for ages before Adam.
 - C. GRAMMATICAL PROBLEM: The gap theory also proposes that the word translated “was” [Heb. ‘hayetha’] should really be translated “became”, thus suggesting a change of state from the original perfect creation to the chaotic condition inferred in Gen. 1:2. The verb is the regular Hebrew verb of being, not the word normally used to denote a change of state [haphak]. Although hayetha can also, if the context warrants, be used to introduce a change of state, it simply means “was” in 98% of its uses. There is nothing at all in the context of Gen. 1 to suggest that it should, in this particular case, be rendered “became”.

DAY AGE THEORY vs LITERAL CREATION DAY

- I. **DAY-AGE THEORY:** The Day-Age Theory seeks more or less to equate the days of creation with the ages of evolutionary geology. However, there are serious problems with this...
- A. The order of creative events in Gen.1 is very different from the accepted order of fossils in the rocks representing the geological ages.
 - B. Many plants require pollination by insects, which were not made until the 6th day.
 - C. The geological ages are predicated on the fossil record, and fossils speak of suffering and death in the world. The day-age theory accepts the existence of death before sin which is in direct contradiction to God's word. Rom. 5:12 - "... sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned."
- II. **LITERAL CREATION DAY: THE OMNIPOTENCE OF GOD**
- A. Ex. 20:11- *"For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy."*
 - 1. Isn't the real reason that we have trouble accepting a literal creation day because we look at the massive size of the universe and cannot conceive of something so huge being manipulated, formed, fashioned, fused, and energized in such a small amount of time and at such a rapid pace?
 - 2. If I tell you that I am going to carve a figure out of a small block of wood in one day, it isn't incredible. but, if I tell you that I am going to carve a figure out of a mountain in one day you wouldn't believe me because you realize that a mountain is too big for me to carve in one day. I'm too small. [not that I don't have the ability to accomplish it over time - cf. the mountain-carver of Crazy Horse. Thus, the real problem is the size of the carver in relation to the thing carved, not the ability of the carver. This is the real dilemma. When we have trouble conceiving of God creating in a single day it's because we are viewing the universe from a human perspective - as if God, like man, is dwarfed by the universe. The truth is - **THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE IS DWARFED BY GOD!**
 - 3. Isa. 45:12 - *"It is I who made the earth and created mankind upon it. My own hands stretched out the heavens; I marshaled their starry hosts."* Isa. 57:15 - *"For this is what the high and lofty One says--he who lives forever, whose name is holy: "I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite."* Isa. 40:12 - *"Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, or with the breadth of his hand marked off the heavens? Who has held the dust of the earth in a basket, or weighed the mountains on the scales and the hills in a balance?"*
 - 4. The universe is as a small wood block in the hands of a carver, in which case it isn't hard to imagine a work being finished in one day. When we begin to see the true relationship between God and His creation, from His perspective, we begin to confine the problem of unbelief to it's real location - a man-centered concept of existence where creation must fit into the limits of what man can conceive of accomplishing himself. It is a question of relativity - we choose to view existence relative to man - or relative to God.
 - B. The issue of a literal creation day involves the omnipotence of God. If God is truly omnipotent [all-powerful] then acts of creation in a literal day are simply manifestations of His omnipotence! Thus the feasibility of a literal creation day proceeds, without any anxiety, from the reality of the omnipotence of our Creator-God!
 - 1. Ps. 8:1-4 - *"1 O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. 2 From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise because of your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger. 3 When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, 4 what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?"*

KEEPING THE SABBATH

*"21 This is what the LORD says: Be careful not to carry a load on the Sabbath day or bring it through the gates of Jerusalem. 22 Do not bring a load out of your houses or do any work on the Sabbath, but keep the Sabbath day holy, as I commanded your forefathers."
(Jeremiah 17:21-22)*

· INTRODUCTION

- The issue of keeping the Sabbath is one that continues to surface for believers...
- cf. 7th Day Adventists...
- It is an issue that has prompted volumes of writings, debates and even division in the body of Christ. We cannot pretend to take an exhaustive look at it in a single Sunday morning message. However, I believe it would be helpful to take time this morning to give an overview.
- This may seem to be a secondary issue - but I assure you it's not. If we do not keep the Sabbath in its True sense, we cannot be saved - so please stay with me and, by the time we're done - I pray you'll see the point and make sure that you're keeping the Sabbath. Although you may be surprised at what it means to truly keep the Sabbath.

I. BACKGROUND

A. ESTABLISHMENT

- 1 Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. 2 By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. 3 And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done. (Genesis 2:1-3)
2. Note: Manna sit. reveals familiarity with concept
 - a) *"He said to them, "This is what the LORD commanded: `Tomorrow is to be a day of rest, a holy Sabbath to the LORD. So bake what you want to bake and boil what you want to boil. Save whatever is left and keep it until morning.'" (Exodus 16:23).*

B. INCLUSION IN THE LAW: CODIFICATION

1. 8 *"Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. 9 Six days you shall labour and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. 11 For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. (Exodus 20:8-11)*

C. ELEMENTS OF ITS OBSERVATION

1. 2 *For six days, work is to be done, but the seventh day shall be your holy day, a Sabbath of rest to the LORD. Whoever does any work on it must be put to death. 3 Do not light a fire in any of your dwellings on the Sabbath day." (Exodus 35:2-3).*
2. 3 *"There are six days when you may work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, a day of sacred assembly. You are not to do any work; wherever you live, it is a Sabbath to the LORD. (Lev 23:3).*
3. BOTTOM-LINE:
 - a) DO NOT - WORK, LABOR OR STRIVE
 - b) DO - REST IN THE LORD

D. THE PROPHETS' INSISTENCE

1. 13 *"If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath and from doing as you please on my holy day, if you call the Sabbath a delight and the LORD's holy day honourable, and if you honour it by not going your own way and not doing as you please or speaking idle words, 14 then you will find your joy in the LORD, and I will cause you to ride on the heights of the land and to feast on the inheritance of your father Jacob." The mouth of the LORD has spoken. (Isaiah 58:13-14).*

E. TRADITIONALIZATION DURING 'SILENT YEARS'

1. They invented many prohibitions respecting the Sabbath.
 - a) cf. false teeth, etc.
 - b) It became a legal burden rather than a profession of faith
 - c) cf. 'Sabbath Day's Walk [2,000 cubits - 1,000 yds] but would get around it by putting food at limits and declaring it a 'temporary residence'.
2. That this had become very general in our Savior's time is apparent from the objections to acts of his on that day and from his conduct on occasions to which those objections were sure to be urged. #Mt 12:1-16; Mr 3:2; Lu 6:1-5; 13:10-17; Joh 6:2-18; 7:23; 9:1-34

II. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF JESUS TO THE SABBATH

A. HE OBSERVED IT - FULFILLED ITS REQUIREMENTS & OBLIGATIONS

B. HE EXPOSED ITS ABUSE

1. *10 On a Sabbath Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues, 11 and a woman was there who had been crippled by a spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not straighten up at all. 12 When Jesus saw her, he called her forward and said to her, "Woman, you are set free from your infirmity." 13 Then he put his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and praised God. 14 Indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, the synagogue ruler said to the people, "There are six days for work. So come and be healed on those days, not on the Sabbath." 15 The Lord answered him, "You hypocrites! Doesn't each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or donkey from the stall and lead it out to give it water? 16 Then should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?" 17 When he said this, all his opponents were humiliated, but the people were delighted with all the wonderful things he was doing. (Luke 13:10-17).*

C. HE CLARIFIED ITS PRIORITIES

1. *Then he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. (Mark 2:27).*

D. HE IS LORD OVER THE SABBATH [claim of Deity]

1. *"... the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath." (Mark 2:28)*

E. HE TRANSFORMED IT THROUGH HIS FINISHED WORK ON THE CROSS

1. *When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. (John 19:30)*

III. THE SABBATH TODAY

A. THE CHURCH IN GENERAL TRANSFERRED IT'S CUSTOMS TO 'THE LORD'S DAY' - 1st Day of Week

1. THE LORD'S DAY -

- a) The Sabbath was a memorial of creation. A work vastly greater than that has now been accomplished - the work of redemption. We should not be surprised if it appears that the Lord established a new day to commemorate His new, completed work of Redemption.
- b) We know for a fact that the first day of the week has been observed from apostolic times, and was observed by the apostles and their immediate disciples. This, we may be sure, they never would have done without the permission or the authority of their Lord.
- c) His resurrection took place on the first day of the week
 - (1) 1 After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. (Matthew 28:1).
- d) After this, we never find Christ meeting with his disciples on the seventh day. But he specially honoured the first day by manifesting himself to them on four separate occasions - Mt 28:9 Lu 24:34,18-33 Joh 20:19-23
- e) Thus the Lord is seen instituting a new day to be observed by his people, a day to be known as the "Lord's day." The observance of this "Lord's day" as the Sabbath was the general custom of the early churches, and must have had apostolic sanction and authority, and so the sanction and authority of Jesus Christ.

- (1) 7 On the first day of the week we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight. (Acts 20:3-7).
 - (2) 1 Now about the collection for God's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. 2 On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made. (1Cor 16:1-2)
2. THE LORD'S DAY AS THE CHRISTIAN 'SABBATH'
- a) cf. Chariots of Fire
- B. SOME ATTEMPT TO KEEP IT AS UNDER THE OLD COVENANT
1. cf. 7th Day Adventists
 2. 1 You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. 2 I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard? 3 Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort? 4 Have you suffered so much for nothing--if it really was for nothing? 5 Does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you because you observe the law, or because you believe what you heard? (Galatians 3:1-5)
- C. THERE IS ROOM FOR SOME FLEXIBILITY RE. THESE THINGS
1. cf. Rom 14 - 5 One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. 6 He who regards one day as special, does so to the Lord. He who eats meat, eats to the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who abstains, does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God. (Romans 14:5-6)
 2. Key: The Mature will fulfill their convictions while not condemning others - The Weak [or Immature] are not at peace unless everyone else agrees with their particular convictions
 3. 16 Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. 17 These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ. (Colossians 2:16-17)

IV. *BUT* EVERYONE MUST KEEP THE SABBATH IN IT'S TRUE & PERFECT SENSE

1. KEY: Heb. 4: 1-13 - "1 Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. 2 For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it. 3 For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said: "So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest,'" although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. 4 For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way: "And God rested on the seventh day from all His works"; 5 and again in this place: "They shall not enter My rest." 6 Since therefore it remains that some must enter it, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience, 7 again He designates a certain day, saying in David, "Today," after such a long time, as it has been said: "Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts." 8 For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day. 9 There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. 10 For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His. 11 Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience. 12 For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. 13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account."

V. CONCLUSION/SUMMARY

- A. THE SABBATH WAS ESTABLISHED BY GOD TO COMMEMORATE HIS FINISHED WORK OF CREATION
- B. IT WAS MADE AN ABSOLUTE REQUIREMENT OF HIS COVENANT WITH HIS PEOPLE - TO FAIL TO OBSERVE IT WAS TO DIE
- C. OBSERVANCE OF IT CONSISTED OF...
 - 1. DO NOT - WORK, LABOR OR STRIVE
 - 2. DO - REST IN THE LORD
- D. AS 'LORD OF THE SABBATH' JESUS CAME TO FULFILL IT'S REQUIREMENTS AND REVEAL IT'S TRUTH
- E. UNLESS WE ENTER INTO HIS REST WE REMAIN DEAD IN OUR SINS
- F. THE RESPONSE?
 - 1. DO NOT - TRY TO WORK FOR SALVATION - CEASE FROM STRIVING
 - 2. DO - REST IN THE LORD - BY TRUSTING IN HIS FINISHED WORK
 - 3. REJOICE IN THE VICTORY CRY OF OUR SAVIOR - 'IT IS FINISHED!'

THE SPECIAL PURPOSE OF THE GARDEN

I. PLANTED BY GOD - 2:8-14

A. Describe, etc. ...

II. GIVEN TO MAN

A. WITH A COMMISSION - 2:15

1. **"Work it"** - lit. "labor or work which is directed at a specific purpose"

a) Work is essential for man

b) Prov. 12:11 - "He who works his land will have abundant food, but he who chases fantasies lacks judgment."

c) Prov. 14:23 - "All hard work brings a profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty."

2. **"Take care of it"** - lit. "to have charge of; look after; exercise care over" [to guard and care for]

B. WITH A COMMAND - 2:16-17

1. Enjoy what is Freely Given

2. Avoid what is Forbidden by God

III. THE BIRTHPLACE OF WOMAN - 2:18

A. MAN NEEDED HELP - vs. 19-20

B. GOD CREATED WOMAN - vs. 21-22

1. cf. humorous views

2. "helper" - lit. "assistant" - assistant to what?

3. The woman was given to the man to assist him in fulfilling his commission.

4. They both shared the same purpose - TO WORK AND TAKE CARE OF THE GARDEN

C. MAN WAS "SPEECHLESS" - vs. 23

D. GOD'S PLAN WAS PERFECT - vs. 24-25

IV. THE SPECIAL PURPOSE REVEALED BY THE GARDEN

A. IT WAS THE PLACE OF FELLOWSHIP

1. note: Gen. 3:8 - "Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as He was walking in the garden in the cool of the day..."

a) The Heb. indicates that this was the common, usual occurrence

2. This was the normal time and place of Fellowship

B. THEY WERE GIVEN THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR GUARDING AND CARING FOR THEIR PLACE OF FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD

1. WE HAVE THE SAME RESPONSIBILITY TODAY!

CHERUBIM

Gen. 3:24 - "So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life."

Rev 4:6-8 ⁶ ...And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back. ⁷ The first living creature was like a lion, the second living creature like a calf, the third living creature had a face like a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle. ⁸ The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!"

I. WHAT ARE THEY?

A. THEY ARE ANGELIC BEINGS - CHERUBIM/SERAPHIM

1. *Isa. 6:1-4* - "In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of His robe filled the temple. 2 Above Him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. 3 And they were calling to one another: 'Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of His glory.' 4 At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke."

2. *Eze. 1:1,4-28* - "In the thirtieth year, in the fourth month on the fifth day, while I was among the exiles by the Kebar River, the heavens were opened and I was visions of God. " ... "I looked, and I was a windstorm coming out of the north - an immense cloud with flashing lightning and surrounded by brilliant light. The center of the fire looked like glowing metal, 5 and in the fire was what looked like four living creatures. In appearance their form was that of a man, 6 but each of them had four faces and four wings. 7 Their legs were straight; their feet were like those of a calf and gleamed like burnished bronze. 8 Under their wings on their four sides they had the hands of a man. All four of them had faces and wings, 9 and their wings touched one another. Each one went straight ahead; they did not turn as they moved. 10 Their faces looked like this: Each of the four had the face of a man, and on the right side each had the face of a lion, and on the left the face of an ox; each also had the face of an eagle. 11 Such were their faces. Their wings were spread out upward; each had two wings, one touching the wing of another creature on either side, and two wings covering its body. 12 Each one went straight ahead. Wherever the spirit would go, they would go, without turning as they went. 13 The appearance of the living creatures was like burning coals of fire or like torches. Fire moved back and forth among the creatures; it was bright, and lightning flashed out of it. 14 The creatures sped back and forth like flashes of lightning. 15 As I looked at the living creatures, I saw a wheel on the ground beside each creature with its four faces. 16 This was the appearance and structure of the wheels: They sparkled like chrysolite, and all four looked alike. Each appeared to be made like a wheel intersecting a wheel. 17 As they moved, they would go in any one of the four directions the creature faced; the wheels did not turn about as the creatures went. 18 Their rims were high and awesome, and all four rims were full of eyes all around. 19 When the living creatures moved, the wheels beside them moved; and when the living creatures rose from the ground, the wheels also rose. 20 Wherever the spirit would go, they would go, and the wheels would rise along with them, because the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels.. 21 When the creatures moved, they also moved; when the creatures stood still, they also stood still; and when the creatures rose from the ground, the wheels rose along with them, because the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels. 22 Spread out above the heads of the living creatures was what looked like an expanse, sparkling like ice, and awesome. 23 Under the expanse their wings were stretched out one toward the other, and each had two wings covering its body. 24 When the creatures moved, I heard the sound of their wings, like the roar of rushing waters, like the voice of the Almighty, like the tumult of an army. When they stood still, they lowered their wings. 25 Then there came a voice from above the expanse over their heads as they stood with lowered wings. 26 Above the expanse over their heads was what looked like a throne of sapphire, and high above on the throne was a figure like that of a man. 27 I saw that from what appeared to be his waist up he looked like glowing metal, as if full of fire, and that from there down he looked like fire; and brilliant light surrounded him. 28 Like the appearance of a rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the radiance around him. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. When I saw it, I fell facedown, and I heard the voice of one speaking."

II. WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THEM?

A. THEY ARE ASSOCIATED WITH THE THRONE AND PRESENCE OF GOD

1. Ps. 99:1 - "The LORD reigns, let the nations tremble; He sits enthroned between the cherubim, let the earth shake."
a) Ps. 80:1, Isa. 37:16, 2Sam. 6:2, 2Kings 19:15, 1Chron. 13:6
2. Gen. 3:24 - "24After He drove the man out, He placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life."
3. Gen. 4:3-4 - "In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the LORD. 4But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering,"
4. Nu. 7:89 - "When Moses entered the Tent of Meeting to speak with the LORD, he heard the voice speaking to him from between the two cherubim above the atonement cover on the ark of the Testimony. And He spoke with him."

