

Last Edited On 08-25-2017

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# Orthodox Christianity Is a Cult

By Tekana Histrom

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# Introduction and Summary of Conclusions

One can describe me as a saved, born-again, Bible-believing Christian because I still agree with Protestant evangelicals on salvation by faith alone. In fact this paper will generally cite evangelical scholars exclusively. It seeks a Second Reformation and refutes cessationism in favor of continuationism.

Orthodoxy is the body of doctrines common to the Protestant, Catholic, and Eastern Orthodox denominations.<sup>1</sup> Although its summary entitled the Nicene Creed is sound doctrine in my opinion, the devil is in the details.

"If the church is a cult, why do I feel the anointing at every service?" The Father won't ignore worship. Today's institutions are not real churches with real pastors but we absolutely still need man-made institutions to help gather us for worship, until revival either transforms them or spawns authentic churches.

Orthodoxy doesn't acknowledge that several of its beliefs *seem* either contradictory, contrary to fact, or unwarranted. This makes it a cult even if those beliefs should someday turn out to be true. When a preacher stands before a congregation with the aura of, "I'm now going to teach you what the Bible says," he's essentially *lying* to them if he never admits that:

- He doesn't know with 100% certainty what it says. Nor do I.
- Many orthodox teachings seem illogical, unclear, or unwarranted.

Well does *anyone* have reliable knowledge of what the Bible says? In my opinion:

1. Prophets had knowledge.
2. God wants all Christians to be prophets (Acts 2:17, 1Cor 14:1).
3. Probably no real prophets exist today.

This paper will further argue:

1. Sola Scriptura (the Bible as the only Authority) is cultic nonsense.
2. Tradition alone (the Church as only Authority) is cultic nonsense.

3. Orthodoxy defines God in insulting ways misconstruing Him as exceedingly evil and unworthy of worship.
4. Orthodoxy denies God's most costly sacrifice, mistakenly presumed to be the cross, leaving many Christians too underwhelmed by the Lord's generosity to praise Him day and night. A shortage of praise throttles the flow of grace, and the whole world suffers for it.
5. Orthodoxy really doesn't know who God is or why He created us. They define Him as a kind of magical being with sorcerer powers, who relies on witch-like incantations, mere shouts of the sort 'Abracadabra,' to magically speak miracles into existence ex nihilo. This cultic fairy tale is an impossible fantasy vigorously challenged here.
6. Luke-Acts defines genuine evangelism as prophetic utterance.<sup>2</sup> And the church still doesn't comprehend prophecy.
7. A mature prophet and a mature believer are the same concept.
8. Any Christian unexposed to face-to-face visions of God is spiritually immature.
9. Sanctification isn't distinct from revival but rather consists of reviving outpourings received through prayer, for "how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" (Lk 11:13, KJV).<sup>3</sup> This verse is Scripture's only explicit instruction on how to receive or be filled with the Holy Spirit.<sup>4</sup>

The footnotes are designed to be readable somewhat like one big appendix, to spare readers the tedium of jumping back and forth.

Square brackets are used to insert my own comments into citations. For example, "The LORD make his face shine [physically] upon thee" (Num 6:25, KJV).<sup>5</sup>

## **Part One: Cultist Views on Authority, God, Creation, Adam, Incarnation, and Soul**

## **The Basic Principles of Reasonable Thinking**

The following is a sensible list of the principles involved in reasonable thinking.

**Principle I.** Absent 100% certainty a reasonable person won't say, "God told me so," but rather, "I am not entirely sure."

**Principle II.** I am morally obligated to whatever I am *most* convinced of. Hence an unbeliever should generally convert if God "convicts" (convinces) him at a level of certainty close to 100%.<sup>6</sup> Does this principle mean it is okay to kill someone if I have, say, 98% certainty about it? Unless I'm a psychopath, I'll always have at least 99% certainty that 98% is insufficient for murder.

**Principle III.** In both doctrine and practice, the pursuit of 100% certainty is an ongoing responsibility.

**Principle IV.** In ordinary Bible-study, known as biblical exegesis, the maxim must be logic first, then Scripture, because a self-contradictory proposition is unacceptable regardless of "supporting" verses.

**Principle V.** A doctrine must be relatively clear. Anything completely beyond human comprehension is gibberish, unless it's just a question of magnitude, for example I cannot comprehend the full magnitude of God's love. And when faced with two competing doctrines, at least one of them sufficiently unclear to possibly constitute gibberish, let's tend to prefer the one more clear.

**Principle VI.** Among competing theories, the one most plausible in terms of harmony with the data wins.

**Principle VII.** Let common sense attempt to resolve any *apparent* conflicts in the above principles. For example 100% certainty trumps all.

## **A Challenge to Orthodox Notions of Authority**

Ask an orthodox Christian, "Who or what is your authority?", and you'll get answers like this:

**"The Bible is my only authority"**

**"God is my only authority. The Holy Spirit speaks to me directly"**

**"The Church is my only authority"**

Here's the only *reasonable* proposition, "My conscience is my only authority."<sup>7</sup> Imagine commanding your son, "Clean your room every day of the week". You meant seven days a week, but he feels certain you meant "all weekdays" and thus five days a week. He is acting in good conscience defined as feelings of certainty concerning his moral obligations. Should he be punished? Of course not. Therefore obedience to conscience defines all righteousness and, as a result, even God's voice must influence conscience to obligate us (Rom 9:1).<sup>8</sup> For example when the gospel is preached, the Holy Spirit provides feelings of certainty that convict (convince) the sinner. This is conscience. God condemns men to hell only for rejecting both of His revelations unto conscience.

1. General revelation (Rom 1:18-20). Nature awakens our conscience's faint picture of God, via fire, clouds, sun, smoke, thunder, lightning, smiling faces, etc.
2. Direct revelation – Usually this vision from the Holy Spirit is also blurry until maturity.

Surrender to either portrait is salvation (the new birth) for OT and NT saints alike, even without hearing the name Jesus Christ. Salvation implants an Inward Witness that will confirm the name if ever heard.

Hebrews 11 celebrates Abraham's attempt to murder his own son as one of the most righteous acts of human history. Only an evil man, or a criminally insane psychopath, would say to himself, "I'm not 100% sure it was God speaking, but I'm going to kill my son anyway." Thus the Voice must have invested him with 100% certainty about killing his son, and then later 100% certainty about abstaining.<sup>9</sup> The same Voice commanded Moses to slaughter seven nations to obtain the promised land, and indicted Israel's initial reluctance as disobedience to the Voice (Heb 3-4). Similarly Saul's reluctance to slaughter the Amalekites was denounced as disobedience to the Voice (1 Sam 15:22). In all such scenarios, the Voice inspired 100% certainty in the conscience. What about evil men who *claim* to be operating on 100% certainty? Believe them only if you



**yourself have 100% certainty about it. At any rate God cannot fault them if they are indeed operating on 100% certainty.**

**From a logical standpoint, 100% certainty seems to be the only possible way for prophets to recognize God's voice infallibly. An OT prophet would be foolish to speak with uncertainty, since he could be stoned for any errors. What exactly is 100% certainty? Let's set the bar at the zenith to avoid confusing it with 99% certainty, thus defining it as an (evidently) supernatural influence that would disable us from even *comprehending* any reservations, questions, or doubts, indeed would prevent them from entering our mind at all. The mind won't even be capable of asking itself, "Am I 100% certain?"**

**Does God perhaps possess His own special definition of justice unconcerned with conscience? If He isn't bound to conventional justice, however, why bother atone? Why not simply place unredeemed sinners in heaven? And let's suppose He does indeed abide by a non-human definition of the virtues justice, love, kindness, goodness, integrity, and merit. Anyone who deviates from humanly defined kindness is behaving unkindly by the human definition, and likewise for the other virtues. Such deviance would therefore categorize Him, in human language, as unloving, unkind, unjust, dishonest, and unworthy – and our Bible translations should be updated accordingly. Thus the verses intended to promise us His eternal benevolence would now proclaim His everlasting unkindness! That is a logical contradiction.**

**"The infallible church is my final authority." This is the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox position, according to which an individual should rely on the infallible church for doctrine because his own private interpretation of Scripture is too error-prone, too fallible, to be relied upon. But if he (or she) shouldn't rely on his own private feelings of certainty, he's stuck, he won't be able to accept *any* religion, denomination, or gospel.**

**"The Bible is my only final authority."<sup>10</sup> Again, if a person shouldn't rely on his or her own private feelings of certainty, he or she cannot accept *any* book as inspired. Furthermore Sola Scriptura unacceptably ascribes authority to mere humans, because one learns Greek and**



Hebrew only from them. It also ties God's hands from running the church because He must always wait for us to verify His will exegetically, whereas angels immediately heed the Voice spoken to them at 100% certainty. 2Tim 3:16-17 is often adduced for Sola Scriptura. For starters it is circular reasoning to use such a NT passage to prove the NT to be authoritative. It's like saying, "I know the Book of Mormon to be true because it says so." Secondly the term "Scripture" in the passage refers to the OT. Therefore if Paul was classifying the OT as sufficient, the NT is not necessary. Thirdly it refers to the "man of God" as a standard OT slogan for a prophet, but a passage scoped to a prophet isn't necessarily for all believers. Fourthly the passage might simply be referring to the use of Bible-study as a fallback for any topics as yet unclarified by the Voice. Fifthly the printing press was invented only 500 years ago. Until then Christians at large lacked Bibles. Either God was too incompetent to provide them earlier in history, or they simply aren't exceedingly urgent. Paul never laments the paucity of Bibles, nor prays for more. On foot he spread the gospel halfway around the world despite a lack of books, pamphlets, tapes, computers, CDs, DVDs, websites, television, radio, cellphones, and modern transportation.

## Is God Infinite?

Orthodoxy's magical God is supposedly infinite, but the notion of an existing infinity smells suspiciously like rubbish. Hypothetically let's suppose God forgot one language, reducing His language count to infinity minus one. Anything less than infinity must be a finite number, right? How many digits in that finite number? Or perhaps it is still infinity, but how can a reduced number be the same number? Thus an existing infinity makes no sense. At first one might imagine a piece of matter to be infinitely divisible, but any *existing* partitioning is actually a finite set. Otherwise the parts would sum to an infinite amount of matter. Even integral calculus doesn't rely on an existing infinity but merely infers the

eventual impact of an ongoing pattern. For example the fraction  $1/x$  approaches zero as the number  $x$  is steadily incremented approaching infinity. Clear enough.

God's love is demonstrably finite because unselfish love *acts* on our behalf, it intervenes. Therefore infinite love yields unlimited atonement exonerating even the demons and thus precluding hell. In my opinion God is perfect, and perfectly unselfish, in the sense of having fully, perfectly realized His finite potential for virtue. Saddled with a finite tolerance for suffering, He abstained from atoning for the fallen angels to avoid destabilizing Himself emotionally.

God's knowledge is finite because He lacks foreknowledge, other than of those events inevitable, foreordained, or a hybrid of the two (such as how Christ predicted Peter's threefold denial of Him). In fact a growing body of evangelicals known as Open Theists adamantly deny foreknowledge. In my view God lacks it because He is trapped in time just like we are. Also free will logically contradicts foreknowledge, because free will is a moment of uncertainty and indeterminacy about an impending decision whose outcome remains unknown until the volition becomes resolute. It is self-contradictory for even God to say, "I foreknow the outcome of my decision even though I haven't yet decided." Since His decisions affect mine, He can't foreknow mine either.

In fact God is evil if He foreknew the fall of Adam, Eve, and Lucifer. Why not have the kindness to simply limit His creation to those foreknown to freely choose obedience? Would you have created Adam, Eve, and Lucifer foreknowing their fall, instead of, say, Bob, Sue, and Vincent foreknowing their obedience? Of course not. Inasmuch as it actually takes monumentally less effort to deal with Bob, Sue, and Vincent, only a sado-masochist would create Adam, Eve, and Lucifer.<sup>[11](#)</sup>

Or perhaps God has some good hidden purpose justifying this dark world? Firstly this is just a veiled way, already refuted, of granting Him a non-human definition of virtues such as goodness. Secondly His purpose is hardly hidden since the final outcome is already foreknown to strand billions in hell. Thirdly the notion of a transcendentally good hidden purpose implies that creating Adam, Eve, and Lucifer was ultimately

more generous than creating Bob, Sue, and Vincent. This leads to an extrapolation problem, namely, exactly how much generosity does God have? If infinite, then He already has plans, after this world is done, to create another dark Earth, and then another, and so on ad infinitum.

## Is God Eternal In a Timeless Sense?

God is certainly eternal in the everlasting sense. The orthodox assertion in question here, however, is that God, as a magical being, is outside of time and thus timeless. Atemporality is humanly incomprehensible. It's gibberish. Consciousness is being aware, for at least one moment of time, the state of affairs around us, or at least the mindset within us.<sup>[12](#)</sup> Furthermore atemporality flies in the face of a Bible that records the actions of men and God over six thousand years of time. For example God became angry with Moses at the time of the burning bush, not from eternity to eternity. Indeed the Lord is a merciful God whose anger will not endure for an everlasting period of time (Mic 7:18). Free will involves time because it is a moment of deliberation and indecision followed by resoluteness.

A timeless God would not merit any praise. Merit is a status acquired by freely choosing to labor/suffer for a righteous cause over an extended period of time. Almost every sermon in church history is based on this definition of merit. Suppose the cross were timeless, for example, lacking even one moment of suffering. Would God merit any praise for it? Of course not. Orthodoxy defines God as an inherently, innately holy Being who did not labor to gradually acquire holiness over time. Such holiness has no merit and merits no praise. After all, picture two men. The first one was born filthy rich in virtue of inherited wealth. The other one was born miserably poor but achieves equal wealth by hard work over much time. Only the work-based acquisition merits praise. At least the loyal angels merit some praise because they labored/suffered for some time against the agony of temptation. Orthodox Christians regularly insult God by praising Him for *being* holy (magically) instead of for *becoming* holy (by hard work). This is tantamount to stigmatizing Him as

*unaccomplished*. Yet doesn't Scripture itself praise God for being holy? Certainly, as do I, having foremost in mind His hard work to *become* holy.

What specific acquisitions of "wealth" constitute His holiness? What exactly are we praising Him for? (1) He transformed His disposition from a morally neutral state into one zealously consumed with righteousness and benevolence. (2) He acquired enough knowledge to judge, protect, and serve the world. (3) His physical hands acquired the mechanical skills to enact His will. Around 200 A.D. the church father Tertullian, the man who invented the word Trinity, insisted that God is a fully material Being.<sup>[13](#)</sup>

Why does Scripture claim that God knows everything? That nothing is impossible for Him? The following scope is in view:

- Nothing escapes His notice
- He can do anything needed for our welfare
- His dexterity performs those tasks impeccably

## Precisely How Did God Incarnate Himself?

Here's my understanding of the Trinity and the Incarnation. God's material substance consists of three distinct Persons/Volitions. The Father is seated on a throne. At His right hand is the Son, likewise seated on a throne. Proceeding from the Son's mouth and nostrils - indeed from His body in general - is a fiery breath widely known as The Holy Spirit but better translated The Holy Breath. Daniel saw the Father or Son, or both, on a fiery throne:

I beheld till thrones were set, and the Ancient of days did sit: his raiment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was flames of fire, and its wheels burning fire. A stream of fire issued and came forth from before him (Dan 7:9-10, Darby).

In order to incarnate the Son as an ignorant babe, the Father surgically removed a portion of the Son and literally scrambled it physically, effectively "scrambling His brains", and then simply blended it into a zygote placed in Mary's womb.

Is the orthodox definition of God conducive to an Incarnation? Logically speaking, a God who is omniscient, tireless, and untemptible – innately and immutably so – cannot possibly *change* Himself into a man ignorant, weak, and temptible. Orthodoxy's proposed solution, known as the hypostatic union, merges an ordinary human being into the Godhead. According to this rather insane doctrine, God selected a *fully* human, fully created soul (one of Adam's actual created descendants) and placed it within Mary's womb. *You* could have been the individual randomly selected, in which case *you* would have died on the cross for the sins of the world and would now be the Second Person of the Trinity – the Quadrinity? As orthodox theologian Millard J. Erickson correctly pointed out, this doctrine has God permitting  $3 + 1 = 3$ .<sup>14</sup> Lewis Sperry Chafer admitted that no human being can possibly explain how the hypostatic union manages to avoid a Quadrinity.<sup>15</sup> The prospect of undoing the union raises troubling questions reestablishing the feasibility concerns already mentioned.<sup>16</sup>

It's deemed a union of two natures human and divine. There are severe problems here. A person is a volition, a locus of free will distinct from all other moral agents. God either snuffed out the human soul's volition or retained it. If retained, the human atoned for us, not the Son of God. If snuffed out, which is evidently the orthodox position,<sup>17</sup> the human soul was at best a dead shell donned by the Son like a garment and, as such, logically incapable of changing an *immutably* holy God into a man ignorant, temptible, and weak. To make matters worse, orthodoxy calls it a *union* of two natures, not a transition from one to the other. This construes Jesus Christ as simultaneously fully divine and fully human, and thus both:

- omniscient, untemptible, and tireless
- ignorant, temptible, and weak

The first three traits contradict the second set, as one orthodox theologian frankly admitted.<sup>18</sup> For example it is a logical contradiction to know all math while not knowing any math. Obviously orthodoxy is attempting to merge two persons (two volitions) into one person,<sup>19</sup> which violates the principle of identity. The principle of identity is what assures us that God

and I are distinct. I will never be God, at least in the sense that I am not, and never will be, the volition who freely chose to undergo the ineffably long period of laboring/suffering to become holy. Nor will God ever be me, because I am a volition who has freely chosen to indulge in sin. Thus we say that God and I are *numerically distinct*. He merited supreme worship whereas I, at most, have only merited a bit of ordinary praise (a good pat on the back). By violating the principle of identity, the hypostatic union undermines reality itself and, by so doing, undermines hope. For instance if God can change or conflate identities, then he could change mine to Lucifer and justifiably have me suffer in hell for all his sins.

To claim that Jesus Christ's soul was one of Adam's actual descendants - fully human – classifies Him as a man conceived with reprobate status (condemned to hell) and tainted with original sin. Walvoord admitted that orthodoxy has no solution for this apparent contradiction.<sup>20</sup> Thus Jesus Christ's inner man was (originally) an ordinary human sinner who somehow managed to become God and atone for the sins of the world. Several orthodox theologians have at least admitted that the hypostatic union is humanly incomprehensible.<sup>21</sup> It's gibberish.

In fact this critique was an over-analysis, because the doctrine was already doomed when entitled a union of two natures. Whenever we ask someone, what is the *nature* of an object in question, we use the singular – never the plural - expecting in reply one list of core attributes as its essential definition and won't accept multiple conflicting definitions/natures. Multiple natures are possible only with respect to a given subdivision of an object deviating from the others. Whereas if a single, undivided object could itself consist of mutually contradicting natures, it could never lend itself to the *a priori* concept known as the truth of the matter. Acquiring a human nature as a (conflicting) second nature is logically incoherent, whereas a *change* of nature is somewhat coherent but impossible for an immutable God.

## Creation as an Act of Labor



**“He rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done” (Gen 2:2, WEB). A great leader sets an excellent example for his subordinates to follow. If I tell my son to work hard for a living but have always been lazy, I am a total hypocrite. An *exceptionally* great leader will work much harder and longer than his subordinates. Thus if God merely performed six lazy speeches over six 24-hour periods, and had the gall to call it “work”, worse yet the audacity to put in for a vacation on the seventh day, how would this *not* make Him a total hypocrite? How callous, inconsiderate, and cheapening to those who do real labor shedding blood, sweat, and tears in the fields for fifty years! As part of the ten commandments, God commanded Israel to keep up a six-day work-week to *measure up* to His own sorry example of work! The irony of it all! This looks like the kind of hypocrisy typical of today’s political leaders.**

**Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. You shall labor six days, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to Yahweh your God. You shall not do any work in it, you, nor your son, nor your daughter, your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your livestock, nor your stranger who is within your gates; for in six days Yahweh made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day; therefore Yahweh blessed the Sabbath day, and made it holy (Ex 20:8-11, WEB).**

**And then He has the nerve to demand worship for His role as Creator? Heck, I'd be far more inclined to bow down before any Israelite who labored in the fields for the full fifty years!**

**It's high time for rethinking the seven days. A 24-hour reading is questionable because the sun apparently wasn't set in place until the fourth day.<sup>[22](#)</sup> Moses never said anything about 24 hours. At verse 5 he simply defined a day as a period of darkness followed by a period of light, "God called the light 'day,' and the darkness he called 'night'" (Gen 1:5, WEB). What was the physical light-source for the seven daylights? 2Cor 4:6 strongly suggests it was the Light of Christ's face, as it directly quotes Gen 1:3.<sup>[23](#)</sup>**

**It is God, that said, [physical] Light shall shine out of darkness, who [physically] shined in our hearts, to give the [intuitive] light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (2Cor 4:6, ASV).**



God physically shines His Light into our bodies to regenerate and sanctify us, cerebrally stirring up intuitions/ revelations of Him. Intuition is called a light dawning on the mind because concepts (conceptual objects) initially not seen clearly, and thus literally in mental darkness, are suddenly seen by the mind's eye and thus have come into a mental light. "I was blind but now I see!" An example is my mind forming a picture/vision of a new type of engine when an engineer first begins describing it to me; its structure and component parts gradually emerge out of a mental darkness into a light as he continues filling in the details. Precisely the same kind of evolution in mental picture/vision commences when a new believer first begins to hear about the Trinity and its three component parts/persons. But I digress.

In my view, over the four billion year period spanning the earth's entire history,<sup>24</sup> God shined His own facial Light into the galaxy seven times to create seven Galactic Days, and quenched it six times to create six Galactic Nights. He did this precisely because He intended to lay down His six-day work-model as a paradigm for human labor.<sup>25</sup> And until the sun was set in place on the fourth Galactic Day, His Light also functioned locally as a kind of sun for the earth, providing photosynthesis for the plants for example. During the 4 billion years, God underwent a laborious learning process, perfecting (or at the very least confirming) His own knowledge of species, science, and nature in general, until He eventually felt ready to create Adam and Eve some six thousand years ago.<sup>26</sup> Indeed the entire 13 billion years of known history were part of His total learning period. After resting on the seventh day, did He go back to work? Not with respect to creation. That act is finished, construing the seventh day as an eternal Galactic Day of rest. The seventh Galactic Light is still shining, therefore, for example the divine Light illuminates the heavenly city (Rev 1:16; 21:23-24; 22:4-5). Understandably, then, Hebrews exhorts us to enter into God's eternal rest (Heb 4:11).

How did God begin learning without books, and eyes to read them? Altering a flow of material thought-currents *alters conscience experience*. This is a fact of reality, even if we don't fully understand why. When external objects including sound vibrations impact a physical mind,

thereby altering its flows, the sudden change in conscience experience is called an external sensation. Conversely, when a thought-current, as an act of free will, alters its own flow by struggling to think or comprehend, the sudden change in conscience experience is an *internal* sensation. The upshot is that even a blind man can see. As long as he's receiving physical impacts from his environment, the resulting sensations paint a picture of it. And so the learning process begins.

Human experience strongly suggests that knowledge is only acquired as a learning process. No one has knowledge magically. Admittedly animal bodies and brains are designed to automatically stir up within their souls simplistic forms of behavior termed instinct, but they don't even comprehend their own actions in an astutely intelligent way. Since principle VI counsels us to opt for the theories most plausible in terms of the evidence, self-education is the best explanation for God's knowledge.

## Introducing the Holy Breath

The basic meaning of the Hebrew term *ruach*, and the Greek word *pneuma*, is breath or wind, at least 100 times in the OT alone, for example in reference to Job's bad breath.<sup>27</sup> No one disputes this fact. A few hundred years before Christ, however, several Greek philosophers influenced by Plato began associating *pneuma* with an immaterial substance known today as "spirit." With the exception of Tertullian, the church fathers incorporated this spirit-concept into their interpretation of the biblical Godhead. However, "The Holy Spirit" is not even a plausible title for the Third Person. Suppose I describe a trio like this, "The father, the son and The Human Being." The third title makes zero sense since all three are human beings. In fact it potentially misconstrues the first two persons as non-humans. Moreover it fails to identify the third person at all. Is it the mother? A girlfriend? Another sibling? A neighbor? A coworker? The reader still has no idea who it is! In the same way, it makes no sense to speak of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Isn't the Father holy? Isn't He a spirit? And likewise the Son? Given that each

of the Three is allegedly a Holy Spirit, who is that third person? The reader still hasn't been told who He is!

At any rate we have these two competing translations as the official title of the Third Person.

- The Holy Spirit/Ghost as an immaterial substance
- The Holy Breath/Wind as a material substance

Note that we only need one decisive passage to end the debate. If Scripture intended to convey immaterial Spirit, it must refrain from alluding to physical breath or wind in the immediate context.<sup>28</sup> And yet it *did* so allude in several cases. Probably the best example is John 20:22, Jesus "breathed on them; and he said to them: Receive ye the Holy [Pneuma]"(DRB). In this passage, Jesus was exhaling physical breath from His own nostrils. Accordingly, which translation best fits this context?

- "Receive the Holy Breath"
- "Receive the Holy Spirit"

The choice is perfectly clear, unless the 2,000 years of cultic brainwashing are still blinding readers to the obvious. At least classical scholarship did universally admit that "Receive the Holy Breath" was the most literal rendering of this passage.<sup>29</sup>

Let's consider a few more passages. The waters of the Red Sea did not part instantly but were gradually pushed apart by a physical wind blowing over the course of an entire evening. Moses later insisted that the Wind was actually a blast of Breath from God's nostrils (Ex 15:8-10). Psalm 18 has similar statements. The Hebrew word used in all such passages is ruach, it is the same word that orthodox scholars have been mistranslating as The Spirit of God for 2,000 years. One of my favorite examples, however, is Pentecost:

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy [Pneuma] (Act 2:1-4, KJV).