B. THEY ARE ASSOCIATED WITH THE TABERNACLE AND TEMPLE OF GOD.

1. Ex. 25:17- "17Make an atonement cover [mercy seat] of pure gold - two and a half cubits long and a cubit and a half wide. 18And make two cherubim out of hammered gold at the ends of the cover. 19Make one cherub on one end and the second cherub on the other; make the cherubim of one piece with the cover, at the two ends. 20The cherubim are to have their wings spread upward, overshadowing the cover with them, The cherubim are to face each other, looking toward the cover. 21Place the cover on top of the ark and put in the ark the Testimony, which I will give you. 22There, above the cover between the two cherubim that are over the ark of the Testimony, I will meet with you and give you all My commands for the Israelites."
a) Ex. 26:1 - "Make the tabernacle with ten curtains of finely twisted linen and blue, purple and scarlet yarn, with cherubim worked into them by a skilled craftsman." Ex. 37:6-9
b) Ex. 36:8,35
2. 1Kings 6:23-35 - "23In the inner sanctuary [Most Holy Place of Solomon's Temple] he made a pair of cherubim of olive wood, each ten cubits high. 24One wing of the first cherub was five cubits long, and the other wing five cubits long - ten cubits from wing tip to wing tip. 25The second cherub also measured ten cubits, for the two cherubim were identical in size and shape. 26The height of each cherub was ten cubits. 27He placed the cherubim inside the innermost room of the temple, with their wings spread out. The wing of one cherub touched one wall, while the wing of the other touched the other wall, and their wings touched each other in the middle of the room. 28He overlaid the cherubim with gold.
a) 29On the walls all around the temple, in both the inner and outer rooms, he carved cherubim, palm trees and open flowers. 30He also covered the floors of both the inner and outer rooms of the temple with gold.
b) 31For the entrance of the inner sanctuary he made doors of olive wood with five-sided jambs. 32And on the two olive wood doors he carved cherubim, palm trees and open flowers, and overlaid the cherubim and palm trees with beaten gold. 33In the same way he made four-sided jambs of olive wood for the entrance to the main hall. 34He also made two pine doors, each having two leaves that turned in sockets. 35He carved cherubim, palm trees and open flowers on them and overlaid them with gold hammered evenly over the carvings."
c) 1Kings 8:6-7
d) 2Chron. 5:7-10
(1) 1Kings 7:29 - "On the panels [of the ten movable stands of bronze] between the uprights were lions, bulls and cherubim - and on the uprights as well. Above and below the lions and bulls were wreaths of hammered work."
e) 2Chron. 3:7-14 - "14He made the curtain [to the Most Holy Place] of blue, purple and crimson yarn and fine linen, with cherubim worked into it."
3. Eze. 41:18-20 - "17In the space above the outside of the entrance to the inner sanctuary [Most Holy Place of Ezekiel's Temple] and on the walls at regular intervals all around the inner and outer sanctuary 18were carved cherubim and palm trees. Palm trees alternated with cherubim. Each cherub had two faces: 19The face of a man toward the palm tree on one side and the face of a lion toward the palm tree on the other. They were carved all around the whole temple. 20From the floor to the area above the entrance, cherubim and palm trees were carved on the wall of the outer sanctuary."

C.THEY HAVE A "SKELETON IN THE CLOSET" - LUCIFER

1.Eze. 28:12-19 - You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. - "12'Son of man, take up a lament concerning the king of Tyre and say to him: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: 'You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. 13You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone adorned you; ruby, topaz and emerald, chrysolite, onyx and jasper, sapphire, turquoise and beryl. Your settings and mountings were made of gold; on the day you were created they were prepared. 14You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones. 15You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you. 16Through your widespread trade you were filled with violence, and you sinned. So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you, O guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones. 17Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor. So I threw you to the earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings. 18By your many sins and dishonest trade you have desecrated your sanctuaries. So I made a fire come out from you, and it consumed you, and I reduced you to ashes on the ground in the sight of all who were watching. 19All the nations who knew you are appalled at you; you have come to a horrible end and will be no more.'"

a)cf. Isa. 14:12-17 - "12How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! 13You said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. 14I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.' 15But you are brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit. 16Those who see you stare at you, they ponder your fate: 'Is this the man who shook the earth and made kingdoms tremble, 17the man who made the world a desert, who overthrew its cities and would not let his captives go home?'"

D.THEY ARE ASSOCIATED WITH THE JUDGEMENTS AND ACTIONS OF GOD

1.Ps. 18:10 - "6In my distress I called to the LORD; I cried to my God for help. From His temple He heard my voice; my cry came before Him, into His ears. 7The earth trembled and quaked, and the foundations of the mountains shook; they trembled because He was angry. 8Smoke rose from His nostrils; consuming fire came from His mouth, burning coals blazed out of it. 9He parted the heavens and came down; dark clouds were under His feet. 10He mounted the cherubim and flew; He soared on the wings of the wind."

2.Rev. 6:1-8 - "I watched as the Lamb opened the first of the seven seals. Then I heard one of the four living creatures say in a voice like thunder, 'Come!' 2I looked, and there before me was a white horse! Its rider held a bow, and he was given a crown, and he rode out as a conqueror bent on conquest." ... etc. for the four living creatures and the four horses.

3.Rev. 15:6-7 - "6Out of the temple came the seven angels with the seven plagues. They were dressed in clean, shinning linen and wore golden sashes around their chests. 7Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls filled with the wrath of God, who lives for ever and ever."

E.THEY INITIATE AND ARE INVOLVED IN HEAVENLY WORSHIP OF GOD.

1.Rev. 4&5; 7:11; 14:3; 19:4,

III. WHAT DO THEY REPRESENT?

A. REPRESENTATIVES OF CHRIST IN THE FOUR GOSPELS?

1. As the Lion - He is the Lion of the tribe of Judah, represented as the King of Matthew
2. As the Ox - He is the Servant of Jehovah, the faithful One of Mark.
3. As Man - He is the human Jesus, presented in Luke
4. As the Eagle - He is the divine Son of God presented in John

B. REPRESENTATIVES OF ALL OF EARTHLY CREATION

C. REPRESENTATIVES OF THE TRIBES OF ISRAEL

1. Rabbinical writers declared that the standards under which the four sets of three tribes gathered around the four sides of the tabernacle were:
 - a) Lion = Judah
 - b) Ox = Ephraim
 - c) Man = Reuban
 - d) Dan = Eagle
2. cf. Num. 2:2

D. REPRESENTATIVE OF THE CHARACTER OF GOD - i.e. "covered with eyes" = all-seeing

E. THE CHARIOT-THRONE OF GOD?

1. 11 He mounted the cherubim and flew; he soared on the wings of the wind. (2 Samuel 22:11).
2. 1Chron. 28:18 - "... He [David] also gave him [Solomon] the plan for the chariot, that is, the cherubim of gold that spread their wings and shelter the ark of the covenant of the LORD."
3. Ps. 18:10 - "6In my distress I called to the LORD; I cried to my God for help. From His temple He heard my voice; my cry came before Him, into His ears. 7The earth trembled and quaked, and the foundations of the mountains shook; they trembled because He was angry. 8Smoke rose from His nostrils; consuming fire came from His mouth, burning coals blazed out of it. 9He parted the heavens and came down; dark clouds were under His feet. 10He mounted the cherubim and flew; He soared on the wings of the wind."

ACHAN'S SIN

Joshua 7:1 - "But the Israelites acted unfaithfully in regard to the devoted things; Achan son of Carmi, the son of Zimri, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took some of them. So the Lord's anger burned against Israel."

- ◇ THE DEVELOPMENT OF HIS SIN - 7:21 - "When I saw in the plunder a beautiful robe from Babylonia, two hundred shekels of silver and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them. They are hidden in the ground inside my tent, with the silver underneath."
 - ◇ He Saw - He Coveted - He Took
 - ◇ James 1: 14-15 - "14 each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. 15 Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death."
- ◇ THE DELAY OF HIS CONFESSION: He didn't Confess until he was Caught
 - ◇ When we've given way to sin it blinds us to truth and whispers lies - "Just stay quiet. Hold on to your pleasure. No one will know. You'll be ok. Besides, it's too late anyway. ..."
 - ◇ "The trouble with a little sin is that it won't stay little."
 - ◇ That's what's going on in lives today.
- ◇ THE SAD COST OF HIS IMPATIENCE
 - ◇ If Achan would have waited, his patience would have been rewarded.
 - ◇ [cf. 8:2] - "You shall do to Ai and its king as you did to Jericho and its king, except that you may carry off their plunder and livestock for yourselves."
 - ◇ What's Cursed by Sinful Impatience - Enjoyed through Simple Patience.
 - ◇ Note: God often calls us to give something up - then, as we yield, gives it back.

INTRO: THE EFFECTS OF SIN - Achan's sin in the midst of Israel is a picture of the effects of sin in our lives...

I. SIN REMOVES SPIRITUAL VITALITY

- A. SUMMARY: We become Spiritually Apathetic, hiding behind a wall of Prideful Presumption, when the real problem is we're not in Fellowship with the Lord.
- B. WE BECOME SPIRITUALLY APATHETIC - "do not weary all the people"
 1. Israel went into battle with only a few men = apathetic, half-hearted effort.
 2. We must resist the lazy, spiritual apathy of the Flesh - as well as its sinful 'flare-ups'
 3. We must also learn to say 'No!' selectively. We too often let pressure build up until we say 'No!' to everything. That is unhealthy and leaves us open to greater enslavement to the flesh through unwise idleness. cf. 1Thess. 5:14, 2Thess. 3:6-15, Ecc. 10:18, cf. also 1Tim. re. widows
 - a) Ecc 10:18 - "If a man is lazy, the rafters sag; if his hands are idle, the house leaks."
 - b) 2Thess. 3:6-13 - "6 In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers, to keep away from every brother who is idle and does not live according to the teaching you received from us. ... 11 We hear that some among you are idle. They are not busy; they are busybodies. 12 Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the bread they eat. 13 And as for you, brothers, never tire of doing what is right."
- C. WE HIDE OUR APATHY BEHIND PRIDEFUL PRESUMPTION - "Not all the people will have to go up ... only a few men are there." ['we'll take it easily']
 1. We convince ourselves we can 'get by' with minimum effort.
 2. The problem isn't whether or not we can do enough to 'get by' - it's that our standards are 'get by standards'. A dull and mediocre life may reflect your standards. You've chosen the realm of the mediocre, the empty lot bounded by the limits of the flesh, rather than the adventurous trails explored by faith.
 3. What would happen if you chose to commit yourself wholly to something?

D. THE REAL PROBLEM: NO FELLOWSHIP WITH THE LORD

1. There's no record of specific communication or counsel with the LORD, the True Commander.
2. Sin hinders our fellowship with God
3. Lack of fellowship with the Lord leads to spiritual apathy and prideful presumption.
 - a) Note: Presumption lends itself to this. We presume, based on past communication, that we know God's will, thus act in presumption.
 - (1) cf. our 'Principle of Assuming'
4. What do we do? - Confession, Supplication for forgiveness, Petition for Mercy upon self and others, Request help for my repentance to bear fruit: correction in this area in the future. And show me if there's sin some where that needs dealing with.

E. WHY IS THIS AN AREA OF CONTINUAL FAILING? Because...

1. The flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit... Gal. 5
2. We don't have a handle on why prayer is important. i.e. If God is sovereign, He'll do what He's going to do anyway, so what's the motivation for prayer?
 - a) The issue of just how much our prayers effect the sovereign work and will of God is one that will not be finally resolved until we reach Heaven and get to see the 'complete, unedited replays'. However, Scripture makes it clear that intercession is very real participation in the Workings of God.
 - b) One factor which we often overlook is: Prayer Definitely Effects Us!
 - (1) Our prayer-life effects how we view God's Sovereign Purposes.
 - (2) Our prayer-life effects how we respond to God's Sovereign Purposes.
 - (3) Our prayer-life effects where we fit into God's Sovereign Purposes.
 - (4) Our prayer-life effects the choices we make and their consequences .
 - c) This prayer is not for the purpose of moving God - but being moved by Him.
 - (1) Leonard Ravenhill: "Prayer is not an argument with God to persuade Him to move things our way, but an exercise by which we are enabled by His Spirit to move ourselves His way."
 - (2) "Prayer is not conquering God's reluctance but laying hold of His Willingness."

II. SIN REMOVES SPIRITUAL VICTORY

A. DEFEAT - 7:3 - "three thousand men went up; but they were routed by the men of Ai."

1. Sin makes us liable to destruction: Joshua warned them before taking Jericho - 6:18 - "But keep away from the devoted things, so that you will not bring about your own destruction by taking any of them. Otherwise you will make the camp of Israel liable to destruction and bring trouble on it."
2. Sin catches us like Delilah caught Sampson - Judges 16:19-20 - "19 Having put him to sleep on her lap, [Delilah] called a man to shave off the seven braids of his hair, and so began to subdue him. And his strength left him. 20 Then she called, "Samson, the Philistines are upon you!" He awoke from his sleep and thought, "I'll go out as before and myself free." But he did not know that the Lord had left him."

B. DISCOURAGEMENT

1. For The People - 7:5b - "... the hearts of the people melted and became like water."
2. For Their Leaders - 7:6-8 - "6 Then Joshua tore his clothes and fell facedown to the ground before the ark of the Lord, remaining there till evening. The elders of Israel did the same, and sprinkled dust on their heads. 7 And Joshua said, "Ah, Sovereign Lord, why did you ever bring this people across the Jordan to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites to destroy us? If only we had been content to stay on the other side of the Jordan! 8 O Lord, what can I say, now that Israel has been routed by its enemies?"
3. Sin in the flock is discouraging to pastors and sin in pastors to the flock.

C. DISGRACE - 7:9a - "The Canaanites and the other people of the country will hear about this and they will surround us and wipe out our name from the earth."

D. DISCREDITING TO THE NAME OF THE LORD - 7:9b - "...What then will You do for Your Own Great Name?"

III. THEREFORE SIN MUST BE REMOVED

- A. The LORD's Response to Joshua Shows us What Needs to be done
- B. BY DIRECT EXHORTATION - 7:10 - "The LORD said to Joshua, 'Stand up! What are you doing down on your face?'"
 - 1. There are times when we need the direct approach - A Father's Rebuke!
 - 2. There are many here who need to hear this from the LORD!
- C. BY DEFINITE EXPLANATION - 7:11-12a - "11 Israel has sinned; they have violated My covenant, which I commanded them to keep. They have taken some of the devoted things; they have stolen, they have lied, they have put them with their own possession. 12 That is why the Israelites cannot stand against their enemies; they turn their backs and run because they have been made liable to destruction."
 - 1. Many are missing this aspect of correction because, they're accepting Deceptive Excuses of the World instead of Direct Explanation of God's Word.
- D. BY DECISIVE CHOICE - 7:12b-13 - "12... I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy whatever among you is devoted to destruction. 13 Go, consecrate the people. Tell them, 'Consecrate yourselves in preparation for tomorrow; for this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: That which is devoted is among you, O Israel. You cannot stand against your enemies until you remove it.'"
 - 1. As long as we can avoid coming face-to-face with the worst consequence of our sin - God's desertion of us - we'll continue in a state of sinful backsliding.
- E. BY DIVINE HELP - 7:14-15 - "14 In the morning, present yourselves tribe by tribe. The tribe that the Lord takes shall come forward clan by clan; the clan that the Lord takes shall come forward family by family; and the family that the Lord takes shall come forward man by man. 15 He who is caught with the devoted things shall be destroyed by fire, along with all that belongs to him. He has violated the covenant of the Lord and has done a disgraceful thing in Israel!"
 - 1. The LORD would help them discover the problem.
 - 2. He will give us the spiritual discernment we need as well.

IV. THEN COMES THE VICTORY OF NEW CONSECRATION

- A. 8:1-3a - "1 then the LORD said to Joshua, 'Do not be afraid: do not be discouraged. Take the whole army with you, and go up and attack Ai. For I have delivered into your hands the king of Ai, his people, his city and his land. 2 You shall do to Ai and its king as you did to Jericho and its king, except that you may carry off their plunder and livestock for yourselves. Set an ambush behind the city.' 3 So Joshua and the whole army moved out to attack Ai. ..."
- B. THE BLESSINGS OF THE LORD
 - 1. ENCOURAGEMENT - "1 then the LORD said to Joshua, 'Do not be afraid: do not be discouraged. Take the whole army with you, and go up and attack Ai.'"
 - 2. PROMISE - "I have delivered into your hands the king of Ai, his people, his city and his land."
 - 3. PROFIT - "you may carry off their plunder and livestock for yourselves."
- C. GUIDANCE - "Take the whole army with you, and go up and attack Ai. ... Set an ambush behind the city."
- D. THE WHOLE-HEARTED EFFORT OF GOD'S PEOPLE - "So Joshua and the whole army moved out to attack Ai. ..."
 - 1. A Newly-Consecrated People are a Mighty Conquering People
 - 2. The Half-hearted walk of sin gave way to the whole-hearted joy of Revival

V. CONCLUSION:

- A. We all have areas of sin we battle with - that's normal. But there are some specific areas of sin in our lives that we must face. We're battling the Conviction of the Spirit more than the Corruption of the Flesh and it's time to choose and act. It's time to step out in faith, face your carnal Canaanites in battle, and take possession of your victory in Jesus.

- B. Heb. 12:1-2 - *"1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. 2 Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."*

SIN

"16 He then said to me: "Son of man, I will cut off the supply of food in Jerusalem. The people will eat rationed food in anxiety and drink rationed water in despair, 17 for food and water will be scarce. They will be appalled at the sight of each other and will waste away because of their sin." Ezekiel 4:16-17

· INTRODUCTION: "Because of their sin..."

I. THE CRIME OF SIN [What Is Sin?]

A. MISSING THE MARK

1. Heb. 'a missing' / Grk. 'a missing the mark'
2. Transgression, Perversion, Evil, Impiety, Unrighteousness, Lawlessness, Depravity, Lust, Rebellion, Iniquity

B. BREAKING THE LAW

1. "Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness." (1 Jn 3:4)
2. 1Jo 5:17 - "All wrongdoing is sin ..."

C. SINS OF OMISSION AS WELL AS OF COMMISSION

1. Jas 4:17 Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins.
2. Nu 32:23 "But if you fail to do this, you will be sinning against the LORD; and you may be sure that your sin will find you out.

D. ACTING APART FROM FAITH

1. "... everything that does not come from faith is sin. (Romans 14:23)
2. ISBE - Sin is "unbelief, the centering of the self upon something or someone, less than God Himself. Sin is any attitude of indifference, unbelief, or disobedience to the will of God revealed in conscience, law, or gospel - whether this attitude express itself in thought, word, deed, or settled disposition and conduct."
 - a) THE SOURCE OF SIN - SATAN - Gen.3

II. THE CONSEQUENCES OF SIN [What did it produce?]

A. SEPARATION FROM GOD

1. "Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. (Genesis 3:8)
2. Why are so many people looking for God? Because they are separated from Him. Unfortunately, most think He's the one who is hiding, but the truth is our sins have separated us from Him.
3. "1 Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. 2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear. (Isaiah 59:1-2)

B. A CURSE UPON CREATION

1. 17 To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,' "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. 18 It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. " (Genesis 3:17-19)
2. 20 For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. (Romans 8:20-21)

C. THE PROCESS OF 'NATURAL' DEATH

1. Gen. 3:19 - "By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return."
2. "Altogether, Adam lived 930 years, and then he died." (Genesis 5:5)

D. THE '2ND DEATH'

1. "13 The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. 14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death" - (Revelation 20:13-14)
2. Sin, indeed, is hell, hell in embryo, hell in essence, hell kindling, hell emerging from the shell. Hell is but sin when it has manifested and developed itself to the full.