**They heard the sound of a rushing mighty wind. Which of the following two translations, therefore, best fits the immediate context?**

- They were all filled with the Holy Wind/Breath**
- They were all filled with the Holy Spirit/Ghost**

**The choice is perfectly clear. The following passage alludes to how the farmer's fan used wind/ air to separate wheat from the chaff, and then fire was used to burn the chaff.**

**He shall baptize you [on Pentecost] with the Holy [Pneuma], and with fire: Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire (Mat 3:11-12, KJV).**

**The choice is clear. John anticipates a baptism in Holy Wind and Fire, fulfilled on Pentecost when the disciples heard the violent Wind and saw the tongues of Fire. To summarize, the upshot of breath and wind is that the term "spirit" simply doesn't exist in the Bible.<sup>30</sup> There is no hard evidence for it. It's just a Latin-English word forced into Bible translations by scholars influenced by the immaterialistic philosophy of Plato and Aristotle.**

## **Is the Human Mind Immaterial?**

**The Greek term pneuma is used in Scripture for the souls of both angels and men, not just for the Third Person. Is the human mind an immaterial "spirit"? God will never be angry with my body per se, because it is the mind within my body that causes it to sin - *moves* it to sin. An immaterial mind would be somewhat useless on account of its inability to push or pull the body in any direction. It would simply have no impact or influence on the body at all. Perhaps some specific examples of mind-body interaction will clarify the point. Suppose a bladder becomes full. *When* and *where* is it released? As an act of free will, the mind has plenty of control over that. By simply exerting the power of free will, the mind manages to constrict the bladder until a time and location of its own choosing, unless it becomes so painful that it feels the need to relinquish the battle. Thus it's a two-way influence. The bladder is physically**

impacting the mind with discomfort, but the mind is physically impacting the bladder with a tight constricting grip. Or consider puberty. At a young age a sudden onslaught of hormones begins to physically impact the mind, causing the thoughts to dwell frequently on the opposite sex. Or consider brain damage. If an accident physically damages your brain, it could easily reduce your cognitive powers. Or consider speech. When I want to inject my thoughts into someone's mind, I simply open my mouth to emit sound vibrations that physically stir up thought-patterns within his or her mind. Or consider drugs and alcohol. By physically spiking a man's food or beverage with alcohol or drugs, I could easily cause his mind to fail a math test. None of these mind-body mutual impacts would be logically possible if the mind were an immaterial, intangible substance. Charles Hodge admitted he had no solution for this logical problem.<sup>31</sup> The same line of argumentation was raised by Tertullian way back in 200 A.D.<sup>32</sup> - the church father who insisted that all things are material, and protested loudly against all the theologians of spirit. Even 2,000 years later, orthodoxy cannot refute the logic of his argument. Most theological treatises don't even mention this severe logical problem. It's incredibly cultic to perpetually ignore an utterly devastating argument raised by the noted church father Tertullian almost 2,000 years ago.<sup>33</sup> Interestingly the cleansing work of God in the heart is a ministry "written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart" (2Cor 3:3, KJV) – written on a *fleshy* heart? Yes. Paul could have said “immaterial heart” if that's what he wanted to convey, but he did not. In fact his usage of the terms flesh and body in Romans 6 thru 8 is highly provocative, as will be seen later.

## **Sending the Holy Breath into Proximity for Miracles**

A magical God could presumably speak miracles into existence remotely from afar, without ever bothering to travel to the region in need. Whereas a material, mechanistic God must journey into the immediate proximity to perform the work with his own hands. Which of these two models of God is best supported in Scripture? The remote model? Or the



proximate model? When God intends to sanctify men, He outpours the Holy Breath directly upon the human body, with Pentecost being a prime example. Prior to His Ascension, Jesus promised the Twelve that He would go to the Father and, from that vantage point, send them an outpouring directly into their proximity, "Remain in the city till ye be clothed with power from on high" (Lk 24:49, Darby). Virtually every time Samson needed miraculous strength, Scripture explicitly records an outpouring falling directly upon him at the moment of need. Furthermore both testaments record a number of outpourings of the Holy Breath for the gift of prophecy. Consider how the disciples spoke in unfamiliar languages on Pentecost. It's implausible to imagine them skillfully forming those unfamiliar syllables on their own. It is far more likely that the Holy Breath was physically affecting their voice box, "as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:4, KJV), once again from the vantage point of proximity. Moreover even orthodoxy has a doctrine known as The Procession of the Holy Spirit, by which the Spirit proceeds from the Father and/or Son to the earth for the sake of doing the Father's bidding. It is based on John 15:26, "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me" (KJV). All such verses betoken the sending of the Third Person into the vicinity of men. God even blew a blast of the Holy Breath into the vicinity of the Red Sea to part the waters (Ex 15:8-10), even as Jesus breathed Holy Breath into the Twelve (Jn 20:22).

Using the Hebrew word *ruach* once again, Ps 33:6 states, "By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth"(KJV). Thus the divine Word issued forth as the Breath/Wind of God's mouth to form the heavens.<sup>34</sup> Speaking is clearly a physical act, however. One wonders why a magical being would even need to physically speak at all. What in heaven's name does any kind of physical act have to do with magic in the first place? Shouldn't a magical God simply be able to mentally *will* His decrees into being? Speech really doesn't fit very well with a magical model. It fits much better with the proximate model understood as the release of divine Breath into the

vicinity of men. The spoken divine Word, released as Breath into the proximity, performs the needed miracle and then presumably *returns* to the throne. On this point Isaiah 55:11 drives the nail into the coffin, "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it"(KJV). As the Keil-Delitzsch commentary noted on this verse, it clearly refers to the divine Word as a substance emitted from God's mouth to perform the miracle, after which it returns to Him.

As it goeth forth out of the mouth of God it acquires shape [and travels] there to melt the ice, as it were, and here to heal and to save; and does not return from its course till it has given effect to the will of the sender.

This return of the word to God also presupposes its divine nature.<sup>35</sup>

Thus it has size and shape, whereas the orthodox understanding of spirit excludes both. Genesis 1 begins like this:

And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the [Ruach] of God moved upon the face of the waters (Gen 1:1-2, KJV).

The Holy Breath/Wind was hovering over a mass of waters used as raw material to form and shape the earth.<sup>36</sup> This is the proximity model. God didn't create the world out of nothing. His own hands formed and shaped it out of existing material.<sup>37</sup>

## Logical Problems with Spirit

The orthodox doctrine of "spirit" becomes even more problematical if we examine the particulars of the technical definition. It is defined as the very antithesis of matter. Thus:

- A spirit is unextended in space, i.e., it has no size and shape<sup>38</sup>
- A spirit cannot be divided into parts<sup>39</sup>
- A spirit is an intangible substance.

An intangible substance? It is thus a substance - without substance?<sup>40</sup>  
This is humanly incomprehensible babble, and it leads to several logical



problems. An indivisibility into parts flatly contradicts any outpouring where part of the Trinity (Father and Son) remain seated on their thrones while the Third Person is sent to Earth. The absence of size and shape further conflicts with these outpourings. Note that Pentecost dropped flames of Fire, each with distinctive size and shape, upon the recipients, even as Israel saw divine Fire descend upon Mount Sinai (Ex 19). John saw the Spirit descend upon Christ in the shape of a dove. Furthermore the human spirit is said to be housed within the human body, and no matter which region of the body it happens to dwell in, it must be a region of some size and shape. How then can a spirit lack size and shape? Similarly God's Presence is distributed throughout the universe - but has no size and shape? This leads to an all-or-nothing approach to omnipresence, precluding partial volumes of the divine Presence within a region, in favor of it being fully/plenally present at every point in space, or as Charles Hodge expressed the orthodox position, "God is in space repletively. He fills all space."<sup>41</sup> This flatly contradicts outpourings, for how can the Third Person meaningfully be "sent" to a region where He was already plenally present?<sup>42</sup> That makes zero sense. In fact a Trinity indivisible into parts is a humanly incomprehensible gibberish and thus, as Millard J. Erickson admitted, logically "absurd from the human standpoint."<sup>43</sup> The Trinity must be divisible into parts because it was only the Son who became flesh.<sup>44</sup> Thankfully one evangelical scholar *did* admit that the orthodox Trinity and Incarnation violate standard human logic.<sup>45</sup> And far from being omnipotent, an immaterial Holy Spirit would be fully impotent over matter, as He would be too intangible to even push a pencil. Although God, angels, and men all engage in speech, how is it even logically possible for intangible spirits to perform the physical act of speech? Even a mental telepathy would need to impact a particular spirit (tangibly!) for intercommunication. None of this makes any sense, all of it appears to be totally insane cultic nonsense. Are angels devoid of size and shape? Isaiah 6:2 states, "Each [seraph] had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly" (KJV). Furthermore a human spirit indivisible into parts renders the problem of Original Sin insoluble,<sup>46</sup> as will be seen in the next section.

## **The Problem of Original Sin**

**Protestants and Catholics regard Adam as our representative. Even the Eastern Orthodox claim that we merely suffer the "consequences" of Adam's sin construes God as the evil jerk who traps innocent babes in a world full of suffering and too steeped in temptation for avoiding sin. If orthodox theologians were seeking out yet another way to insult God, congratulations, they have succeeded marvelously once again. Never mind the fact that Ezekiel 18 utterly repudiates the notion of penalizing a child for the sins of an earthly father such as Adam. Admittedly Yahweh does visit the sins of the parents upon their children in the sense of revoking mercies that neither party strictly deserved.**

**Representation means that the status of the rep is all that matters.<sup>47</sup> And yet such a judicial framework, taken literally, would construe "individual sin" as an oxymoron. This flatly contradicts every page of the Bible that treats individual sin as a reality. It's difficult to imagine a doctrine more cultic than one that literally contradicts every page of Scripture with rare exception. Representation also contradicts our human understanding of justice. For example if representation were true, Eve should have murdered Adam before he ever had a chance to eat the fruit because, after all, if the rep dies innocent, then she remains innocent by representation no matter what she does. In fact anyone could murder the entire human race with impunity if Adam dies innocent. This is a judicial outrage, it is pure evil. Or suppose Adam and Eve had remained faithful, abstaining from all sin, but one day God throws them into hell nonetheless, and when they cry out for an explanation, He responds, "I decided to appoint Lucifer as your rep. Hence you must pay for all his sins." Representation is legal nonsense. Contrary to popular belief, Christ did not function as our rep on the cross. Instead He suffered to pay for our sins. Had Christ been appointed as our rep, death on Calvary would have been unnecessary because, after all, the innocent status of the rep is**

all that matters, no death is necessary to secure that status. To regard representation as a viable jurisprudence, furthermore, casts yet another aspersion on God's character because it leaves unanswered the question, why would a loving God appoint Adam as my rep foreknowing his sin? Why not have the kindness to simply appoint His innocent Son as the universal rep for both men and angels alike? And once Adam sinned as our rep, why allow him to have children? Just to secure a fully populated hell?

And yet one still must explain why God allows seemingly innocent babes to suffer the consequences of Adam's sin. The answer is pretty simple. They are not innocent. They are legitimately guilty. In my opinion God created only a single human soul named Adam (only one material mind), and even Eve's soul was merely a portion of it extracted from his ribs. When Adam sinned, God presumably removed most of his sin-stained soul to a place of suspended animation. Adam continued to live a somewhat normal human life, even with his body now divested of most of his material soul. At every subsequent human conception, God extracts a portion of the sin-stained soul from the suspended-animation reservoir, awakens it, and implants it within the conceived zygote. What I am saying is that *you* are Adam. *You* are the one who freely chose to sin in the Garden, even though you currently do not remember it. Back then all of us were one big lump of material soul forming one mind named Adam, and thus we functioned as one individual (technically two if we count Eve), but have since then been physically split apart into separate individuals (separate fragments of the original Adam), for such divisibility is definitive of a material mind. God doesn't punish you for the sins of "representative Adam" (defined as someone other than you) but rather for your own sins, both the original sin that you volitionally committed back in the Garden as well as those sins you now commit today. All other attempts to explain Original Sin have failed miserably on logical grounds, after all, for the last 2,000 years. Consider for example the *taint* of original sin. It simply doesn't make sense to claim that we inherited a taint from a representative named Adam. Logically speaking a morally corrupt status cannot be inherited, it must be volitionally produced within oneself by an

act of free will. Thus even if it were possible for a fully innocent babe to be born with harmful passions, caused for example by a biological taint, they cannot be logically classified as *sinful* passions, as a sinful taint, if the child had no complicit involvement in their existence. For example if God created a new sentient species tomorrow named Martians, biologically designed with an excess of dangerous passions, this would hardly incriminate the Martians themselves with a sinful status or state.<sup>48</sup>

In sum, the orthodox definition of "spirit" as a substance indivisible into parts is simply unacceptable, because a divisible Adam is the only way to explain Original Sin.<sup>49</sup>

## Why Did God Create This World?

The orthodox God is omnipotent. Infinite in power, He is entirely self-sufficient and has no need for man. Nonetheless He created man for His own good pleasure. Of course as a self-sufficient Person, He certainly could have managed to find a way to afford Himself the same degree of pleasure without creating this kind of dark world. Yet He did it anyway? Thus for no reason at all, He creates a world that allows the possibility of suffering and ultimately culminates in billions sent to hell. One really has only two options for why God created this world.

1. He is the kind of jerk who, for needless pleasure, creates a world where infants can starve and children be raped and murdered.

2. He created this world because He needed us.

This isn't rocket science. In the biblical view, God is holy. He is not a jerk. Therefore the only viable option is #2. Let's try to figure out precisely why God *needed* to create angels and men.

In this discussion the term Totality refers to the sum total of matter, understood to originally be a kind of raw material of unknown composition that was only later used during Creation to form the highly structured atoms and molecules comprising our universe today. What was the Totality's initial state like? After all, the past cannot extend back infinitely, because today would never have been reached if an infinite amount of time had to transpire before today. Hence there must be an

initial event definitive of the beginning of time. The question is, why and how did part of the Totality initiate that first motion? Free will. (One can picture that first motion, volition, or thought much like that of an orthodox soul supposedly created out of nothing). There are really only two possible explanations, after all, as to why a piece of matter in the Totality would begin to move:

1. Reality is characterized by randomness and thus randomly moves.
2. Free will causes it to move.

Option #1 doesn't seem very plausible, because it doesn't really provide a very satisfying *reason* why something moved. And it certainly doesn't provide eternal hope, for if matter can move at random, even God could not claim to have full control. And yet one must ask regarding option #2, is free will really a kind of power that moves matter? As already noted, the mind can constrict a full bladder as an act of free will. Physiology textbooks can easily mislead one to believe that the mechanics of muscles and metabolism constitute the primary controlling impetus for human behavior, but if such were the case, one could only blame a person's physiology, not his free choices, for any acts of malice. And I will go further. I suspect that all matter in the Totality is innately volitional, meaning a piece of matter can only exert some control over the *direction* in which its free will is moving it, it cannot actually desist totally from motion/free-will. At the very least it is always *striving* to move, whether in the sense of internal motion (thought), or in the sense of externally reaching out in an effort to get a better "grasp" on things - a better understanding obtained by literally physically grasping, precisely as a fetus does in the womb. In adults this physical compulsion often manifests itself in the eyes, ears, and nostrils inclining toward any available sensations, hoping to better grasp the surrounding environment.

When the matter in the Totality initially began grasping, it originally had no appreciable consciousness, no self-awareness to speak of. It was certainly conscious, in my opinion, because I define matter as innately conscious, but it was negligibly conscious at the outset. Thus there is no telling how long it took before a very large piece of the Totality - the part that we now know as God - became distinctly self-aware/ awake.

Unfortunately He awakened to find Himself *all alone* and faced with an incredibly daunting task. He soon realized that in order to make the Totality a safe place to live for all existing matter, He would need to become holy as to perfectly judge, rule, protect, and serve. Imagine the kind of skillset He would need to acquire for this role. After all, according to Scripture the divine Word upholds the universe, and thus it seems pretty certain that gravity is simply the hand of God at work - exerting force on every particle of matter simultaneously? Yes.<sup>50</sup> And not just gravitational force, but a simultaneous exertion of magnetic and electrical forces as well? Yes. Without ever making a mistake? Yes. Plus the ability to speak to, and interact with, billions of angels and men simultaneously? Yes. The level of difficulty involved is commensurate with the worship merited. There is simply no telling how long it took for Him to acquire this kind of skillset. The known universe is 13 billion years old, but it's possible that He had already labored a hundred times that span before He even formed our universe.

And He was supposed to embark on this long-term commitment of becoming holy - without any hope of future reward? No one to celebrate with? No one to praise Him for it? He was a realist. He knew it was too daunting a venture to take on without the hope of some minimal compensation. He also realized that the possibility of eternal loneliness - perpetual solitary confinement - was simply too overwhelming a burden to face while struggling to become holy. Surely such a miserable isolation would eventually cause Him to have a kind of nervous breakdown, utterly destabilizing Him emotionally and thus, instead of making the Totality a safe place to live, He would likely become an unstable nutcase, or worse yet a deliberate abuser of existing matter, creating subjects merely to take advantage of them. Furthermore if such a nervous breakdown short-circuited His effort to become holy, He might never acquire the skillset needed to protect everyone from any villains who awakened choosing to walk in malice. Thus He needed to make a promise to Himself at the outset, namely He had to commit to eventually creating a church of angels and men as a reward for Himself, a hope providing sufficient incentive to face the formidable task of becoming holy. And He evidently felt that a



church devoid of full free will would be too mundane, too uninteresting to supply the magnitude of incentive needed. Thus it was crucial that His people somewhat mirror His own achievements by facing the agony of temptation and overcoming it by free will, much like He had done.<sup>51</sup>

Is all of this wild speculation? Arguably not, for two reasons. First it is clear enough that God needed us for some cause. The reader is certainly welcome to produce a better theory as to why He needed us. That's no easy task, and the specifics of why He needed us are probably not much worth debating anyway. Secondly the Bible seems to make it pretty clear that He did in fact create us to address His own loneliness. Genesis 1 documents a list of creative acts. In each case Moses seals it with, "And God saw that it was good" - *until* He creates Adam. This is the one case where God says it was *not* good, "It is not good for the man to be alone." And so God creates Eve. And what role does she play? She becomes Adam's *wife*. Thus God's primary antidote to loneliness is *marriage*. Fine. Now what role does the church play for Christ? She is His *bride*. The implication seems clear enough. God's antidote to His own loneliness is marriage, "Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb" (Rev 19:9, KJV).

All matter in the Totality is conscious, but some of it is negligibly conscious. A plant has some life to it but is not appreciably conscious, and a mere rock is even less conscious, essentially dead. God simply keeps a tight enough grip on ordinary matter to prevent it from awakening to full awareness. He basically keeps it at a relative standstill, despite its incessant attempts at grasping. When He physically breathed Adam's soul into his body (Gen 2:7), however, it was a fully awakened soul. All species of life have awakened souls with differing degrees of self-awareness. Unlike humans, however, the brains of other species do not foster conscience within their souls. Conscience is a trait unique to men, angels, and of course God.

Is God the sort of cruel person who, for His own education, ran experiments on innocent species for several billion years before creating Adam? It's a legitimate question. One possibility is that God ran those experiments on fragments of His own soul. There is another feasible



solution, however. Although animals cannot be classified as evil, for lack of a conscience, this tells us nothing about the behavior of their souls prior to being situated within an animal body. Even as Adam was divisible, so are fallen angels. In my opinion, then, the souls within animal species are fragments of fallen angels. One debater objected to such casting of aspersions on animals. He evidently prefers to cast them on God? At any rate, the NT arguably does contain a hint of this viewpoint, when Jesus cast 2,000 demons named Legion into a herd of pigs. That destination doesn't really make much sense, unless He was simply returning them from whence they came, or reuniting them with their brethren.

## **How Does God Know Our Thoughts?**

One might be wondering how a material God can know our thoughts. Although He needs an incredible skillset to accomplish this effectively, the underlying concept itself is pretty straightforward. He hears them. He monitors all motions in the Totality and therefore listens to all our cerebral and physiological activity in much the same way that you and I listen to ordinary sound waves.

## **Excursus on Creation Ex Nihilo**

Principles V and VI of reasonable thinking urge us, in the face of two competing propositions, to prefer the one that seems more within human comprehension and more plausible. Consider making these two statements to a friend:

1.I selected a hammer from the chest full of tools.

2.I retrieved a hammer from the empty toolbox.

Which proposition is more plausible? In a similar way:

1.God formed the world out of preexisting material.<sup>52</sup>

2.God retrieved the needed raw material from nothing.

The choice seems pretty clear.

## **What Lies Beyond the Boundaries of Reality?**

**What exists beyond the Totality? As a rule, neither theologians nor philosophers attempt to define reality's boundaries because the concept is apparently a humanly impenetrable mystery. What follows here is my own wild conjecture on the issue, but it doesn't really count as a theory because it's not humanly intelligible. It's gibberish. Anyway here goes. After the border of the Totality is nothingness rather than empty space. If we're still positioned in empty space, we haven't reached the border yet. Empty space has size and shape, whereas nothingness isn't even a region. Now suppose I found a way to travel out to the Totality's boundary and attempted to put one foot across it. In other words I'm attempting to move my foot into the Totality's after-region (the region outside of, and thus containing, the Totality). The problem is that no such region exists because nothingness is precisely nothing at all. So the question is, where will my foot land? Obviously it will land somewhere in the Totality, but precisely where? Probably on the opposite end. This envisions a continuum, that is, a seamless experience of exiting one end and reemerging at the other, too seamless for an ordinary traveler to even realize that he had reached the boundary, much less crossed over.**

## **Immutable Holiness vs Irreversible Holiness**

**According to Scripture God cannot sin. Why not? Admittedly orthodoxy is impregnable on this challenge, because an innately holy, immutably holy God obviously would be unable to sin by definition. But where then is the merit? If He never had to overcome the agony of temptation, the faithful angels who did freely choose to overcome it merit more praise than He. (In my view God granted those angels irreversible holiness after a very short period of resisting temptation). Furthermore it's a contradiction to ascribe to God full liberty of free will, on the one**

hand, while deeming Him incapable of freely choosing to sin on the other. How do we resolve these tensions? How do we explain the fact that God cannot sin? And if He cannot sin, how is it that the Son faced real temptation in the wilderness?

The solution is pretty straightforward. Bear in mind that one of the primary functions of the Holy Breath is sanctification. He purifies us, He makes us holy. How does He do it? Physically.<sup>53</sup> Sprinkled upon our body (and unfortunately it is currently an absolute minimal sprinkling for lack of revival),<sup>54</sup> He lovingly caresses the sprinkled portions of the soul with the most unfathomable tenderness and finesse, thereby revealing His love, assuaging its fears, stirring up holy passions, tickling it with joy (etc.). This is efficacious grace. In a nutshell, God cannot sin because the Holy Breath applies this same act of sanctification upon the entire Godhead. One could call it the divine Immune System. If at any moment the Immune System detects the slightest decline in holy zeal in any particle of the Godhead, even a decreased enthusiasm for enforcing the immunity, the remainder of the Immune System will instantly zap it like a germ, i.e., rekindle its holy passions. The Holy Breath was certainly wise enough, however, to occasionally diminish His sanctifying work within the incarnate Christ to facilitate real temptation on earth. In self-preservation, on the other hand, the Godhead is immune to allowing too much of Himself to become temptible all at once. (Incidentally even if Christ had sinned, a kindred fragment of the enthroned Son would presumably have atoned for Him).

Why can't God shut down His Immune System? Each particle's zeal for remaining holy and enforcing the immunity is so incredibly escalated and so indelibly ingrained as to be diminishable only at a snail's pace much too slow to escape an instant zap by the remainder of the Immune System.<sup>55</sup> God is therefore fully immune to sin - by His own intent and design. He is irreversibly holy. And thus, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to day, and for ever" (Heb 13:8, KJV). This kind of statement has been true ever since He achieved irreversible moral purity. Since then, "I am the LORD, I change not" (Mal 3:6, KJV).

## Part Two: Charismatic Evangelism, Missions, Sanctification, and Revival

### Why Evangelism Is Prophetic Utterance

Population studies find that some 100 billion people have existed to date. Since that's a lot of souls potentially winding up in hell, there's zero margin for error in evangelism. As a result, an evangelist needs to know with 100% certainty exactly *where* to preach, *when* to preach, and *what* to preach – which is precisely the definition of prophetic ministry. Ideally “it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you” (Mat 10:20, KJV). Surely 100% certainty is the only logically satisfying explanation as to how the prophets recognized God's voice with infallible accuracy.<sup>56</sup> And during a prophetic utterance, God must transmit the 100% certainty from the prophet to the audience, for example when Moses commanded Israel to slaughter seven nations. This transmission of certainty, accomplished by preaching the divine Word as exhaled Breath (Jn 20:22), or radiating Light as Moses' body did, or as a discharge from his body to 70 elders (Num 11:25), is crucial to evangelism. Why so? Suppose I march out to a street corner and preach the gospel in an ordinary way. Very few will pay attention to the message because, by default, I have zero credibility in their eyes. Whereas if I speak a prophetic utterance releasing 100% certainty that God is speaking, my credibility pinnacles. Throughout history most Christians have attempted to preach the powerless *written* Word, confusing it with the convicting power of God.<sup>57</sup> Imagine the students in a classroom arising and running outside screaming, “It's a bomb!” when the professor brandishes a history book on World War II. The history book is a mere description of the bombs, not the explosive power itself. In virtue of inspiration, the written Word is merely an accurate description of God's power.<sup>58</sup> For

example the Pharisees were full of written Word but devoid of God and His power.

The total text of Luke-Acts constitutes a whopping 25% of the NT. That's huge, and must therefore be taken very seriously. Although Luke is indeed aware that the Holy Breath sanctifies, prophecy is more in focus. Luke-Acts can be summarized as the following formula. Prayer outpours the Holy Breath sent for prophetic utterance to empower evangelism. Let's survey a few texts indicating this formula. The expression "filled with the Holy Breath" occurs about 14 times in the NT but *only* in Luke-Acts except for Eph 5:18. In virtually every case, Luke associates the filling with the kind of inspired speech known as prophetic utterance.<sup>59</sup> How is one filled? By prayer, because Luke is the *only* writer to record Christ's instruction, "how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy [Breath] to them that ask him?" (Lk 11:13, KJV). How was Jesus Himself filled with the Holy Breath? Luke is the *only* writer crediting to prayer the descent of the Holy Breath upon Christ, and the *only* writer referring to it as being filled with the Holy Breath. Christ's public, prophetic ministry began shortly after the filling, inaugurated with the words, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor" (Lk 4:18, KJV). It cannot be overstated that John – a prophet in the magnitude of Elijah – was possibly the most effective evangelist in history. And Luke was the *only* writer to record the fact that prayer led both to John's birth, to his filling with the Holy Breath, and to his prophetic ministry (Lk 1:10-17). Even his own father "was filled with the Holy Ghost and prophesied" (Lk 1:67, KJV). One last example. Although the other gospels recorded the Transfiguration – which is actually just an outpouring of the Holy Breath as divine Light – Luke was the *only* writer crediting it to prayer.<sup>60</sup> Luke is indeed the theologian of prayer.<sup>61</sup>

Once again the formula is: prayer outpours the Holy Breath sent for prophetic utterance to empower evangelism. A few years ago at least two scholarly evangelical books appeared in support of this formula, namely Roger Stronstad's *The Prophethood of All Believers: A Study in Luke's Charismatic Theology*, and James Shelton's *Mighty in Word and Deed: The*

***Role of the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts***<sup>62</sup>. Let's now take a look at Acts. Pentecostal theology imagines that Acts features the gift of tongues. Three problems here. First of all, prophethood was extremely prominent in the tradition of the biblical historians including Luke whereas the gift of tongues was conspicuously absent. Secondly the gift of tongues as defined at 1Cor 14 is speech in unknown languages necessitating the gift of interpretation, whereas the utterance of Acts 2 was in known languages.<sup>63</sup> Acts is contemplating the spread of the gospel *to the nations* and is thus attempting to reassure the reader that prophecy has the power to overcome language barriers. Thirdly Acts 2 explicitly characterizes Peter's speech as prophetic utterance because they all spoke in languages as the Holy Breath gave them utterance (2:4). According to Peter this inspired speech was in fulfillment of Joel promise:

I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy (Acts 2:17-18, KJV).

Two crucial points here. First, how was this prophetic outpouring elicited? Here again Luke credited it to prayer (Acts 1:14). Secondly, what purpose did the prophetic utterance serve? Acts has evangelism in purview. Peter's prophetic utterance articulated the gospel in the languages of the audience.