III. THE CHARACTER OF SIN

A. PERVASIVE

1. 19 The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; 20 idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions 21 and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. (Gal 5:19-21)

B. DECEITFUL

1. Heb 3:13 - "...Encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness."

C. DANGEROUS

1. "... if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it." (Gen 4:7)

IV. THE COURSE OF SIN

- A. DEATH • MOURNING • CRYING • PAIN - "3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 4 He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." (Revelation 21:3-4)

1. Every process that brings Death is ultimately rooted in Sin - cancer, virus, disease, famine, act of violence, war, ...
2. Every loss that is Mourned is a testimony of Sin and the separation it inevitably produces - Separation from God, from others, from our closest loved ones.
3. Each Cry and every Pain...

V. THE CONDITION OF SINNERS

A. SICK

1. "... sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned--" (Rom 5:12)
2. "Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me." (Psalms 51:5)
3. Original sin is in us, like the beard. We are shaved today and look clean, and have a smooth chin; tomorrow our beard has grown again, nor does it cease growing while we remain on earth. In like manner original sin cannot be extirpated from us; it springs up in us as long as we live. - Luther
4. A correspondent of the London Times quite a while back, researching and reporting on many of the same problems we now have, ended every article with this statement: "What's wrong with the world?" G. K. Chesterton once wrote a famous reply: Dear editor: What's wrong with the world? I am. Faithfully yours, G. K. Chesterton. At the base of most of the world's problems is the sinfulness of man.
5. Sin drives men mad. Against their reason, against their best interests, they follow after that which they know will destroy them. They are slaves, though they wear no fetters of iron; captives, though no walls enclose them. The magic arts of evil have taken them in a net and wrapped them about with invisible bonds, from which they cannot escape. * "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin."

B. SELF-CENTERED

1. "Sin is believing the lie that you are self-created, self-dependent, and self-sustained" (Augustine).
2. 1 But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. 2 People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, 4 treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God-- 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them. (2 Tim 3:1-5)
3. cf. The Transforming of Family - from Selfishness - to Servanthood

C. IGNORANT

1. 2Co 4:4 - "The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."

D. NON-SPIRITUAL

1. "The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned." (1 Cor 2:14)
2. "He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work." (1 John 3:8)

VI. THE CURE FOR SIN - JESUS

1. Isa 1:18 - "Come now, let us reason together," says the LORD. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.

B. HE CAME TO TAKE AWAY OUR SINS

1. 4 Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness. 5 But you know that He [Jesus] appeared so that He might take away our sins. And in Him is no sin. (1 John 3:4-5)
2. "9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives. 1 My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defence--Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. 2 He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world. (1 John 1:8-2:2)
3. The simplest word of faith is the deepest word of theology: Christ died for our sins.

C. WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? WASH AWAY YOUR SINS?

1. Calvary shows how far men will go in sin, and how far God will go for man's salvation.

VII. THE CHALLENGE FOR SAINTS

A. STRUGGLE AGAINST SIN

1. 3 Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. 4 In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. (Hebrews 12:3-4)

B. RESIST TEMPTATION

1. "Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart." (2 Timothy 2:22)

C. RECOGNIZE THE REALITY OF SIN

1. 1Jn. 1:8 - "If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us."

D. CONFESS AND REPENT OF SIN

1. "He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy." (Proverbs 28:13)
2. Confessing sin is not informing God, it is agreeing with him.

E. CAST YOURSELF UPON THE MERCY OF GOD

1. "But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.'" (Luke 18:13)
2. When men begin to complain more of their sins than of their afflictions then there begins to be some hope of them.

F. KEEP GROWING IN FAITH, SERVICE [GOOD WORKS], AND SIMPLE DEPENDENCE

1. 3 His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. 4 Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. 5 For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; 6 and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; 7 and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. 8 For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 1:3-8).
2. 17 Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position. 18 But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever! Amen. (2 Peter 3:17-18)

G. WORSHIP WITH A FERVENT DESIRE TO BE FILLED WITH A FRESH ENABLING OF GOD'S SPIRIT AS YOU SINCERELY PRESENT YOUR HEARTS AND LIVES TO HIM.

1. Don't just *do* Worship, or even just *enjoy* Worship - *GIVE* WORSHIP - Spiritual Worship...
2. It is perhaps the greatest sin of the greatest number of Christians that in so many details of life they put God second.
3. "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship." (Romans 12:1)

H. PRAYER

◇ MISCL QUOTES

- ◇ Sin will keep you from this book, or this book will keep you from sin.
- ◇ God's wounds cure; sin's kisses kill.
- ◇ A church is a hospital for sinners, not a museum for saints.
- ◇ It is impossible to compromise with sin and conquer it at the same time.
- ◇ Order my footsteps by thy Word,/And make my heart sincere;/Let sin have no dominion, Lord,/But keep my conscience clear.
- ◇ This one event of the cross of Christ is a final revelation both of the character and consequence of human sin and of the wonder and sacrifice of divine love.
- ◇ You should no more allow sinful imaginations to accumulate in your mind and soul than you would allow garbage to collect in your living-room.
- ◇ A flippant youth asked a preacher, "You say that unsaved people carry a weight of sin. I feel nothing. How heavy is sin? Is it ten pounds? Eighty pounds?" The preacher replied by asking the youth, "If you laid a four-hundred-pound weight on a corpse, would it feel the load?" The youth replied, "It would feel nothing, because it is dead." The preacher concluded, "That spirit, too, is indeed dead which feels no load of sin or is indifferent to its burden and flippant about its presence." The youth was silenced.
- ◇ A college freshman went to the dorm laundry room with his dirty clothes bundled into an old sweatshirt. But he was so embarrassed by how dirty his clothes were that he never opened the bundle. He merely pushed it into a washing machine and when the machine stopped pushed the bundle into a dryer and finally took the still-unopened bundle back to his room. He discovered, of course, that the clothes had gotten wet and then dry, but not clean. God says, "Don't keep your sins in a safe little bundle. I want to do a thorough cleansing in your life all the dirty laundry of your life."
- ◇ The St. Petersburg Times once carried a news item about a hungry thief who grabbed some sausages in a meat market, only to find they were part of a string fifteen feet long. Tripping over them, he was hindered in his getaway and the police found him collapsed in a tangle of fresh sausages. So it is with sin: we always come away with more of it than we expected, and it tends to entangle us until it brings us down.
- ◇ The sin which Christ came to heal is not something on the skin, or a mere matter of custom or habit. The venom of sin is in the very fountain of our being; it has poisoned our heart. It is in the very marrow of our bones and is as natural to us as anything that belongs to us. You might even tear the man in pieces, but you could not tear his sin from him.

3 FACTS ABOUT SIN

"But if you fail to do this, you will be sinning against the LORD; and you may be sure that your sin will find you out."

Num. 32:23

◇ **INTRO: BACKGROUND: / FOCUS:**

◇ Israel at the border once again - tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh ask for the land east of Jordan - "Do not make us cross the Jordan" - Moses' reaction - their proposal - Moses' acceptance and warning - 32:23

◇ **FOCUS:** In the charge of Moses to the 2 1/2 Tribes are found Three Facts About Sin that help clear up some common misconceptions we have of sin. cf. Sin is major issue in any true understanding of reality...

I. FAILING TO DO THE RIGHT THING IS SIN - "But if you fail to do this you will be sinning..."

A. WE OFTEN THINK OF SIN ONLY AS A MATTER OF DOING THE WRONG THING

1. LIKE PHARISEES, WE STRIVE TO BUILD A MORALITY BASED ON NOT DOING THE "BAD THINGS"

B. BUT SIN IS ALSO A MATTER OF THE "GOOD THINGS" THAT WE DO NOT DO!

1. Jas. 4:17 - "Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins."

C. AVOIDING EVIL IS JUST THE BEGINNING - "clearing out the land" - Removing Offenses

D. PLEASING THE LORD IS THE CONTINUATION - "building the house" - Cultivating Obedience

E. THE ESSENCE OF WALK w/JESUS CONSISTS IN THINGS WE DO

1. What we do says more about us than what we do not do

a) cf. the testimony re. Jesus - Acts 10:37-38 - "You know what has happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached - how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how He went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with Him."

(1) cf. Jesus vs Pharisees in Mk.7

II. ALL SIN IS AGAINST THE LORD - "But if you fail to do this, you will be sinning against the LORD..."

A. WE TEND TO SEE SIN ONLY 'HORIZONTALLY'

B. THIS LEADS TO COMPARING SINS

1. We establish "categories" - "bad, badder, baddest, absolute worst"

2. or We "counter-balance" our sins with other's blame or guilt

C. SIN IS FAILURE TO KEEP GOD'S REQUIREMENTS

1. Covet? Lie? Murder? Sexual Immorality? Steal? Idolatry [greed]? - Do you love the LORD with all your heart, mind, soul, & strength?

2. God requires perfection - not just absence of evil but positive righteousness

a) Matt 5 - "You must be perfect even as your Father in Heaven is perfect."

b) John 14 - The Holy Spirit convicts the world concerning sin because Jesus goes to the Father. Jesus is God's acceptable standard!

D. ALL SIN IS ULTIMATELY AGAINST GOD

1. cf. Joseph - Gen.39:6b-10 - "Now Joseph was well-built and handsome, and after a while his master's wife took notice of Joseph and said, 'Come to bed with me!' But he refused. ... How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?' And though she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her or even be with her."

2. cf. David - Ps. 51:4 - "Against Thee, and Thee only have I sinned..."

3. Since all sins have been laid on Jesus, they are ultimately against Him.

III. WE CANNOT HIDE FROM OUR SINS - "...and you may be sure that your sin will find you out."

A. FIRST WE TRY TO HIDE FROM OUR SIN

1. We 'gloss' over them with new labels.
 - a) People are no longer 'sinful' - they're 'underprivileged', or 'immature', or 'crazy'...
2. But We Cannot Hide From Our Sin
 - a) "My guilt has overwhelmed me like a burden too heavy to bear." -Ps. 38:4
 - b) Manifestations: guilt complexes, fetishes, neurosis, 'psychological' problems...
 - c) cf. D. Webster - "The guilty soul cannot keep its own secret. It is false to itself, or rather it feels an irresistible impulse to be true to itself. It labors under its guilty possession, and knows not what to do with it. The human heart was not made for the residence of such an inhabitant. It finds itself preyed on by a torment, which it does not acknowledge to God or man. A vulture is devouring it, and it can ask no sympathy or assistance, either from heaven or earth. The secret the sinner possesses, soon comes to possess him; and like the evil spirits of which we read, it overcomes him, and leads him whithersoever it will. He feels it beating at his heart, rising to his throat, and demanding disclosure. He thinks the whole world sees it in his face, reads it in his eyes, and almost hears its workings in the very silence of his thoughts. It has become his master. It betrays his discretion, it breaks down his courage, it conquers his prudence. When suspicions from without, begin to embarrass him, and the net of circumstance to entangle him, the fatal secret struggles with still greater violence to burst forth. It must be confessed, it will be confessed...
 - (1) , there is no refuge from confession but suicide, and suicide is confession."
 - d) Ps. 32:1-5

B. THEN WE TRY TO HIDE OUR SINS FROM OTHERS - But we're rarely as successful as we think.

1. We commit secret sins in secret places to keep them wrapped in plain brown paper.
 - a) cf. the Congress bad-checks scandal

C. WE THINK IF OTHERS DON'T NOTICE - NEITHER WILL GOD

1. cf. Ex.2:12 - Moses when he killed the Egyptian - "Glancing this way and that and seeing no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand."
2. He looked to the left and right, but not "up"

D. BUT WE'RE JUST DECEIVING OURSELVES

1. Jas. 1:22 - "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says."
2. 2Tim. 3:13 - "... evil men and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived."

E. NOTHING IS HIDDEN FROM GOD

1. Ps. 139:7 - "Where can I go from Your Spirit? Where can I flee from Your presence?"
2. cf. Those who think delayed judgement equals God's approval - Ps.50:16-21
3. Delayed judgement is just God's gift of time for us to repent.

IV. WHAT CAN WE DO? - "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."

A. WE ARE ACCOUNTABLE FOR THE GOOD WE DON'T DO AS WELL AS FOR THE WRONG WE DO

1. The wages of sin are death whether there's recession or inflation

B. NO MATTER WHAT WE DO - OUR SIN WILL FIND US OUT [or 'reveal itself' - 'be exposed']

C. EVERY SIN WE COMMIT IS ULTIMATELY AGAINST GOD

D. GOD IS OUR JUDGE - WE ARE AT HIS MERCY

1. Only He is perfect and just - thus able to judge justly

E. THE ONE WE HAVE OFFENDED IS THE ONE WHO WILL JUDGE US. WE ARE AT HIS MERCY

F. WHAT CAN WE DO? WE ARE IN AN IMPOSSIBLE POSITION

1. The One We Have Offended is the One Who Will Judge Us
2. cf Matt. 19:23-26 - "25 When the disciples heard this[rich man & heaven - camel & needle], they were greatly astonished and asked, "Who then can be saved?" 26 Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

G. BUT THERE IS GOOD NEWS! - GOD IS ALSO THE FORGIVER OF SINS

1. "He who falls into sin is a man; He who grieves at sin is a saint; He that boasts of sin is a devil; But He Who forgives sin is God!"

H. BETTER YET - HE'S NOT ONLY ABLE - HE IS WILLING!

1. Prov. 23:18 - "He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy."
2. 'Don't try to deal with sin, for you are sure to lose. Deal with Christ; let Him deal with your sin and you are sure to win.' - Arthur Elfstrand
3. Isa. 55:7 - "Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him, and to our God, for He will freely pardon."
 - a) cf. David's example - Ps.51:1-12,

"Here is a trustworthy saying, Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners..."

"Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered." Psalms 32:1

C O M P A R I S O N

of

THE CURSED WORLD vs. THE ETERNAL WORLD

CURSED WORLD [GENESIS]

ETERNAL WORLD [REVELATION]

SATAN TEMPTS [3:1]

SATAN BANISHED [20:10]

A REDEEMER PROMISED [3:15]

REDEMPTION ACCOMPLISHED [5:9-10]

THE GROUND CURSED [3:17]

NO MORE CURSE [22:3]

TEARS & PAINFUL TOIL [3:17]

NO MORE PAIN OR TEARS [22:4]

DEATH [3:19]

NO MORE DEATH [21:4]

COATS OF SKINS [3:21]

FINE LINEN, WHITE & CLEAN [19:14]

BANISHED FROM THE GARDEN [3:23]

WELCOMED INTO THE CITY [22:14]

KEPT FROM THE TREE OF LIFE [3:24]

ACCESS TO THE TREE OF LIFE [22:14]

CONTINUAL EVIL [6:5]

NOTHING IMPURE [21:27]

THE IDENTITY OF THE “TWO WITNESSES”

Rev.11:3-13

The "nominees" are...

I. ELIJAH

- A. cf. Jewish children look for Elijah every Passover
 - 1. Mal. 4:5-6 -5"See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes. 6He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse." [cf. Apocrapha - Ecclesiasticus 48:1-11]
- B. Similar Power - no rain -
 - 1. James 5:17 - "Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years."
 - a) 1Kg. 17:1 - Now Elijah the Tishbite, from Tishbe [Or Tishbite, of the settlers] in Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the Lord, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve, there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word."
- C. At Transfiguration [Law & Prophets] - Mt. 17:1-8 - Note: Law & Prophets fulfilled in Jesus
 - 1. 1After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. 2There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. 3Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus. 4Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters--one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." 5While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!" 6When the disciples heard this, they fell facedown to the ground, terrified. 7But Jesus came and touched them. "Get up," he said. "Don't be afraid." 8When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus.
- D. "Pre-death ascension"
- E. John the Baptist - Didn't he fulfill the prophecy about Elijah?
 - 1. Lk. 1:13,17 -13But the angel said to him: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to give him the name John. ... 17And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous--to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."
 - 2. Jn. 1:21-23 -21They asked him, "Then who are you? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" He answered, "No." 22Finally they said, "Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" 23John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, "I am the voice of one calling in the desert, 'Make straight the way for the Lord.'" [Isaiah 40:3]
 - 3. Mt. 11:13-15 -13For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John. 14And if you are willing to accept it, he is the Elijah who was to come. 15He who has ears, let him hear.
 - 4. Mt. 17:10-13 -10The disciples asked him, "Why then do the teachers of the law say that Elijah must come first?" 11Jesus replied, "To be sure, Elijah comes and will restore all things. 12But I tell you, Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but have done to him everything they wished. In the same way the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands." 13Then the disciples understood that he was talking to them about John the Baptist.

II. ENOCH

A. A Prophet of End Times

1. Jude 14-15 -14*Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: "See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones 15to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him."*

B. "Pre-death ascension" - Heb. 9:27, cf. 1Cor.15:51-52

1. Heb. 9:27 - "... man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment,"
2. 1Cor. 15:51-52 -51*Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed-- 52in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.*

III. MOSES

A. At Transfiguration [Law & Prophets] - Mt. 17:3

B. Similar Power - water to blood - Ex. 7:20 [and plagues]

1. Ex. 7:20-21 -20*Moses and Aaron did just as the Lord had commanded. He raised his staff in the presence of Pharaoh and his officials and struck the water of the Nile, and all the water was changed into blood. 21The fish in the Nile died, and the river smelled so bad that the Egyptians could not drink its water. Blood was everywhere in Egypt.*

C. His body has been "hidden" [in heaven]

1. Dt. 34:6 -*He [the LORD] buried him in Moab, in the valley opposite Beth Peor, but to this day no one knows where his grave is.*
2. Jude 9 -*But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"*

D. His chance to finally enter and minister in the Promised Land?

1. cf. Dt. 18:15,17-19 -15*The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him. ... 17The Lord said to me: "What they say is good. 18I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers; I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him. 19If anyone does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name, I myself will call him to account.*

IV. JOHN

- A. John 21:22-23 - 22 Jesus answered, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me." 23 Because of this, the rumour spread among the brothers that this disciple would not die. But Jesus did not say that he would not die; he only said, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?"

THE COVENANT OF COVENANTS

“Jehoiada then made a covenant that he and the people and the king would be the Lord's people.” - 2Chron. 23:16-17

INTRO: Bible is divided into O.T. and N.T. Testament = Covenant. The Law by Moses = Former Testament. Grace thru Jesus = New Testament... Today we take communion and celebrate the New Testament/ Covenant of Jesus - so it's good to consider covenants

I. JEHOIADA MADE A COVENANT

A. HE WAS A COURAGEOUS AND GODLY MAN

1. 2Chron. 24:15-16 - “15 Now Jehoiada was old and full of years, and he died at the age of a hundred and thirty. 16 He was buried with the kings in the City of David, because of the good he had done in Israel for God and his temple.”

B. HE WAS A COVENANT MAKER - v.1,3,16

1. 2Chron. 23:1-3 - “1 In the seventh year Jehoiada showed his strength. He made a covenant with the commanders of units of a hundred: Azariah son of Jeroham, Ishmael son of Jehohanan, Azariah son of Obed, Maaseiah son of Adaiah, and Elishaphat son of Zicri. 2 They went throughout Judah and gathered the Levites and the heads of Israelite families from all the towns. When they came to Jerusalem, 3 the whole assembly made a covenant with the king at the temple of God. Jehoiada said to them, “The king's son shall reign, as the Lord promised concerning the descendants of David.”

a) Covenant - “covenant” - Strong's reference number: 1285, Hebrew: beriyth, Derivation: Derived from 1262 - Definition: a compact

2. It takes a godly man to make a godly covenant

C. THE FOCUS OF HIS COVENANT

1. 2Chron. 23:16-17 - “16 Jehoiada then made a covenant that he and the people and the king would be the Lord's people.”

D. JEHOIADA'S COVENANT WAS MAINTAINED THROUGHOUT HIS LIFE

1. 2Chron. 24:14b - “...As long as Jehoiada lived, burnt offerings were presented continually in the temple of the Lord.”

a) A testimony to his godly influence and a challenge to us.

b) What is my influence? Am I using it for the Lord?

II. COVENANTS ARE IMPORTANT

A. They Are An Important Part of Life. Formal or Informal - agreements, contracts, understandings, etc.

B. THERE ARE DIFFERENT KINDS OF COVENANTS IN THE BIBLE

1. HUMAN

a) Positive: “And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself.” - 1Sam. 18:3

b) Negative: Laban & Jacob - Gen. 31:44-52

c) personal examples? - loan, job, marriage... How many do you have?

2. DIVINE

a) Conditional - “If...” - cf. Dt. 28:1-6, 15-19

(1) Based on Law / Dependent on Obedience - Focus: Performance

b) Unconditional - “I will...” - Abraham - Gen 12:1-3

(1) Based on Grace / Dependent on Faith - Focus: Promise

(2) David - 2Sam.7:8-9, 16

C. NOTE: WITHOUT THE LAW, GRACE WOULD BE EMPTY.

1. Gal. 3:24 - “So the Law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith.”

2. Rom. 11:32 - “For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that He may have mercy on them all.”

a) Rom. 10:4 - “Christ is the end of the Law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.”

III. **JESUS MADE THE COVENANT OF COVENANTS** - Lk. 22:20 - "In the same way, after the supper, He took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is poured out for you'."

A. A PROMISED COVENANT

1. Jer. 31:31-34 - "³¹ The time is coming," declares the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. ³² It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them," declares the Lord. ³³ "This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the Lord. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. ³⁴ No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the Lord. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

B. A SUPERIOR COVENANT

1. Heb. 8:6 - "But the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, and it is founded on better promises."
2. cf. Rom. 8:3-4 - "³ For what the Law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, ⁴ in order that the righteous requirements of the Law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit."
3. Heb. 7:23-27 - "²³ Now there have been many of those [Levitical] priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office; [After Jehoiada's Death, his Covenant Failed - 24:17ff] ²⁴ but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. ²⁵ Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them. ²⁶ Such a high priest meets our need--one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. ²⁷ Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself."
 - a) Heb. 10:11-18 - "¹¹ Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. ¹² But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God. ¹³ Since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool, ¹⁴ because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy. ¹⁵ The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. First he says: ¹⁶ "This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds." ¹⁷ Then he adds: "Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more." ¹⁸ And where these have been forgiven, there is no longer any sacrifice for sin."
 - b) Heb. 2:14-17 - "¹⁴ Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death--that is, the devil-- ¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. ¹⁶ For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants. ¹⁷ For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people."
 - (1) Heb. 6:13-20 - "¹³ When God made his promise to Abraham, since there was no one greater for him to swear by, he swore by himself, ¹⁴ saying, "I will surely bless you and give you many descendants." ¹⁵ And so after waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised. ¹⁶ Men swear by someone greater than themselves, and the oath confirms what is said and puts an end to all argument. ¹⁷ Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. ¹⁸ God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged. ¹⁹ We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, ²⁰ where Jesus, who went before us, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek."
- c) Heb. 7:11 - "If perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the law was given to the people), why was there still need for another priest to come--one in the order of Melchizedek, not in the order of Aaron?"

d) Heb. 4:14-16 - "14 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet was without sin. 16 Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."

4. Jesus is our Eternal High Priest / One Sacrifice / Sufficient Savior / Righteousness

C. A FULFILLING COVENANT

1. 2Cor. 1:18-20 - "18 But as surely as God is faithful, our message to you is not 'Yes' and 'No'. 19 For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, Who was preached among you by me and Silas and Timothy, was not 'Yes' and 'No', but in Him it has always been 'Yes'. 20 For no matter how many promises God has made, they are 'Yes' in Christ, And so through Him the 'Amen' is spoken by us to the glory of God."

2. Every covenant-promise of God was made possible through the New Covenant of Jesus.

a) Anticipated in the O.T. - Celebrated in the N.T.

b) From Shadow to Reality!

IV. THE FOCUS OF HIS COVENANT

A. TO BE THE LORD'S PEOPLE

1. 1Pet. 2:9-10 - "9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy."

2. The Lord's People - cf. Belonging & Possessing - Boyfriend/Girlfriend, Pet, Group [gang], etc.

a) cf. the pronoun of inclusion - "we"

B. TO DO THE LORD'S WILL

1. cf. 2Chron. 23:17 - "All the people went to the temple of Baal and tore it down. They smashed the altars and idols and killed Mattan the priest of Baal in front of the altars."

2. Heb. 10:19-25 - "19 Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. 24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. 25 Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

a) Heb. 13:15-16 - "15 Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise--the fruit of lips that confess his name. 16 And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased."

V. CONCLUSION: BENEDICTION

A. Heb. 13:20-21 - "20 May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, 21 equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

BLESSED TO BE A BLESSING

Gen. 12:2-3

I. ABRAHAM

A. BLESSINGS

1. Great Nation
2. Great Land [N.S.E.W.]
3. Great Family [dust,starts]
4. Great Name
 - a) It will stand for something - cf. E.F.Hutton
 - b) cf. J.B.C. Sports Arena
5. Bless/Curse - i.e. "I Will Watch Over You" - cf. "I am your Shield" [15:1]
 - a) Identification w/ Abraham [cf. Jesus w/ Paul - Acts 9:4]
 - b) Victory over 4 Kings
 - c) Melchizedek's blessing for A. flowed Blessing to God
 - d) note: Abraham's Prophet-Status
6. A Part in the Eternal Purposes of God - "All people on earth will be blessed through you"
 - a) Messiah, Promised Seed, Great Champion, Deliverer of Mankind, etc. Will Come Through You - Abraham!
7. Personal blessings - "I will bless you"
 - a) "I am... your very Great Reward"
 - b) Eternal Covenant
 - c) "I will be your God"
 - d) Called *Friend of God* - not just helper but someone we can be free with - trust and be trusted by, etc.

B. COST?

1. LEAVE - Country, People, Family
2. FOLLOW - one step at a time
3. BELIEVE and RECEIVE
 - a) "Abraham believed the LORD, and He credited it to him as righteousness."

C. HOW CAN I KNOW THAT I WILL GAIN POSSESSION? - ASSURANCE

- cf. "sore spot" - no children
1. Eternal Covenant - "I Will"
 - a) Sacrifice - Heb. 6:13-15***
 - (1) "13 When God made his promise to Abraham, since there was no one greater for him to swear by, he swore by himself, 14 saying, "I will surely bless you and give you many descendants." [Gen. 22:17] 15 And so after waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised."
 - b) Circumcision - Sign of Covenant - "I'm different"

D. PURPOSE? - "YOU WILL BE A BLESSING"

1. "All peoples on earth will be blessed through you"
 - a) A channel for God's Eternal blessings, etc.
 - b) Multitudes will become your children and share a glorious inheritance through your 'seed' - Christ Jesus!

II.US

A. BLESSINGS

1. KINGDOM - Col. 1:13, Heb. 12:28
2. LAND
 - a) Millennial Inheritance
 - b) New Heaven & Earth
3. FAMILY
 - a) Eternal Family of God - All believers from all places and all times.
4. NAME
 - a) Name above all names, Only Name given, etc,
 - b) cf. Jn. 17:9-11,26...
5. WATCH OVER US? [Bless/Curse]
 - a) 2Cor. 1:9-11 [cf. shooting incident]
 - b) toddler example - unconscious of protection
 - c) Identification - cf. Mt. 25:40
6. PART IN GOD'S PURPOSES?
 - a) Temple of God's Spirit
 - b) Priests
 - c) Examples of God's Grace
 - d) We'll Rule and Reign with Jesus, etc.
7. PERSONAL BLESSINGS?
 - a) Delivered, Forgiven, Filled, Sealed, Strengthened, and Freed, etc.
 - b) summed up in Christ - Col. 1:27; 2:3

B. COST?

1. LEAVE - Repentance
2. FOLLOW
3. BELIEVE and RECEIVE - Eph. 2:8-9

C. HOW CAN I KNOW? - ASSURANCE

1. Eternal Covenant thru the Blood of Jesus!
2. Jesus - High Priest, Sacrifice, Savior, King
 - a) Circumcision? - Baptism - Col 2:9-11
 - (1) Must to be saved? - cf. Paul in 2Cor.1, and Abraham's faith accepted *before* circumcision.
 - b) Communion - reminder/identification
3. Believe the Word - cf. 1Jn. 5:13 - "I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life."

D. PURPOSE? - TO BE A BLESSING!

1. A channel through which Jesus reaches out to this world.
 - a) Examples, Prayers, Feats of Faith, Daily Lives
2. To demonstrate the Kingdom of God! - 'Righteousness, Peace, and Joy in the Holy Spirit'!

**ARE YOU BLESSED IN JESUS? - THEN GO OUT,
SENT BY GOD, TO BE A BLESSING TO OTHERS!**

MELCHIZEDEK: WHO IS HE?

I.MELCHIZEDEK

A.He may simply be an obscure historical person who happens to have significant Biblical importance.

II.SHEM

A.There are those who believe that Melchizedek is in fact, Noah's son Shem, who was still alive at the time.

III.A THEOPHANY - God in human form

A.A PRE-INCARNATIONAL APPEARANCE OF GOD THE SON - JESUS CHRIST.

1.Because Hebrews 7:3 describes Melchizedek as without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually, some have thought that Melchizedek is actually a pre-Bethlehem appearance of Jesus

2.Psalms says that the priesthood of the Messiah is a priesthood according to the order of Melchizedek, as opposed to being of the order of Aaron; Hebrews 5-7 makes a great deal of this idea

a)"The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind: "You are a priest for ever, in the order of Melchizedek." (Psalms 110:4)

3.Heb. 7:1-4, 16, 24-28

a)"1 This Melchizedek was king of Salem and priest of God Most High. He met Abraham returning from the defeat of the kings and blessed him, 2 and Abraham gave him a tenth of everything. First, his name means "king of righteousness"; then also, "king of Salem" means "king of peace." 3 Without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life, like the Son of God he remains a priest forever. 4 Just think how great he was: Even the patriarch Abraham gave him a tenth of the plunder!"

b)"15 And what we have said is even more clear if another priest like Melchizedek appears, 16 one who has become a priest not on the basis of a regulation as to his ancestry but on the basis of the power of an indestructible life."

c)"24 but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. 25 Therefore he is able to save completely [Or forever] those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them. 26 Such a high priest meets our need--one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. 27 Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself. 28 For the law appoints as high priests men who are weak; but the oath, which came after the law, appointed the Son, who has been made perfect forever."

4.John 8:56-58

a)"56 Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad." 57 "You are not yet fifty years old," the Jews said to him, "and you have seen Abraham!" 58 "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!"

OUR VERY GREAT REWARD

“After this, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: “Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward.”

Genesis 15:1

INTRO: Many blessing, joys, wonders - but One is above all: OUR VERY GREAT REWARD!

I. THE REWARD - “I am ... your very great reward.”

A. GOD HIMSELF

1. Not Canaan, etc.
2. The LORD is the Portion of His People
 - a) cf. Levites' portion - Josh. 18:7
 - b) Like the Levites, the LORD is our portion.
 - c) Like Abraham - God is our reward!
3. He is our Greatest Possession
 - a) cf. Thomas - “My Lord and my God!”
 - b) My Father, my King, my Lord, my Savior, my God, my Redeemer, etc.
4. Note: It's impossible to describe this - we must take this verse for ourselves - hold it, look, taste, savor, be filled with it's wonderful truth.

B. WHAT IS THE EXTENT OF THIS REWARD?

Gen. 17:1 - “I am God Almighty” - EL SHADDAI - GOD ALL SUFFICIENT!

1. OMNISCIENT - God knows all things - end from beginning - His counsel is perfect. - Prov. 3:6
2. OMNIPRESENT - God is present everywhere - we're never alone - Mt. 28:20, Heb. 13:5
3. INFINITE - God has no limits - *all* sufficient.
4. IMMUTABLE - God does not change - no shifting shadows - He is constant, consistent, loving, patient, forgiving, always.
 - a) cf. “I the Lord do not change. Therefore you, O Israel, are not consumed.”
5. OMNIPOTENT - He is all powerful - there is no lack of strength. - Isa. 40:29-31
6. ETERNAL - He is our All in All for Today, Tommorrow, and Forever.
 - a) other rewards will fade away - but OUR VERY GREAT REWARD WILL NEVER FADE AWAY!

C. THINK OF IT! It is our reward ...

1. To Know Him
 - a) no greater treasure - Phil 3:8, Col. 2:3 [“all treasures of wisdom & knowledge”
2. To Be Known By Him
 - a) [cf. 1Cor. 13:12] 1Cor. 8:3 - “The man who loves God is known by God.”
3. To Love Him
 - a) He is that approachable! Words fail us
4. To Be Loved By Him
 - a) How dare we say we love Him? Because He first loved us!
 - b) For Him to even give a thought to me is something. Pity? maybe. Hear me? how could it be. Help me? unthinkable. Love me? Beyond Comprehension.
 - c) How do I know He loves me? Rom. 5:8; 8:35-39
5. To Serve Him
 - a) 1Thess. 1:9-10
 - b) How do we serve? Rom. 7:6 (note: We'll also reign - Rev. 5:9-10)

6. To Be Served By Him!?
 - a) Cannot serve Him until He's first served us - Mk. 10:45
7. To Be Transformed Into His Image - 2Cor. 3:18, Phil 1:6
 - a) Grieve that we aren't more like Him.
 - b) Rejoice that somehow, in spite of ourselves, once in a while, He Shines Thru You and Me. - Col. 3:3-4, 1Jn. 3:2

II. IS HE *YOUR* VERY GREAT REWARD?

A. THIS IS WHAT MAKES THE DIFFERENCE IN YOUR CHRISTIAN LIFE.

1. Do You Follow Him for *What You Can Get* ?
 - a) Health? Prosperity? [cf. 1Tim. 6:5]
 - b) Self-vindication?
 - c) Easy life?
 - d) To receive the praises of others? [like the Pharisees]
 - e) For future riches?
2. Do You Follow Him for *Who He Is* ?
 - a) Because He is your reward - you want no other.

- **The rewards of this life will fade away, but OUR VERY GREAT REWARD will *never* fade away!**
- **OUR VERY GREAT REWARD grows more Glorious every day!**

III. RESPONSE? LET'S ENJOY OUR REWARD!

A. Make it our aim to Know Him - Love Him - Serve Him.

1. Do we have the resources? YES! - Mt. 6:36, Rom. 8:31-32

B. Enjoy being Known by Him - Loved by Him - Served by Him.

1. Saying with a whole heart - " Whom have I in Heaven but You? And being with You, I desire nothing on earth."

THE ANGEL OF THE LORD

- I. **HIS APPEARANCES** - It is interesting to note how often the appearance of The Angel of the Lord marked a turning point in history: The founding of the chosen race through Abraham; the deliverance from Egypt; establishment of the theocracy at Sinai; Bringing Israel into the Promised Land; etc.
- A. **He gave aid and encouragement to Hagar twice.**
1. Gen. 16:6-12 - 6 "Your servant is in your hands," Abram said. "Do with her whatever you think best." Then Sarai mistreated Hagar; so she fled from her. 7 The angel of the Lord found Hagar near a spring in the desert; it was the spring that is beside the road to Shur. 8 And he said, "Hagar, servant of Sarai, where have you come from, and where are you going?" "I'm running away from my mistress Sarai," she answered. 9 Then the angel of the Lord told her, "Go back to your mistress and submit to her." 10 The angel added, "I will so increase your descendants that they will be too numerous to count." 11 The angel of the Lord also said to her: "You are now with child and you will have a son. You shall name him Ishmael, [Ishmael means God hears.] for the Lord has heard of your misery. 12 He will be a wild donkey of a man; his hand will be against everyone and everyone's hand against him, and he will live in hostility toward all his brothers."
 2. Gen. 21:17-18 - "17 God heard the boy crying, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, "What is the matter, Hagar? Do not be afraid; God has heard the boy crying as he lies there. 18 Lift the boy up and take him by the hand, for I will make him into a great nation."
- B. **He stopped Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac and promised him countless descendants**
1. Gen. 22:10-18 - "10 Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. 11 But the angel of the Lord called out to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. 12 "Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son." 13 Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. 14 So Abraham called that place The Lord Will Provide. And to this day it is said, "On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided." 15 The angel of the Lord called to Abraham from heaven a second time 16 and said, "I swear by myself, declares the Lord, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, 17 I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, 18 and through your offspring [Or seed] all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me."
- C. **He was the spokesman of the three who announced to Abraham the destruction of Sodom and the birth of Isaac. It was He Whom Abraham spoke concerning destroying a place with at least 10 righteous.**
1. Gen.. 18ff
- D. **He appeared to Jacob and identified Himself as "The God of Bethel"**
1. Gen. 31:11 - "11 The angel of God said to me in the dream, 'Jacob.' I answered, 'Here I am.' 12 And he said, 'Look up and see that all the male goats mating with the flock are streaked, speckled or spotted, for I have seen all that Laban has been doing to you. 13 I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and where you made a vow to me. Now leave this land at once and go back to your native land."
- E. **After wrestling with Him Jacob said "I saw God face to face".**
1. Gen. 32:24-30 - "24 So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. 25 When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. 26 Then the man said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak." But Jacob replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." 27 The man asked him, "What is your name?" "Jacob," he answered. 28 Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome." 29 Jacob said, "Please tell me your name." But he replied, "Why do you ask my name?" Then he blessed him there. 30 So Jacob called the place Peniel, [Peniel means face of God.] saying, "It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared."
- F. **He appeared to Moses in the burning bush**
1. Ex. 3:2-6 - "2 There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. 3 So Moses thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight--why the bush does not burn up." 4 When the Lord saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!" And Moses said, "Here I am." 5 "Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." 6 Then he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God."