The historic significance of Pentecost cannot be overstated, because Luke's God-given assignment in writing the Book of Acts was primarily to lay down a paradigm of evangelism for all future generations. In such a crucial matter, it would obviously be catastrophic for him to get started off on the wrong foot, pointing us in the wrong direction. It was absolutely vital, therefore, that he lay down the appropriate paradigm at the very outset of Acts. And what formula do we find in the Pentecost-narrative that launches Acts? Prayer outpours the Holy Breath sent for prophetic utterance to empower evangelism. Joel's promise does not state, "And they *might* prophesy", but rather, "And they *shall* prophesy." A Christian who hasn't experienced prophecy, therefore, is simply not yet a participant in Joel's (inexhaustible) promised outpourings deployed in



Acts for evangelism.<sup>64</sup> Acts 4:31 is a clear expression of Luke's formula, for "When they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness" (KJV).<sup>65</sup> This was actually an earthquake.<sup>66</sup> Here speaking the "word of God" betokens prophetic utterance because, after all, hermeneutics dictates the exegesis. Meaning that, since Acts 1 and 2 had previously established a prophetic formula for evangelism, subsequent passages should be understood in the same way. Acts 10 paints a picture of Cornelius as a man of prayer, culminating in the outpouring at verse 44 and marked by "speaking in other languages and praising God" (10:46, WEB).<sup>67</sup> Inasmuch as Peter, in retrospect, classified Cornelius' outpouring as a repeat of Pentecost (Acts 11:15-17),<sup>68</sup> it must have been the same prophetic gift. Prayer is seen at work again in Acts 8:15 where Peter and John "prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit" (KJV).

In Acts there is yet another powerful indicator that Luke had prophecy in mind. The NT almost always uses the term witness (120 occurrences) in the same way it is used today. A witness – a witness in court for example - is someone who has seen and heard a reality and then testifies ("witnesses") about it. An unacceptable witness is one too far distanced from the event to have witnessed it with accuracy. An excellent witness, therefore, is one who beheld it in face-to-face proximity. Now what precisely is Acts wanting men to witness about? *Christ*. "Ye shall be *my* witnesses" (Acts 1:8, ASV, italics added). If the risen Christ has never appeared to a person face to face, he or she is *not a witness*. Christ likely had a *reason* for choosing the term "witness" to describe evangelism. Thus God's plan was that Paul, for example, visibly "see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth. For thou shalt be his [prophetic<sup>69</sup>] witness unto all men of what thou hast *seen* and *heard*" (22:14-15, KJV, italics added). And again, "I have appeared [visibly and audibly] unto thee [Paul] for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in which I will [later] appear unto thee" (26:16, KJV). These verses are a description of Paul's ongoing ministry. They explicitly define witnessing as relaying to



others things seen and heard face-to-face with Christ, which especially characterizes prophetic ministry in its mature stages.<sup>70</sup> Peter said that all the OT *prophets* bore witness to Christ (10:43). In a similar vein, several parallel verses allude to being witnesses of His resurrection.<sup>71</sup> One is not a witness of His resurrection if the risen Christ has never appeared to him or her face to face. Until then, any testimony he or she might provide on Christ's resurrection would be dismissed in court as mere hearsay, and rightly so.

## Maturity Requires Seeing God Face to Face

Consciousness is loudness. To be conscious is to be conscious of one sensation or another, perceived either very distinctly (loud and clear) or somewhat indistinctly. All conscious thought is thus a stream of sensations more or less loud and clear. For example a person can mentally sing any words to his favorite tune, and then must visualize their meanings in order to comprehend them. This includes the words of Scripture such as “God”, “angels”, and “heaven”. The mind always worships God according to its visions of Him; the mind can only worship that which the mind's eye sees. It is impossible for ordinary cognitive powers, however, to *properly* conceive an ineffably holy God. Therefore our visions of Him are idolatrous to the extent painted by our own mind, and revelatory/accurate to the extent painted by the Holy Breath. For lack of such revelatory visions, unfortunately, the Mormons and the Jehovah Witnesses only worship an idol whenever reading or reflecting upon the same biblical word “God” that Christians do.<sup>72</sup> Now, what happens when an object isn't face-to-face with us, that is, when it's too far in the distance for us to make out the details? Unavoidably, in our instinctive efforts to see and comprehend it better, our mind will itself paint some of the picture, attempting to fill in the details. This results in idolatry. Seeing God face-to-face, up close and personal in *accurate* visions, therefore, is the only reliable antidote to idolatry, and thus the only route to maturity.

And there is a second reason why maturity entails face-to-face visions. When I challenge Christians to define a personal relationship with the Father, they often respond that it is a “spiritual relationship”, but this description is actually non-responsive for lack of any specific content. The following conversation will confirm the lack of content. A man says to his comrade, “Guess what? I have recently been enjoying incredibly intimate fellowship with a woman. Indeed we are in love.” “Oh really? Tell me all about it! Is she beautiful?” “Well, I’ve never actually *seen* her.” “No? Ok. In that case, I’ll bet she has a wonderfully feminine voice.” “Well, honestly, I’ve never actually heard her voice.” “No? How exactly do you know her, then?” “Well, actually she died 2,000 years ago nailed to a cross, but she left behind a book of laws and rules for me to obey.” “Wait a minute, I thought you referred earlier to enjoying intimate *fellowship* with her!” “Yes I did. It’s a spiritual relationship.”

Sorry to burst that guy’s bubble, but what he denoted as a “spiritual relationship” is *not* fellowship. Fellowship between two parties can only be defined as a mutual exchange of sensations more or less distinct (loud and clear). The broader the spectrum of sensations, the more intimate the fellowship. For example a man who merely hears a woman’s voice has less potential for intimacy than someone who hears, sees, smells, and touches her. Since God created us out of a need for intimate fellowship (1Cor 1:9; Phi 2:1; 3:10; 1Jn 1:3, 6), it must be His desire to maximize the intimacy by availing of the full spectrum, revealing Himself to us in sight, sound, touch, hearing, and taste (in addition to loud and clear feelings/ sensations of joy, love, and peace). Indeed He has little choice but to avail of the entire spectrum, because the mind will instinctively tend to fill in any sensory details omitted in a vision, which is idolatrous, or the mind can accidentally confuse natural sensations with God. Thus it must be His will for us to eat and drink of Him, for instance, as to properly fulfill the sensation of tasting Him, and it is therefore a foregone conclusion that Christ was speaking literally when He claimed to have assumed the shape of bread and wine<sup>73</sup> (although it is potentially idolatrous for us to presume the same of today’s elements absent 100% certainty). Bottom line is that Christians who don’t see God face-to-face shouldn’t claim to

have an intimate relationship with Him, i.e., in the radical sense of presuming themselves mature. Anyone who has ever had friends should know that friendship is supposed to work just like Ex 33:11, “And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend” (KJV). Likewise the prophet Abraham was called the friend of God, for example one afternoon he had God come over to his house for supper, baked Him up a loaf of bread, fried Him up a beef steak, and stood with Him face-to-face while He ate (Gen 18).<sup>74</sup> In the realm of OT saints, Abraham is the principal NT model of sanctification and faith for all NT believers. Until we, like Abraham, know what it means to be the friend of God, let’s not presume ourselves mature.

## **John’s Emphasis on Visions of God**

One of John’s emphases is experiencing visions of God. On this issue he provided a number of verses absent from the other gospels. The entire Book of Revelation, for instance, is a recount of visions seen on the island of Patmos. Here’s a face-to-face example, “His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength” (Rev 1:16, KJV). Earlier John wrote, “Every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life” (Jn 6:40, KJV).<sup>75</sup> According to John 5:37, the problem with many Jews can be summarized in one simple nutshell, “Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape” (KJV).<sup>76</sup> John 1:50-51 predicted for the Twelve a lifestyle of seeing visions, “Thou shalt see greater things than these...Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man” (KJV).<sup>77</sup>

In ordinary life even partial blindness – an inability to see things clearly – is a very serious malady. Of equal gravity is spiritual blindness, the inability to see God clearly. One is not a healthy, spiritually mature Christian if still spiritually blind, and this is precisely the theme of Jn 12:40-41.

He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be

converted, and I should heal them. These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him (KJV).

Here John is recalling Isaiah's vision (Isa 6:1-10). Isaiah went up to the temple and saw God face to face. What was the immediate impact of the vision upon his assessment of the world? It led to the sudden realization that those around him – all those non-privy to the vision - were still living in darkness, spiritually blind. An excellent parallel is Elisha's prayer for his manservant who couldn't see the armies of God surrounding them, "Open his eyes, that he may see" (2Kings 6:17, KJV). Notice his prayer did not take the form, "Grant this man a special gift." He didn't *need* any special gifting, something out of the ordinary. All he needed was to have his eyes opened. Two crucial points here. First and foremost, note the implied classification. The petition clearly characterizes the manservant as spiritually blind. Thus the *normative* state of the believer – the healthy, spiritually mature saint – is to have open eyes that clearly perceive the armies of God in full living color. The second crucial point is Elisha's proposed *remedy* to the blindness, namely prayer. And the remedy succeeded. It solved the problem.

Chapter 16 of John's gospel discusses praying in Christ's name, usually misunderstood to mean praying like this, "I pray all these things to you Father in the name of Jesus Christ." Even the disciples likely misunderstood until later, because Jesus was speaking in riddles at that time (vs. 25). In reality "prayer in Christ's name" is a codename for the Father speaking face-to-face the specifics of His will, resulting in petitions according to His will always granted. How privileged must a man be for the Father to speak to him in such plain language face to face? But this is precisely the distinction at issue in Num 12:6-8 where God claims to speak to regular prophets merely in riddles but to Moses in plain language and face to face.<sup>78</sup> As John Gill realized, Jn 16:25 parallels Num 12:6-8 because it promises the Twelve a promotion from riddles to plain language:<sup>79</sup>

These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs [i.e. riddles] but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father [in visions!] (Jn 16:25, KJV).

Even when speaking face to face, however, both Father and Son allow the Holy Breath, exhaled as words from their mouth, to deliver the messages.

I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now...when he, the [Breath] of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear [from me], that shall he speak: and he will shew you [visually] things to come" (Jn 16:12-13, KJV).

Such statements about the Counselor look forward to Pentecost, because it was only on that day that the Twelve began to receive massive amounts of prophetic revelation. Verses 23 to 27 bring the crucial thesis into focus. The intimation is that when we are standing face to face with the Father, it suddenly becomes awkward, even inappropriate, to route our petitions through the Son. It's like standing in a room with a man and his son, but instead of addressing the man directly, we speak only to his son, waiting for him to relay the message to his father. No one would ever do something that silly, not even for a moment, right? Which is precisely the whole point of the passage:

And in that day [of Pentecost<sup>80</sup>] ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. These things have I spoken unto you in [riddles]: but the time cometh,<sup>81</sup> when I shall no more speak unto you in [riddles], but I shall shew you plainly of the Father. At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you. For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me (16:23-27, KJV).

Verse 16 is illuminating as well, "Ye shall see me, *because* I go to the Father" (KJV). See the point? If not, allow me to explain. Suppose you see a vision of the Father on His throne, up close and personal, as though you were standing right in front of Him. In such proximity, who or what would you see seated at His right hand, in your peripheral vision? The Son! Stephen's experience drives the nail into the coffin, because it is a clear example of peripheral vision. He "looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God" (Acts 7:55). (As we'll see later, the OT sometimes used the phrase "glory



of God” for the human-like Figure who spoke to prophets face to face). Let’s now back up two chapters to Jn 14.

Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye [apostles will] see me (14:19, KJV).

Several evangelical scholars admit that both 14:19 and 16:16 refer to an ongoing vision of Christ for the Twelve.<sup>82</sup> A few of them also read verses 14:21-23 in the same way.<sup>83</sup> Verses 14:11-14 further confirm that petitions offered in Christ’s name are always granted.

Verily, verily, I say to you, he who is believing in me, the [miraculous] works that I do - that one also shall do, and greater than these he shall do, because I go on to my Father; and whatever ye may ask in my name, I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son; if ye ask anything in my name I will do it (Jn 14:3 -14, KJV; cf. 15:7, 16).

## No One Can See God’s Face and Live?

The “angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven” (Mat 18:10, KJV). However, God is one “dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see” (1Tim 6:16, KJV). Inasmuch as the prophets *did* see God,<sup>84</sup> in what limited sense does He remain unseen? A light too bright for the eyes simply needs shading.<sup>85</sup> God utilized His own hand to shade Moses from His countenance:

And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live. And the LORD said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen (Exo 33:20-23, KJV).

The radiance is most intense on God’s face, not on His back, for “His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength” (Rev 1:16, KJV). Therefore God removed the hand-shade from Moses after passing by, because at that point only the back of His head was visible.



**"The LORD make his face shine upon thee," said Moses, "and be gracious unto thee: The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace" (Num 6:25-26, KJV). David said, "They shall walk, O LORD, in the light of thy countenance" (Ps 89:15, KJV). The Transfiguration is not supposed to be an esoteric experience limited to Christ. Moses' face was transfigured too brilliantly for Israel's eyeballs, leading him to put a physical veil over his face. The veil proves the Light's physicality, since a physical veil cannot restrain an intangible Light. Christians who contemplate the glory of God are transfigured increasingly (2Cor 3:18; cf. 4:4-6).<sup>86</sup> The Greek word for transfigured at 2Cor 3:18 is the same word used for Christ's Transfiguration, He "was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light" (Mat 17:2, KJV). Similarly Stephen's face shone like an angel (Acts 6:15).**

**How would Christ's Light prove fatal? His Light reveals His face and features to the eyeballs, far more accurately than an ordinary light would, but also massages the soul with all finesse stirring up sanctifying thoughts/sensations. An unshaded exposure would be an unmitigated revelation of inconceivable Holiness unleashed unmercifully upon every living body cell. The emotional trauma would fatally spasm the organs and short-circuit the nervous system like electrocution. "Mine heart within me is broken," wrote the weeping prophet, "all my bones shake" (Jer 23:9, KJV). One must *gradually* acclimate to increasing Radiation. To Moses' credit, he (alone) was acclimated enough to withstand God's back. Couldn't God grip the biological heart, for example, tightly enough to prevent spasms? Such a stopped heart is death and also impedes the body's internal motions (thought-currents) in ways diminishing the revelation just like shading. Even removing the soul from the body wouldn't save it from PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) upon return.**

## **Does God's Voice Make a Sound?**

Perhaps this is just a good a place as any to air some of my frustrations with the church. One disturbing trend is the tendency to presume any thought that comes to mind to be the voice of God, as long as it doesn't blatantly contradict Scripture. When taken a step further, it culminates in a so-called prophetic ministry marked by silly proclamations of the sort, "The Lord just told me that someone in the audience has stomach problems and should come down to the altar for prayer." In a crowd of fifty people or more, that's not a prophecy but a self-evidently true statement that any false prophet could get away with. The crowd needs to use their head. Prophecy is supposed to glorify God – He isn't glorified by the kind of statement that any charlatan could safely announce. An utterance should at least be empirically impressive (such as someone identifying a random number known to my mind alone) or, preferably, the speaker should confer 100% certainty to us.

Let's desist from presuming our own thoughts to be God's voice. He created us for *fellowship*. Fellowship consists of sensations undoubtedly of external origin, that is, impossible to suspect of originating from my own mind. I will never confuse my own thoughts with the voice of a friend because his voice makes a sound in the usual sense of an *external* sound.<sup>87</sup> The one exception is a dream, but even dreamed voices follow the rule of being impossible (at that moment) to suspect of originating from my own mind. Largely at fault is the erroneous assumption that God is somehow "inside our mind." In a material metaphysics, God indwells our mind only in the sense of penetrating it physically even as one man can interlock fingers with another. Just as the two interlocked men (the two minds) remain external to each other, and thus can communicate only by external physical sensations, so it is with God. He *impacts* us physically with His Light, His Voice, and His Touch. This is fellowship. His voice even shook Mount Sinai (Heb 12:26).<sup>88</sup> The answer to the question, then, is Yes, His voice most certainly does make a sound.

After all, God can indwell my mind in only two possible ways:

- (1) Spatial/physical penetration. The body is His temple even as the OT temple and tabernacle functioned as physical receptacles for His Shekinah Glory.

- (2) His mind becomes part of my mind, or vice versa. Am I now God? Why do I lack His knowledge? Is it I sinning and erring or He?

Since #2 is too unclear to comprehend, it's not a doctrine. It's gibberish and thus on a par with those weird teachings by cult-leaders on the "energies in our minds."

Another disturbing trend consists of ministers standing behind me at the altar to catch me if I fall, exacerbated by a minister in front of me pushing on my forehead as he prays. This arrangement is a horrible insult to God. Recall the parable of the prodigal son, after all. Did the father kindly embrace his son upon return? Or shove him down to the ground attempting to break his neck or back? What a cruel, nasty Father we serve. Thank heaven for the loving, kind, gentle ministers standing behind us for protection from Him! Woops I forgot. Those ministers are mere men who, historically speaking, have routinely stabbed one another in the back. Therefore I'd prefer to reposition them in front of me, where at least I can keep an eye on them.

Here's a third disturbing trend. Although it's fine that Pentecostals pray for one another to receive the gift of tongues, here's how it went for me. They gathered around me laying hands and, as they were praying, they kept urging, "Start speaking it out in faith! Believe that you have received it!" I tried ignoring them at first, but they kept pressuring me. Since I didn't want to make a scene, or even come off as a rebel, I spoke out a few syllables of gibberish. The moment I did so they announced, "There it is! That's it! You've got the gift of tongues!" Nice.

## Sanctification as Volumetric

(Note: In my view man consists entirely of two material substances, mind and body, intermixed from head to toe somewhat like milk mixed with water,<sup>89</sup> although God keeps the mind hidden. This position is probably best characterized as dichotomy, although arguably monism).

What is sanctification? "Be filled with the [Breath]" (Eph 5:18, KJV). It really is that simple. Eph 5:18 is merely a recapitulation of the

incredibly simplistic, elementary dynamic at work in Ex 40:34, “Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle” (KJV) from top to bottom, whereby “the tabernacle shall be *sanctified* by my glory” (29:43, KJV, italics added).<sup>90</sup> The word sanctified is the word holy used as a verb to convey made holy. Human holiness is likewise the physical, volumetric filling of the human body from head to toe with outpourings of the Holy Breath.<sup>91</sup>

Possessing holiness in the exact sense that God has it merits supreme worship. That’s why Rev 15:4 confirms that, in the strict sense, God alone is holy. What then is human holiness? It’s a derived holiness.<sup>92</sup> To better understand this concept, let’s first define derived strength. God had two possible ways to strengthen Samson. The first way is to actually add more muscle mass to his body at the moment of need, and then remove it until the next occasion of need. In this case Samson does all the heavy lifting himself using his own (new) muscles. The second possibility is the Holy Breath enveloping Samson’s body like a suit of armor and, from that vantage point, doing all the heavy lifting Himself. In this second case his newfound strength is not that of his own muscles and may therefore be characterized as a *derived* strength. How strong is it? As strong as God is. Thus even though derived strength differs in *kind* from divine strength, it does not differ in *degree*. It differs in kind because derived strength is borrowed strength, it’s not a faculty of the consumer. Whereas God possesses divine strength as one of His very own faculties unborrowed.

“Be ye holy, for I am holy” (1Pe 1:16, KJV). Given that God demands of us the same *degree* of holiness as He, it is implausible that He would expect us to laboriously self-develop holiness as a faculty of our very own, for which we would then merit worship, having achieved the same degree of holiness as He.<sup>93</sup> Rather His intent is to dwell within us functioning as a derived holiness. Therefore outpourings of the Holy Breath – much like a suit of armor enveloping Samson’s body - are the only thing needed for increments in holiness. Admittedly obedience to conscience is necessary to avoid forfeiting outpourings but should never be confused with holiness proper. Any fragment of the human body in possession of the Holy Breath is holy and, as such, will always obey conscience. The cloud filled the

tabernacle from top to bottom to sanctify it, that is, to make it holy. Obedience had nothing to do with it. In what sense was it now holy? The holy God had declared His sovereignty over that region to leverage it for His purposes and exert some restrictions over its use. Ex 3:5 is another example of derived holiness, “Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground” (KJV). Why was the ground holy? Was it obeying conscience? Again, obedience has nothing to do with holiness. The burning bush was radiating divine Light particles in every direction, imparting derived holiness even to the ground at Moses’ feet.<sup>94</sup> Recall that the pillar of cloud transformed itself at night into a pillar of Fire as to radiate Light for Israel’s travels.<sup>95</sup> And bear in mind that radiation is strongest at its source. The more distanced one is from the source, the less radiation received. This is why the inner room was called the Most Holy place. Even the accouterments of the outer court became holy,<sup>96</sup> but less holy than those within the Most Holy place.<sup>97</sup> Now for the million dollar question. In the sense of derived holiness, how much of the human body does God want holy? All of it, from top to bottom. Therefore sanctification must be defined as the volumetric filling of the human body. On the other hand the term filled need not spell maturity, because it all depends on the density or sparseness of the filling, for instance divine Smoke or Light. Also some outpourings/fillings are only for the sake of discharges to others. The classic example is when the pillar of Cloud descended on Moses’ body to charge it volumetrically with the Holy Breath, subsequently discharged as a prophetic anointing to the seventy elders (Num 11:25). In a similar manner Christ discharged the Holy Breath from His own lungs into the bodies of His disciples (Jn 20:22). The only way for a preacher to know himself adequately filled for a discharge is 100% certainty.

Even aside from the concept of derived holiness, sound hermeneutics demands interpreting filled as volumetric. After all, how is the term filled used throughout both testaments? And how is it used in everyday life? Admittedly fullness of joy or other emotions need not imply a material, volumetric filling, but filling one *substance* with another *substance* is inescapably volumetric both in Scripture, daily experience, and common



sense. When a concept has only one humanly conceivable interpretation, that's the one we're stuck with. A volumetric filling is the only way to imagine one substance being filled full of another substance. The human mind and the Third Person are both existing substances. Furthermore the tabernacle wasn't the only inanimate item filled with God's glory. The term filled was also used in several other volumetric accounts of the divine glory filling receptacles or regions (Isa 6:1, 4; Ezek 10:2-4; Rev 8:5; 15:7-8).<sup>98</sup> And let's not forget how Pentecost filled them all with – what exactly? They saw distinct, volumetric flames descending upon their heads on the day they were “clothed with power from on high” (Lk 24:49).

The new birth is holiness.<sup>99</sup> About 60 times the NT refers to the body of believers as "the saints," using a Greek adjective for “holy” employed as a noun to signify "the holy ones."<sup>100</sup> This word “holy” is the same Greek adjective used about 90 times in the NT for “The Holy Breath.” When we say that God is holy, note we do not find it necessary to add, “And He also lacks a sinful nature.” That would be redundant, because the two are mutually exclusive. What is holy in nature cannot be sinful in nature. Likewise when Paul said, “if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2Cor 5:17, KJV), his words precluded any vestige of the unholy old man. He's gone. Thus any part of the human body/mind indwelt with the regenerating Holy Breath is holy, it has no remnant of the old man, and thus the sinful nature (the old man) must lie in the unsprinkled remainder of his mind/body. Let's look at this logically. There are only three types of points on the moral spectrum. To the far left is evil/rebellion, a disposition continually moving away from God in opposition to Him. That's not a Christian. Dead center, point zero, is morally neutral, neither for God nor against, although able to make a free choice. That's not a Christian either. Points on the far right signify a disposition continually in favor of God. That's a Christian. That's the new birth, and it's permanent. If the reborn heart could make an instantaneous choice to jump leftward, whether to point zero or even farther left, then we would be Christians one moment and non-Christians the next. That's not the



**biblical view. Even if loss of salvation were possible, it wouldn't be a quick jump but rather a persistent rebellion grieving the Holy Breath enough for Him to eventually withdraw, thereby undoing the new birth. And surely this rebellion wouldn't originate from those parts of the soul indwelt with the Holy Breath, as those parts are automatically righteous. After all, if the new birth fails to automatically sustain righteousness, then it has no value in sustaining our relationship to God because one could instantly jump from Christian-status to non-Christian status. For example, if the inward witness weren't busily at work sustaining our saving faith, a single moment of doubt/confusion about Christianity would instantaneously revoke our Christian status! To summarize, the new birth is actually a sanctification of at least one soul-fragment, making it holy.<sup>101</sup> This fragment is now a new creation and, as such, retains no vestige of the old man whatsoever (2Cor 5:17). The old sinful man continues to exist only in those parts of the soul still devoid of the indwelling Holy Breath.<sup>102</sup> The old man will be progressively put to death ("crucified") only by additional sanctifying outpourings of the Holy Breath.**

## **The Neutral Zone in the Believer's Heart**

**In my opinion God, in order to provide the Christian full liberty of free choice, washes clean one special, reserved section of the old man, rendering it morally neutral. This special region is neither the (holy) new man, nor the (evil) old man but a neutral locus of free will furnishing a choice to either obey or disobey conscience. Thus the Christian's soul has three sections – the holy part, the evil part, and the neutral part. Is there any biblical basis for this neutral zone? Actually yes. There's a hint of it at 1Jn 1:9. According to this verse, confession of sin moves God to forgive us and cleanse us of all unrighteousness. Cleanse what exactly? Cleanse the new man that is holy? He doesn't need any cleansing. Cleanse the old man who is evil? Perhaps, but in that case congratulations, the Christian no longer has a sinful nature, as God cleansed it on the first confession. Trouble is that Scripture asserts the persistence of the old man (Rom**

8:12-13; 13:14; Gal 5:16-17; Col 3:5-8). This leaves only the third option, namely that every time the neutral zone freely chooses to sin, it taints itself, and thus needs a fresh cleansing.<sup>103</sup>

## Sanctification as Rest from the Agony of Temptation

Most sermons are frankly mistaken on what sanctifying strength is supposed to feel like in terms of resisting sin. Here's an analogy. Imagine your arm extended with a weight in your hand. You are charged with upholding it steadfastly. Very quickly this challenge becomes agonizing, thereby creating a temptation to relinquish the struggle. This is a picture of the agony of temptation. Suppose a companion now injects a fast-acting steroid into your muscles, strengthening them enough to render your task completely *effortless*. The arm's agony is completely gone; effectively it is now at *rest*. In like manner any area of life where a Christian suffers the agony of temptation has not yet been fully strengthened and thus needs more injections.<sup>104</sup> After all, if the Christian life were supposed to be an incessant miserable wrestling with the agony of temptation, or worse yet a frequent succumbing to it due to battle-weariness, it would never amount to the abundant life proffered by Christ, and certainly wouldn't be any more joyful than heathen existence. Christ Himself didn't *live* and *abide* in the wilderness of temptation but merely *visited* it on occasion. For the most part, then, the Christian life is supposed to be one of *rest*:

Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light (Mat 11:28-30, KJV).