G. He guided and guarded the Israelites in their exodus

1. Ex. 13:21-22; 14:19-20 - "21 By day the Lord went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night. 22 Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people." ... "14:19 Then the angel of God, who had been traveling in front of Israel's army, withdrew and went behind them. The pillar of cloud also moved from in front and stood behind them, 20 coming between the armies of Egypt and Israel. Throughout the night the cloud brought darkness to the one side and light to the other side; so neither went near the other all night long."

H. He talked with Moses during the journey and forgiveness was His to give or keep.

1. Ex. 23:20-21 - "20 See, I am sending an angel ahead of you to guard you along the way and to bring you to the place I have prepared. 21 Pay attention to him and listen to what he says. Do not rebel against him; he will not forgive your rebellion, since my Name is in him."

I. He blocked the road before Balaam

1. Num. 22:22-35 - "22 But God was very angry when he went, and the angel of the Lord stood in the road to oppose him. Balaam was riding on his donkey, and his two servants were with him. 23 When the donkey saw the angel of the Lord standing in the road with a drawn sword in his hand, she turned off the road into a field. Balaam beat her to get her back on the road.
 - a) 24 Then the angel of the Lord stood in a narrow path between two vineyards, with walls on both sides. 25 When the donkey saw the angel of the Lord, she pressed close to the wall, crushing Balaam's foot against it. So he beat her again. 26 Then the angel of the Lord moved on ahead and stood in a narrow place where there was no room to turn, either to the right or to the left. 27 When the donkey saw the angel of the Lord, she lay down under Balaam, and he was angry and beat her with his staff. 28 Then the Lord opened the donkey's mouth, and she said to Balaam, "What have I done to you to make you beat me these three times?" 29 Balaam answered the donkey, "You have made a fool of me! If I had a sword in my hand, I would kill you right now." 30 The donkey said to Balaam, "Am I not your own donkey, which you have always ridden, to this day? Have I been in the habit of doing this to you?" "No," he said. 31 Then the Lord opened Balaam's eyes, and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the road with his sword drawn. So he bowed low and fell facedown. 32 The angel of the Lord asked him, "Why have you beaten your donkey these three times? I have come here to oppose you because your path is a reckless one before me. 33 The donkey saw me and turned away from me these three times. If she had not turned away, I would certainly have killed you by now, but I would have spared her." 34 Balaam said to the angel of the Lord, "I have sinned. I did not realize you were standing in the road to oppose me. Now if you are displeased, I will go back." 35 The angel of the Lord said to Balaam, "Go with the men, but speak only what I tell you." So Balaam went with the princes of Balak."

J. He identified Himself as the "Commander of the army of the Lord" to Joshua.

1. Joshua 5:13-15 - "13 Now when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, "Are you for us or for our enemies?" 14 "Neither," he replied, "but as commander of the army of the Lord I have now come." Then Joshua fell facedown to the ground in reverence, and asked him, "What message does my Lord [Or lord] have for his servant?" 15 The commander of the Lord's army replied, "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did so."

K. He spoke with the backslidden Israelites at Bokim

1. Judges 2:1-5 - "1 The angel of the Lord went up from Gilgal to Bokim and said, "I brought you up out of Egypt and led you into the land that I swore to give to your forefathers. I said, 'I will never break my covenant with you, 2 and you shall not make a covenant with the people of this land, but you shall break down their altars.' Yet you have disobeyed me. Why have you done this? 3 Now therefore I tell you that I will not drive them out before you; they will be thorns in your sides and their gods will be a snare to you." 4 When the angel of the Lord had spoken these things to all the Israelites, the people wept aloud, 5 and they called that place Bokim. [Bokim means weepers.] There they offered sacrifices to the Lord."

L. He appeared to Gideon to commission him to his task

1. Judges 6:11-14 - "11 The angel of the Lord came and sat down under the oak in Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, where his son Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites. 12 When the angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, he said, "The Lord is with you, mighty warrior." 13 "But sir," Gideon replied, "if the Lord is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our fathers told us about when they said, 'Did not the Lord bring us up out of Egypt?' But now the Lord has abandoned us and put us into the hand of Midian." 14 The Lord turned to him and said, "Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian's hand. Am I not sending you?"

M. He appeared to Manoah and his wife regarding Samson.

1. Judges Chapter 13 - "... 21 When the angel of the Lord did not show himself again to Manoah and his wife, Manoah realized that it was the angel of the Lord. 22 "We are doomed to die!" he said to his wife. "We have seen God!"

N. **He appeared to David at Onan's threshing floor, stopped the destroying angel and commanded the prophet Gad to tell David to build an altar.**

- 1Chron. 21:14-30 - 14 So the LORD sent a plague on Israel, and seventy thousand men of Israel fell dead. 15 And God sent an angel to destroy Jerusalem. But as the angel was doing so, the LORD saw it and was grieved because of the calamity and said to the angel who was destroying the people, "Enough! Withdraw your hand." The angel of the LORD was then standing at the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite. 16 David looked up and saw the angel of the LORD standing between heaven and earth, with a drawn sword in his hand extended over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders, clothed in sackcloth, fell face down. 17 David said to God, "Was it not I who ordered the fighting men to be counted? I am the one who has sinned and done wrong. These are but sheep. What have they done? O LORD my God, let your hand fall upon me and my family, but do not let this plague remain on your people." 18 Then the angel of the LORD ordered Gad to tell David to go up and build an altar to the LORD on the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite. 19 So David went up in obedience to the word that Gad had spoken in the name of the LORD. 20 While Araunah was threshing wheat, he turned and saw the angel; his four sons who were with him hid themselves. 21 Then David approached, and when Araunah looked and saw him, he left the threshing-floor and bowed down before David with his face to the ground. 22 David said to him, "Let me have the site of your threshing-floor so that I can build an altar to the LORD, that the plague on the people may be stopped. Sell it to me at the full price." 23 Araunah said to David, "Take it! Let my lord the king do whatever pleases him. Look, I will give the oxen for the burnt offerings, the threshing-sledges for the wood, and the wheat for the grain offering. I will give all this." 24 But King David replied to Araunah, "No, I insist on paying the full price. I will not take for the LORD what is yours, or sacrifice a burnt offering that costs me nothing." 25 So David paid Araunah six hundred shekels of gold for the site. 26 David built an altar to the LORD there and sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. He called on the LORD, and the LORD answered him with fire from heaven on the altar of burnt offering. 27 Then the LORD spoke to the angel, and he put his sword back into its sheath. 28 At that time, when David saw that the LORD had answered him on the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite, he offered sacrifices there. 29 The tabernacle of the LORD, which Moses had made in the desert, and the altar of burnt offering were at that time on the high place at Gibeon. 30 But David could not go before it to enquire of God, because he was afraid of the sword of the angel of the LORD. (1 Chronicles 21:14-30).

II. HIS IDENTITY

- A. The reference in Judges 2 shows clearly that The Angel of the Lord is a personal manifestation of God.
- B. Resemblances between The Angel of the Lord and Jesus support the conclusion that He was a preincarnate manifestation of God the Son - Jesus Christ! He always had the same specific personality, distinguishable from angels in general. Like Jesus, He spoke with authority as though He were God Himself and the authority to give or withhold forgiveness was his. Only the manifest personification of God would be able to do that. John declared that the Word [Logos] "was in the beginning with God" and that He "was God"; that He was instrumental in the Creation; and, that "The Word [Logos] became flesh and dwelt among us" [Jn. 1:1-14]. Also note that this angel did not appear on earth while Jesus was in the flesh.
- C. ISAIAH'S PROPHECY IS VERY ENLIGHTENING.
 1. Isa. 63:7-9 - *"7 I will tell of the kindnesses of the Lord, the deeds for which he is to be praised, according to all the Lord has done for us-- yes, the many good things he has done for the house of Israel, according to his compassion and many kindnesses. 8 He said, "Surely they are my people, sons who will not be false to me"; and so he became their Savior. 9 In all their distress he too was distressed, and the angel of his presence saved them. In his love and mercy he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old."*

AN ANGEL YOU OUGHT TO KNOW

by Loren Jacobs

The modern mind cannot conceive of angelic beings. This is due in part to medieval art and literature, which relegate belief in angels to the realm of superstition. Or perhaps we like to try to explain away that which makes us uncomfortable. Indeed, there are those who would even dismiss the belief in God as mere superstition.

Yet virtually every philosopher who has recognized the God of the Bible has also believed in angels—not the cute cherubs of Christmas cards, but mighty and powerful spiritual beings who are servants of the Most High God.

In Hebrew, the word for "angel" is malakh. A malakh is a messenger, either human or angelic. Yet there is one malakh who stands out from all the rest. The Bible calls him simply, "the angel of the Lord."

Since the time of Abraham, our people have known about the angels of the Lord. In the Talmud he is given the name Metatarsus, which indicates a special relationship with God. One meaning of meta and thronos, two Greek words, gives the sense of "one who serves behind the throne of God." He is also known as the "Prince of the Countenance" because of the close proximity between this angel and God Himself. The implication for the malakh of the Lord is that He is, above all, the messenger of God, the one sent by God, the one who represents God Himself.

Throughout the Tanach, the angel of the Lord often appeared in human form. He served in three ways—guiding the people of Israel, effecting miracles, and executing judgment on Israel's enemies.

He is first mentioned in Genesis 16. After Hagar fled into the wilderness to escape from Sarah, Abraham's wife, the angel of the Lord found her and admonished her to return to her mistress. He then promised to greatly multiply her descendants and prophesied the birth of Ishmael, who became the progenitor of the Arab nations.

In Genesis 22, read every Yom Kippur, it is the angel of the Lord who called from heaven to stay the hand of Abraham as he took the knife to slay his son Isaac. In Exodus 14, he was in the pillar of cloud guiding the Israelites through the wilderness after their flight from Egypt. In Numbers 22:22-35, the angel of the Lord appeared to Balaam, the non-Jewish prophet, and gave him orders to be followed.

He instructed Gideon in Judges 6, telling him to deliver Israel from Midian. He prophesied the birth of Samson (Judges 13), directed Elijah to Mt. Horeb (1 Kings 19), and commanded King David to build an altar in Jerusalem which later became the site of the temple of Solomon (1 Chronicles 21:18).

The angel of the Lord is also presented to us as an avenger of evil, a judge. When Assyria, which was one of the ancient super powers, threatened to destroy Israel (700's BCE), it was the angel of the Lord who killed the 185,000 Assyrian soldiers besieging Jerusalem (2 Kings 19:35). This angel, powerful in battle, was gentle enough to succor a fleeing and frightened Hagar in the wilderness.

This angel was perceived in a unique and remarkable way by those with whom he came in contact. In ancient times it was common knowledge that if one saw God, it meant death for the individual. God stated this directly to Moses on Mt. Sinai: "You

cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live" (Exodus 33:20). After Hagar saw the angel of the Lord, it is recorded that she called him Lord and marveled that she was still alive after having seen him (Genesis 16:33).

Jacob reacted in a similar fashion when he wrestled with a "man" during the night. The man blessed Jacob and changed the patriarch's name to Israel. Jacob responded by calling the place of this encounter Peniel, saying, 'it is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared.' (Genesis 32:30). Jacob identified the "man" as God. Later in his life, when Jacob blessed his son Joseph and his children, he said, "The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my Shepherd all my life to this day, the Angel who has delivered me from all harm..." (Genesis 48:15,16). The parents of Samson, likewise, recognized the angels of the Lord to be God, "We are doomed to die!...We have seen God!" (Judges 13:22).

The angel of the Lord appeared to Moses in the midst of a burning bush (Exodus 3:2) but then in verse 4, "God called to him from within the bush..." When the Lord delivered the children of Israel from Egypt, the Bible says, "By day the Lord went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light..." (Exodus 13:21). But we read again in Chapter 14, verse 19, that the "angel of God, who had been traveling in front of Israel's army, withdrew and went behind them. The pillar of cloud also moved from in front and stood behind them, coming in between the armies of Egypt and Israel" (Exodus 14:19,20). And then in verse 24 we are told that the Lord looked down on the Egyptian army through the pillar of fire and cloud, and fought against Egypt! Who is involved in this pillar—the angel of the Lord or God Himself?

In Judges 6, the angel of the Lord appeared to a timid Gideon and sat down under an oak tree to initiate a conversation with him (vs. 11,12). In verse 13, we see Gideon responding, but in verse 14 something strange happens: all of a sudden it is the Lord who is seen talking to Gideon! In verse 16, the conversation continues, but in verse 20, it is the angel of God who is in conversation. The next verse relates a miracle is performed by the angel. Then Gideon responds: 'Ah, Sovereign LORD! I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face!' But the LORD said to him, "Peace! Do not be afraid. You are not going to die!" (Judges 6:22,23)

Are there two or three characters in this passage? One, of course, is Gideon. In verses 11 and 12 we have the angel of the Lord, then the Lord in verses 14 and 16, then the angel of God in verse 20 and again the angel of the Lord in verse 21. This writer maintains that the angel of the Lord must be the Lord God. Yet in some sense, the angel of the Lord, even though He Himself is deity, must be distinguished from the totality of the Godhead. For in Zechariah 1:12, the angel of the Lord is seen interceding on behalf of Israel, calling out to the Lord of hosts! The Holy Scriptures have given us a paradox: The Angel of the LORD is distinct from God, yet is Himself very God!

This paradox is consistent with God's very nature. God, who is involved with His creation and interested in our welfare (Psalm 139:3, 13) is also high above (Isaiah 55:8,9). God is a vengeful God to those who flaunt His revealed will (Deuteronomy 32:35), and yet He is merciful (Exodus 33:19). God is all-important (Psalm 139), and yet He willingly "forgets" (Jeremiah 31:34, Isaiah 64:9). God is an advocate, a defender of His people (Psalm 59:1, Job 16:19), but He is also a prosecutor and judge (Psalm 50:6, Ecclesiastes 3:17). When we study the nature of God, we find paradoxes.

The angel of the Lord, God Himself, revealed Himself in a visible, personal way—taking the form of a human being.

This writer maintains that not only could the angel of the Lord assume human form, but that, in time, he took on true humanity by being born into the human race!

"Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness." (Philippians 2:6,7) (NIV)

This writer also maintains that the Old and New Testaments are intrinsically connected and make up God's revelation to man. The claims in the New Testament portion concerning Jesus correspond to those claims in the Old Testament portion which refer to the angel of the Lord. Jesus claimed to be the supreme malakh of God. "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9). The angel of the Lord did miraculous acts; so did Jesus. (See John 2:9, Matthew 8:3, Luke 7:11, Matthew 15:32, etc.) The angel of the Lord taught and instructed people; Jesus was called "rabbi" (John 20:16). The angel of the Lord is a judge of mankind; in John 5:22 we see "The Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son." Is Jesus of Nazareth and the angel that wrestled with Jacob one and the same? Carefully study the Scriptures for God's answer.

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HOMOSEXUALITY

²⁶ Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. ²⁷ In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion. ²⁸ Furthermore, since they did not think it worth while to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done.”

Romans 1:26-28

- I. The sin of the men of Sodom is plainly connected to their homosexuality [cf. ‘sodomy’]; The Bible declares that homosexual conduct is sin
 - A. The Bible condemns homosexuality in the same context as it condemns incest and bestiality. If we ignore the word of God, what standing do we have to say that any of these are sin?
 1. “Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable.” (Leviticus 18:22).
 2. “If a man lies with a man as one lies with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable. They must be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads.” (Leviticus 20:13)
 - B. Homosexual advocates have an interest in saying that homosexuals are exactly like everyone else, except they love people of their own sex. But when the conduct of homosexuals is observed, this is not the case
 - C. Consider the statistics on the number of partners homosexuals have: 43% of homosexuals say that they have had 500 or more sexual partners in their lifetime; only 1% of homosexuals say they have had four or less sexual partners in their lifetime. According the Unites States Department of Health and Human Services, 77% of homosexuals say they have met sexual partners in a city park; 62% in a homosexual bar, 61% in a theatre, 31% in a public restroom. Only 28% of homosexuals said that they had known their partners for at least a week before participating in homosexual sex.
 - D. Homosexuals also have an interest in saying that up to 10% of the population is homosexual; but the most reliable statistics show only 2.3% of men in their 20s and 30s said that they had ever had a homosexual experience; only 1.1% reported being exclusively homosexual. The low figures do agree with several other recent surveys and surveys done in Britain and France.
 - E. Homosexuals also have an interest in saying that they were "born that way"; all attempts thus far to prove this have been based more on wishful thinking than solid biological research, but if it is found to be the case, so what? The Bible teaches that we are all born with a predisposition to sin; it shouldn't surprise us that some 2% of the population finds that predisposition expressed in homosexual desire
 - F. Homosexuals also have an interest in defining themselves as "gay," a word that used to mean "happy, carefree" - but is a poor description of a lifestyle that has the rate of death, disease, and suicide found among homosexuals

JESUS AND THE HOMOSEXUAL

- by Lambert Dolphin

• A brochure on the door of the Episcopal Chaplain's office at Stanford University reads, "What did Jesus say about homosexuality?" When the brochure is opened the inside is completely blank. Episcopal Chaplain Penelope Duckworth explains, "For we, as Christians, pay particular attention to the words of our savior. Jesus said nothing regarding homosexuality, and in his ministry spoke more about the sins of the spirit than the sins of the body...Our reading of the Bible in its entirety is one of a loving, forgiving and nurturing God who wants us to help create a world that accepts and empowers us all." (Letter to the Editor, by Rev. Penelope Duckworth, Elizabeth Cook and Cynthia Stotts Howard, the Stanford Daily March 1990).

I. JESUS AND FORGIVENESS OF SIN

A. It is true that nothing specific is recorded about homosexuality in the four gospels. However to assume that Jesus was neutral on this issue might be to ignore a great deal of indirect evidence to the contrary. Perhaps Ms. Duckworth and friends seek to assure gay men and women at Stanford that they are the objects of God's love and grace---which is certainly biblically sound. The gospels contain many examples of the forgiveness and mercy Jesus extended to men and women from all backgrounds and circumstances in life. One clear example of the forgiveness and mercy of Jesus is given in John Chapter 8:

1. "Early in the morning Jesus came again to the temple; all the people came to him, and he sat down and taught them. The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and placing her in the midst they said to him, 'Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such. What do you say about her?' This they said to test him, that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. And as they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, 'Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her.' And once more he bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. But when they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the eldest, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. Jesus looked up and said to her, 'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?' She said, 'No one, Lord.' And Jesus said, 'Neither do I condemn you; go, and do not sin again.'" (John 8:1-11)

B. In extending forgiveness to this individual, Jesus certainly did release her from all past and future condemnation at the same time silencing the self-righteous, prudish arrogance of the Pharisees. But his parting remark to this adulterous woman was the firm admonition, "go, and do not sin again." The gift of wholeness Jesus granted to this previously broken woman required that she mend her ways and lead a different lifestyle thereafter.

1. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. He who believes in him is not condemned; he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." (John 3:16-19)

II. JESUS ON DIVORCE AND THE CELIBATE LIFE

A. With regard to divorce, Jesus demonstrated a similar depth of compassion, but He firmly endorsed the central importance of marriage in society:

1. "Now when Jesus had finished these sayings, he went away from Galilee and entered the region of Judea beyond the Jordan; and large crowds followed him, and he healed them there. And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, 'Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?' He answered, 'Have you not read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh"? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder.' They said to him, 'Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?' He said to them, 'For your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for unchastity, and marries another, commits adultery.'

2. "The disciples said to him, 'If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is not expedient to marry.' But he said to them, 'Not all men can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given. For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He who is able to receive this, let him receive it.'" (Matthew 19:1-12)

B.Marriage, Jesus implied, was for life. Only under exceptional circumstances, that is in the case of adultery, was divorce permitted. The disciples were evidently startled at the standards Jesus indicated when He quoted Moses as authoritative. They suggested to Jesus that remaining single might be preferable. To this Jesus responded that a celibate, single life, "for the sake of the kingdom of heaven" was acceptable. However Jesus made no mention of homosexuality as a third option for those who might have been "born that way," nor did He suggest that all have a right to choose their own "sexual preference." He did not give us the slightest reason to suppose every individual has a God-given "right" to his or her body, to do with it as one wills. Evidently He believed that marriage, though at times difficult and demanding, is the only relationship where sexual expression meets with God's approval. Those who prefer to remain single are to live as "eunuchs," that is without expressing their sexual desires. This is consistent with the Old Testament norm--for example in Isaiah 56:

1."Let not the foreigner who has joined himself to the LORD say, 'The LORD will surely separate me from his people;' and let not the eunuch say, 'Behold, I am a dry tree.' For thus says the LORD: 'To the eunuchs who keep my sabbaths, who choose the things that please me and hold fast my covenant, I will give in my house and within my walls a monument and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name which shall not be cut off. And the foreigners who join themselves to the LORD, to minister to him, to love the name of the LORD, and to be his servants, every one who keeps the sabbath, and does not profane it, and holds fast my covenant--these I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.'"

III.JEWISH CULTURE IN THE TIMES OF JESUS

A.Perhaps the reason Jesus said nothing specifically about homosexuality was that "gay lifestyles" were virtually unknown in the Israel of his day. Everyone knew and understood the culturally acceptable standards. Sexual immorality in any form was shameful and not for open public discussion. In fact, even the suggestion of heterosexual activity before marriage was scandalous:

1."Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been

betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit; and her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.' All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: 'Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel' (which means, God with us). When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took his wife, but knew her not until she had borne a son; and he called his name Jesus." (Matthew 1:18-25)

IV.JESUS AND THE LAW OF MOSES

A.What was the attitude of Jesus towards the Law of Moses? In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus said the following:

1."Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfil them. For truly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Whoever then relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but he who does them and teaches them shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:17-20)

2."You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that every one who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and throw it away; it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell." (Matthew 5:27-30)

3."It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' But I say to you that every one who divorces his wife, except on the ground of unchastity, makes her an adulteress; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery." (Matthew 5:31-32)

B.Thus Jesus invariably upheld the authority and applicability of the teachings and Law of Moses. In fact He interpreted Moses in a manner which intensified the demands of the Law. The Law reveals the moral character and the holiness of God which can not change. The purpose of the Law of Moses is not to produce good moral behavior, but to call all of us to understand our need for God's mercy and forgiveness:

1."...a man is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ, and not by works of the law, because by works of the law shall no one be justified." (Gal 2:16)

V.JERUSALEM AND SODOM COMPARED

A.Actually, Jews in the times of Jesus who knew their own history would have been familiar with Abraham and Lot and the destruction of the Canaanite cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, recorded in Genesis Chapter 19. Some have suggested that these cities were destroyed because of their inhospitality, because of a passage in Ezekiel:

1."As I live, says the Lord GOD, your sister Sodom and her daughters have not done as you and your daughters have done. Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had pride, surfeit of food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy. They were haughty, and did abominable things before me; therefore I removed them, when I saw it." (Ezekiel 16:48-50)

B.In this figurative passage the Lord likens Jerusalem in her apostasy to a grossly unfaithful wife. Jerusalem's spiritual adultery was more serious, in comparison, than the sins of "her sister Sodom." While God was unhappy at Sodom's love of pleasure and lack of concern for the poor, she also "did abominable things" before God. This passage shows us that sin becomes more serious in proportion to the light that is rejected, and that spiritual sins are indeed more grievous than sins of the body. However, the sexual activities of the men who lived in Sodom

were still "abominable" in the eyes of God. Jude and Peter in the New Testament confirm that these cities of the Dead Sea plain were in fact destroyed because of their homosexual immoralities, not merely because they failed to show proper hospitality towards strangers.

VI.JESUS AND THE WELLSPRINGS OF THE HEART

A.Concerned as He was with the motivations of the individual's heart rather than mere outward conformity to accepted social norms or the code of the Law, Jesus spoke of sexual sins as originating in the fallen nature of man's innermost self:

1."And he called the people to him and said to them, 'Hear and understand: not what goes into the mouth defiles a man, but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man.' Then the disciples came and said to him, 'Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?' He answered, 'Every plant which my heavenly Father has not planted will be rooted up. Let them alone; they are blind guides. And if a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into a pit.' But Peter said to him, 'Explain the parable to us.' And he said, 'Are you also still without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach, and so passes on? But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a man. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false-witnessing, blasphemies. These are what defile a man; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man.'" (Matthew 15:1-20)

B.In this passage adultery and fornication are both mentioned. Adultery of course refers to sexual infidelity when one is married. Fornication is usually taken to mean heterosexual intercourse before marriage. However the Greek word translated "fornication," (porno, from whence our word "pornography"), is actually a broad word used in the Bible "to denote any form of sexual behavior which is not in accord with Old Testament regulations and the teaching of the apostles..." (International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, 1982). Homosexual behavior is without doubt included in the meaning of this word.

C. In offering forgiveness and mercy to many individuals during His three year ministry, Jesus gave these individuals a new, cleansed, purified heart---not only forgiving their previous sins, but making it possible for them to live afterwards on the basis of new and right motivations. To my knowledge, there is nothing in the gospels to suggest that Jesus "wants us to help create a world that accepts and empowers us all." Putting to death an entire old way of life, and a dying to one's own selfish desire is indicated for all the followers of Jesus. Christians constitute a minority of a few percent in most parts of the world and can not expect to have their beliefs held in popular approval by those who have not yet come to know their Lord personally.

1. "Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's foes will be those of his own household. He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and he who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for my sake will find it." (Matthew 10:34-39)

D. Actually, what Jesus was interested in above all else was love. Love seeks the best interests of the beloved. Love gives unselfishly rather than taking. Koine Greek has several words for love: affection, brotherly love, and agape. There are also numerous words for lust, and lust frequently disguises itself as love in our society. Jesus never argues that two men or two women should not love each other, in fact the opposite is true, "The whole Law is fulfilled in this one word: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" Homosexuality is not merely an issue of genital sexual conduct---it has to do with distortions of what the Bible means by real love. Here is where so much confusion lies in modern society. This confusion is across the board: having lost touch with the living God, all men are confused and lost and subject to the passions of a fallen race. God wants from us more love for one another, not less. In this lies the cure.

1. (1 Cor. 13)

VII. CONCLUSION FROM THE GOSPELS

A. Although the four Gospels contain no specific statement by Jesus against homosexual behavior, nor any examples of His meeting and dealing with a homosexual person, there is more than enough evidence from Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John alone to conclude that the only form of sexual behavior Jesus endorsed was limited to the married state.

B. The writer of the letter to the Hebrews in the New Testament gives this summary of both Old Testament and New Testament norms regarding marriage and various possible types of human sexual behavior:

1. "Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled; but God will judge fornicators and adulterers." (Hebrews 13:4)

VIII. WHAT DOES THE LAW OF MOSES REALLY SAY ABOUT SEXUAL CONDUCT?

A. Specifics concerning sexual conduct under the Law of Moses are found in the book of Leviticus. These are (briefly) as follows:

1. Adultery is sexual activity between a married person and another person who is not one's spouse: "Thou shalt not commit adultery" is the Seventh Commandment in the Law of Moses. Leviticus 18:20 says, "You shall not lie carnally with your neighbor's wife, and defile yourself with her." Leviticus 20:10 states, "If a man commits adultery with the wife of his neighbor both the adulterer and the adulteress shall be put to death."
2. Homosexuality is sexual activity between members of the same sex. Leviticus 18:22 states, "You shall not lie with a male as with a woman, it is an abomination." (The Hebrew word "abomination" means loathsome, repugnant, abhorrent to God). Leviticus 20:13 prescribes the death penalty for homosexual acts also, "If a male lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall be put to death, their blood is upon them."
3. Bestiality is sexual activity involving an animal. "If a man lies with a beast, he shall be put to death; and you shall kill the beast. If a woman approaches any beast and lies with it, you shall kill the woman and the beast; they shall be put to death, their blood is upon them." (Leviticus 20:16) This law is also stated in Leviticus 18:23.

4. Harlotry and Fornication refer to sexual intercourse with a male or female prostitute, and to sexual activity between unmarried persons, respectively. Leviticus 19:29 says, "Do not profane your daughter by making her a harlot, lest the land fall into harlotry and the land become full of wickedness." This Scripture, and other passages in the Old Testament, connect sexual immorality and other human evil with a defilement of the land, not only of the individuals involved. That is, sexual license in a society leads invariably to child abuse, rape, and other forms of violence that affect the entire culture harmfully. Sexual morality thus becomes a matter of public and governmental concern, not just a private matter.

a) Deuteronomy 22:23-29 makes provision for marriage rather than death in certain situations involving sexual involvement before marriage, and provides for release of a woman who is raped and can not get help:

b) "If there is a betrothed virgin, and a man meets her in the city and lies with her, then you shall bring them both out to the gate of that city, and you shall stone them to death with stones, the young woman because she did not cry out for help though she was in the city, and the man because he violated his neighbor's wife; so you shall purge the evil from the midst of you. But if in the open country a man meets a young woman who is betrothed, and the man seizes her and lies with her, then only the man who lay with her shall die. But to the young woman you shall do nothing; in the young woman there is no offense punishable by death, for this case is like that of a man attacking and murdering his neighbor; because he came upon her in the open country, and though the betrothed young woman cried for help there was no one to rescue her. If a man meets a virgin who is not betrothed, and seizes her and lies with her, and they are found, then the man who lays with her shall give to the father of the young woman fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife, because he has violated her; he may not put her away all his days."

5. Incest is sexual involvement with a member of one's own immediate family and is discussed thoroughly in Leviticus 18:6-18. The Bible specifically mentions as forbidden any and all sexual involvement with one's father, mother, sisters, step-sisters, granddaughters, aunts, and daughters-in-law. The death penalty for incest is specified in Leviticus 20:11-21.

6. Related Areas: Abortion is usually considered murder according to the standards of Scripture and is equivalent to the offering of children to the cruel God Molech of the Old Testament.

a) "Say to the people of Israel, any man of the people of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn in Israel, who gives any of his children to Molech shall be put to death; the people of the land shall stone him with stones. I myself will set my face against that man, and will cut him off from among his people, because he has given one of his children to Molech, defiling my sanctuary and profaning my holy name. And if the people of the land do at all hide their eyes from that man, when he gives one of his children to Molech, and do not put him to death, then I will set my face against that man, and against his family, and will cut them off from among their people, him and all who follow him in playing the harlot after Molech." (Leviticus 20:2-5)

IX. THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS IN THE LIFE OF A CHRISTIAN

A. One distinguishing mark of the true Christian is his or her commitment to the lordship and authority of Jesus over life. This right of Jesus to rule from within one's heart having been established, the Christian recognizes that Jesus Himself invariably followed the Old Testament as His standard and guide. He never taught or said anything that was inconsistent with any part of the Old Testament. Individual believers have no right, therefore, to choose to follow Jesus on some points and ignore Him on other issues. Neither are we free to edit the Word of God selectively, discarding some portions as irrelevant today, wrongly supposing that the Bible no longer addresses common issues in our world today. According to the Bible fallen human nature has not changed since the fall, and neither has the character of God.

X. THE CHRISTIAN AND THE APOSTLES' AUTHORITY

A. A follower of Jesus Christ in our period of history (the past 2000 years) also recognizes that he or she has been reborn spiritually, adopted into God's family, and, at the same time has been placed into the body of Christ, the true church. This true church of Jesus Christ is built on foundations laid by the apostles. The apostles (and Old Testament writers also) have authority over those who accept the authority of Jesus in their lives.

1. "So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built into it for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit." (Ephesians 2:19-22)

B. A good portion of the New Testament was written by the Apostle Paul. Paul says about His basis of authority and source of information concerning God:

1. "But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, If any one is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed. Am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still pleasing men, I should not be a servant of Christ. For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ." (Galatians 1:8-11)

C. The New Testament does not single out homosexual behavior as worse than heterosexual immorality. (See Sexual Sin in General). Romans 1 depicts homoexuality in a culture as one of a chain of many consequences of widespread rejection of God by a society. This passage does not explain why individual men and women become gay---Romans One is intended to show what happens in a culture when God loosens His restraints against the latent evil in the hearts of

all men. Jesus is "a friend of sinners" and all are welcome in his church and in his family. When a man or woman becomes a Christian, lifestyle changes are essential---regardless of a person's previous "orientation" or lifestyle. 1 Corinthians 6:11 indicates that all true Christians no longer are what they once were in the core of their being:

1. "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither the immoral (fornicators), nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals [two different Greek words are used here denoting the different roles of the active partner and the passive partner in homosexual behavior], nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor robbers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God." (1 Corinthians 6:9-11)

D. The Apostle Paul gives detailed guidelines about marriage, the single Christian life, marriage divorce, and Biblical norms for sexual behavior in 1 Corinthians Chapters 5-7. The above quotation falls in the middle of his long and thorough discussion of all these topics.

E. In his epistle to the church at Ephesus Paul similarly writes concerning purity of heart and integrity of conduct expected among Christians. He reminds us that sins related to sexual immorality are the cause of God's continuing wrath upon the world at large,

1. "But fornication and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is fitting among saints. Let there be no filthiness, nor silly talk, nor levity, which are not fitting; but instead let there be thanksgiving. Be sure of this, that no fornicator or impure man, or one who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for it is because of these things that the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be joint-partakers with them, for once you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord." (Ephesians 5:3-10)

F. The Bible does not teach that homosexual desires, or other forms of erotic desire, lust, envy, greed, covetousness (and so on) are in themselves sin though they may reflect a the universal diseased condition called sin.

Temptation not acted on or responded to causes an individual to become stronger and does not incur moral guilt before the Lord. What God disapproves of is certain forms of behavior or conduct, and these certainly include homosexual acts. Heterosexual premarital activity seems to be equally weighted with homosexual acts in Scripture---both are sinful and worthy of death.

G. Homosexuals are, it is true, socially ostracized and looked down upon by many in society. In most cases these persons do not feel they have become gay by a set of deliberate choices. It is heritage or fate that has made them the way they are as far as they know. The Biblical view is that all of us are fallen and depraved--yet we are each the objects of God's enduring loyal-love. If all are lost, and if Christ died for all and God does not wish anyone to perish, then sufficient grace is available for any sinner to live a life pleasing to God. This may lead to a successful heterosexual marriage, to a less-than-perfect marriage, or to a dedicated single life of celibacy and service. The Apostle Paul (himself single) said, "If for this life only we have hoped, we are of all men most miserable."

H. Actually the Bible also does not suggest that some individuals are "born" gay, though the fall of Adam has left all of mankind in a state of total depravity according to Romans Chapters 1-3. The breakdown of family life and general morality in a society does result in more individuals becoming vulnerable to seduction into the gay lifestyle. Such persons are often victims of prevailing cultural decadence. However God's grace is always adequate to allow such individuals to embark on a liberating path leading to wholeness and ultimate fulfillment---whether they go on to marry or are called to a single life of celibacy and service. The general deterioration of a culture (because of its abandonment of God) is outlined in the first chapter of Paul's letter to the church at Rome:

1. "...the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of men who by their wickedness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has

shown it to them. Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse; for although they knew God they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking and their senseless minds were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for images resembling mortal man or birds or animals or reptiles.

2. "Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever! Amen.

3. "For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. Their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural, and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameful acts with men and receiving in their own persons the due penalty for their error.

4. "And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a base mind and to improper conduct. They were filled with all (kinds of) unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, malice. Full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity, they are gossips, backbiters, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, implacable, unmerciful. Though they know God's decree that those who do such things deserve to die, they not only do them but approve those who practice them." (Romans 1:18-32)

a) For a detailed analysis of this famous and key passage in Romans see Ray C. Stedman's messages When Everyone Knows God, The Tragic Sense of Life, and The Deepening Darkness.