Does that sound like a lot of hard work? The last time you awoke from sleep, did you complain, "Good Lord that rest was a lot of hard work!" Rest and work are polar opposites. The only conceivable way to enter into a state of spiritual rest is to receive outpourings that automatically sustain holiness. Hence the need for revival.<sup>105</sup> Isaiah put it like this:

**Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall. But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint (Isa 40:30-31, KJV).**

**And yet doesn't Scripture urge us to work/ labor? Yes but according to Hebrews we are laboring (in prayer for example) to enter into the desired state of rest, "Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest" (Heb 4:11, KJV). Furthermore not every biblical reference to labor is proof of agony. A man laboring in the fields is actually at rest if He has sufficient power from on high. Let us go up and capture the promised land of rest from all our enemies.**[106](#)

**Admittedly Jn 4:6 described Jesus as tired, but it's probably the only verse that does so. And it is precious little to go on, for two reasons. First, quite possibly the Holy Breath often insulated His sensibilities from the weariness until a resting place was reached. In other words most of His fatigue was likely suffered at the very end of His workday. Second, He may have suffered extra on occasion on account of atonement.**

## **Spiritual Awakening/ Revival as Storm**

**"Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?" (Ps 85:6, KJV). Any major historic revival was a perceptual storm of sensation but is actually to be credited to a real physical storm as we shall see. Such a large-scale revival was a divine invasion of a community typically transformative enough to virtually vanquish immorality overnight, and the Lord became the only topic of interest in almost every conversation. Suddenly His sweet Presence became so intensely manifest and addictive that the residents of the community desired to spend much of their spare time in prayer.**

**The new birth sheds some preliminary light on revival because it is a resurrection/awakening from death (Jn 5:21, 24-25; 11:25; Rom 6:4-5; 8:10-11; 1Cor 15:45, Eph 2:1, 5; Gal 2:20; Col 2:13; 1Jn 3:14) as Walvoord affirmed, "The new life in Christ received at conversion is**

compared here to resurrection from the dead.”<sup>107</sup> It is a spiritual awakening. To understand the relevance, let’s first reflect on our daily experience of the natural realm. Relentlessly the natural realm invades and dominates our awareness, persistently hammering itself into our consciousness, barraging us with an oft-undesired storm of unquenchable sensations loud and clear. Ordinary life is thus a tumult, and sleep an oblivion to it. In the current day and age the Christian, for lack of spiritual awakening, is essentially dead/ oblivious to the invisible realm. For him the natural realm is exceedingly more distinct (loud and clear) than the invisible realm, which is precisely why he regards it as invisible. And yet doesn’t even the Bible itself classify it as unseen? Absolutely. Scripture employs the rubric “unseen” to encapsulate the *world’s* perspective on the supernatural realm, that is, the perspective of the unbelieving and immature. This is blindness.

A spiritual awakening, then – a revival – is the invisible realm suddenly behaving like the natural realm, that is, relentlessly invading and dominating our awareness, persistently hammering itself into our consciousness, distinctly bombarding our minds with a perceptual storm of conceptual objects terrifying and glorious such as hell, heaven, angels, demons, and the enthroned Christ. Fear of God suddenly arises in the hearts of men and women like never before. "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord," wrote Paul, "we persuade men" (2Cor 5:11, KJV). Ezekiel fell facedown in terror (Eze 1:28) during his own personal revival experienced as a storm of divine Energy advancing upon the horizon of his perception:

The heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God...And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it (Eze 1:1, 4, KJV).

Anyone who has survived a hurricane or tornado can relate to the dreadfulness of such an experience. Presumably this revival elevated Ezekiel to new heights of obedience and devotion to God even as Isaiah’s consecration intensified after a reviving vision both glorious and terrible seen in the temple (Isa 6:1ff), for “The foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke”

**(vs 4, ASV). His voice shook the foundations? Sounds pretty terrifying to me.**

**Unbeknownst to many Israelites, Yahweh's promise to scatter their enemies pertained to foe demonic as well as human. Praying down revival is the only way to fully defeat "the prince of the power of the air" (Eph 2:2, KJV). Demons on the earth below use deception to corrupt society, impede conversion, and stunt sanctification, while demons in the upper atmosphere inhibit angels charged with reviving Fire from reaching us. For instance angels brought to Isaiah's lips a live coal blazing with reviving Fire (Isa 6:5-7), sacramentally nourished Elijah for forty days of traveling (1Ki 19:8), radiated sanctifying Light to various saints during apparitions, and rejuvenated Christ in prayer at Gethsemane (Lk 22:43). Angels even hurl divine Fire to the earth (Eze 10:2; Rev 16:1ff). A revival is a rending of both the demonic blockade on high and the solid heavenly firmament above it, followed by angels, Fire, and Light torpedoed/unleashed through the aperture. From a demonic perspective in particular, it is an absolutely horrifying tempest of storm Clouds and violent Winds descending through the atmosphere and energetically scattering demons in its wake. David's prayers elicited precisely such a rending of the heavens followed by a foe-scattering, cataclysmic release of earthquaking Energy through the gap, as he perceived in a frightening vision:**

**In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his [heavenly] temple, and my cry came before him, into his ears. Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because he was wroth. There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it. He bowed the heavens also, and came down: and darkness was under his feet. And he rode upon a cherub [i.e. upon a crystal platform mounted on cherub – see Eze 1:22ff], and did fly: yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind. He made darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him dark waters and thick clouds of the skies. At the brightness before him his thick clouds passed, hail stones and coals of fire. The LORD also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice; hail stones and coals of fire. Yea, he sent out his arrows, and scattered them; and he shot out lightnings, and discomfited**

them. Then the channels of waters were seen, and the foundations of the world were discovered at thy rebuke, O LORD, at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils (Ps 18:6-15, KJV).

Precisely such a storm of earthquaking Energy instigated the revival of Acts 4:30-31. Noted commentators classify that outpouring as a literal earthquake.<sup>108</sup> As usual, it was in response to prayer. And then sometime later:

And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken (Acts 16:25-26, KJV).

Isaiah's prayer that God once again tear apart or "rend the heavens, that though wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at your presence" (Isa 64:1, KJV) wistfully reminisces the fiery Pillar's descent upon a trembling Mt. Sinai (Ex 19:1ff). Christ's own prayers rent open the heavens as an aperture for a divine Storm needed to inaugurate His crowd-drawing revivals, "And praying, the heaven was opened, And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him" (Lk 3:21-22, KJV).<sup>109</sup> Daniel had to pray three weeks (Dan 10:2) before an angel was able to penetrate the demonic barricade in the heavens. Solomon's prayer elicited reviving Fire from heaven (2Chr 7:1-3). Elijah's prayers brought down Fire from heaven and precipitated rain in a dry land as a model of revival (18:36ff). On Pentecost the prayers of 120 saints elicited a violent Wind and tongues of Fire constituting one of the most landmark Storms of church history.

At times God delays answers to prayer because He is strategically accumulating an outpouring for a citywide revival potentially synergistic through positive peer pressure. Unanswered prayer is never wasted because He tallies its value as credit toward the next revival.

## **OT Military Campaigns as a Paradigm for Evangelism**

Aside from a few scattered individuals such as Charles Finney and Paul Yongi Cho, orthodox Christianity has been largely oblivious to the victory-strategy thematic to OT military campaigns. In a nutshell, the



people of Yahweh are supposed to wait for a loud and clear signal from heaven, as a forepromise of victory, before marching out to battle their enemies (Gen 25:22; Ex 18:15; Jos 6:20; Jdg 20:27-28; 1Sa 9:9; 14:37; 22:15; 23:2, 4; 28:6; 30:8; 2Sam 2:1; 5:19, 23; 1Ki 22:5-8; 2Ki 1:3, 6, 16; 3:11; 8:8; 16:15; 22:13-19; 1Ch 21:30; 34:21, 26; Ps 27:4). This OT approach to military campaigns is precisely the apostolic strategy for evangelistic campaigns throughout the entire book of Acts, beginning with Pentecost's (loud and clear) sound of the mighty rushing Wind and visible tongues of Fire (quite a storm there). Notice how signals loud and clear directed Paul's missionary work:

When they had gone through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. When they had come opposite Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit didn't allow them. Passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. A vision appeared to Paul in the night. There was a man of Macedonia standing, begging him, and saying, "Come over into Macedonia and help us." When he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go out to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the Good News to them (Act 16:6-10, WEB; cf. 13:2-4; 18:9-10; 20:22-23; 22:9-10, 14, 17-18; 23:11; 27:24).

In Acts 4, Peter was praying for a fresh endowment of power to preach the gospel. The ensuing earthquake was a loud and clear signal indicating a heavenly grant of power. In Acts 10 Peter was praying on a rooftop. Praying for what? Why not just get out there and preach instead of wasting time? He was waiting for a loud and clear signal from heaven. He eventually saw a vision directing him to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, and "the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word" (10:44, KJV).

Evidence of this pattern exists even before the Book of Acts. For example suppose the Twelve, at any time during the gospel period, had decided to march out and heal the sick. The likelihood of having some success? Precious little, for lack of authorization from heaven. Whereas in Luke 9 and 10, Christ's own voice, speaking loud and clear, *sent* them out to heal the sick. Chances of having some success? Absolutely 100%. In fact Jesus used a fish-based parable to reinforce the need for Him to authorize any and all evangelism. Jesus said to Peter the fisherman, "From henceforth thou shalt catch men" (Lk 5:10, KJV; cf. Mat 4:18-19;

**Mk 1:16-17; Lk 5:10). With how much abundance? All night long Peter was casting out the nets (“evangelizing”) without success (Lk 5:5). What was wrong with his evangelistic methodology? It was self-initiated on blind faith and, as such, had no authority (exousia) from heaven. Then Christ vocally authorized him to cast out the nets once again (5:4). Suddenly the nets became so overflowing with fish (“new converts”) that the two ships (“the local churches”) began to overflow and sink (5:7). It was a harvest too abundant for them to handle. Now *that’s* a revival, and Christ repeated the illustration at one of Peter’s later fishing expeditions (Jn 21:1-6) just to make sure His followers got the point!**

**Any reader habitually skeptical of loud and clear signals from heaven is probably wondering, “Are you advising me to go out and evangelize whenever I hear some thunder or see some lightning?” Let’s look at it logically. What function did the heavenly signs serve in the hearts of the observers? They raised the level of certainty. Ultimately our responsibility, therefore, is to wait on God for distinct (loud and clear) feelings of 100% certainty, regardless of whether He decides to actually use signs and wonders to help us reach it. Again, the prophets needed to be 100% certain of *what* to preach, *when* to preach, and *where* to preach.**

**The OT officially had a rubric for the military paradigm. It was known as “inquiring of the Lord.” For example:**

**David enquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go and smite these Philistines? And the LORD said unto David, Go, and smite the Philistines...Then David enquired of the LORD yet again. And the LORD answered him [again]...I will deliver the Philistines into thine hand (1Sa 23:2, 4, KJV).**

**Why a second inquiry? Either the level of certainty on the first iteration was less than 100%, or was indeed so but subsequently waned. Clearly this strategy wasn’t an aberration but a way of life for David. At 2 Sam 2:1 we read:**

**David inquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah? And the LORD said to him, Go up. And David said, Where shall I go up? And he said, To Hebron (2Sa 2:1, KJV).**

Here again the inquiry was twofold. He did receive a loud and clear signal on the first iteration but it lacked a bill of particulars. He needed to know *exactly* which city to journey towards. Three chapters later:

And David inquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go up to the Philistines? Will you deliver them into my hand? And the LORD said to David, Go up: for I will doubtless deliver the Philistines into your hand (2Sam 5:19, KJV).

Sadly most preachers discourse on “David and Goliath” as though the undertaking was basically a leap of blind faith. The foregoing evidence would seem to belie this conclusion in favor of 100% certainty. David was, after all, a prophet. It definitely wasn’t blind faith when Peter later stepped out to walk on water. Peter prayed the Lord for authorization. Only when the divine Voice authorized him to tread water did he actually venture forth (Mat 14:28-29). In the days of Moses, the Pillar of Cloud would suddenly ascend far above its normal hovering position as a loud and clear sign for all Israel to see, signaling the need to abandon camp and resume marching toward their enemies. Eventually the Pillar would descend again into the hovering position above the tabernacle, as a loud and clear signal to encamp (Ex 40:36ff; Num 9:15ff).<sup>[110](#)</sup>

## Inspired Faith (100% Certainty) vs Self-Generated Faith

Jesus tied miracles, and answers to prayer in general, to 100% certainty.

For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them (Mar 11:23-24, KJV).

This has led to the name-it-and-claim-it faith movement. Name a blessing, believe as hard as you can – and bam! However, are we to entertain seriously the notion that God intended to entrust mountain-moving power to a bunch of spiritually immature carnal believers? Power corrupts, and

absolute power corrupts absolutely. The passage is true, but 100% certainty is by divine fiat. Why then does the passage command us to exert faith? As usual, let's put logic first, then Scripture. As a rule of thumb, blind faith is foolhardy and thus one should not try to make himself believe something. The one exception to this rule – the one scenario where self-generated faith is wise - is when conscience so demands, because conscience is our final authority in all matters. The upshot is two kinds of faith, namely inspired faith (100% certainty) and self-generated faith (always less than 100%). The two can coexist, in fact 100% certainty can actually coexist with doubt. Why so? Because a material mind is a multiplicity. A newborn Christian has only a minimal sprinkling of the Holy Breath. The few sprinkled body cells operate at 100% certainty continually, in virtue of being holy, which amounts to a very small voice of certainty largely *drowned out* by any (loud and clear) doubts resonating throughout the rest of the mind. (Imagine an excruciating pain drowning out a mild sensation such as your clothing's skin-contact). Nonetheless this small voice is often loud enough to place a demand on the overall conscience. For example suppose I just lost my job. Due to the influence of the voice, my conscience on the whole will likely still be inclined to believe that God will find a way to provide for me. This imposes an obligation on me to cultivate a positive attitude about the situation, to sustain a self-generated faith in disturbing circumstances. Thus I have a free choice. I can either choose to be disobedient, that is, I can sit around mumbling about God and slandering His goodness, or choose to make a sincere effort to trust Him to provide for me. God often uses these kinds of scenarios to test our faith – although, more precisely, what He's really testing is our obedience to conscience.

As we mature, that is, receive more outpourings, God will begin to grant us 100% certainty about works of power, especially in seasons of revival. In some cases, though, here too, in order to test our faith, He might allow part of our being to drown out the certainty somewhat. (It's always up to Him). Thus if am laying my hands on a sick person to heal him, and I have *nearly* 100% certainty about it, and my conscience is demanding that I believe a little harder, I will have to self-generate some

faith to obtain the miracle. It is in this sense that the second of the two verses cited above is commanding us to exert faith. In the apostolic period this counsel was extremely relevant on account of the abundant flow of miracles in that highly revived period. Unfortunately at the moment, for lack of revival, it isn't very relevant in terms of miracles but is still relevant in terms of how we manage our faith and conscience in a broad sense.

Christians have for centuries attempted to fix any faith-deficiencies by believing harder. This is a serious misplacement of focus, because the main cause of low faith is a lack of 100% certainty received through prayer. After all, recall the occasion when the disciples were unable to cast out a particular devil. Jesus did not say, "You just need to believe harder." Rather He said, "This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting" (Mk 9:29, KJV). Six verses prior He had said, "Anything is possible if a person believes" (vs 23). The implication is clear. More faith was indeed needed, but such faith is attainable only through prayer.

Charles Finney and Paul Yongi Cho are among the precious few individuals in church history to grasp the need for 100% certainty. Cho writes of his staff, "Experienced 'prayer warriors' are assigned to each [prayer] request and they fast and pray until they get the [loud and clear] witness of the Holy Spirit that their prayer has been answered."<sup>111</sup> because, says Cho, "faith cometh by hearing."<sup>112</sup> They literally intercede for a particular unsaved person until hearing God say "Yes, he will be saved"!<sup>113</sup> Charles Finney did the same.<sup>114</sup> He generally abstained from evangelism in a particular village until God gave him 100% assurance, during intercessory prayer, of impending victory.<sup>115</sup> In another example of 100% certainty he struggled in prayer for a terminally ill unsaved woman until he obtained, he said, "the assurance in my own mind that the woman...would never die in her sins...I had no doubt that she would recover."<sup>116</sup> Although Finney wasn't likely a prophet, he evidently received prophetic-style anointings strictly for evangelistic purposes. He would wait in prayer until an outpouring descended upon his body like a suit, and then open his mouth to unleash it like a hammer against the

listeners, so devastating was its convicting power. For example, "The Spirit of God came upon me with such power, that it was like opening a battery upon them."<sup>117</sup> In a similar scenario "the congregation began to fall from their seats in every direction, and cried for mercy."<sup>118</sup> He said that whenever he lost this awesome power, it left him evangelistically impotent, until he regained it through prayer and fasting.<sup>119</sup>

## **Why a Charismatic Anointing Can't Last Long**

Many Christians regard the indwelling Spirit as a dormant entity, awakened for use at their whim and will, whenever they so deign, by their own deliberate exertion of faith. In reality the divine Word is sent, not to slumber, but to perform a specific function with efficacy until its completion and then return to God, "My word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void"(Isa 55:11, KJV). Gravity is the divine Word at work upholding the universe, because God is "upholding all things by the word of his power" (Heb 1:3, KJV). Let's understand this. A reserved volume of the divine Word already fills the entire universe, albeit somewhat sparsely, because a divine Presence too dense would obviously displace all ordinary matter.<sup>120</sup> That volume isn't used for our regeneration because it already has the ongoing assignment of upholding the universe and, presumably, monitoring all things as well. Why isn't it used for our regeneration? New converts are still arising 6,000 years after Adam. God simply didn't send out volumes of the Word to lie dormant for 6,000 years waiting for the converts of today. That's just not how He operates. Therefore at the moment of regeneration Christ releases a fresh volume of the Word to the believer in question, not to lie dormant, but on the contrary to enforce holiness efficaciously. Any outpouring for sanctification functions the same way.

Such a sanctifying anointing is long lasting because holiness is an ongoing task – but what now of a short-lived task such as a prophetic



utterance? A sermon? A session of healing the sick? The divine Word performs the assignment and then returns to God. The upshot is that a charismatic anointing won't last long but will likely return at time of need if we are faithful in prayer. In the book of Jeremiah, for example, the divine Word came to him on at least 25 separate occasions (Jer 1:2, 4, 11, 13; 2:1; 13:3, 8, 14:1; 16:1; 18:5; 24:4; 25:3; 28:12; 29:30; 32:6, 26; 33:1, 19, 23; 34:12; 35:12; 36:27; 37:6; 39:15; 42:7; 43:8; 46:1; 47:1; 49:34). By that same token, the Spirit of God fell on Samson whenever he needed supernatural strength (Jdg 14:6, 19, 15:14-15). Such a charismatic anointing's frequency of return can depend on a variety of factors such as prayer, fasting, the prophet's current level of maturity, and even the church's current level of favor with God.<sup>121</sup> Samson's final prayer returned his charismatic anointing one last time (16:28).

Unsurprisingly, then, Shelton's masterful work of redaction criticism identified in Luke-Acts two types of filling, one is the abiding Spirit of holiness for ongoing sanctification, the other a transitory filling for a prophetic utterance or other miracles, repeated when needed.<sup>122</sup> For example, "Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied" (Lk 1:67, KJV).

## Why You Should Only Pray For Yourself

Pending revival, here's our predicament, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Mat 26:41, KJV). A weak, unrevived flesh will not likely sustain altruistic intercession with any long-term consistency. The end result is a low amount of prayer and consequent loss of revival. Since it's *much* easier to pray for our own wants, we will be much more likely to keep up the petitioning all day long. Therefore the best thing an individual can do for the church is to always pray for himself or herself alone, except of course when congregated with other intercessors in a united petition for a shared concern.

If your goal is to be a strong, disciplined, fearless, mighty prayer-warrior, there's a chance you'll fail due to the weakness of the flesh. In

fact God values your weakness more than your strength, if Gideon has anything to say about it, for His “power is made perfect in weakness” (2Cor 12:9, ASV). You are more likely to be faithful in prayer if you bring *nothing* to Him except your weaknesses, fears, needs, wants, flaws, and addictions, beseeching His help – first and foremost the weakness of your prayer life. You don’t even need to say anything. Just bring your frailty. He wants, nay, *needs* our dependence on Him. And to give you fair warning, here’s what happened to me. When I eventually got a taste of His strength, then I *really* felt my weakness, as though for the first time. The effect was like a drug impossible to live without. I immediately began to hope that He would steadily increase my strength, allowing me to approach a state of rest – but then I would likely have prayed less, in pursuit of my own selfish goals. He does want to fully revive us, but right now He needs our prayers and our free will because the world is such a mess. Be content to remain weak, continually dependent on Him in prayer for what little strength you have, because this sacrifice is of inestimable value to Him. Your reward will still be in heaven if you are not fortunate enough to experience a major revival on earth.

## Where Do We Go From Here?

Where do we go from here? I don’t know. Since today’s church leaders need money to feed their families, one can hardly expect them to be open minded about any doctrinal changes potentially ousting them from leadership or alienating their congregation. After all, “The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Mat 26:41, KJV). Lucky for me I don’t earn my living from the gospel, because I likely wouldn’t fare any better than average in the face of such a temptation-prone financial dilemma.

Although we do need man-made institutions as a precursor to a revival, it is possible that today’s leaders will only impede it if they continue to pretend to know God’s will and how to properly run the church, because they are effectively shoving their own man-made religion down His throat. Widespread repentance of this pretense would be a significant step

toward revival. The second thing needed is a willingness to experiment with creative new (man-made) ways to run the church and conduct services, specifically new tactics to help increase the amount of prayer and worship accomplished both individually and corporately. One such possible strategy is the implementation of my idea entitled Family Fellowship (below), as yet untested. Again, any such man-made tactics are just a precursor to revival.

## **A New Format for Corporate Prayer: Family Fellowship**

Prayer towers – buildings dedicated to prayer – are not very effective because isolation is boring and difficult on the flesh. Why bother drive to a prayer tower if I can feel equally lonely at home? In fact I can even feel lonely in a crowded church due to social inhibition. The members of a family suffer no social inhibition. They jump into each other's conversations and activities *uninvited*. Churches call themselves “the family of God” and yet generally fail to aggressively combat social inhibition (due to the mistaken assumption that the (powerless!) written Word preached will satisfy the members' needs). Family Fellowship is an agreement among voluntary participants to interact without social inhibition.

Leadership is an authority capable of eliminating social inhibition, for example, a preacher can command, “I want each of you to hug three people around you.” In a similar way, Family Fellowship is a set of *rules* designed to eliminate social inhibition. Every ministry has implicit or explicit rules whether for pew members, greeters, ushers, musicians, choir members, cooks, sound technicians, deacons, teachers, security, and parking attendants. Family Fellowship has rules because it is a *ministry*.

A church leader can keep his building open for Family Fellowship all weekend long, for 24-hour spans starting Friday night, excepting conflicts with regular scheduled services. The list of rules should be served to anyone who enters the fellowship building during the hours designated for

**Family Fellowship.** *At no other hours or locations do these rules apply.* Proctors must “enforce” the rules (gently of course) to prevent the deadly dynamic of social inhibition from rearing its ugly head. Here is a suggested list of rules. However, if the proctors observe patterns of behavior culminating in isolation and social inhibition, the rules should be modified as needed to improve the results.

1. No isolation permitted. You will immediately join a group of occupants and handshake at least one person while exchanging names. Upon leaving a group you must join another group or exit the building. You can engage the group in any conversation fun and appropriate including sports, hobbies, recreation, etc. It’s okay for groups to split off as long as the split doesn’t leave a lone individual stranded/ isolated.
2. No isolated prayer. All prayer will be audible, open-eyed, and performed as a group, either holding hands or laying hands on a member. You can and should ask the members in your group to pray for you, or for any concerns weighing on your mind.
3. A private conversation justifies turning away a newcomer only if immediately moved outside the building.
4. On a table will be forms for social activity. Suppose you wish to attend a movie, restaurant, or bowling alley tonight. Fill out a form indicating the time to rendezvous at the table. Anyone who sees your form can sign up, but each participant is responsible for his own transportation. (Such a table can also be placed in the lobby before regular church services).
5. You *agree* to presume all greetings, conversations, and invitations from the opposite gender as Platonic (nonromantic).
6. The fellowship building is for conversation rather than spectator-activities such as televisions, board games, pool tables, table tennis, video games, etc.
7. Any lull in the conversation is to be remedied by someone in the group sharing an uplifting testimony (or simply asking for prayer).

8. Once every hour or two, an appointed proctor or member will congregate everyone for five to ten minutes of corporate prayer or worship/singing.

9. (This one will be especially controversial but is worth considering, especially for singles groups). To overcome any social inhibitions between the sexes, singles are expected to spend at least 25% of their fellowship time with the opposite sex. However, all advances are to be presumed Platonic/ nonromantic, for purposes of prayer and fellowship alone, unless or until one of the parties makes other intentions explicit.

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Also recommended is the development of a social networking website that implements a Family Fellowship atmosphere nationally, for example a website where a Christian can post a notice that he is headed to McDonald's for a cup of coffee (or any fun activity), and even schedule it one or more days in advance. Other members can then do a search by zip code to find such postings and attend. Here too there needs to be a list of rules in place that would tend to cultivate group prayer.

## **Appendix One: The Charismatic Theology of Galatians and 1Corinthians**

### **Galatians: What is the Covenant of Grace?**

Logic first, then Scripture. No matter how many different covenants might *seem* to exist in Scripture, the underlying divine-human relationship is unchanging, because the cross is retroactive. Since NT saints don't get a better cross than OT saints, they don't get a different set of benefits. For example to claim that OT saints were under the law, not

under grace, effectively condemns them to hell because no one will qualify for heaven by good works, “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom 3:23). This retroactive, atonement-based economy spanning both testaments forms the heart of the Protestant Reformation’s theology still upheld in all Reformed churches of today. It is called the “Covenant of Grace” or “Covenant Theology.”<sup>123</sup> It postulates a single covenant of saving grace spanning both testaments. Whether or not Scripture explicitly mentions this covenant is irrelevant, since it rests solidly on logical grounds. However, let’s take a walk through the third chapter of Galatians because it *does* seem to blatantly assert the Covenant of Grace. As a preface, bear in mind that since God created us for fellowship (sensations loud and clear), hearing the divine Voice defines the divine-human relationship. Only a Voice-based covenant, therefore, would likely suffice as the primary covenant between God and man.

## Galatians: The Promised Land

The Covenant of Grace is the Promise of Grace. “Covenant” and “promise” are somewhat interchangeable terms because any promise voiced by Yahweh binds Him covenantally to fulfill it. Scripture resorts to both the singular and the plural. In one sense God voiced to Abraham a single Promise/ Covenant (hence the singular “promise” at Gal 3:17-18), namely the promise of His eternal favor/ grace.<sup>124</sup> However, that favor/grace consists of multiple benefits vocally announced to our hearts in an endless number of voiced promises/covenants including the Davidic promise/ covenant, Israel’s promise/ New Covenant, and Joel’s (inexhaustible) promise of the Spirit of prophecy (hence the plural “promises” at 3:16). It even includes any one-off promises voiced to any individual believer for his personal needs alone. Why is this important? Earlier this paper mentioned the OT principle of “inquiring of the Lord,” waiting on Him in prayer – for what exactly? For a *promise*, for example a promise of victory in a military or evangelistic campaign. Thus the Abrahamic Covenant/Promise is the covenant that *defines how people are*



*supposed to walk with God* - their primary responsibility is to “inquire of the Lord,” that is, to wait upon the divine Voice to vocalize, and then fulfill, fresh promises/ covenants according to their needs. To do otherwise is to walk in human effort instead of availing of the power of the Spirit, it is walking by law instead of by grace. The third chapter of Galatians reminds the congregation that only those who walk according to the promissory paradigm will receive the outpourings essential to secure *both* miracles *and* sanctification as needed. Paul wrote:

Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?...He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh *miracles* among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness (Gal 3:2-6, KJV, italics mine).

Hearing what? Hearing promises. The key point here is that Abraham is adduced at verse six as the *paradigmatic exemplar* of verses 2 thru 5, specifically it cites his experience at Gen 15:6 as the precedent. Let's turn back to Genesis asking ourselves, did Abraham in fact receive an outpouring of the Holy Spirit by the hearing of faith, specifically when hearing spoken promises? Or was Paul mistaken in citing Abraham as proof?

After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram...And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus?...the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness (Gen 15:1-6, KJV).

Turns out Paul was correct. The divine Word was outpoured twice upon Abraham in the passage – the second time *in direct response to prayer* - because God exhales the Holy Breath when speaking promises. Promises of what? In verses 4 and 5 God promised him a son, offspring like the stars, and a land to inherit. *Why* did Abraham believe the promises voiced by the divine Word? Because He confers feelings of certainty when

speaking. This is faith/belief. As a result, “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the [divine] word of God” (Rom 10:17, KJV). This divine Word has absolutely nothing to do with the written Word. The Pharisees were overflowing with written Word while devoid of faith. Every Christian’s saving faith germinates from hearing the divine Word speak promises, because when the gospel is preached, the Holy Breath convicts (convinces) the sinner of a promised salvation and heavenly city.

## Galatians: Sanctification Instead of Justification

As seen, the divine Word conferred a grant of faith/ certainty to Abraham when speaking promises to him at Gen 15:1-6. Both Romans and Galatians refer to this particular grant of faith as justification by faith. Does anyone see the problem here? He already heard the Word speaking promises prior to this point (Gen 12). He already had saving faith. How many times can a man be justified by faith? *Plenty* of times, as it turns out, because Pauline soteriology is *micro-redemptive*. Think about it. The Holy Breath confers justifying faith *wherever He lands*. Those parts of your body as yet unsprinkled still lack justifying faith. As a result, this outpouring was actually for Abraham’s ongoing sanctification. Or to put it more precisely, justification and sanctification are two sides of a coin, as Reformed theology has always held. They are somewhat coterminous. The emphasis in Romans is on justification; in Galatians sanctification,<sup>125</sup> even though Galatians likewise uses the term justification. How do we know that Galatians is sanctification? Because it refers to becoming mature/perfect.

Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? (Gal 3:2-3, KJV).

The word “begun” is crucial. The Galatians had begun aright and then strayed. How had they begun? By *receiving* the outpoured Holy Breath through the hearing of faith. How then should they have continued onto maturity? The implication is clear. The same way they had begun. All they needed was to *receive* more outpourings by the hearing of faith.<sup>126</sup>

Anything else would be sanctification by human effort. All evangelical Christians rightly repudiate justification by works but then fall prey to the error of sanctification by works, as Andrew Murray saw so clearly:

Though [the Galatians] had been justified by faith, they were seeking to be sanctified by works...Almost every believer makes the same mistake as the Galatian Christians.<sup>[127](#)</sup>

Accordingly Murray understood Gal 3:2-5 as an admonition to wait on God for more power from on high:

A man may often have a measure of the power of the Spirit, but if there be not a large measure of the Spirit as the Spirit of grace and holiness, the defect will be manifest in his work...It was with new prayer and fasting, with more prayer and fasting, that this company of [early] disciples carried out the command of the Holy Ghost, ‘My soul, wait thou only upon God.’ That is our highest and most important work. The Holy Spirit *comes* in answer to believing prayer.<sup>[128](#)</sup>

Murray argued that Gal 3:2-5 validates how the 120 disciples waited in prayer until Pentecost for power from on high.<sup>[129](#)</sup> In a chapter whose title emphasized that crucial word “begun” at 3:3, Murray concluded, “One must “wait upon God to be filled with the Spirit.”<sup>[130](#)</sup> Until we learn, he said, to “cease trying by human effort do God’s will and wait upon the Holy Spirit to come with all His omnipotent and enabling power, the Church will never be what God wants her to be.”<sup>[131](#)</sup>

As Gordon Fee has pointed out, the traditional translation “suffered” at 3:4 is unfortunate, “Have you suffered so many things in vain?” The immediate context is sanctification and miracles. Anyone participating in an apostolic revival had already experienced a significant measure of both. Paul is now asking, “Have you *experienced* so many supernatural things in vain?” He was horrified. After seeing all these signs and wonders, and hearing Christ’s voice at 100% certainty, the Galatians had narrowed their focus to the written Word/Law? Really?

## Galatians: The Nature of the Promised Land

**The Abrahamic Promise/Covenant is fundamentally God’s promise to be our eternal Provider, fulfilling our needs through an endless supply of voiced promises/ covenants. That is our inheritance passed down from Abraham. A given promise can be scoped to one single individual, or to a few (such as the Counselor/Fire promised to the Twelve), or to many, or even to the entire church. Here’s my thinking on the scope of the promised land. God promised Abraham the land at Gen 15:1-6 *in a vision*. As a prophet, he received excellent visions, by which “he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (Heb 11:10, KJV).<sup>132</sup> Thus by visions the OT saints had only “seen [the promised heavenly realities] afar off, and were persuaded of them” (11:13, KJV). Jacob had such a vision of the Promised Land (Gen 28:12-13), featuring angels ascending and descending a ladder with the Lord visibly standing at the top.<sup>133</sup> God promised Abraham offspring like the stars, meaning he foresaw the saints in the heavenly city shining like stars. Clearly the heavenly city is a promise scoped to the entire church. In all probability, some or all of the city’s substance consists of the divine Word and thus the Promised Land is actually Christ. Taking possession of outpoured Promised Land grants us both rest from our (demonic) enemies and rest from the agony of temptation.**

**What about the earthly land promised to Abraham? Was it scoped to Israel alone? Perhaps it’s a matter of perspective because God promised the whole world to Abraham and his descendants (Rom 4:13). In the day of Moses, the Hebrews had authorization from the divine Voice to seize the land of Israel by force, whereas today the only definite land-grant is our right to win the whole world to Christ evangelistically. Regardless of what kind of land or blessing is in view, however, the people of God must go up to take possession of it, by waiting on the Lord to speak promises. This exposes a dichotomy, namely that promised blessings, such as the heavenly Promised Land (outpourings of Christ), inherited *unconditionally* in the next life are typically *conditional* in this life. Such a conditional-unconditional duality was the thesis of the brilliant theological volume *The Covenants of Promise* by Thomas Edward McComiskey. Having outlined the major components of the Abrahamic**

**Promise/Covenant, McComiskey proceeded to summarize the Law as an effort, in large part, to express the Promise's conditionality in the following terms:**

- Here's the blessings currently available via Abrahamic covenant**
- Obey my voice and you'll receive all those blessings.**
- If you disobey, here's a list of curses.**

**As McComiskey insisted, the Law did not interrupt, suspend, add to, detract from, or terminate the Abrahamic Promise/ Covenant in any way, shape, or form (Gal 3:15, 17). Instead it merely brought to light a conditional aspect of the Promise not immediately apparent in its original articulation. Such a conditional law-based covenant, argued McComiskey, is inferior to the Promise for lack of conferring the inheritance unconditionally and eternally. Therefore promise-based covenants are superior to – are “established on better promises” (Heb 8:6, KJV) than those of – any law-based covenant. Gal 3:13-14 states.**

**Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith (Gal 3:13-14, KJV).**

**There is an ambiguity. Is the “law” here referring to its written form? Or to the original vocalization? Apparently the written form, because the divine Voice, by conferring a sanctifying outpouring characterized as justification in this epistle, is hardly a curse, on the contrary it fulfills the commands (the conditions) of the law in order to spare us from its curses. Anyone who is *not* currently seeking outpourings – the Galatian error in a nutshell and a perennial shortcoming of ancient Israel as well - is conferring curses upon himself because fleshly efforts to fulfill the conditions/ commands of the law will surely fail. To summarize, the “blessing of Abraham” is primarily outpourings of the Promised Land, the promised Inheritance, referred to in Galatians as the “promise of the Spirit.”<sup>[134](#)</sup> The law (the written Word) had no power to confer either sanctification or miracles. It did not confer the inheritance. Its primary function was to describe the curse, but it also provided a sometimes-useful reminder of commands voiced to Israel and Moses. It was a set of**



commands that God deemed appropriate for that ancient nation and culture. Even so, each Israelite needed the Voice because written commands are never a fully up-to-date description of God's will. Nothing has changed. The divine Voice is still speaking laws/commands and, as one would expect, each command is geared to the listener's own situation, culture, and nation, as determined by Him.

With respect to miracles, Gal 3:5-6 states:

He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness (Gal 3:5-6, KJV).

Abraham was adduced as proof.<sup>135</sup> How did Abraham's experience at Gen 15:6 prove that miracles come by the hearing of faith? Sarah was barren and had no solution. Since human effort cannot avail in a situation like this, a miracle was needed. The divine Voice promised Abraham a son in his old age (Gen 15:4). The Greek word for miracles at Gal 3:5 is *dunamis* (power), the same word used at Lk 24:49:

I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high (Lk 24:49, KJV).

## Galatians: The Father-Son Covenant

“Now to Abraham were the promises spoken, and to his seed” (Gal 3:16, ASV).<sup>136</sup> What is this seed? It means offspring either in the singular or plural. At verse 29 it is a plural reference to the whole church as the offspring of Abraham, “And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise” (KJV). This fits well with 3:16 because each of us, as Abraham's seed and thus under the same covenant as he, naturally hears God speaking the same kinds of promises spoken to him and thus, “Now to Abraham were the promises spoken, and to [us] his seed” (Gal 3:16, ASV). This is only the first half of verse 16, and it allows for both singular and plural implementations of seed.<sup>137</sup> When we move to the second half of the verse, however, the implementation is specifically singular, “He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of



one, and to thy seed, which is Christ” (KJV). The implication is this: “Now to Abraham were the promises spoken, and to [us] his seed [*and* to Christ His seed]” (Gal 3:16, ASV). Thus when the Father voices covenantal promises, He is sometimes speaking both to men and to His own Son. Visualize this promise for example, “Unto your offspring I will give this Promised Land.” Such a promise/ covenant is perfectly appropriate for the Son to hear. The upshot is that the covenant made with Abraham is also a covenant made with the Son.<sup>138</sup> It is the Father-Son covenant. In all probability the Father-Son covenant precedes Abraham because the Father was speaking promises to the Son long before Abraham was born. Perhaps one could argue, then, that the Abrahamic Promise/ Covenant is merely one specific implementation of the Father-Son covenant, spanning both testaments.

Israel’s old covenant, known as the Law, is made with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. Similarly her New Covenant, consisting of Christ as High Priest, is a promise/covenant *also* made unto the house of Israel and the house of Judah as well (Heb 8:8). Israel’s “New Covenant itself will not occur until the Lord Jesus Christ returns.”<sup>139</sup> Although neither covenant was made with the Gentiles specifically, the author of Hebrews had every right to apply the central elements of Israel’s New Covenant to the Gentiles since we too, as members of the Abrahamic Promise/Covenant, have that same Christ as our High Priest. In sum, Israel’s New Covenant/ Promise is one specific implementation of the Abrahamic Promise/ Covenant, scoped to Israel alone.<sup>140</sup> It furnishes unto them the redemption of the cross, the cleansing of their hearts, and the (eschatological) gathering of Israel into the New Jerusalem (the Promised Land).

## **Galatians: The Promised Holy Spirit**

The elements of the Abrahamic Promise/ Covenant - its most fundamentally definitive blessings and conditions – do not change over time (Gal 3:17). No changes are needed because it proffers God as our

Provider, who then supplies everything we need, including the indwelling Christ outpoured as the promised Holy Spirit. In every generation, the people of God are supposed to take possession of Promised Land. For example, all Christians are supposed to appropriate the Spirit of prophecy (Acts 2:39; 1Cor 14:1). Through Joel, God promised outpourings of the Spirit of prophecy in the last days. This isn't anything new per se, given that Abraham himself was already a prophet, and indeed Israel actually did a better job of appropriating Abraham's Spirit of prophecy than we Gentiles. To whom was Joel's promise scoped? It's scoped to all last-days believers who appropriate this promised land:

Then Peter said to them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is to you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the LORD our God shall call (Acts 2:38-39, KJV).

What are the terms and conditions? As the theologian of prayer, Luke was pretty clear on the matter. The main condition is prayer (Lk 11:13). Why then did Peter promise the gift of prophecy *unconditionally* to the crowd? Because God determines how much prayer is needed, and had probably decided that enough historic prayer was already in place for this crowd to partake of the outpouring. Thus Peter foreknew of the crowd's inclusion in the outpouring by revelation, even as God had forepromised Moses an outpouring of the Spirit of prophecy upon the seventy elders. Most likely Peter intended to hand-transfer the Spirit of prophecy to the crowd after water-baptism just like Paul did (Acts 19:5-6).

“I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh” (Acts 2:17, KJV). Who are the “all flesh”? Since the crowd represented every nation under heaven, it almost certainly means “all types of flesh” in the sense of all nationalities. God enunciated this promise to Joel as groundwork for the Book of Acts. By citing this promise, Luke managed to convey to the world that the OT Spirit of prophecy is scoped to all nations. This is not a brand new scope for the Spirit of prophecy – in fact God had always wanted Israel to bring the gospel to all nations, for example when the prophet Jonah preached the gospel to Nineveh. It's just that Joel's promise served as a literary tool utilized in Acts to help make this global scope biblically explicit.

## 1Corinthians: Devoid of No Gift (1:7) as Charismatic Diversity

The main thesis of 1Corinthians is that only a mature prophet is spiritually mature. In fact the prophets usually come to mind first whenever we seek to identify the most mature saints in the Bible. Unfortunately two particularly difficult, potentially misleading verses in 1Corinthians tend to obscure this thesis. One of them is 1Cor 13:2, “And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge...but have not love, I am nothing.” On the surface it suggests that a prophetic superman can be spiritually immature, but it’s merely a hypothetical. Moses’ spiritual maturity is precisely what qualified him for top-notch prophetic revelation (Num 12:6-8). Similarly Paul, in virtue of his spiritual maturity, was privy to an “exceeding greatness of the revelations” (2Cor 12:7, ASV). However, the most difficult, potentially misleading verse of all is 1Cor 1:7:

Ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (1:7, KJV).

Quite understandably, this verse causes some readers to regard the Corinthians as charismatic supermen who were spiritually immature. Is there another possible interpretation? Churches planted by Paul had a plethora of gifts. In fact Paul defined an *authentic* assembly as follows – and any deviation would be a blueprint for a man-made institution.

And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues (1Cor 12:28, KJV).

In my view 1Cor 1:7 was merely attesting to the full *variety* of spiritual gifts existing in any Pauline congregation including Corinth, as opposed to a proliferation of gifts. A good rendering of the verse would be, “You are not devoid of any gift.”<sup>141</sup> Paul urged Corinth to seek the greater gifts (1Cor 12:31; 14:1)<sup>142</sup> precisely on account of the shortage of gifts. The following defense of continuationism will naturally refute cessationism.

## 1Corinthians: Concerning Spirituals (12:1) as the Charismatic Gifts

Paul summarized Corinthian immaturity as a state of being worldly rather than spiritual (1Cor 3:1-3). What does spiritual mean? Does it mean holy? Verse 14:37 uses that same word spiritual, “If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual” (KJV). Notice how it juxtaposes “prophet” and “spiritual” in a nearly synonymous way precisely because those two words are largely coterminous.<sup>143</sup> Verse 12:1 reinforces the point, “Concerning spiritual things, brothers, I would not have you ignorant” (WEB). What follows is a list of “spirituals” – spiritual gifts. Clearly the Corinthians, being unspiritual, were still much too ignorant of spiritual gifts including prophecy. That was precisely the *nature of their immaturity*. Verse 12:1 is usually rendered, “Concerning spiritual gifts,” but the insertion of “gifts” by the translators tends to obscure Paul’s program. Chapter 12 isn’t itemizing a list of optional, superfluous gifts but is rather defining mandatory spirituality/ maturity. Both the WEB and NHEB have a good rendering, “Concerning spiritual things.” Other good options are “Concerning the spirituals” or “Concerning spiritual men.”<sup>144</sup> A spiritual man is one heavily steeped in “spiritual things” – the charismatic gifts.<sup>145</sup> Since the Corinthians were unspiritual (3:1-3), Paul commanded them to seek spiritual things, “Follow after love, and earnestly desire *spiritual things*, and especially that you may prophesy” (14:1, NHEB, italics added). Here too, the word “gifts” is usually inserted into the translation despite its absence from the Greek.

## 1Corinthians: The Charismatic Higher Wisdom of Apostles and Prophets (2:6-16)

“And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ” (3:1, KJV). Note the contrast.

He cannot speak spiritually to these babes whereas he does speak spiritually to the mature: “We speak wisdom among them that are mature” (2:6, KJV). Thus verses 2:6-16 thematize mature speech – presumably a special class of prophetic utterances - as a way of creating a contrast utilized to surface Corinthian immaturity at 3:1. As this discussion proceeds, it will become increasingly clear that verses 2:6-16 are describing prophetic inspiration. Consider 4:9-10:

God hath set forth *us the apostles* last, as it were appointed to death...We are fools for Christ’s sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised (4:9-10, KJV, italics mine).

Thus in this epistle, Paul used the term “we” in reference to “we apostles and prophets.” This is an interpretive key unlocking the epistle, notably chapter two. Robertson affirmed that “We” at 2:12 refers to “particularly Paul and the other apostles.”<sup>146</sup> Vincent remarks on 2:12, “especially we, the apostles.”<sup>147</sup> Kaiser says of 2:6-16 that “We” can “only designate the apostles collectively, or Paul himself with his fellow laborers.”<sup>148</sup> Wesley understood of 2:16, “*Spiritual* men, apostles in particular.”<sup>149</sup> Calvin surmised of 2:13, “[Paul] speaks of himself, for he is still employed in commending his own ministry.”<sup>150</sup>

Verse 4:10 branded the Corinthians as wise, in worldly things evidently, whereas the Higher Wisdom passage (2:6-16) prized spiritual wisdom over worldly wisdom.

We [mature apostles and prophets] speak [higher] wisdom among them that are perfect [i.e. *mature*<sup>151</sup>]: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: But we [apostles and prophets] speak the wisdom of God in a mystery...Which things also we speak [*in prophetic utterances*], not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but [in words] which the Holy Ghost teacheth<sup>152</sup> (2:6-7, 13, KJV).

Considerable scholarship understands this Higher Wisdom passage as referring to prophetic revelation in the magnitude of those utilized to create Scripture.<sup>153</sup> Why is this important? Because here its simplistic classification as “wisdom” automatically licenses it to all mature believers. Paul attempted to pray down upon *all* the Ephesian believers the Spirit of



wisdom and revelation (Eph 1:17). Likewise he wanted the Colossians to be “filled with the knowledge of his will in *all* wisdom and spiritual understanding” (Col 1:9, KJV, italics added). Note he didn’t qualify it with, “except for the Higher Wisdom forever limited to the original set of apostles.”

The Higher Wisdom passage states, “God hath revealed [these prophetic things] unto us [the apostles and prophets] by his Spirit” (1Cor 2:10, KJV) The biblical terms revealed and revelation (*apokalupsis*) stem from a Greek root frequently ascribed to prophetic experience (1Cor 2:10; 14:6, 26, 30; 2Cor 12:1, 7; Gal 1:12; 2:2; Eph 3:3-5; 1Pet 1:12; Rev 1:1). Using the same Greek root, John refers to his entire book of prophetic visions as the Book of Revelation (Rev 1:1). What is more, the leading cessationists *insist* that this Greek term differentiates prophets from ordinary teachers, pastors, and evangelists.<sup>154</sup> Cessationist Farnell writes:

In the New Testament the presence or absence of revelation distinguishes prophecy from teaching...No *apokalupsis* [revelation] in the New Testament is ever said to result in a ‘teaching’ of one man to another.

Instead teaching is put *in contrast to* divine ‘revelation.’”<sup>155</sup>

Farnell belabored this position in four lengthy cessationist articles but never once apprised the reader that the NT applies the same Greek root for revelation to *all the saints* (Mat 11:25, 27; 16:17; Lk 10:21-22; Gal 3:23; Eph 1:17; Phi 3:15). Kaiser at least reluctantly admitted the ubiquitous application of the term but then attempted, unconvincingly, to sidestep the implied universal prophethood.<sup>156</sup> The Higher Wisdom passage states:

We [mature apostles and prophets] speak wisdom among them that are perfect [mature]...I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with [babes’] milk, and not with meat [i.e. solid food] (2:6; 3:1-2, KJV).

Solid food, then, is the higher wisdom withheld from the Corinthians for lack of maturity. They could not digest solid food (3:1-3). Paul gave them this epistle (babes’ milk) instead of solid food. Therefore this epistle *is not solid food*. Similarly the epistle to the Hebrews was provided *instead of*



solid food (see Heb 5:11-14), and the same with 1Peter (1Pet 2:2). Clearly Scripture is *not a source of solid food*. Chrysostom remarked that not even “Scripture hath anywhere discoursed to us of these things.”<sup>157</sup> Where then do we get it? From the same place that the apostles got it – prophetic revelation:

For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of a man within him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man [*not even the Bible scholar*], but the Spirit of God. Now we [apostles and prophets] have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know [these things]” (2:11-12, KJV).

Since a spiritual man is under the Lord’s direction, attempting to correct his thinking is like trying to correct the Lord!

But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we [apostles and prophets] have the mind of Christ (2:15-16, KJV).

A man whose thinking is beyond correction? 14:37 now makes perfect sense:

If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord (14:37, KJV).

Thus a spiritual man would automatically *know* the authenticity of Paul’s teachings.

## 1Corinthians: The Perfect/Mature Man (13:8-12)

1Cor 13:8-12 is a hotly debated passage. Three Greek terms used in the Higher Wisdom passage (2:6 – 3:3) reappear in this passage. The translations of these three Greek terms are:

- “We”, still meaning “we apostles and prophets”
- babe
- mature/ perfect<sup>158</sup>

Cessationists must opt for “mature” over “perfect” – and they do - because gifts persisting “until that which is perfect is come” (13:10, KJV)

would persist until the next life perfects us, contrary to an early cessation. I myself prefer “mature” as well. Let’s dive right in. Below is my own translation, firstly to preserve the word “babe” echoed from 3:1-3 (versus “child”), secondly to keep repeating the word “cease” for clarity, and thirdly to use the rendering “mature” instead of “perfect.”

Love never ceases. As for prophecies, they will cease; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will cease. For we [apostles and prophets] know in part and we prophesy in part, but when the mature comes, what was in part will cease. When I was a babe, I spoke like a babe, I thought like a babe, I reasoned like a babe. When I became a [mature] man, I ceased from baby things (13:8-11, my translation).

Thus three revelatory activities will cease (prophecy, knowledge, and tongues) in parallel to three baby activities ceasing, “spoke like a babe, thought like a babe, reasoned like a babe.” However, did the babe actually *cease* from those three activities? By no means. He merely ceased from his *immature executions* of them. In a word he matured.

Was Paul a babe? Or mature? Both. Relative to the Corinthian babes, he was definitely mature, as he implied at 2:6, “We [apostles and prophets] speak wisdom among them that are perfect [mature]” (KJV). He again implies his maturity at 13:11, “When I became a *man*, I ceased from baby things” (my translation). Relative to Christ, however, he was still a babe. Having asserted his maturity, therefore, he *also* affirms his immaturity, like this:

For we [immature apostles and prophets] know in part and we prophesy in part, but when the mature comes, what was in part will cease (13:9-10, my translation).

The upshot is an endless cycle<sup>[159](#)</sup> known as relative maturity.<sup>[160](#)</sup> He is indeed a babe. As a babe, he knows only in part and prophesies only in part. When he has finally become mature (i.e. well advanced of his current babe status), he will know and prophesy maturely. Fine. Despite this great advancement, however, he will still be light-years short of Christ. Thus relative to Christ he will *still* be a babe prophesying only in part and thus will still need to grow even *more* in prophecy, as to become mature. And so the cycle continues. Each time he matures, what ceases

are his immature, in-part experiences of prophecy, knowledge, and tongues.<sup>161</sup> Verse 12 elaborates further on in-part experience:

For now [in immaturity] we see through a glass, darkly; but then [in maturity] face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known (13:12, KJV).

“I was blind but now I see!” Poor comprehension of a concept dooms the mind’s eye to a kind of darkness. As knowledge matures, the objects in the vision become vivid, as though face to face, with relative maturity. Paul was a mature man already seeing face to face but, relative to Christ, still a babe in darkness. What kind of knowledge is at stake here? Is it knowing God face to face? “Then shall I know even as also I am known” (13:12, KJV). Well, who *really* knows me, except God? Intimated here, evidently, is the prospect of knowing God as intimately as He knows us. Is that fully possible? Irrelevant. Relative maturity merely postulates it to a *relative* degree. It seems to echo the distinction at Num 12:6-8 between immature prophets, to whom God spoke in dark puzzling riddles, and Moses face to face.<sup>162</sup>

What do the leading cessationists have to say about all this? They actually accept relative maturity (see my recent footnotes), correctly deducing here an endless quantitative increase in prophecy, knowledge, and tongues. As cessationist Robert Thomas says, “The [Greek] idiom *ek merou*” [*in part*] is specifically quantitative in character.”<sup>163</sup> Along with other leading cessationists Weaver, Houghton, and Farnell,<sup>164</sup> Thomas admitted that “‘in part’ (*ek merou*)” anticipates quantitatively increasing “degrees of revelatory understanding...This is quantitative, not qualitative.”<sup>165</sup> Houghton conceded

In the quantitative contrast in verses 9 and 10 the partial is contrasted with the complete (or perfect)...The nature of the partial gifts of prophecy, tongues, and knowledge...is that they are revelational in quality. Since this is so, ‘the perfect’ [the mature] *must also be revelational*.<sup>166</sup>

As if that concession weren’t sufficiently explicit, cessationist Robert Thomas asked, “By what criteria may *maturity in the body of Christ be gauged*?...The criterion before Paul in 1Corinthians 13, however, centers

in knowledge, tongues, and prophecy...for special revelation and [miraculous] signs for verification of this revelation (cf. Heb 2:3-4).”<sup>167</sup> Likewise Gentry admits that “the mature” is the quantitative escalation of “partial” prophecy, knowledge, and tongues properly defined as revelatory experiences.<sup>168</sup>

How do these writers attempt to sidestep their own (devastating) concessions? They suddenly backpedal, undoing their own groundwork. They begin redefining the passage as a discussion of revelation instead of *prophecy, tongues, and knowledge*. They next equate ordinary Bible-study of the NT with the needed quantitative increase in revelation. Note the resulting contradiction. Cessationism is the claim that direct revelations such as prophecy cannot occur today. In other words it proposes Bible-study as a satisfactory *alternative* to prophetic revelation, terminating it, and thus as a *non-revelatory* exercise. Now, suddenly, they are attempting to depict this selfsame Bible-study as the needed quantitative *increase* in prophetic revelation? That simply doesn’t work. How can the termination of prophetic revelation be the needed quantitative increase of it?

“Follow after love, and earnestly desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy” (1Cor 14:1, WEB). The next *thirty-eight verses* elevate prophecy over tongues,<sup>169</sup> culminating at verse 39, “desire earnestly to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues” (ASV).<sup>170</sup> Why so many verses “wasted” on prophecy? Couldn’t Paul have conveyed the basic idea in just two or three verses? Did he even have his priorities straight? Based on how evangelicals prioritize, he should have spent those thirty-eight verses on evangelism. And yet *none* of his epistles command the congregation to evangelize! Jesus commanded His *prophets* to preach the gospel (Acts 1:8). The so-called Great Commission? Really? It was actually the Great Omission!