I. What the New Testament emphasizes---in agreement with the Law of Moses---is that those persons who refuse the grace of God and by their own choice continue in a gay lifestyle, or in heterosexual promiscuity, or in adultery, etc., risk

not being true Christians at all, have quite possibly deceived themselves. Such individuals will not be received into the kingdom of heaven unless their life style changes and genuine repentance is demonstrated. This is confirmed in the last chapter of the Bible,

1."Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense, to repay every one for what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates. Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and fornicators and murderers and idolaters, and every one who loves and practices falsehood." (Revelation 22:12-15)

J. Severe though God's final division between right and wrong may seem, the mercy and daily help of Jesus become all the more valuable to each one of us who elects to follow Him. By His death Jesus accomplished not only the forgiveness of our sins, but also made possible a whole new life for any sinner willing to be healed. God "does not desire that any one should perish," indeed "He takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked." By His life Jesus saves his followers daily. He said,

1."I am the door; if any one enters by me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it more abundantly." (John 10:9,10)

K. Paul wrote,

1."No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your strength, but with the temptation will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it." (1 Corinthians 10:13)

L. John the beloved Apostle says, "If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not live according to the truth; but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

1."If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." (1 John 1:6-10)

XI. BIBLICAL STANDARDS ARE NOT FOR THE WORLD

A. Today the issues of homosexuality and abortion and women's rights have been so highly politicized it is almost impossible to bring the discussion back to individuals. God loves people as they are, it is wrong for Christians to stereotype any person so that he or she can be treated as a statistic and dismissed. Biblically speaking, God does not ask non-Christians to do what they lack the power to do, namely, to live a godly life.

B. From the above discussion of the Law it should be clear that God's standards of conduct in this life apply directly only to those who have chosen to follow Jesus Christ as Lord. Other persons lack the understanding, power and motivation to align themselves into harmony with their Creator.

C. Yet, the gospel message is an appeal to every individual to accept God's gift of forgiveness, wholeness and eternal life. Because all men will one day give account of themselves to God, and because God desires that all men come to know Him out of their own free will choices, behavior that is grossly out of harmony with Biblical standards should be strongly discouraged in a pagan society such as ours. Actually God commands all men to reconsider and change their minds about Who He is and what He desires for the peoples of the earth whom He has made in His own image and likeness:

1."The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all men life and breath and everything. And he made from one (man) every nation of men to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their habitation, that they should seek God, in the hope that they might feel after him and find him. Yet he is not far from each one of us, for 'In him we live and move and have our being;' as even some of your poets have said, 'For we are indeed his offspring.' Being then God's offspring, we ought not to think that the Deity is like gold, or silver, or stone, a representation by the art and imagination of man. The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all men everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all men by raising him from the dead." (Acts 17:24-31)

D. The good news given us by means of the life and teachings of Jesus---and affirmed also by the Apostles---is that God receives sinners regardless of their family background, previous track record or actual current moral condition. Jesus also sees to it that all who come to Him for help are changed and made new so as to be fully qualified to enter into eternal life:

E. "For the grace of God has appeared for the salvation of all men, training us to renounce irreligion and worldly passions, and to live sober, upright, and godly lives in this world, awaiting our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all iniquity and to purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds...For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by men and hating one another; but when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of deeds done by us in righteousness, but in virtue of his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit, which he poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that we might be justified by his grace and become heirs in hope of eternal life." (Titus 2:11-3:7)

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STOP DENYING YOUNG MEN TREATMENT

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Suppose that a young man, seeking help for a psychological condition that was associated with serious health risk and made him desperately unhappy were to be told by the professional he consulted that no treatment is available, that his condition is permanent and genetically based, and that he must learn to live with it. Perhaps this young man, unwilling to give up hope, sought out other specialists only to receive the same message: "Nothing can be done for you. Accept your condition."

How would this man and his family feel when they discovered years later that numerous therapeutic approaches have been available for his specific problem for more than 60 years? What would be his reaction when informed that, although none of these approaches guaranteed results and most required a long period of treatment, a patient who was willing to follow a proven treatment regime had a good chance of being free from the condition? How would this man feel if he discovered that the reason he was not informed that treatment for his condition was available was that certain groups were, for political reasons, pressuring professionals to deny that effective treatment existed?

Every day young men seek help because they are experiencing an unwanted sexual attraction to other to other men, and are told that their condition is untreatable. It is not surprising that many of these young men fall into depression or despair when they are informed that a normal life with >a wife and children is never to be theirs.

This despair can lead to reckless life-threatening actions. Many young men with homosexual inclinations, feeling their lives are of little value, are choosing to engage in unprotected sex with strangers. Epidemiologists are well aware that the number of new HIV infections among young men involved in homosexual activity is rising at an alarming rate; within this population, the "safer sex" message is falling on deaf ears. One recent study revealed that 38% of homosexual adolescents had engaged in unprotected sex in the previous months.

Young men and the parents of at risk males have a right to know that prevention and effective treatment are available. They have a right to expect that every professional they consult will inform them of all their therapeutic options and allow them to make their own choices based on the best clinical evidence. A variety of studies have shown that between 25% and 50% of those seeking treatment experienced significant improvement. If a therapist feels for whatever reason that he cannot treat someone for this condition, he has an obligation to refer the patient to someone who will.

Also, these young men and their parents have a right to know that, contrary to media propaganda, there is no proven biological basis for homosexuality. A November 1995 article in Scientific American pointed out that the much-publicized brain research by Simon Le Vay has never been replicated and that Dean Hamer's gene study has been contradicted by another study.

The truth is that the clinical experience of many therapists who work with men struggling with same-sex attractions and behaviors indicates that there are many causes and various manifestations of homosexuality. No single category describes them all, but the disorder is characterized by a constellation of symptoms, including excessive clinging to the mother during early childhood, a sense that one's masculinity is defective, and powerful feelings of guilt, shame and inferiority beginning in adolescence.

If the emotional desire for another man is primarily a symptom of the failure to develop a strong masculine identity, then a man's unconscious desire to assume the manhood of another male may be more important than the sexual act. The goal of therapy in such cases is to help the clients understand the various causes of his feelings and to strengthen his masculine identity. Eventually many find the freedom they are seeking and are able to have a normal relationships with women.

Help is available for men struggling with unwanted homosexual desires. The National Association for Research and Treatment of Homosexuality offers information for those interested in understanding the various therapeutic approaches to treatment. In addition, a number of self-help groups have sprung up to offer support to those who suffer from this problem.

As we grieve for all those lives so abruptly ended by AIDS, we would do well to reflect that many of the young men who have died of AIDS have sought treatment for their homosexuality and were denied knowledge and hope. Many of them would be alive today if they had only had been told where to find the help they sought.

By Dr. Socarides of Albert Einstein College, Dr. Kaufman of U Cal Davis, Joseph Nicolosi, Dr. Satinover of Westport Conn, Dr. Fitzgibbons of West Conshohocken Pa.

SELECTED BOOKS ON SEXUAL WHOLENESS RELEVANT TO HOMOSEXUALITY:

1. *Reparative Therapy of Male Homosexuality: A New Clinical Approach*, by Joseph Nicolosi, PhD. (Jason Aronson, Inc., New York, 1991). Nicolosi's clinic specializes in counseling for gay men who wish to change their sexual orientation. The best current semi-technical book on the subject.
2. *Straight and Narrow*, by Thomas E. Schmidt, (Intervarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL, 1995). Prof. Schmidt compassionately and carefully addresses common arguments that the Bible does not condemn homosexual life styles.
3. *Eros Redeemed: Breaking the Stranglehold of Sexual Sin*, by John White, MD (Intervarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL 1993). Dr. White is a retired Canadian psychiatrist who specializes in healing and help for the sexual broken and for those struggling with sexual identity and behavior.
4. *The Wounded Heart: Hope for Adult Victims of Childhood Sexual Abuse*, by Daniel B. Allender, (Navpress, Colorado Springs, CO, 1990). Reveals the long terms and often disastrous effects of unresolved sexual abuse in childhood.
5. *The Broken Image, Crisis in Masculinity and Healing Presence*, by Leanne Payne (3 separate classic books) (Crossway Books, Westchester, IL. 1981, 1984 and 1985 respectfully). Especially helpful in understanding homosexuality and the damage to sexual identity caused by abuse.
6. *The Healing Presence*, by Leanne Payne (Crossway Books, Westchester, IL 1989). Mrs. Payne continues to write and speak and to lead seminars on sexual wholeness that have become well known around the world.
7. *Coming out of Homosexuality*, by Bob Davies and Lori Rentzel, (Intervarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL 1992) Drawn from the experience of men and women who have been part of the Exodus International Christian ministry of San Rafael, California. With bibliography and support group listing.
8. *Homosexuality, A New Christian Ethic*, by Elizabeth Moberly (Attic Press, Greenwood SC, 1983). A classic research study by a qualified psychologist.
9. *Desires in Conflict*, by Joe Dallas, (Harvest House, Eugene, OR, 1991). On overcoming homosexuality, especially for men.
10. *Pursuing Sexual Wholeness*, by Andrew Comiskey, (Creation House, Lake Mary, FL, 1989). A former homosexual, now happily married shares principles of freedom.
11. *Setting Love in Order*, by Mario Bergner, (Baker Books, Grand Rapids 49516, 1995). A very transparent personal life story of a formerly-homosexual man who describes his Christian journey towards wholeness.
12. *Homosexuality and the Politics of Truth*, Jeffrey Satinover, M.D., (Baker Books, Grand Rapids, 49516, 1996). "Psychiatrist Jeffrey Satinover examines recent research reported in medical journals (and the popular press). He finds many of these studies flawed and cites evidence that homosexuality is indeed changeable. He explains how psychology, biology, choice, and habit all interweave to produce deeply imbedded patterns of sexual behavior. The model Dr. Satinover develops is based on modern science and psychological understandings of habit, compulsion, and addiction. Homosexuality, he writes, 'is one of the many forms of soul sickness that is innate to our fallen nature.'" Dr. Jeffrey Satinover has practiced psychoanalysis and psychiatry for more than nineteen years. He is a former Fellow in Psychiatry and Child Psychiatry at Yale University and a past president of the C. G. Jung Foundation. He holds degrees from MIT, the University of Texas, and Harvard University and serves as a medical advisor to Focus on the Family. Jeffrey and his wife have three children.
13. *Judaism, Homosexuality and Civilization*, by Dennis Prager.
 1. Judaism's sexual revolution Desexualizing God and religion The ubiquity of homosexuality
 2. Judaism and homosexuality Biblical opposition to homosexuality Why Judaism opposes homosexuality The Jewish sexual ideal
 3. Moral and psychological questions Is homosexuality wrong (even if homosexuals have no choice)? Is homosexuality chosen? Is homosexuality an illness?
 4. What are we to do? Decriminalizing homosexuality Homosexual ordination Homosexual marriage Homosexual employment Behavior toward homosexuals 'Homophobia'
 5. Epilogue This issue is available for \$7.50 from Ultimate Issues. © 1990. Dennis Prager. Write to 6020 Washington Blvd., Culver City, CA 90232. Or call 213-558-3958. More on Jewish theologian/philosopher Dennis Prager
14. The Jewish point of view on homosexuality is further amplified by the historian Josephus, "But, then, what are our laws about marriage?...it abhors the mixture of a male with a male; and if any one do that, death is his punishment...The law, moreover, enjoins us to bring up all our offspring, and forbids women to cause abortion of what is begotten, or to destroy it afterward; and if any woman appears to have done so, she will be a murderer of her child, by destroying a living creature, and diminishing humankind."-- Josephus (c. 35-95 C.E.), In, "Contra Apion" Book II Ch. 25. With thanks to puritan@jps.net (CyberPilgrim).

Jesus and the homosexual - by Lambert Dolphin Email: dolphin@best.com Web Pages: <http://www.lldolphin.org/>

THE NAMES OF GOD

[adapted from notes by Raul Ries]

· INTRODUCTION:

- In this study we are going to see the importance of names in the Old Testament, especially the names of God.
- Webster defines "name" as "that by which a person or thing is known."

· HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

- 1) The Hebrews thought of names as being revelatory, as disclosing some attribute or characteristic of the person named.
- 2) For instance, the name "Adam" means "of the earth" or "taken out of the red earth," his name revealed his origin.
- 3) A number of names for God are found in the scriptures, for no one name, or even multiplicity of names, can reveal all His attributes.
- 4) But, we need only know God's attributes to the extent that he is pleased to reveal them, and those that pertain to the relationships with God, revealed by one of His names, that corresponds to every need of His children.
- 5) It is the goal of theology to define, as far as possible what those relationships are. The study of the names of God will significantly help us to attain that goal today as we study them.

I. THE NAME OF GOD.

A. THE NAME "ELOHIM."

1. The name "ELOHIM" is the first word used in Scripture to designate "God." (Gen. 1:1) "In the beginning ELOHIM created the heaven and the earth."
2. This name is used around 2,500 times in the Old Testament.
3. Its probable root meaning is "Strong and Mighty One."
4. The singular form "ELOAH," in the same reference work, is defined as follows:
 - a) "God" singular of Elohim = Eloah; it is used 41 times in Job (replacing Elohim) and 16 times elsewhere.
 - b) These occurrences are mainly poetic and refer to the true God except in: 2 Chron. 32:15, Dan. 11:37-39, Hab. 1:11, Job 12:6.
5. The name "ELOHIM," like the word "God" in English, may refer to the true God or to any object of worship, or even to human dignitaries.
 - a) Almost always, when used together with the definite article, it is applied to the one true God of Israel.
6. The use of the plural form for God (ELOHIM) with the singular article, it gives a clear indication of the trinity in unity.

B. THE NAME OF GOD "EL."

1. The name "EL" meaning "God, god, mighty one, strength." - Dt. 32:4 - "*He is the Rock, His work is perfect; for all His ways are justice, a God of truth and without injustice; righteous and upright is He.*"
 - a) This is a very ancient name for God, which is found in some form in all of the Semitic languages.
 - b) It can have several meanings, but in the bible, it usually refers to the True God of Israel.
 - c) It also occurs in common names, as in "Daniel," meaning "God is my judge."
 - d) It is interesting that this name, as well as most of the common divine names, are found in Deut. 32.

2. "**EL ELYON**" - "The Most High" From Alah Which Means "To Ascend."

- a) Deut. 32:8 - "When the Most High divided their inheritance to the nations, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the boundaries of the peoples according to the number of the children of Israel."
- b) Gen. 14:18-20 - "Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. And he blessed him and said: "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand." And he gave him a tithe of all."
- c) It was the most high God who so loved the world that He sent His Son to redeem us, who is our High Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.
- d) Heb. 6:20 - "Where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek."
- e) The Saviour lowered Himself to the level of the greatest sinner.
- f) Phil. 2:9 - "Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name."
- g) He is at the right hand of the Most High God.

3. "**EL OLAM**" - "THE EVERLASTING GOD."

- a) The thought conveyed by this name was not only the eternal duration of God but also His everlasting faithfulness.
- b) As recorded in Genesis, Abraham called on "Jehovah," the Everlasting God" who keeps His covenants.
- c) The psalmist, thinking of the Lord as a perpetual dwelling place, said, "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hast formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God" (EL). (Ps. 90:1-2)
- d) Isaiah the prophet exhorted the people in a time of wavering.
 - (1) Isa. 26:4 - "Trust in the LORD forever, for in YAH, the LORD, is everlasting strength."

4. "**EL SHADDAI**" - "THE ALMIGHTY ONE." - Gen. 17:1 - "When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless."

- (1) Gen. 28:3 - "May God Almighty bless you, and make you fruitful and multiply you, that you may be an assembly of peoples."
- (2) Gen. 35:11 - "Also God said to him: "I am God Almighty. Be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall proceed from you, and kings shall come from your body."
- (3) Gen. 43:14 - "And may God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may release your other brother and Benjamin. If I am bereaved, I am bereaved!"
- (4) Gen. 48:3 - "Then Jacob said to Joseph: "God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me."
- (5) Ex. 6:3 - "I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name, LORD, I was not known to them."
- (6) Ezek. 10:5 - "And the sound of the wings of the cherubim was heard even in the outer court, like the voice of Almighty God when He speaks."
- b) The compound form "EL SHADDAI" is found 7 times.
- c) The single word "Shaddi" meaning "the Almighty" is found 41 times and 31 times in Job alone.

C. THE NAME OF GOD "ADONAI" - Lord, lord, master, owner, ruler.

1. "Adonai" occurs 449 times in the O.T. and 315 times in conjunction with "Yahweh."
2. "Adhon" emphasizes the servant-master relationship.
 - a) Gen. 24:9 - "So the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and swore to him concerning this matter."
3. And thus suggest God's authority as Master; One who is Sovereign in His rule and has absolute authority.
 - a) Ps. 8:1 - "O LORD, our Lord, How excellent is Your name in all the earth, You who set Your glory above the heavens!"
 - b) Hos 12:14 - "Ephraim provoked Him to anger most bitterly; therefore his Lord will leave on him his bloodguilt, and return his reproach upon him."
4. Adonai should probably be understood as meaning "Lord of all" or Lord par excellence.
 - a) Deut. 10:17 - "For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe."
 - b) Josh. 3:11 - "Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth is crossing over before you into the Jordan."
5. It is also possible to understand ADONAI as a personal address meaning "my Lord."

D. THE NAME OF GOD "JEHOVAH" - Is The Personal Name Of God In His Relationship As Redeemer.

- a) Ex. 3:13-15 - "Then Moses said to God, "Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What is His name?' what shall I say to them?" And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.' " Moreover God said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: 'The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is My name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations.'"
2. "JEHOVAH" is the name for the Lord God occurring most frequently in the O.T. (5,321 times).
 - a) The actual Hebrew form of the word was "YHWH." There was no sound in the name of God in pronouncing His name, because they were forbidden by the commandments to take the name of the Lord in vain.
3. Jesus used the name "I'AM" to identify with the Jews -
 - a) Before Abraham was IAM (Jn. 8:58).
 - b) IAM the Way, the Truth and the Life (Jn. 14:6).
 - c) I'AM the Light (Jn. 8:12).
 - d) I'AM the Bread of Life (Jn. 6:35).
 - e) I'AM the Resurrection and the Life (Jn. 11:25).