## 1Corinthians: The Anti-Charismatic, Cessationist Reading of 13:8-12

Cessationist literature, ad nauseam, dismisses the gifts as no longer “strictly necessary.” Is anything in life strictly necessary? Is the Holy Spirit incapable of building a church without pastors? Certainly not, but isn’t His program generally *more effective* with leaders like Moses, Joshua, David, and Paul in place? Their deaths precipitated churchwide decline, after all. And Paul’s evangelistic and church-planting skills wouldn’t be of much use today? A biblical perspective inquires not, “Are these gifts ‘strictly necessary’?” but rather, “Are these gifts good?” For “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?” (Mat 7:11, KJV). Cessationism has the Father denying His children something good. It is the ludicrous petition, “Holy Spirit enlighten me today but *please* do not speak as plainly as you did to the prophets!”

“When I became a [mature] man, I put away childish things” (1Cor 13:11, KJV). The cessationist reading of 13:8-12 divides into three camps. By doing away with prophecy as childish, all three camps inadvertently deprecate the prophetic experience of both Paul<sup>171</sup> and Christ as immature childish knowledge superseded by our own mature knowledge, which verges on heresy. Two of the three camps regard the passage as a metaphor for the entire corporate church maturing in knowledge,<sup>172</sup> whereas in reality mature knowledge, far from being restricted to a corporate attainment, is solid food always available to mature *individuals* (2:6 – 3:3, cf. Heb 5:11-14). Most scholars would probably agree that corporate maturity has only declined since the early church.

Without more ado, here are the three camps.<sup>173</sup> The last two are corporate. Revelatory gifts allegedly became no longer “strictly necessary,” and hence came to a cessation, at the moment when the perfect/ mature arrived (13:10), which is allegedly the moment of either:

- (A) The completed NT canon in 300 A.D.
- (B) Churchwide maturity among early Christians<sup>174</sup>
- (C) Christ’s (preteristic) return back in 70 A.D.

A few comments, starting with camp-A:



- (1) If the NT canon provides the most mature knowledge to date, today's Christians would exceed Paul and Christ in knowledge.
- (2) The NT replaced prophecy in 300 A.D.? But the printing press pended 1500 A.D. Thus prophecy was replaced with – nothing.
- (3) Epistles such as Romans, 1Corinthians, and Hebrews are initially an immature knowledge, until they form a canon in 300 A.D. as to constitute mature knowledge? This is facile, dubious, and unclear.
- (4) Paul didn't mention the canon. It's generally inappropriate to introduce an exegetically unsupported interpretation, unless it's more *logically* compelling than the alternatives.
- (5) Given this NT as mature knowledge, should we do away with the OT as childish things (1Cor 13:11)?<sup>[175](#)</sup>

Now for camp-B.

- (1) Which early church matured? The Catholic Church? Consider a new or prospective convert of today. How is he supposed to know which church is the mature one? Guess? Here's how it's *really* supposed to work. Transmitting 100% certainty, a prophet such as Paul can simply command converts to follow a particular pastor. This is *accreditation*. Cessationists claim the gifts were only needed for early-church accreditation, but such is still needed today.
- (2) What now of churchwide *immaturity* over the last 2,000 years, at least regionally? If the gifts are needed wherever there is corporate immaturity, shouldn't they be present at least regionally? Or did God overlook the regional aspect? Maybe He's just a sloppy leader?

Finally camp-C:

- (1) Preterism has Satan bound in 70 A.D, but since the world is just as dark as ever, wouldn't the gifts still come in handy?
- (2) Since this too is a corporate position, see comments on camp-B.

## 1Corinthians: Can All Prophecy?



Can all prophesy? “For ye may *all* prophesy one by one, that *all* may learn, and *all* may be comforted” (1Cor 14:31, KJV). Any such “all” is likely fulfilled across multiple church services,<sup>176</sup> as with each “all” of 14:23-24,<sup>177</sup> and the “every” of 11:5, “Every woman that prays or prophesies,” and the “any” of 1Pet 4:11, “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God” (KJV) which is prophetic utterance.<sup>178</sup> Doesn’t 1Cor 12:29-30 deny universal prophecy? A grocery store where every employee is a cashier won’t succeed, hence the diversification of assignments. Each employee, however, might be trained in *all* the departments. One day he’s a cashier, another a cook, another a stock-boy. If he’s especially skilled, he’ll be promoted to a manager and perhaps even plant new stores (like an apostle). Therefore “desire earnestly the greater gifts” (12:31, ASV). The Greek root of charismata (gifts) is the word for grace.<sup>179</sup> The NT abounds on the topic of grace, for instance its superiority to law. And God was supposedly bent on *doing away* with much of this grace, particularly the *greatest* gifts? Sounds unlikely.

Leading cessationist Farnell produced four articles totaling over 100 pages.<sup>180</sup> He argues that infallible prophets don’t exist today. Agreed. He also regards fallible revelation as an oxymoron. Yet fallible Christians do indeed hear Christ’s voice (Jn 10:27).

## The Foundation of Apostles and Prophets (Eph 2:20)

God has always preferred prophetic leadership. When NT prophets wrote down God’s words, it was reminiscent of Moses’ example of writing them down. Nothing has changed. Hence the “foundation of apostles and prophets” – regardless of its precise meaning – presumably pertained to both OT and NT saints:

Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord (Eph 2:19-21, KJV).

What is the foundation? Is it the apostles and prophets themselves? Or do they lay down the foundation? Cessationism self-contradicts by asserting both. They say, “Apostles and prophets were the foundation passed away.” When we object, “We still need a foundation,” they reply, “No, because they *laid down* the foundation once-for-all (the NT canon).”<sup>181</sup> Actually it must be laid afresh in every region, hence Paul “strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was [already] named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation” (Rom 15:20, KJV). And who wants a building whose foundation was laid down by a novice? Paul boasted to Corinth, “As a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation” (1Cor 3:10, KJV). Apostles and prophets have the needed expertise. And what foundation did Paul lay down at Corinth? The NT canon? Hardly. Presumably the foundation is the gospel delivered as the preached divine Word, in essence a reviving outpouring, “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (3:11, KJV). Apparently Christ is both the foundation and the chief cornerstone, and thus He has multiple roles, for “The Lord is my rock, *and* my fortress, *and* my deliverer” (Ps 18:2, KJV). And couldn't Christ be *both* the Rock (1Cor 10:4) *and* the drink? Yes, for we “have been all made to drink of one Spirit” (12:13, KJV). In sum apostles and prophets are not the foundation but the experts who lay Him down within each successive region assigned to them.<sup>182</sup> Hence we still need apostles and prophets today.

He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ (Eph 4:11-13, KJV).

While all Bible versions seem to prefer “perfect” or “complete” at 1Cor 13:10, several allow “mature man” here at Eph 4:13 (see CEV, EMTV, ESV, ISV, LEB, NRSV-CE, LBLA, WNT). It's the same Greek word. Honorable mention goes to “full-grown” (ASV, BBE, Darby, LITV, MKJV, RV, WEB).

# Appendix Two: Supplementary Arguments and Conclusions

## A Brief Tribute to Andrew Murray

As one of the most well-known and prolific evangelical Christian writers of church history, Andrew Murray wrote some 200 books. I've read about 30 of those books, but even the first one is what initially led me to suspect that orthodoxy is way off track. Naturally, then, I consider him my mentor. I always had to read between the lines because none of those 30 books were explicit on his disagreements with orthodoxy, probably to avoid ostracism. One of them cried out for a Second Reformation.<sup>183</sup> Consider the magnitude of that statement. It's an insinuation that orthodoxy was still in a state of disaster.

Murray realized that God gradually achieved holiness over a long period of self-development and that Adam, made in His image, would be expected to engage in some degree of self-development as well.

If the image and likeness of God was not to be a mere name, and man was really to be like God in the power *to make himself what he was to be*, he must needs have the power of free will and self determination....Man was to be a creature made by God, and yet he was to be, as far as a creature could be, like God, *self made*.<sup>184</sup>

Murray insisted that the church is still operating under the Galatian error – an error for which Paul branded them fools. In the following statement, Murray characterizes the Galatian error as a failure to fully understand the nature, import, and preeminence of waiting for power from on high.

The mistake of the Galatian church is repeated to this day even in the churches that are most confidently assured that they are free from the Galatian error. Just notice how often the doctrine of justification by faith is spoken of as if it were the chief teaching of the Galatian epistle. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit's indwelling as received by faith and our walking by the Spirit is hardly mentioned...[Unfortunately today] human effort and human arrangement take a much larger place than in the waiting on the power that comes from on high.<sup>185</sup>

Murray surmised, “More of the Spirit is the *one thing* needed for the Church.”<sup>186</sup> Therefore, said Murray, “Let every believer, who longs to be holy, join in the daily prayer that God would visit His people with a great outpouring of the Spirit of holiness.”<sup>187</sup>

Murray insisted that we need to hear God’s voice to know the specifics of His will. He wrote, “Obedience depends on hearing the voice. Do not imagine you know the will of God. Pray and wait for the inward teaching of the Spirit.”<sup>188</sup> Accordingly he placed a premium on the scenarios in Acts where the apostles deferred missionary campaigns pending the divine voice or other heavenly signals. Citing Acts 13:2-4, he writes:

We [wrongly] ask God first to bless our feeble [missionary] efforts, instead of absolutely *refusing to go* unless God go before us. God has planned for the work and the extension of His kingdom. The Holy Ghost has had that work given in charge to Him. ‘The work whereunto I have called them’ [Acts 13:2-4]. May God, therefore, help us all to be afraid of touching ‘the ark of God’ except as we are led by the Holy Ghost...Yes, blessed be God, communications still come down from heaven! As we read here [at Acts 13:2-4] what the Holy Ghost said, so the Holy Ghost will still speak to His church and His people.<sup>189</sup>

The Voice should be pursued unto a level of certainty more authoritative than biblical exegesis, "All the teaching through the Word or men is made entirely dependent on and *subordinate to* the personal teaching of the Holy Ghost."<sup>190</sup> Faith/ certainty increases in magnitude to the extent we see and hear God, for faith "is the ear which has heard God say what He will do, the eye which has seen Him doing it."<sup>191</sup> Hence Murray advised, "I must *hear* the person who gives me the promise: the very tone of his voice gives me courage to believe. I must *see* him: in the light of his eye and countenance all fear as to my right to take passes away."<sup>192</sup> God expects us to continue pressing Him for a particular petition until His Voice responds at 100% certainty, even if the answer is No. In a chapter entitled, “The Certainty of the Answer to Prayer”, he argued that God does “not leave His servant in uncertainty as to His will. The gods of the heathen are dumb and cannot speak. Our Father lets His child *know* when He cannot give him what he asks.”<sup>193</sup>

**Murray had a very detailed concept of the divine Breath:**

**[The Holy Spirit] is the breath of God. The Father breathes Him into us, to unite Himself with our life. And then just as on every expiration there follows again the inhaling or drawing in of the breath, so God draws in again His breath, and the Spirit returns to Him laden with the desires and needs of our hearts. And thus the Holy Spirit is the breath of the life of God, and the breath of the new life in us. As God breathes Him out, we receive Him in answer to prayer; as we breathe Him back again, He rises to God laden with our supplications.**<sup>[194](#)</sup>

**Thus in an endless process God exhales His Breath to inspire the intercessor whose petitions exhale Him back to God. The Father then permanently stores these treasured petitions in vials to be forever presented sacrificially to Him by angels during heavenly worship (Rev 5:8; 8:3-4).**

## **OT Saints Had To Obey God's Voice**

**This discussion presumes that the divine Voice influences conscience whenever speaking. John 10:27 counts as an OT verse since Christ made this statement prior to the cross, “My sheep hear my voice” (KJV).**<sup>[195](#)</sup>  
**Some Christians imagine that God originally delivered the Ten Commandments to Israel on stone tablets. In reality the fiery Pillar on Mount Saini proclaimed them with a deafening, mountain-shaking voice to all Israel (Ex 19:3ff; 20:1ff). Only later were they written on stone. As the King James Version bears out so well, the OT referred to obedience as obedience to God's voice about fifty times (Ex 15:26; 19:5; 23:21-22; 29:42-43; Num 14:22; Deut 4:30, 36; 8:20; 9:23; 13:4, 18; 15:5; 26:17; 27:10; 28:1-2, 15, 45; 30:10, 20; 32:8, 10; Jos 5:6; Jdg 2:2,20; 6:10; 1Sa 12:14; 15:22; 24:24; 1Ki 20:36; 2Ki 18:12; Ps 95:7; Jer 3:13, 25; 7:23; 9:13; 11:4, 7-8; 26:13; 32:23; 38:20; 40:3; 42:6, 21; 43:4, 7; 44:23; Dan 9:10-11, 14; Zech 6:15). The Hebrew word *qowl* used for voice in all fifty verses totals some 500 instances in the OT, is always sonic in meaning, and is specifically translated voice about 375 of the 500 times in the KJV. The Hebrew words for written law and written command are totally**



distinct from *qowl* and rarely used to define obedience. The upshot is that Israel's obligation has always been to the Voice, not to the written Word, except of course in the loose sense that both the Law and the Voice command love. Andrew Murray's mastery of Hebrew led to the same conclusion.

The expression 'obeying the commandments' is very seldom used in Scripture; it is almost always obeying Me, or obeying or hearkening to My voice.<sup>[196](#)</sup>

The Hebrew word *shama* translated “obey” or “hearken” throughout the OT literally means “to hear, to listen”<sup>[197](#)</sup> or “give ear to.”<sup>[198](#)</sup> In fact in the KJV it is translated “hear” 743 times and “hearken” (as to a voice) an additional 119 times.<sup>[199](#)</sup> Only 74 times does the KJV translate it “obey.”<sup>[200](#)</sup> Even a common Greek word for obey has a sonic connotation.<sup>[201](#)</sup>

## Water Baptism, Anointing Oil, and Eucharist

“Sacrifices and offerings...you didn't desire, neither had pleasure in them” (Heb 10:8, WEB). Does God want empty rituals? Jumping through hoops for nothing? Certainly not. He created us for fellowship, not for meaningless ceremonies. Therefore any *authorized* ceremonies will occasion a physical contact with Him known as fellowship. For example when high priests sprinkled blood on men, it was presumably intermixed with Christ's cleansing Blood (Lev 17:11), at least during the authorized periods of Moses' day. And the smoke of the sacrifices presumably contained some divine Smoke, as an aroma pleasing to both God and men. Similarly the apostles baptized men in the *Living Water*.<sup>[202](#)</sup> Hence the NT rightly equated water baptism with regeneration,<sup>[203](#)</sup> although it isn't the initial sprinkling of conversion and thus actually serves as a post-salvific sanctification.

Remember when Naaman baptized himself seven times to be healed? Should the church inaugurate a new seven-dunk ritual based on this Scripture? John the Baptist didn't baptize based on Scripture but was



rather a prophet *authorized* to do it. And even if God authorized a rite for yesterday, it doesn't establish authorization today. Sadly enough, throughout history the church has been performing the rituals of water baptism, Eucharist, anointing oil, and even prayer shawls – based on Scripture! As long as we keep shoving man-made religion down God's throat, the odds of revival remain low. In fact when rituals abound, Christian conduct begins to disturbingly resemble witchcraft.

What about the laying of hands? Depends on one's mindset, and how it's used. A leader who thinks he can, without authorization, hand-ordain another man to leadership is verging on witchcraft. Here's an appropriate mindset for laying hands. God wants us to be a *family*. The members of a family physically touch and embrace, as *fellowship*. Therefore He probably prefers us to lay hands when praying for one another, for fellowship purposes only. Yahweh often prefers to route His Presence through one human body to another because doing so is an opportunity for physical contact with us as fellowship (Num 11:25; Acts 8:18; 19:6, 11-12). With this mindset, the act of laying hands will likely be pleasing to Him, resulting in larger outpourings. Let's bear in mind, however, that the boundary between sacrament and witchcraft is a very fine line that must always be tread carefully. Even asking "pastors" to pray for you is risky business. Absent 100% certainty, why are you presuming them to be authorized leaders? Do they at least have a solid reputation for performing miracles? Excessively condoning or idolizing man-made leadership can throttle grace. Leaders should be encouraging Christians to pray for *one another* (see my recommendation named Family Fellowship). "Confess therefore your sins one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed" (Jam 5:16).

What about modern church-membership systems? The rule of thumb is that man-made techniques can have a measure of pragmatic value but definitely hinder grace when masqueraded as authentic spirituality/ecclesiology.

## Born of Water and Spirit? On John 3:5

Apparently all translations of the Bible render John 3:5 in a way nearly identical to the KJV, “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” This is an unresolved problem passage for orthodoxy because historic attempts to deal with it are unconvincing.<sup>204</sup> Contextually speaking the very Son of God is here delivering His *keynote speech on salvation*. One would hope for a reasonably straightforward formula! Accordingly verse 16 simplistically grants salvation to all who believe in the Son. Any interpretation that complicates this formula is probably incorrect, but unfortunately the physical water (hudor in Greek) at verse 5 *seems* to complicate it. Here’s what Jesus said:

Except a man be born of water [hudor] and [pneuma], he cannot enter into the kingdom of God (3:5, KJV).

And then verse 8 is an excursus on hearing the sound of blowing Wind!

The [Pneuma] bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the [Pneuma] (3:8, KJV).

The proper interpretation of 3:5, then, is:

Except a man be born of [living] Water and Wind, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God (3:5).

Thus divine Water and Wind jointly effect the new birth. All *we* need to be concerned with is saving faith. It’s a wonderfully simple formula devoid of even water baptism. Jesus expected Nicodemus to have recognized His formula from the OT (see 3:10), but precisely which OT passage? Considerable scholarship links Ezek 36:25-27 to Jn 3:5.<sup>205</sup> Admittedly Ezekiel used Hebrew terminology, but the Greek OT (Septuagint) has hudor and pneuma just like Jn 3:5:

Then will I sprinkle clean [Hudor] upon you, and ye shall be clean...A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you...And I will put my [Pneuma] within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes (Eze 36:25-27, KJV)

Thus Ezekiel likewise defined regeneration as a cleansing work of Water and Wind/ Breath. Several scholars also tie Jn 3:5 to Eze 37 where divine Wind/ Breath resurrects dead bones,<sup>206</sup> because the NT often uses a

resurrection-metaphor for the new birth (Jn 5:21, 24-25; 11:25; Rom 6:4-5; 8:10-11; 1Cor 15:45, Eph 2:1, 5; Gal 2:20; Col 2:13; 1Jn 3:14).

## Which Part of the Trinity is the Divine Word?

Which part of the Trinity is the divine Word? Scripture doesn't seem blatantly lucid on this question. Apparently the divine Word refers to the divine substance in general, especially when released from the mouth of Father or Son. Scripture could simply have used the term matter to refer to the divine substance, but such would fail to distinguish God from creature. Thus the Word means *divine* matter and, depending on the context, can refer to any one of the Three. For example, "The Word was God" (Jn 1:1) probably refers to the Father. "The Word was with God" (1:1) probably refers to the Son. "The Word became flesh" (1:14) refers to the Son as well. "You are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you" (15:3) refers to the exhaled Holy Breath for regeneration/cleansing.

It is the [Breath] that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the[exhaled] words that I speak unto you, they are [Breath], and they are life (Jn 6:63, KJV).

Do the Father, Son, and Holy Breath each constitute exactly one third of the divine Word? Scripture doesn't say.

## More Biblical Evidence for Materialism

Evidence for materialism exists in a few passages not yet discussed. First and foremost, the literal rendering of the Greek at Jn 1:14 is, "The Word *became* flesh."<sup>207</sup> Notice the text does not say any of the following:

- The Word took on the likeness of flesh<sup>208</sup>
- The Word manifested itself as flesh
- The Word entered into flesh

In that verse the Greek word for flesh is *sarx*, used 162 times in the NT and always connoting flesh/ body although, in a few cases, it is (unconvincingly) alleged to signify our supposed immaterial sinful nature. In those cases it's simply referring to our body/ flesh as our *material* sinful

nature (see Rom 6 thru 8). The term flesh is completely unsuitable for an immaterial sinful nature because even in English it always connotes actual flesh whenever designating an existing substance. At any rate, what did it mean for the Word to become flesh? Matter has no trouble becoming flesh. If I eat a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, my digestive system soon converts it into cellular protoplasm. It becomes flesh. In a similar way the material Word had to assume a fleshy texture to fully intermix with Christ's earthly flesh/ body. The Word became flesh. No logical problems there. Whereas to say that an immaterial spirit *became flesh* is a contradiction in terms, or at best logically incoherent, somewhat like saying, "My material chair suddenly became an immaterial substance today." Furthermore our earlier disproof of the hypostatic union establishes the divinity of Christ's Mind living inside His earthly body. It was a *material* divine Mind, therefore, because a mind within a human body must be material since mind-body interaction is always tangible.

Suppose I said to an evangelical Christian, "Today I learned that God is highly combustible. When He becomes angry He runs red hot, catches on fire, and gives off smoke." The likely reply? "That's crazy! God is a Spirit!" And yet here's a passage concerning His anger:

And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever. And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power (Rev 15:7-8, KJV).

His burning anger parallels that of any irate person whose face turns red-hot and blood boils. "Our God is a consuming fire" (Heb 12:29, KJV). At Exod 19 He descended as Fire upon Mount Sinai. Since people are prone to idolatry, it would be self-defeating for an immaterial God to needlessly manifest materially, or needlessly deify material things with words like, "This bread is my body" (which did in fact precipitate Catholic worship of the Eucharistic elements for several hundred years). The Fire was clearly physical, for example it consumed the corpses of animal sacrifices (Lev 9:23-24; 1Ki 18:36-38; 2Chr 7:1) and even ignited men in fierce judgments (Lev 10:1; 2Ki 1:10-14; Rev 20:9). And precisely as a physical flame can illuminate any dark room, the Pillar of Cloud transformed itself into Fire at night to provide Light for Israel's travels (Ex 13:21). NT

phenomenology is the same. Unto some shepherds at night the “angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them” (Lk 2:9, KJV). Christ’s Light physically illuminates the heavenly city (Rev 1:16; 21:23-24; 22:4-5). And “suddenly there shined round about [Paul] a light from heaven” (Acts 9:3, KJV). “Round about him” means environmentally whereby even his unsaved companions saw the Light (22:9; 26:13).<sup>209</sup> The Light damaged his optic nerve, blinding him for three days until a miraculous healing removed the scales from his eyes (Acts 9:9, 17-18, 22:11). The same Light shining in Stephen’s face was visible even to his assassins (Acts 6:15). In prison “the angel of the Lord came upon [Peter], and a light shined in the prison” (12:7, KJV). “I saw another angel come down from heaven,” wrote John, “and the earth was lightened with his glory” (Rev 18:1, KJV). Plenty of passages imply the materiality of angels.<sup>210</sup> Moreover an abundance of NT sacramental passages attest to physically eating and drinking of Christ. For example, “They drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ” (1Cor 10:4, KJV).

Face to face, the Father physically wrestled with Jacob all night long, precisely as any man playfully wrestles with his kids (Gen 32:24-30). Contrary to the immaterialist’s claim that God has no size and shape, even the 70 elders of Moses’ day saw Him face to face, with His feet resting on solid material pavement:

Then went up [Mount Saini ] Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness Ex 24:9-10, KJV).

This humanly shaped divine Figure often abode in the Pillars of Cloud of Fire, and sometimes called out to Moses, summoning him into the cloud.

And the glory of Jehovah abode upon mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud. And the appearance of the glory of Jehovah was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel. And Moses entered into the midst of the cloud, and went up into the mount: and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights (Exo 24:16-18, KJV).

Understandably Moses' face shone radiantly after the experience, since Fire radiates Light. At any rate, the figure-in-cloud is at issue whenever the OT recorded events prefaced with the Lord coming down in the cloud (Ex 16:10; 34:5; Num 11:25; 12:5). The expression "the glory of the Lord" sometimes refers to the figure within the cloud and sometimes to the cloud itself. The ISBE's definition of "glory" commented on Ex 33:23:

The glory of Yahweh is clearly a physical manifestation, a form with hands and rear parts, of which Moses is permitted to catch only a passing glimpse, but the implication is clear that he actually does see Yahweh with his physical eyes.<sup>[211](#)</sup>

Augustine apparently regarded this divine Figure as the same one who walked with Adam and Eve in the garden.<sup>[212](#)</sup> Augustine used the term corporeal in the standard sense of material substance, for example "Whoever saw that dove [descend upon Christ] and that fire [at Pentecost]," he wrote, "saw them with their eyes....in corporeal forms"<sup>[213](#)</sup> Augustine's additional examples of "corporeal forms [were] the fire of the bush, and the pillar of cloud or of fire, and the lightnings in the mount."<sup>[214](#)</sup> Ultimately the "glory of the Lord" apparently refers to the sum total of His physical substance, because it is even said to fill the entire earth (Num 14:21). Next we'll consider briefly the material Firmament of Genesis.

## Genesis: The Firmament and the Water Above

Paul Seely wrote a very valuable two-part article entitled "The Firmament and the Water Above."<sup>[215](#)</sup> He finds the Hebrew text so unambiguous that Jews and Christians alike were rightly unanimous on the following creation schema until Renaissance science began to discourage them from continuing to accept Genesis literally. God's raw material for the earth was a huge mass of water, into which He inserted a crystalline firmament, expanding/ arching it upwards as a roof pushing excess waters upwards. Therefore, "Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens" (Ps 148:4, KJV). He positioned/



anchored our visible stars in this solid firmament as well.<sup>216</sup> During Noah's flood the "windows of heaven [the firmament] were opened" to release some of the upheld water upon the earth and then were closed afterwards, according to scholars such as Paul Seely, John Wesley, Adam Clarke, Joseph Dillow, J.C. Whitcomb Jr., and H.M. Morris.<sup>217</sup> Unlike these scholars influenced by science, however, I myself still accept the literal reading. In my view the divine Word serves as the generally unseen hand of Gravity upholding all stars and planets of the universe, and the Firmament of Genesis is just a subsection of Him put to precisely such use.

This crystal Firmament constitutes some of the heavenly architecture. For instance in Ezekiel's vision, Christ's throne rested atop a chunk of this same crystal, "And above the [crystal] firmament...was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone" (Eze 1:26, KJV). Convinced that Ezekiel is recorded to have seen the very same solid firmament of Genesis, Paul Seely elaborated,

The throne mentioned was apparently sitting on this firmament (cf. Exod 24:10) and the firmament looked like crystal or ice...Even conservatives admit the firmament in Ezekiel 1 is solid.<sup>218</sup>

The 70 elders literally saw God with His feet resting on the crystalline pavement. They "saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in clearness" (Ex 24:10, KJV). Here several commentators recognize Ezekiel's heavenly crystal appearing in Exodus.<sup>219</sup> After all, where did Christ's material body ascend if not to a solid throne?<sup>220</sup> Spacecraft do not collide with the Firmament in virtue of the same divine intervention preventing collisions with angels. Norm Geisler noted that "physical objects are mostly empty space,"<sup>221</sup> which potentially allows one object to diffuse through another without collision.

Some prefer the term vault over firmament, defined in *Webster's Dictionary* as "The canopy of heaven; the sky. That heaven's *vault* should crack." Revival is a cracking or rending of the Firmament. In the outpouring of the Holy Breath upon Christ in the bodily form of a dove, the "heavens opened," literally "rent asunder,"<sup>222</sup> indeed were

**“materially and really opened, parted, rent, or cloven asunder” (Gill).<sup>223</sup> The Greek word for “rend” occurs about 17 other times in the NT<sup>224</sup> and, when applied to substances (9 times), always means a physical bifurcation whether of split rocks (Mat 27:51) or torn fabric (Mat 9:16; 27:51; Mk 2:21; 15:38; Lk 5:36; 23:45; Jn 19:24; 21:11).**

## **A Refutation of Trichotomy**

**Historically only a mere handful of theologians advocated trichotomy. In the last one hundred years, however, it has become very prominent among evangelical pastors and laymen, although it’s still extremely unpopular among professional theologians.<sup>225</sup> Trichotomy is one of the most blatant examples of the church’s cultic state, because its proponents assert it with the utmost confidence as though it weren’t exceedingly problematical.**

**The heart of the matter is the heart. Since Scripture focuses with tunnel vision on the heart, anything else is moot. At least that’s the argument made here. The Greek root “kardia” as in “cardiac arrest” occurs about 160 times in the NT and is always rendered “heart” in the KJV.<sup>226</sup> The Hebrew counterpart for “heart” occurs about 845 times in the OT.<sup>227</sup> NT usage of “kardia” to translate the Hebrew term implies an OT-NT continuity of “heart.”<sup>228</sup> Considerable evidence that the OT and NT writers had in mind the physiological organ verifies that body and mind are intermixed into one material unit. As Boyd observed of Scripture, “The ‘heart’ (leb, lebab; kardia) was simultaneously that which beats in our chest...and the location of thought.”<sup>229</sup>**

**There is only one inner man entitled the heart as Charles Hodge recognized, “The heart in Scripture is that which thinks, feels, wills, and acts. It is the soul; the self.”<sup>230</sup> Most evangelical theologians agree.<sup>231</sup> Hebrews 4:12 refers to “the thoughts and intents of the heart” (KJV). Augustine attributed to the heart our volitional ability to choose between good and evil.<sup>232</sup> Similarly a Catholic catechism speaks of “the heart, in the biblical sense of the depths of one’s being, where the person decides**

for or against God.”<sup>233</sup> Hebrews cited Psalm 95:10, "They do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways" (Heb 3:10, KJV) and thrice quoted Psalm 95:7-8, "Today if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts" (Heb 3:7-8, KJV; cf. Heb 3:15; 4:7) combined with the warning, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God" (Heb 3:12, KJV). "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom 10:10, KJV). The mouth confesses unto salvation because "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Mat 12:34, KJV). If a man "shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith" (Mk 9:23, KJV). A holy heart will always produce good fruit whereas a wicked heart evil fruit (Gen 6:5; Jer 17:9; Mat 7:17-20; 12:33-35; 15:19-20). Thus God can (and will) forever end the problem of sin by making the heart holy. Documented here are about forty additional NT verses linking the heart to either doubt, faith, righteousness, or wickedness (Mat 5:8, 28, 6:21; 9:4; 13:15; 18:35; 24:48; Mk 7:6, 21; 12:33; 16:14; Lk 1:17, 51; 6:45; 8:15; 16:15; Jn 12:40; Acts 5:3-4; 7:39; 8:21-22, 37; 13:22; 15:9; Rom 1:24; 2:5, 15, 29; 6:17; Eph 6:6; 1Ti 1:5; 2Ti 2:22; Heb 4:12; 10:22; Jam 3:14; 4:8; 1Pe 1:22; 3:15). There are too many OT examples to bother documenting. Since all human troubles lie in the evil heart,<sup>234</sup> naturally the only solution is to target it with the Holy Breath.<sup>235</sup> "God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal 4:6, KJV). Paul prayed "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith" (Eph 3:17, KJV). "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2Cor 4:6, KJV). Regeneration and sanctification occur where "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost" (Rom 5:5, KJV). It is a ministry "written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart" (2Cor 3:3, KJV). In sum, any preoccupation with multiple kinds of inner men is a flight of fancy at variance with the evidence. All of redemptive economy

clearly hinges on a single inner man typically termed the heart but understood to be synonymous with mind, soul, spirit, will, and conscience.

In order to play a critical role in God's kingdom, after all, an inner man needs all the available faculties. He is basically irrelevant unless he has all the following capabilities:

- He must be a mind comprehending right and wrong.
- He comprehends the temptations currently facing him.
- He must be emotive to fully experience the allure of temptations.
- He has volition/will to choose. This volition cannot be separate from him, because the volition that chooses must be the same mind who comprehends the choices.

At this point there is nothing of importance left. To postulate a second kind of inner man distinct from the mind, such as a "spirit", is to postulate a mindless entity. Comprehending nothing, a mindless entity is irrelevant to the critical elements of redemptive economy. A mindless entity is not even conscious, because consciousness is a mind that has (loud and clear) experiences which it attempts to grasp/ comprehend.

Trichotomy is a composition of spirit, soul, and body. According to trichotomy the new birth transforms the spirit alone, leaving the sinful soul unchanged (intact) in its role as sinful nature, contradicting the biblical view that the new birth does not leave the sinful nature intact but rather crucifies it, buries it, and resurrects it anew in holiness (Rom 6:1-11; 7:6; 2Cor 5:17; Gal 2:19-20; 5:24; Eph 2:1, 5; 4:24; Col 2:11-13, 20; 3:1-5). The sinful soul is what needs the new birth, not the (sinless) spirit of trichotomy but, oddly enough, trichotomy ascribes the new birth to the spirit, which makes no sense.

The spirit of trichotomy, subsequent to the new birth and by an act of its own will (volition), is supposed to seize control of the sinful soul, taming it by forcing it to behave righteously. This is supposedly the process of sanctification. There are two problems here. First, the spirit has no will (volition) of its own to so act, because trichotomy ascribes the will to the soul. (Trichotomy defines the soul as mind, will, and emotions). Second, true righteousness is not forced behavior but freely volunteered behavior. Let's clarify this point. Sin is truly sinful only if it is voluntary

rather than forced, or at least if it originates in Adam's voluntary choice. God would have no basis for displeasure if our so-called "sins" were always forced upon us. Since the sinful nature is displeasing to God only because it voluntarily chooses to sin, the best way to curb His displeasure is for it to begin voluntarily choosing righteousness. Therefore a spirit forcing a sinful soul to behave would not exonerate this soul before God. He would still be displeased due to the lack of sincere repentance. This is a problem.

In trichotomy a spirit negligent in taming the sinful soul is obviously sinning, so which one of the two beings is really the sinful nature? Is it the spirit, or is it the sinful soul? Trichotomists say I "am" a spirit but I "have" a soul (a sinful nature) which sins. But the whole economy of redemption is concerned with what happens to "I" rather than what I have (my possessions). It is a fundamental assumption of the NT that my possessions are ultimately irrelevant to redemptive ontology. In reality I am the sinful nature; it is not a "possession," a pet separate from me in need of taming. I know my ordinary pets to be mere possessions separate from my being because I neither feel their cravings nor apprehend their sensations. In marked contrast I know that I myself am my sinful nature, that it is not a pet but my very being because I am the craver of its cravings and the sensor of its sensations. Even if the sinful nature were indeed a pet separate from me in need of taming, the real sinner is not the pet but I as the owner who fails to control it. I am therefore the sinful nature because I am he who sins; I do not "have" a sinful nature as a possession separate from me serving as the explanation of sin's persistence.

Trichotomy's regard for the soul as sinful nature deprives the spirit of sinful tendency. Such a morally pure spirit would *unfailingly* tame the soul even before the new birth, resulting in a sinless unbeliever, which is absurd. To reply that the sinful soul corrupts the spirit (but how precisely would the pet compel the owner to sin?) by dragging it into sin overlooks the argument above that forced behavior is neither sin nor righteousness, because God is only concerned with voluntary behavior.

Trichotomists take the soul to be the mind, will, and emotions, and the spirit as subduer of this sinful soul. Yet a spirit without mind, will, and emotions would be mindless and thus dead, as already argued; it could not fathom, desire, or will the subduing of the soul. Thus by limiting the spirit to a partial subset of human faculties, and potentially likewise limiting the soul, trichotomy divests either spirit or soul or both of traits vital to consciousness.

A soul and spirit disparate in kind would be unable to share the same kinds of perceptions and would therefore be complete strangers to one another and, as such, not responsible for each other's behavior. I am a unity (uniformity), I am a man, I am the man inside my body, the inner man. It is empirically false that within my body are two radically different types of beings speaking totally different languages, doomed to failure in their effort to intercommunicate. Charles Hodge raised this very objection that trichotomy contradicts the empirical harmony of inner experience.<sup>[236](#)</sup>

Although trichotomists seize upon the phrase "spirit, soul, and body" (1Th 5:23), why arbitrarily stop at three parts? "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength." So why not add heart, mind, and strength (willpower) plus sensibility (the five senses), the conscience, the flesh (sinful nature), and subconsciousness for a total of ten?<sup>[237](#)</sup> Trichotomy's principal rationale for settling on three parts is that humanity as God's image supposedly must be threefold like the Trinity. Unfortunately trichotomy fails to image the Trinity in any meaningful or logically consistent way. The Trinity is the Father and Son localized to a throne plus the omnipresent Holy Breath. Each of the Three is an individual Person, three autonomous conglomerations of self-propelling thought-currents, three individual minds who jointly form one larger Mind. In disturbingly stark contrast trichotomy does not postulate three persons but three components of one human being, or rather two components since the body is disposable. Trichotomy's stretching of man-as-Gods-image to supposedly imply triunity is like stretching Christ-as-image of the Father (2Cor 4:4; Col 1:15; Heb 1:3) to mean that Christ Himself is a triunity in Himself, resulting in a fivefold "Trinity" consisting



of the triune Christ plus Father and Holy Spirit. In reality people image the Father physically rather than trinitarily.

Trichotomy has no satisfactory response to several troubling questions. Where in the body are spirit and soul located? How do they interact and intercommunicate apart from matter-energy dynamics? Lewis Sperry Chafer advocated trichotomy but admitted it humanly incomprehensible and acknowledged that in most cases Scripture uses spirit and soul interchangeably.<sup>[238](#)</sup> Evidence suggests that trichotomists do not really believe that soul and spirit are two different kinds of substance.<sup>[239](#)</sup> For how can there be three different kinds of substance – material, immaterial, and what else? As Norman Geisler pointed out, a substance not material is immaterial.<sup>[240](#)</sup>

Against trichotomy Charles Hodge remarked that both in Greek and Hebrew the terms spirit and soul are used interchangeably of both men and animals, and since animals are not trichotomous, neither are people.<sup>[241](#)</sup> He argued that even as joints and marrow are one substance (matter), likewise spirit and soul are one substance.<sup>[242](#)</sup> He believed that trichotomy originated in Plato.<sup>[243](#)</sup> Catholics and Protestants almost unanimously rejected it<sup>[244](#)</sup> until its recent surge among pastors. Jeffrey H. Boyd reported that dichotomy was dominant from the second century until the end of the nineteenth.<sup>[245](#)</sup> In 870 A.D. the Fourth Council of Constantinople officially upheld dichotomy by asserting that the term spirit “does not introduce a duality into the soul.”<sup>[246](#)</sup>

## **Did Calvary Atone For All Men?**

The position taken in this section is pure speculation on my part, but here goes. Since God is accurate in His justice, He determines the exact amount of penal suffering appropriate for offenses, and He couldn't allow Christ to suffer more than needed. However, since God couldn't foreknow how much sin would occur, Christ presumably undersuffered. The upshot is that, even though the incarnate Christ has indeed finished atoning (for

*Him* "it is finished"), subsections of the remainder of the Son (the Christ-on-throne) probably perform additional atonements, perhaps by unseen exposure to demons who recrucify Him.

Think about it. Regardless of how unimaginably horrible Christ's suffering was on Calvary, do we really believe it was enough to atone for billions of people? As a judge, would you permit a single death to remove the death penalty from billions of guilty people? Probably not.

He didn't wait until Calvary to begin atoning. Rev 13:8 refers to "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (KJV). And I suspect there's an additional reason for starting the process so early in the game. Although the Fire of hell is divine and thus everlasting, God probably won't perpetuate the suffering forever. To bring it to end, He Himself will need to atone for any new sins freshly committed in hell.

My theory spawns new problem passages such as Rom 5:12-21 and Heb 10:10, 12, but here's a way to deal with some of them. The "one offering" and the "one act of righteousness" possibly refer to the enthroned Son's one sacrificial act of committing His divine Body and Blood to the atoning process. Admittedly this isn't the surface-level connotation of such verses, but it's a possible "solid-food" reading. In my opinion some verses are a façade, veiling a profound meaning, as to avoid becoming a stumbling block to those unable to accept the deeper truth.

At any given moment God's finite tolerance for suffering limits His potential for atonement. He will not risk destabilizing the Godhead. Whenever He gets what He needs most from us – prayer and praise - it alleviates His loneliness (reduces His suffering) and thus elevates His pain tolerance. The more prayer and praise, therefore, the more atonement, and the more people saved. All we need to focus on is prayer. "When Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed. When he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed" (Ex 17:11, WEB).<sup>[247](#)</sup>

## Israel, Preterism, and R.C. Sproul

Even R.C. Sproul, understandably enough, has succumbed to the error known as preterism.<sup>[248](#)</sup> At least preterists, to their credit, are taking

seriously several troublesome verses treated superficially heretofore. In these verses Christ insisted that His own generation would be alive to see His second coming. Take Mat 24 for example. Having chronicled all the final events including His return, He further predicted, “This generation shall not pass, till all these [future] things be fulfilled” (Mat 24:34, KJV).<sup>249</sup> Preterism is correct that Jesus did indeed tie His own generation to supposedly future events – but also to the past! He blamed them for murdering all the prophets.<sup>250</sup>

That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of Abel the righteous unto the blood of Zachariah son of Barachiah, whom *you slew* between the sanctuary and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation (Mat 23:35-36, ASV, italics mine; cf. Lk 11:50).

Mat 10:23 ties the Twelve to His future second coming:

But when they persecute you [Twelve] in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come (Mat 10:23, KJV).<sup>251</sup>

Similarly Mat 16:28 ties the Twelve to the future, “There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom” (KJV).<sup>252</sup> The Olivet Discourse was clearly preparing the Twelve to survive the future tribulation. Preterism’s solution is to ascribe these events to the past in denial of their futurity, by regarding the tribulation as a past event and similarly the second coming as a past “spiritual coming,” such as a churchwide vision or theophany, already fulfilled in 70 A.D.<sup>253</sup> The trouble is that Jesus was almost certainly describing a literal physical coming instead of a churchwide vision.

Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other (Mat 24:29-31, KJV; cf. 26:64).

To spiritualize away this passage, preterists look to OT prophecies that supposedly used such language symbolically for the downfall of rulers, authorities, and principalities as opposed to physical stars literally falling from heaven. To which I reply: Firstly, some of those OT passages may indeed be literally fulfilled on the same Day of the Lord as Mat 24. Secondly angels are great lights and thus stars in heaven but, even for them, falling from the sky will be a literal physical event. Thirdly the prophetic corpus is indeed somewhat symbolic whereas the gospels are exceedingly narrative, except where parables are heralded. Fourthly the promise of His visible return in OT-style Pillars of Cloud from heaven was *utterly impossible* for the Twelve as OT students to take non-literally. They had asked Him, what will be the (visible) sign of your coming? Unless He was trying to confuse and mislead them, He meant those words literally. Fifthly the gathering of the elect (the rapture) is hardly a mere vision, because the context cries out for an *actual* rescue from the horrible tribulation. Sixthly preterism isn't a natural reading of the text but rather an (understandably) desperate move to resolve some contradictions. Let's try to resolve the contradictions in a manner more harmonious with a natural reading.

While preterism's solution is to move future events to the past, my proposal will build on Israel's election. Rom 11 preserved the distinction between corporate Israel and the Gentiles. *Israel as a whole* is God's "elect" (11:28) whom He "foreknew" (11:2) for a "calling" that is "irrevocable" (11:29). This is standard Pauline language for a specific election unto salvation and therefore Israel as a whole will be saved. Verse 26 sums it up, "All so all Israel shall be saved" (KJV) – any exceptions would cast aspersions on the grand OT promises. And yet doesn't 9:6 indicate exceptions, "For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel" (KJV)? Isn't this verse redefining Israel as the believers alone and thus divesting corporate Israel of elect status? Although it's true that believers alone will be saved, nonetheless Rom 11 affirms national Israel's elect status. As such, Israel will be grafted in again the same way the Gentiles were grafted in (11:17-24) and therefore by evangelism. And yet won't this too create exceptions since millions of modern Jews are currently

living and dying unsaved by evangelism? How can Paul state – and the OT promises imply – that *all* Israel will be saved?

Now for my solution. Earlier discussions of Original Sin defined every individual human being of today as a fragment of Adam's soul and thus as a *reincarnation* of it. Can a man be reincarnated more than once? Israel is evidently an everlasting generation. When did this start? Israel's Old Covenant was made with one specific generation of Hebrews alive in Moses' day. That generation constitutes the Israel to whom the promises were given and, by parity of reasoning, the New Covenant promises as well. That one specific set of souls is the true Israel, with each soul potentially subject at God's sovereign discretion to be reincarnated by Him any number of times either as an Israelite or as a Gentile (viz. "I will scatter you to the nations"). At some point after Moses died, God presumably began birthing additional fragments of Adam into the Israelite community, but any such *new* Israelites are not the original true Israel under promise. Ancient Israel was consistently a mixture of true Israelites and pseudo-Israelites, therefore, and thus "they are not all Israel, which are of Israel" (9:6, KJV). As God's elect, all the true Israelites – no exceptions - are saved by OT and NT evangelism, in some cases as a Gentile reincarnation. Incidentally John the Baptist was undeniably a reincarnation of Elijah.<sup>[254](#)</sup>

And yet isn't man appointed to suffer death only once?<sup>[255](#)</sup> Death is *experiencing* the cessation of the heart and nervous system, but whenever God deigns to incarnate a particular individual, He simply removes the soul just prior to death. And if desired, He can hold it in suspended animation for thousands of years. It's quite possible that none of the ethnic Jews born in the last 1800 years are true Israelites. In complete awe of how hidden, mysterious, and inscrutable are the ways of God until revealed, Paul closes out Rom 11 with this doxology:

O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?(Rom 11:33-34, KJV)

And we haven't even discussed individual election yet! Let's do so now.<sup>[256](#)</sup>

## Predestined Before the Foundation of the World

Calvin's theory of a fixed number of elect<sup>257</sup> stems from the false assumption of foreknowledge. As the doxology of Rom 11:33-34 suggests, the precise details of election – the specifics of a possible Arminian-Calvinistic synthesis – seem somewhat hidden from us (pending prophetic revelation). However, it seems reasonably safe to conclude that our prayers do have a major impact on how many people will be saved, and that's probably all we need to know. Paul counseled:

I exhort therefore, that, first of all [i.e. as *top priority* (Barnes)], supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth (1Ti 2:1-4, KJV).

Jesus advised us to pray that laborers be raised up to reap the harvest (Mat 9:38). Paul prayed that his fellow Israelites be saved (Rom 10:1), and he regimented his lifestyle to save as many as possible (1Cor 9:19-22). Jude exhorted us to snatch men from the fire, and Daniel promised great reward to soul-winners (Dan 12:3). All this intercession would be somewhat useless if the total harvest were already fixed. Furthermore God has historically blessed the efforts of missionaries despite their frequently poor tactics. In other words the harvest was in part a product of their efforts rather than a mere manifestation of a forenumbered elect. A Calvinist would object, "But doesn't Rom 9:16 indicate that salvation is not of man's effort?" According to this verse the unbeliever possibly contributes nothing to his salvation, but it says nothing about intercessory prayer. Indeed, the ability of prayer to deliver men from the wrath of God is one of the most striking morals of Moses' autobiography.

The Arminian handling of the election texts seems a bit dubious. Watering them down to an extent bereft of predestination and particular election isn't a seamless fit with their content (Jn 6:44; 15:16-17; Acts 13:48; Rom 8:29-30; 9:10ff; Eph 1:4-5, 11; Col 3:12; 1Th 1:4; 2Th 2:13-14; 2Ti 1:9; 2Ti 2:10; 1Pet 1:1-2). After all, if the Calvinistic doctrine of particular election is completely devoid of truth, one wonders why such



verses even exist. Just to confuse us? Calvin was surely correct that these verses convey a valuable lesson about the sovereignty of God. A biblical soteriology, therefore, will retain divine sovereignty of particular election – and even eternal predestination - without forfeiting the intercessor's potential to leverage petitions impacting His sovereign decisions. Without further ado, here's my proposal.

God couldn't completely abandon soteriology to human freedom because He *needed* a church. Prior to the foundation of the world, therefore, He decided upon the minimum percentage of Adam's soul necessary to meet His eternal need for a bride, and selected a commensurate set of its fragments as His predestined elect, in case of a fall. Of interest is the distribution of the elect fragments. My hypothesis is that every human soul has at least one speck of an elect fragment in its total mass. Therefore prayer warriors can intercede for any individual on the planet with the hope and expectation of his eventual conversion. If God acquiesces, He will monergistically regenerate the individual's elect fragment – but why then do I speak of a possible Arminian factor? Because in some cases He perhaps might allow the user's neutral zone to reject the invitation, evoking His departure. We just don't know. At any rate if God never consents to the individual's salvation, He will remove the elect fragment just prior to death and reincarnate it in a later generation. On the last day He will regenerate any elect fragments that never got converted through evangelism.

## Why Orthodox Theology Repudiates the Trinity

Orthodox assumptions are incompatible with three separate Persons. According to the orthodox historian Phillip Schaff, probably the foremost authority on orthodoxy in his day: "The essential points of the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity are these...The three persons are related to the divine substance not as three individuals to their species, as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, or Peter, John, and Paul, to human nature; they are only one God."<sup>258</sup> Why can't the Trinity be three separate people like

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? As Schaff explains in the very next sentence, it is on account of God's indivisibility, immateriality, and unextension in space: "The divine substance is absolutely indivisible by reason of its simplicity, and absolutely inextensible and untransferable by reason of its infinity; whereas a corporeal substance can be divided [into parts]."<sup>259</sup> The inevitable conclusion? Obviously a complete denial of the Trinity as Schaff continues: "Father, Son, and Spirit cannot be conceived as three separate individuals, but are in one another, and form a solidaric unity...The term person must not be taken here in the sense current among men, as if the three persons were three different individuals, or three self-conscious and separately acting beings."<sup>260</sup> So reads orthodoxy's Athanasian Creed, "They are not Three Eternals but One Eternal...not Three Uncreated, nor Three Incomprehensibles, but One Uncreated, and One Uncomprehensible...not Three Almighty but One Almighty."<sup>261</sup> Phillip Schaff considered this confession the most comprehensive Trinitarian creed<sup>262</sup> even though, in my opinion, it plainly denies the Trinity altogether. Thus while orthodoxy superficially pays lip-service to the Trinity and Incarnation in the overwhelming majority of its statements, it actually denies both realities in a few select declarations for consistency's sake, precisely because indivisibility precludes both. Unitarians dismiss the Trinity as incompatible with indivisibility,<sup>263</sup> and rightly so. Quite unsurprising is Schaff's admission that orthodoxy considers the Trinity as incomprehensible as the Incarnation.<sup>264</sup> Robert Dabney likewise admitted the orthodox Trinity incomprehensible.<sup>265</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> I had considered using the term “mainstream Christianity” throughout this paper but decided to go with the standard term “orthodox Christianity.”

<sup>2</sup> Although my own epistemology has always regarded inspired speech as a necessity, I didn’t realize that Luke-Acts specifically sought to define evangelism as inspired speech (prophetic utterance) until I learned it from James Shelton’s book *Mighty in Word and Deed: The Role of the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts*. I am deeply indebted to this important work.

<sup>3</sup> Aside from maybe two or three exceptions, this paper only cites Bibles in the public domain, mostly KJV but also ASV, WEB, Darby, DRB, BBE, and YLT. Most verses are copied from e-Sword Bible software.

<sup>4</sup> “How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?” (Lk 11:13, KJV). Oden’s conclusions are especially important because his work summarizes classical consensus. On Luke 11:13 he comments that here the “disciples were taught that the Holy Spirit would be received in answer to earnest prayer (Luke 11:13)” (Thomas Oden, *Life in the Spirit: Systematic Theology Volume Three* (Peabody: Prince Press, 2001), p. 48).

The *context* of Lk 11:13 reinforces the conclusion because Christ was teaching the disciples *lifelong* prayer habits. “When we read the book of Acts,” observed Andrew Murray, “we see that the filling with the Spirit and his mighty operation was always obtained by prayer” (Andrew Murray, *In Search of Spiritual Excellence* (Springdale: Whitaker House, 1984). p. 8).

Luke 11:13 exemplifies the didactic value of Luke-Acts. Critics of Pentecostalism argue that the epistles alone are didactic, but formidable scholars such as Howard Ervin, Roger Stronstad, and James Shelton have shown otherwise. For example Stronstad points out that both Rom 15:4 and 2Tim 3:16-17 actually used the Greek root of the English word didactic when they classified *all* Scripture as instructive (Roger Stronstad, *The Charismatic Theology of St Luke* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1984), pp. 18-19).

<sup>5</sup> The current Wikipedia article on Pentecostal theologian Howard M. Ervin eulogizes him as the forerunner of theologians like Roger Stronstad and James Shelton who now regard Luke’s definition of evangelism as prophetic utterance. However it neglected to mention that Ervin’s sacramentalism – his conviction that the divine Word can assume material forms such as bread, wine, and baptismal waters – was grounded in a metaphysics that he called a “Spirit-matter continuum, after the analogy of a matter-energy continuum,” as made explicit in his short essay “Excursus on a World View,” where he postulates a physical manifestation of the Holy Spirit as the only cogent explanation of how God manipulates the larynx to create the gift of tongues (see Howard M. Ervin, *Conversion-Initiation and the Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1984), pp. 80-81). Ervin also implied that Christ’s expression “clothed with power from on high” sets

forth a real expectation of a distinctly (loudly) felt descent of a suit of power upon one's material body (viz. the tongues of fire on Pentecost). This, he intimated, would generally be a post-conversion experience, firstly because few Christians could lay claim to such an experience at conversion, and secondly because Luke-Acts primarily records post-salvation outpourings. Ervin's essay was my initial awakening to biblical materialism.

<sup>6</sup> One of the doctrines that Calvin is famous for, and has been an evangelical consensus for several hundred years now, is the Inward Witness of the Holy Spirit. When the gospel is preached, the Spirit convicts (convinces) men, creating within them a feeling of certainty that the gospel is true – and He sustains this saving faith throughout our Christian life to prevent loss of salvation by doubt. Thus for Calvin, saving faith and assurance of salvation are inspired feelings of certainty rather than painstaking logic. This is, said Calvin, “a conviction which asks not for reasons...[a] knowledge in which the mind rests more firmly and securely than in any reasons” (John Calvin, *Institutes*, book 1, Ch. 7, sec 5). By this Inward Witness we recognize the Scriptures to be the written Word of God, “Those who are inwardly taught by the Holy Spirit acquiesce...[that Scripture's inerrancy] deigns not to submit to proofs and arguments, but owes the full conviction with which we ought to receive it to the testimony of the Spirit....[In] a way superior to human Judgment, [we] *feel* perfectly assured” (Ibid, italics mine).

Under Calvin's influence, the doctrine of the Inward Witness became part of the official Protestant Reformed creeds such as “the Gallican, Belgic, Second Helvetic, Westminster, and other Reformed Confessions” (see Phillip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church* Volume VIII, sec. 7).