E. THE NAME OF GOD "HA TSUR" - "THE ROCK."

1. The metaphysical name for Jehovah, HA TSUR, is found 5 times in Deuteronomy chapter thirty-two verse four.
2. This term stresses the immutability of God, the Rock of ages. Also in:
 - a) Deut. 32:15, 18, 30, 31 - "But Jeshurun grew fat and kicked; you grew fat, you grew thick, you are covered with fat; then he forsook God who made him, and scornfully esteemed the Rock of his salvation." (15) "Of the Rock who begot you, you are unmindful, and have forgotten the God who fathered you." (18) "How could one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, unless their Rock had sold them, and the LORD had surrendered them? For their rock is not like our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges." (30, 31)
 - b) Isa. 17:10 - "Because you have forgotten the God of your salvation, and have not been mindful of the Rock of your stronghold, therefore you will plant pleasant plants and set out foreign seedlings."
3. Paul used this name in (I Cor. 10:4) which is also in (Ex. 17:6).
 - a) I Cor. 10:4 - "And all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ."
 - b) Ex. 17:6 - "Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink." And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel."

II. THE NAMES OF JEHOVAH.

A. THE COMPOUND NAMES OF JEHOVAH.

1. Since JEHOVAH is the covenant name of God expressing personal relationship (Ex. 19:3-6), it is natural that His name would be compounded with other terms that identify and make specific those relationships.

2. Ex. 19:3-6 - *"And Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. 'Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. 'And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel."*

B. JEHOVAH ELOHIM.

1. Gen. 2:4 - *"This is the history of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens."*

2. This name identifies Jehovah with the creation of all things.

3. The triune God of creation is also the Redeemer of His people.

C. JEHOVAH JIREH.

1. Gen. 22:14 - *"And Abraham called the name of the place, The-Lord-Will-Provide; as it is said to this day, "In the Mount of The LORD it shall be provided."*

2. This was the name of the place Abraham called it when God provided a substitute for Isaac.

D. JEHOVAH RAPHA.

1. Ex. 15:26 - *"And said, "If you diligently heed the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I am the LORD who heals you."*

2. Jehovah here reveals His personal relationship as the Healer of His people.

E. JEHOVAH NISSI - "The Lord Is My Banner"

1. Ex. 17:15 - *"And Moses built an altar and called its name, The-Lord-Is-My-Banner."*

2. "The Lord is My Banner" - The Israelites had just been victorious in the battle with Amalek. To commemorate the victory, an altar was built and named Jehovah Nissi.

a) Ex. 17:8-15 - *"Now Amalek came and fought with Israel in Rephidim. And Moses said to Joshua, "Choose us some men and go out, fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand." So Joshua did as Moses said to him, and fought with Amalek. And Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. And so it was, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses' hands became heavy; so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it. And Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. So Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write this for a memorial in the book and recount it in the hearing of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven." And Moses built an altar and called its name, The-Lord-Is-My-Banner."*

F. JEHOVAH SHALOM - "The Lord Is Peace"

1. Jud 6:24 - *"So Gideon built an altar there to the LORD, and called it The-Lord-Shalom. To this day it is still in Ophrah of the Abiezrites."*

2. *"Jesus said My peace I give unto you."* (Jn. 14:27)

G. "JEHOVAH SHAMMAH" - "The Lord Is There"

1. Ezek. 48:35 - *"All the way around shall be eighteen thousand cubits; and the name of the city from that day shall be: The LORD Is There."*

H. "JEHOVAH RAOH" - "The Lord Is My Shepherd."

1. Ps. 23:1 - " *The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.* "
2. It was consulting to Israel to think of Jehovah as the great Shepherd of their flock, who provided such rich pastures that none needed to suffer want.
3. Jesus: " *I 'AM the good Shepherd; the good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.* " (Jn. 10:11)
4. Peter also spoke of the Great Shepherd. - I Pet. 5:4 - " *And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.* "

I. "JEHOVAH TSIDKENU" - "The Lord Our Righteousness."

1. Jer. 23:6 - " *In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell safely; now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.* "
2. Paul the Apostle also wrote us about Jesus who is made for us Righteousness.
3. I Cor. 1:30 - " *But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God--and righteousness and sanctification and redemption--* "

J. "JEHOVAH SABAOTH" - "The Lord Of Hosts"

1. Ps. 24:10 - " *Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, He is the King of glory. Selah* "

III. CONCLUSION:

A. How wonderful to know that all these names bring comfort to my life, knowing in whom I have believed, will never fail me.

QUICK FACTS ABOUT ANGELS

A.THERE ARE MULTITUDES OF ANGELS IN JOYFUL ASSEMBLY

1.Heb. 12:22 - "But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly."

B.ANGELS ARE A HEAVENLY AUDIENCE

1.1Cor.4:9 - "...We have been made a spectacle to the whole universe, to angels as well as to men."

2.1Cor. 11:10 - "For this reason, and because of the angels, the woman ought to have a sign of authority on her head."

C.THEY ARE VERY INTERESTED IN THE GOSPEL

1.1Pet. 1:12 - "It was revealed to them [the prophets] that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from Heaven. Even angels long to look into these things."

2.Eph.3:10 - "His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to His eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord."

D.THEY ARE MINISTERING SPIRITS SENT TO SERVE US

1.Heb. 1:14 - "Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?"

a)cf. Peter's angelic 'jail-break' - Acts 12:5-10

2.John Paton, a missionary to the New Hebrides Islands, told of how one night hostile natives surrounded his missions headquarters, intent on burning the Patons out and killing them. He and his wife prayed through the entire night, and when daylight finally came, their attackers all left. A year later, the chief of the tribe became a Christian, and Paton asked the man about that night. The chief replied, "Who were all those men you had with you there?" The missionary explained that only he and his wife were there. The chief insisted that he had seen hundreds of big men with shining garments and swords circling the mission headquarters, so the natives were afraid to attack (Billy Graham in Angels, God's Secret Agents, pg 3).

E.INDIVIDUAL BELIEVERS HAVE ANGELS ASSIGNED TO THEM

1.Matt. 18:10 - "See that you do not look down on one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of My Father in heaven."

F.THEY MAY BE SEEN "UNDERCOVER" OR "IN UNIFORM"

1.Heb. 13:2 - "Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it."

a)cf. Burglary Protection

b)cf. Gold Run Experience

G.THEY ALWAYS INITIATE CONTACT WITH US - LEAVE IT THAT WAY!

"Why God Crippled"

outline by Chuck Smith

Intro. I believe that God rules over the affairs of my life. I believe that God loves me. These dual beliefs often cause me problems, for if God loves me, why would He allow pain or hurt to come into my life? I do not want to see those I love hurting. Why would God allow someone He loves to become permanently crippled? This is exactly what happened in the story before us. Let us examine it carefully that we may learn from it.

I. LOOK AT THE MAN JACOB.

A. His name means heal catcher, which has come to be translated supplanter.

1. He is what we would title a self made man.
2. He is a shrewd, cunning operator who will always get the best of the deal. Not the kind you like to do business with.
3. He was the second born, but he desired the rights of the firstborn, so he took advantage of his brothers weakened famished condition and would not share some of his stew with him unless he would trade for the birthright.
4. He desired the blessing his father intended to bestow upon his brother so he disguised himself as his brother and lied to his father in order to steal the blessing.
5. He desired Laban's daughter Rachel as a wife and he had no dowery to offer, so he offered his services for seven years.
 - a) For a time it seemed that he had met his match in Laban, when his uncle switched daughters and he discovered in the morning that it was Leah in bed with him instead of Rachel.
 - b) But in the end, as he leaves Haran, he has acquired a greater herd than his uncle.

B. You can not be this kind of an operator, without making enemies.

1. When Esau heard that Jacob had deceived his father and received his intended blessing, he vowed to kill him at the opportune time.
2. When Laban heard that Jacob had left with all his goods he pursued after him intending to retrieve all the wealth.
 - a) Had it not been for God's intervention, he would have stripped Jacob.

II. THE CRISIS THAT JACOB IS FACING.

A. Behind him there is an angry uncle.

1. They had had angry bitter words between them.
2. They had set up a pile of stones with the agreement that they would not pass over them toward each other.
3. Jacob knows that there is no turning back.

B. He had sent messengers ahead to let his brother Esau know that he is returning home after twenty years, and they have just returned to let him know that his brother is coming to meet him, with four hundred men.

1. Jacob know very well that this is more than he needs for a welcoming committee.

C. C. He is trapped, behind him is an angry uncle, in front of him is an angry brother. There is no where to go. What does he do? What any one does when they get in these straits, he prayed.

1. But then true to form, he began to scheme.
2. He ordered the servants to drive three herds of animals before him, comprised of goats, rams, camels, cows, donkeys. When they met Esau, and he asked of them they were to reply that they were a gift for Esau from his brother Jacob.
3. Here is Jacob calling on God for help, but then back up to his old tricks of scheming his way out of his predicament.

III. GOD'S PROBLEM. Here is a man He wants to bless, He desires to make him one of the patriarchs of the nation. From his line, He wants to bring His Son into the world. God can not use him, or do for him what He desires as long as he is such a self-reliant conniver.

A. God must somehow break him down, where he will trust in God completely, and not in his own schemes.

1. You would think that the present set of circumstances would have accomplished that, but not so, as the servants start out toward Esau strategically spaced we see old heel catcher at work.

2. It is at this point in the loneliness of the night that the Lord came to him and began to wrestle with him all night long.

a) If ever there were a time that you need a good night's sleep to face the great pressures of the coming day, this was it.

b) But instead a wrestling match that lasted all night.

c) Now I know that wrestling can be very exhausting. 15 minutes can leave you weak and tired.

d) Jacob would not give up, he would not surrender.

3. As the new day had begun to dawn, and Jacob would still not surrender to the Lord, the Lord touched his hip and crippled him.

a) This was it, the last straw, so to speak, Jacob was now defeated, it is more that he can handle, and he begins to weep.

b) The Lord said, "Let me go, the new day is dawning." Jacob crying replied, "Don't go without blessing me."

c) Crippled, broken, defeated, crying, he is now in the place where God can do his work in his life.

d) What is your name? Heel catcher. Your name shall no more be heel catcher, but ruled by God.

4. You have wrestled with God and prevailed. How did he prevail in his struggle with God? Through prayer and tears.

a) You say, I don't see anywhere in the text that Jacob was crying. For this insight you must turn to Hosea's commentary on this passage and in #Hos 12:4 |, he tells us that he struggled with the the angel of the Lord, and prevailed, he wept and sought favor from Him.

b) Many see Jacob's statement of I will not let you go unless you bless me as a demand from a position of strength. Not so, it was the prayer of a man who had been crippled, and is now broken.

c) In the early morning light as Jacob goes back across the stream toward his wives and children, they probably asked, "Heel catcher, what's wrong, why are you limping?" I believe he responded, "Don't call me heel catcher, call me Israel, ruled by God."

B. Did God have to cripple him?

1. In Jacob's case yes. There was so much that God had yet in store for him, and he was not able to receive it yet.

2. Does God have to cripple you? It all depends, what will it take to bring you to the end of yourself and to a complete trust in him.

3. Did Jonah have to spend three miserable days and nights in the belly of the whale. No, had he gone directly to Ninevah, he would have never met the whale.

4. When God cripples a man, it is always for the purpose that He might crown him.

HOW COULD JOSEPH RESIST THE TEMPTATION FOR SO LONG?

A. JOSEPH LET HIS FAITH BE KNOWN

1. Potiphar (and others, presumably) knew that Joseph was blessed because of his relationship with God (39:3). Joseph had to have said something about his relationship with God for that to be the case

B. JOSEPH KEPT BUSY

1. You don't advance the way he did unless you are a busy worker. An old Turkish proverb says, "Men are usually tempted by the devil, but an idle man positively tempts the devil."

2. cf. also "Idle hands are the Devil's workshop".

C. HE WAS CAREFUL TO NEVER BE ALONE WITH HER

1. Joseph wisely avoided even being around her.

D. JOSEPH CALLED THE TEMPTATION WHAT IT WAS - SIN! "How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?"

1. Today we call sin by other names. Hostility and temper is "self-expression." Pride is "self-esteem." Gluttony is "the good life." Covetousness is "trying to get ahead." Perversion is "an alternative lifestyle." Adultery is "a cry for help in a bad marriage."

E. JOSEPH KNEW THAT SIN WAS AGAINST GOD

1. One might justify sinning against another person who has done us wrong, but how can we sin against God? David reflects this same heart in his prayer of repentance: "Against You and You only have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight" (Psalm 51:4). Of course, David had also sinned against Uriah, against Bathsheba, against their child, against his family, and against his people; but worst of all was his sin against God.

F. HE REFUSED TO SIN!

1. Sometimes it just comes down to that. We have to refuse, and say "no" to sin, even when we feel like saying "yes."

a) Knowing the fleshly inclination of men - their ability to detach sex from romance and love, and be promiscuous - this is wonderful obedience on the part of Joseph

• NOTE: OBEDIENCE IS MUCH EASIER WHEN WE KNOW WHO GOD IS.

2. "When I regarded God as a tyrant, I thought sin a trifle; but when I knew him to be my father, then I mourned that I could ever have kicked against him. When I thought that God was hard, I found it easy to sin; but when I found God so kind, so good, so overflowing with compassion, I smote upon my breast to think that I could ever have rebelled against one who loved me so, and sought my good." (Spurgeon)

DREAMS

I. DREAMS ARE USED BY GOD TO COMMUNICATE WITH PEOPLE

A. God may certainly speak through dreams (Genesis 20:3; 28:12; 31:11; 31:24; Numbers 12:6; 1 Samuel 28:6; Joel 2:28; Matthew 1:20; 2:13; 2:22)

1. cf. Jacob and his dream at Bethel - Gen. 28:12-15

2. cf. Laban - Gen. 31:24 - "Then God came to Laban the Aramean in a dream at night and said to him, "Be careful not to say anything to Jacob, either good or bad."

II. DREAMS ARE USED BY GOD TO TELL THE FUTURE

A. cf. Pharaoh's dream - Gen. 41:1-7

B. Dan. 7:1, 15-18 - 1 - "In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream, and visions passed through his mind as he was lying on his bed. He wrote down the substance of his dream." ... "16 I, Daniel, was troubled in spirit, and the visions that passed through my mind disturbed me. 16 I approached one of those standing there and asked him the true meaning of all this. "So he told me and gave me the interpretation of these things: 17 'The four great beasts are four kingdoms that will rise from the earth. 18 But the saints of the Most High will receive the kingdom and will possess it forever--yes, for ever and ever.'"

III. DREAMS ARE A SIGN OF THE LAST DAYS

A. Joel 2:28-29 - "28 And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. 29 Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days."

IV. BUT NOT EVERY DREAM IS A REVELATION FROM GOD.

A. Be careful of putting too much weight on dreams.

1. Dreams can come just because our minds are agitated or busy

2. cf. Ecclesiastes 5:3, 7 - "3 As a dream comes when there are many cares, so the speech of a fool when there are many words. ... 7 Much dreaming and many words are meaningless. Therefore stand in awe of God."

V. DREAMS ARE TO BE EVALUATED VERY CAREFULLY

A. The Bible warns about false prophets who use dreams to give weight to their message (Deuteronomy 13:1-5; Jeremiah 23:25-28)

1. Dt. 13:1-4 - "1 If a prophet, or one who foretells by dreams, appears among you and announces to you a miraculous sign or wonder, 2 and if the sign or wonder of which he has spoken takes place, and he says, "Let us follow other gods" (gods you have not known) "and let us worship them," 3 you must not listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer. The Lord your God is testing you to find out whether you love him with all your heart and with all your soul. 4 It is the Lord your God you must follow, and him you must revere. Keep his commands and obey him; serve him and hold fast to him."

2. Jer. 23:25-32 - "25 I have heard what the prophets say who prophesy lies in my name. They say, 'I had a dream! I had a dream!' 26 How long will this continue in the hearts of these lying prophets, who prophesy the delusions of their own minds? 27 They think the dreams they tell one another will make my people forget my name, just as their fathers forgot my name through Baal worship. 28 Let the prophet who has a dream tell his dream, but let the one who has my word speak it faithfully. For what has straw to do with grain?" declares the Lord. 29 "Is not my word like fire," declares the Lord, "and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces? 30 "Therefore," declares the Lord, "I am against the prophets who steal from one another words supposedly from me. 31 Yes," declares the Lord, "I am against the prophets who wag their own tongues and yet declare, 'The Lord declares.' 32 Indeed, I am against those who prophesy false dreams," declares the Lord. "They tell them and lead my people astray with their reckless lies, yet I did not send or appoint them. They do not benefit these people in the least," declares the Lord."

B. Col. 2:18-19 - "18 Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions. 19 He has lost connection with the Head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow."

JOSEPH AS A PICTURE OF JESUS

1. Was a shepherd
2. Loved by his father
3. Sent to his brethren
4. Hated by his brothers
5. Prophesied his coming glory
6. Rejected by his brothers
7. Endures unjust punishment from his brothers
8. Sentenced to the pit
9. Delivered to the pit though a leader knew he should go free
10. Sold for pieces of silver
11. Handed over to the Gentiles
12. Regarded as dead, but raised out of the pit
13. Went to Egypt
14. Made a servant
15. Tempted severely, but did not sin
16. Falsely accused
17. Made no defense
18. Cast into prison, and numbered with sinners and criminals
19. Endures unjust punishment from Gentiles
20. Associated with two other criminals; one is pardoned and one is not
 1. The Cupbearer, with his wine, and the Baker, with his bread, have been associated with the elements of communion; the three-day period before their case is resolved has been associated with the three days before the resurrection of Jesus
21. Brings a message of deliverance in prison
22. Shown to have Divine wisdom
23. Recognized as having the Spirit of God
24. Betrayed by those close
25. Glorified after his humiliation
26. Honored among Gentiles while still despised or forgotten by his brethren
27. Given a Gentile bride
28. Thirty years old when he began his life's work
29. Blesses the world with bread
30. The world is instructed to go to him and do whatever he says to do
31. Joseph's brethren were driven out of their own land
32. Joseph does not go to his brothers; they come to him
33. Knew his brethren even while unknown and unrecognized by them
34. Blesses his brethren without their knowledge
35. Desires all of his brethren to come to him
36. Time gap between Joseph's initial relationship with his brothers and his second relationship to his brothers
37. Joseph made known to his brethren a way of deliverance through substitution
38. "Second coming" to his brothers has two stages; Joseph made himself known to his brethren at his second appearing to them
39. The brothers repent of their rejection of Joseph
40. Joseph will allow no fellowship (as in eating together) until his brothers repent and he reveals himself
41. Joseph's brethren went forth to proclaim his glory
42. Joseph makes full provision for his brethren
43. Prepares a place for his brethren, and receives them into it