The doctrine stands on several verses. For example Rom 8:16 states, “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God” (KJV). 1Jn 4:13 affirms that it is by the Spirit we know ourselves to be children of God, “Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit” (KJV). Again, “Ye need not that any man teach you [because] the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth” (2:27, KJV). Again, “It is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth” (5:6, KJV). Again, for “the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me” (Jn 15:26, KJV). Evangelicals are correct about this doctrine, but have failed to ramify it. Consider



this. The doctrine is stating that God is entrusting the most critical revelations of His Kingdom to the Inward Witness (feelings of certainty). What then is the church's potentially greatest source of instruction? Is it the Inward Witness? Or Sola Scriptura and biblical exegesis? Here's John's advice on how best to prevent the infiltration of false doctrines leading his readers astray:

These things have I written unto you concerning them that would lead you astray. And as for you, the anointing which ye received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any one teach you; but as his anointing teacheth you; concerning all things, and is true, and is no lie, and even as it taught you, ye abide in him (1Jn 2:26-27, ASV).

Thus John looks to the Inward Witness as our best protection from false doctrine. He didn't advise them to practice biblical exegesis, especially given the absence of a printing press in that day and age. Bible-study is indeed valuable – primarily as a crutch useful until prophetic revelation abounds.

The Book of Acts has some good examples of the superiority of direct revelation. Based on his understanding of the OT, Peter did not associate with the Gentiles. When God was ready for him to go to them, He gave Peter a vision three times to reinforce the point (Acts 10). Had Peter relied on biblical hermeneutics, he would not have embarked on a mission to the Gentiles. Or consider Paul. He too was a zealot for Jewish tradition, lifestyle, and beliefs until he saw a vision and heard a voice on the Road to Damascus. Peter and Paul were both right to immediately reject conclusions drawn from biblical exegesis based on the degree of certainty imparted.

<sup>7</sup> Conscience is ultimately our only authority, although admittedly my conscience might tell me to submit to a particular teaching in Scripture. One might object, isn't circular reasoning still involved? By what authority does one know that conscience is our only authority? Agreed, I have no higher authority to appeal to and, even if I did, we're back to the circularity of how to validate the higher authority. Hence I don't really base my appeal on any authority, it's more a process of elimination. From what I've seen, any attempts to avoid the doctrine of authoritative conscience – all alternative theories of authority - seem to produce the kinds of contradictions alleged in this paper. If the reader has an alternative theory avoiding such contradictions, he is certainly free to promote it and live by it.



Suppose a Mormon or Jehovah Witness says, “You can’t classify me as a non-Christian since I’m acting in good conscience.” Actually we can, if our conscience inclines us to disbelieve his testimony. Personally I feel myself getting physically ill and starting to vomit whenever I spend much time listening to the preaching of Mormons and Jehovah Witnesses.

<sup>8</sup>—Obedience to conscience defines all righteousness and, as a result, even God’s voice must influence conscience to obligate us. Paul attested, “I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost” (Rom 9:1, KJV). Andrew Murray commented on this verse that the “Holy Ghost speaks through conscience” (Andrew Murray, *The Secret of True Obedience* (Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1999-9-29, v1.0), public domain, from the chapter “Of the Voice of Conscience.”)

<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/murray/obedience.htm>

<sup>9</sup> One person argued that Abraham’s rationale, his final authority, for attempting to slaughter his son was his *reasoning* that God could raise him from the dead (Heb 11:19). Given his full commitment to the slaughter, however, why abstain at the last instant? Did he detect a flaw in his reasoning? But that verse isn’t describing *flawed* reasoning. Even as the first voice mandated the assassination, the second one forbade it. His final authority was the voice-of-certainty. After all, if the divine Voice can’t impart certainty, why bother speak?

<sup>10</sup> What does it mean for the Holy Spirit to enlighten us? There’s only two possible ways to learn something when reading the Bible. Either the voice of God feeds me conclusions, telling me what a particular verse means (which is called direct revelation), and I accept these conclusions based on a feeling of certainty about the authority of the voice, or I use my own analytical skills to form a hypothesis as to what a given verse means (which is called exegesis). If exegesis were the best avenue to truth, the Spirit’s technique for illuminating our mind would consist of upgrading our analytical skills, resulting in higher test-scores even on secular-field tests. Surely this is not the case. In fact if mere analytical skills could spiritually enlighten the mind, pagan Bible scholars would uncover all the mysteries of Scripture while both ordinary believers and even prophets walk in comparative darkness. This reversal of the facts prompted Andrew Murray to introduce a chapter on spiritual illumination with Mat 11:25, “Thou hast hid these

things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes (Andrew Murray, *The Inner Life* (Springdale: Whitaker House, 1984), p. 70). Note the word “revealed” in that verse, as it can only mean direct revelation. According to Murray, “The wise and the prudent are those who [mistakenly] have confidence in their [analytical] reasoning ability to help them in their pursuit of spiritual knowledge” (Ibid), whereas babes accept a truth on the authority of their father's voice. An interesting sidenote of S. Lewis Johnson on theologians versus babes interprets this verse in the same way (S. Lewis Johnson, “G. C. Berkouwer and the Doctrine of Original Sin,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 132:528 (1975), p. 317).

Andrew Murray further warned that too much preoccupation with exegesis, at the expense of spending time with the Father, can hinder spiritual growth, such that the “light of his countenance and the joy of his love cannot enter you...Your Bible study may become a substitute for God Himself” (Andrew Murray, *The Inner Life* (Springdale: Whitaker House, 1984), pp. 13-14). Analytical skills cannot be divine illumination because one cannot know God analytically, for example the word “joy”, no matter how well “analyzed,” isn’t fully comprehended until He actually stimulates this feeling distinctly (loudly) within us.

<sup>11</sup> The first time I drove a car it was at 10 miles per hour. Accelerating up to 20 seemed really fast – at first. Today 70 seems normal. One gets used to it. Assume that God’s grip on all matter, including every thought-current, limits its speed. Now suppose He relaxes it slightly, (imperceptibly) increasing our speed. You would adjust – you would get used to it – immediately. And if over a matter of years He continued making imperceptibly small increases in speed, it would eventually double. Note what’s happened. Two workdays on the timeclock would now transpire in what used to be one day – but it would still *seem* like two long boring workdays to us. The point is that time doesn’t even exist. There’s no river of time subsisting and flowing. Rather the word time is just a synonym for motion/ change. In fact if everything came to a standstill – including God’s own thoughts – what meaning would time have? There would be no measuring of it. If nothing is changing, decaying, or aging, who could justifiably claim that time had passed or say how much?

The assumption that God inhabits the future erroneously presumes that time is real. Its proponents also contradict themselves when they say that the past is

forever gone, that it does not currently exist. If my future exists, after all, then I *am* the existing past of some future; past and future would always exist together. And this creates a disturbing problem. If both God and I have free will, can we effectively change the past?

At any rate the usual claim is that God foreknows a free choice in virtue of inhabiting the future. The logic is:

1. The future already exists
2. God inhabits that future
3. Therefore He can see what I freely chose

Let me get this straight. I am the one who made this free choice (literally it's already happened) but I don't know what I chose? This is logically incoherent, as can be proven like so.

1. The future already exists
2. I exist in that future.
3. Therefore I can see what I freely chose

Thus if the future exists, I too should already know what my future choices are, just like God supposedly does. The fact is I don't, because the future does not yet exist.

Although God is evil if He foreknew the fall, a few construe His foreknowledge as logically subsequent to the fall, supposedly exonerating Him. Since orthodoxy has done little or nothing in the way of *publicly* exonerating Him, however, the charge of openly insulting Him for 2,000 years still stands. And does logical subsequence even make sense? God's own future is indeterminate since at every stage of the game He can make free choices. It's a contradiction for Him to say, "I haven't yet made my decision on this issue but already foreknow it in a logically subsequent sense."

How did God foreknow that Peter would deny Christ three times? Free will isn't absolute. For example the Father's holy desires restrict His freedom to any of the currently available righteous choices. Knowing Peter's weakness of will, the Father arranged circumstances beyond his threshold of resistance. Did God therefore tempt Peter to sin? He exposed Peter's neglected spiritual life. Picture a person's first-ever ingestion of drugs or alcohol. He senses his weakness but continues to violate his conscience. At some point he becomes so addicted that he *cannot* resist certain temptations. Did God tempt him more than he can bear? Depends on how we look at it. It wasn't excessive temptation, because he *could* have broken the

cycle early in the game. Since he had plenty of opportunities to escape, God was quite fair. Similarly Peter's character was already ruined by his own free choices – God merely exposed it, and eventually fixed it.

Also we must allow God the right to cause someone to do an act. When He sovereignly controls human behavior, however, He cannot count it as sin.

<sup>12</sup> Is God atemporal in the sense of transcending time? Admittedly atemporality can be defined as the simultaneous perception of all events past, present, and future. Let's try to understand this better. A typical movie consists of, say, 500,000 picture-snapshots called frames. Perceiving them all simultaneously is surely the best analogy for atemporality. However, editors remove a number of frames for various reasons, for example to reduce publishing costs, at the expense of a loss of detail. Full detail would entail an infinite number of frames, necessitating the kind of existing infinity shown incoherent in this paper. Why doesn't ordinary conscious experience require an infinite number of frames, then? Because it is understood to be ongoing as long as any frames – any perceptions "loud and clear" - register somewhat frequently, and thus full detail (infinite frames) isn't a necessary component of *human* consciousness, whereas an infinite God is supposed to know *everything*. Accordingly even a man who frequently nods off into sleep for a split second, thus missing some frames, is still compliant with the definition of human conscious experience. Secondly, even if it were possible for God to perceive an infinite number of frames simultaneously, this perception must register – must resonate within Him - for at least one moment in time. He must be conscious for at least one moment to meet our human definition of consciousness. In sum any attempt to define God as atemporal is both logically self-defeating and humanly incomprehensible. It's gibberish. Thirdly, merit involves suffering over an extended period of time, as we shall see.

Strictly speaking what is real is motion/change rather than time. Consciousness is loudness, specifically the loudness of empirical contrast and temporal contrast.

1. Empirical contrast. White chalk is distinctly (loudly) visible on a black chalkboard but imperceptible on a white chalkboard for lack of contrast.
2. Temporal contrast. This is experienced change, that is, the loudness of contrast between my current set of perceptions (or initial lack thereof) and

the next. This is what adds a sense of time/ duration to consciousness, providing us a feeling of being self-aware for at least one moment.

Mat 24:36 is a tempting verse for divine foreknowledge, “But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only” (KJV). Interestingly Jesus merely said that the Father alone knows *about* that day. It’s possible the end-date was already set in the Father’s mind although I doubt it.

<sup>13</sup> Tertullian’s materialism stems from his attitude that anything which really exists must have some substance to it and thus he wrote, “For *nothing* it certainly is, if it is not a bodily substance” (Tertullian, “Treatise on the Soul,” ANF, Vol 3, Part First, Sec 9). He does allow the term spirit but apparently this is only to distinguish those bodies usually invisible to us (angels, demons, and God) from ordinary material bodies seen every day. In other words he was smart enough to realize that not all matter has the same internal structure/ composition. Once again insisting that a substance must have substance, he objects to the notion of the divine Word as “a sort of void, empty, and incorporeal thing.” The last clause is especially important because incorporeal means immaterial. He continues, “How could He who is empty have made things which are solid, and He who is void have made things which are full, and He who is incorporeal have made things which have body? For although a thing may sometimes be made different from him by whom it is made, yet nothing can be made by that which is a void and empty thing. Is that Word of God, then, a void and empty thing, which is called the Son, who Himself is designated God? The Word was with God, and the Word was God...In what form of God? Of course he means in some form, not in none. For who will deny that God is a body, although God is a Spirit? For Spirit has a bodily substance of its own kind, in its own form. Now, even if invisible things, whatsoever they be, have both their substance and their form in God, whereby they are visible to God alone, how much more shall that which has been sent forth from His substance not be without substance!” (*Against Praxeas*, VII).

<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0317.htm>

Phillip Schaff ranked Tertullian as one of the two greatest defenders of orthodoxy in all of church history. Indeed, says Schaff, “He contributed to the development of the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity” (Phillip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, Vol 2, ch. 10, par. 109). Schaff wrote, “Tertullian ascribes to [God]

even corporeality...he considers the non-existent alone incorporeal” (Ibid, Ch. 12, par 137).

Schaff elsewhere described Tertullian as one of Christianity’s “ablest and most fearless advocates against infidels and heretics...He was one of the strongest champions of catholic orthodoxy against the Gnostic heresies, and would allow no change in matters of fundamental doctrine” (Phillip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom with a History and Critical Notes*).

<http://www.ccel.org/s/schaff/creeds2/htm/ii.xi.iii.htm>

The Catholic Encyclopedia says that Tertullian conceded immaterialism of not one thing, meaning he was a materialist in all things, and thus for him even God is a body, “Immateriality in the fullest sense he admits for nothing that exists, — even God is *corpus*.”

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14520c.htm>

Tertullian made a clear “ascription to God of corporeity” (*Encyclopedia4u.com* on Tertullian). Quoting Tertullian, Roberts insisted that materialism

is plainly evident in Tertullian [who wrote] ‘For who will deny that God is a body, although God is a spirit?’ ‘For spirit has a bodily substance, of its own kind, in its own form.’ Here the corporeity of God, in a certain sense, is clearly held, and the notion is applied in like manner to the human soul. [Tertullian stated:] ‘Everything which exists is a bodily existence *sui generis*. Nothing lacks bodily existence but that which is non-existent’ (R.E. Roberts, *The Theology of Tertullian*, p. 127).

<sup>14</sup> Admittedly he actually wrote it as  $2 + 1 = 2$  to be more exact but the end result is obviously the same, if we extrapolate his math (Milliard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, p. 731).

<sup>15</sup> Lewis Sperry Chafer, “Trinitarianism Part 7,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 98:391 (July, 1941), p. 266, Galaxie Software.

Admittedly someone will accuse my own Christology of being worse than a Quadrinity because a material soul potentially consists of as many persons/volitions as it has particles. Consider this. Although I am a material, multi-volitional soul, I nonetheless *feel* like one unit (one whole individual). God’s own process of self-development evidently culminated in three such units/ individuals. Admittedly each of them is multi-volitional, but that’s just the nature of the beast. Let’s bear in mind the brevity of Scripture. It isn’t a detailed systematic theology that meticulously discusses the pros and cons of multi-volitional psychology.



Rather it simply asks us to believe that God is Three Persons. On a high level, my Doctrine of God clearly satisfies this definition, and there simply isn't enough specific data in Scripture for a nitpicker to decisively refute it.

<sup>16</sup> The (hypothetical) prospect of God's undoing the hypostatic union raises tough questions that confirm its problematical aspect. Prior to the union the soul at issue was an ordinary created human soul devoid of divine status. It wasn't part of the Godhead and, as such, merited no worship. Now it supposedly is part of the Godhead, in virtue of the Son's choice to unite to it. As a result, nowadays we bow down and worship this human soul as our God. After all, since Jesus Christ, containing this human soul within His earthly body, ascended to the right hand of the Father, we must worship it. However, suppose the Son, at some point in the near future, opts to disconnect from it, based on a decision to dissolve the union. Will I then have lost the Son whom I used to worship? I can't worship that soul anymore? And the Trinity, having lost a member, is now a Duality? This prospect of altering the Trinity lies in serious tension with a theology that boasts of an innately immutable God. Such a supposedly immutable Godhead can gain a new member at will – whenever it so deigns - and then let him go at whim? Or suppose God should opt to unite to a lesser creature such as the soul of my dog. After my dog ascends to God's right hand, would I then worship it thenceforth? There's no coherent answer to these questions because the whole arrangement simply doesn't make sense.

<sup>17</sup> Orthodox descriptions of the hypostatic union suggest that God snuffed out the personality of the human soul. Phillip Schaff writes, "Christ's human nature had no independent personality of its own...the divine nature is the root and basis of his personality" (Schaff-Herzog, *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge Vol XIII*, p.55). But this takes back with the left hand what was offered with the right. The human personality was supposed to supply a weak, temptible, ignorant nature to the godhead – but it was removed? This again is a contradiction but is precisely what orthodoxy affirms. Robert Dabney wrote, "It is the creed of the Church, that the human nature never had its separate personality" (Robert Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, ch 34). Wilhelmus Brakel concurred that there was "not a human personality...for otherwise Christ would consist of two persons" (Wilhelmus Brakel, *The Christian's Reasonable Service*, ch 3, Ephesians Four Group's free

Bible Study Library on CD ROM; cf. Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology Vol. II: Anthropology* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers), 2001, reprint, p. 391). Norm Geisler says that God “united himself to a personless human nature” (Norman L. Geisler and William D. Watkins, “The Incarnation And Logic: Their Compatibility Defended,” *Trinity Journal*, Vol 6 (1985) p. 194, Galaxie Software).

<sup>18</sup> John Dahms admitted that the union of two natures in Christ leads to an “X and not X” situation contrary to ordinary logic. He also admits it logically contradictory to speak of the threefold Trinity as a simple, indivisible, uncompounded substance. He was apparently not denying orthodox theology but at least raising the prospect of a higher logic transcending ordinary human logic (John v Dahms, “A Trinitarian Epistemology Defended: A Rejoinder To Norman Geisler,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, Vol 22:2 (1979), p. 138). He also writes, “Many conservatives have turned liberal or neo-orthodox simply because they became convinced that some of the important doctrines of orthodoxy involve logical contradictions” (Ibid, p. 140). In an earlier article he spoke somewhat approvingly of Paul Tillich’s assessment of the hypostatic union as a set of “inescapable contradictions and absurdities” (John v Dahms, “How Reliable Is Logic?,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, Vol 21:4 (1978), p. 373). Morris (unconvincingly) defended the hypostatic union after noting how many present-day theologians consider it incoherent (Thomas Morris, “Jesus Christ Was Fully God and Fully Human,” *Philosophy of Religion: Selected Readings*, ed. Michael Peterson, William Hasker, Bruce Reichenbach, David Basinger (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 599-607).

Orthodoxy insists that only a being fully human can atone for the human species. Actually the exact species is largely irrelevant because it’s the soul within the body that suffers the atonement.

<sup>19</sup> The hypostatic union as defined in orthodoxy doesn’t produce a human volition distinct from the divine volition. Thus the Son is, as Oden writes, “a single undivided personality” who is “not two persons” (Thomas Oden, *The Word of Life: Systematic Theology Volume Two* (Peabody: Prince Press, 2001), p. 165, 171). This logically contradicts Gethsemane where Jesus, by praying that the Father remove the cup of wrath from Him, clearly distinguished between His own earthly volition in tension with the heavenly volition. In other words He differentiated what *He*

wanted from what the Father wanted, albeit acquiescing, “Not my will but thine done.” That’s a clear distinction between two separate wills/volitions, and it’s certainly not the “single undivided personality” described by Oden in the citation above. Were it one undivided personality, Jesus could have more accurately phrased his acquiescence like this, “Not my will but my will be done” which of course makes no sense. Let’s make this objection perfectly clear. Why am I insisting that the enthroned Son, united with the earthly Christ into one Volition (one undivided personality), could not possibly articulate the prayer of Gethsemane? Where is the problem? The problem lies in the nature of the petition. It stems from ordinary human frailty (weakness) quite understandably recoiling at the prospect of unthinkable suffering, whereas the heavenly Volition isn’t weak and thus the heavenly Father, Son, and Spirit would always be of one accord to proceed with the crucifixion. So this cannot be an undivided personality since the heavenly Father, Son, and Spirit would never have been volitionally complicit in the recoil-based prayer at Gethsemane. This is an accurate extrapolation of the orthodox view – after all, if the heavenly Three are susceptible to weakness, temptibility, and ignorance, the hypostatic union would have been unnecessary to begin with. (My version of the Incarnation champions a divided personality instead of resisting it). This insusceptibility to weakness was perhaps best expressed in the orthodox doctrine of Impassibility, made official around the year 431, although it has waned in popularity over the last 100 years because it insulates the enthroned Son from redemptive suffering. As Martin Luther pondered, if the enthroned Son never suffered – if He merely hired a created human being to do all His dirty work – then He Himself never atoned for the world. But how can an infinitely powerful Being suffer? It isn’t real suffering, after all, unless it’s the kind that begins to cripple or handicap a person as it intensifies. Imagine your arm extended out upholding a weight in hand. You soon put the weight down, not because your muscles lack sufficient strength, but because the pain is unbearable. Real suffering thus weakens us, because it makes us more likely to put down the weight, it tempts us to relinquish the good fight. If I don’t feel any such weakness/ temptation, it isn’t real suffering, or it’s a negligible amount. Since the omnipotent orthodox Son can be neither tempted nor weak, suffering is an impossibility for Him. Thus the orthodox Incarnation divests the Son of atoning work.

Although my own Christology isn't susceptible to this problem, readers might still be curious whether the heavenly Father, Son, and Spirit can suffer in my view. The answer is yes. How? Here again the solution lies in the divisibility available to a material metaphysics. Reflect again on the arm extended upholding a weight in hand. Two things to bear in mind here. First, although one arm is in agony, and is thus tempted to lay down the weight, the other arm can still function just fine. The suffering is indeed disabling, but only for one of the two arms. In a similar fashion God, at times, physically isolates some of His sensibilities to a subdivision of His physique, for example the seven bowls of wrath outpoured upon the earth in Rev 16. Secondly, not all temptation is unto sin. The arm upholding the weight is indeed tempted to relinquish the effort, but if the endeavor is voluntary instead of morally obligatory, the desistence isn't sin.

<sup>20</sup> John F. Walvoord, "The Person of the Holy Spirit," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 98:389 (1941), p. 38).

<sup>21</sup> Orthodox scholars do admit that the hypostatic union is humanly incomprehensible. Oden's assessment is the most important because his systematic theology is a survey of classical consensus. He writes, "The incarnation remains incomprehensible" (Thomas Oden, *The Word of Life: Systematic Theology Volume Two* (Peabody: Prince Press, 2001), p. 97).

Charles Hodge called it "mysterious and inscrutable" (Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology Vol. II: Anthropology* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers), 2001, reprint, p. 390).

Michael Bozack classified both the Trinity and Incarnation as "beyond human comprehension" (Michael J. Bozack, "Physics In The Theological Seminary," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, Vol 36:1 (1993), p. 65, Galaxie Software).

Lewis Sperry Chafer described Christ's simultaneous ignorance and omniscience as unfathomable, for "How could He know and not know?...These are problems the finite mind cannot solve" (Lewis Sperry Chafer, "Trinitarianism Part 7," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 98:391 (1941), p. 278, Galaxie Software).

Charles Lee Feinberg wrote of the divine-human union, "No sane study of Christology even pretends to fathom it" (Charles Lee Feinberg, "The Hypostatic Union: Part 2," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, (1935), p. 412, Galaxie Software).

Norm Geisler conceded that the human mind, being limited, cannot conceptualize the hypostatic union without contradiction, “The fact that one cannot explain how the two natures unite in one person without contradiction has nothing to do with the obvious fact that what happens when they do [unite] is clearly not a contradiction” (Norman L. Geisler, “Avoid... Contradictions” (1 Timothy 6:20): A Reply To John Dahms,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, Vol 22:1 (1979), p. 62, Galaxie Software).

In general, then, does orthodoxy stipulate to the problematical nature of its doctrines? Yes and no. Although an (extremely) rare scholarly treatise will so acquiesce, the overwhelmingly majority of its books, articles, and sermons impress the audience that “we know what we’re doing.” In my own experience, for example, I read quite a few books on the Holy Spirit when I first got saved, hoping to find strength in Him for my battle against a severe depressive and anxiety disorder. The tenor of these books exuded supreme confidence in their teachings – and thereby sent me on a wild goose chase that nearly ruined my life. Their advice and methods simply did not work; nothing helped me until I started reading Andrew Murray.

<sup>22</sup> The sun, moon, and stars either were not formed or did not illuminate the earth until Genesis 1:14-16; see John Gill’s *Exposition of the Entire Bible*; Calvin’s Commentaries; see Darby, Grant, and Coates in the *Online Bible Anthology of Commentaries*; Leopold’s *Exposition of Genesis*; Geneva Bible Footnotes; Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Commentary; the Matthew Henry Commentary; Albert Barnes’ *Notes on the Bible*; John Wesley’s *Notes*; Keil and Delitzsch’s *Old Testament Commentary*.

On the other hand, in all fairness we must be careful about presuming all the events of the seven days to be in strict chronological order. Moses is probably writing topically rather than chronologically and thus likely compromises the chronology at some points. Is there evidence that it is topical? Take for the example the words, “Let there be light” (Gen 1:3, KJV). This command birthed the first galactic day of seven. But how was the second day birthed? Presumably in the same way. Thus even though God likely reuttered those words on each of the subsequent days, Moses only recorded it once. In a topical listing, each topic gets mentioned only once, at the possible expense of some chronology. Nonetheless perhaps we should still question why Moses seems to have modern plants



appearing on day 3 contrary to their recent arrival only 60 million years ago according to the fossil record. My suspicion is that God temporarily introduced modern plants early on, in a small controlled region, just to fudge history in case Genesis 1 should ever be written. Why would He do this? To convey desired theological implications to the reader. It allows Moses to introduce plants on day 3 and thus before the sun's collocation on day 4, thereby alerting us that God's Light was sufficiently physical to nourish them, and further impugning 24-hour sun-based days.

<sup>23</sup> Paul alluded to Gen 1:3:

It is God, that said, [physical] Light shall shine out of darkness, who, [physically] shined in our hearts, to give the [intuitive] light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (2Cor 4:6, ASV).

For instance the following Bibles at 2Cor 4:6 reference Gen 1:3 in the margin: *King James Version*; *New American Bible*; *New International Version*; *Dios Habla Hoy* (Spanish Bible); *Santa Biblia* (Spanish New International Version). As evidence that Paul had in mind God's physical light, consider that 2Cor 4 continues the preceding chapter's discussion of the glory shining in Moses' face (2Cor 3). We know that the Light in his face was physical, because the veil on his face would have utterly failed to restrain/ dim an immaterial Light. In any case Moses' radiant face is a parallel to Christ's radiant face at 2Cor 4:4-6.

Unger acknowledged that the daylight at Gen 1:3 constituting the first of seven days was the glory of God that lights the heavenly city, since the sun was not created until thirteen verses later (Merril F. Unger, "Rethinking the Genesis Account of Creation," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 115:457 (1958), p. 29).

<sup>24</sup> Some advocates of a young earth claim that God created the universe with the appearance of age even as Adam began life in adult form. However, God had to create Adam as an adult since he had no parents to take care of him. Couldn't God have taken care of him? No, because such would contradict His own ideal of biologically self-sustaining creatures.

Fossils appear in layers of rock and sediment called strata reaching thousands of feet underground, suggesting millions or billions of years. How was all this material laid down? As a solution, Young Earth Creationists (YECs) propose a global flood supposedly responsible for instantly creating these layers. A global flood would surely intermix men with dinosaurs, however, whereas dinosaurs are



only found on the lower strata where men have never been found. (YECs cannot and do not dispute the existence of dinosaurs). Indeed this holds true for all species of life. That is to say, in not one fossil dig anywhere in the world has any modern species ever been found on the lower layers and, conversely, the species located on the lower layers have never been found to also exist on the upper layers, except in those rare cases where a chunk of sediment has obviously been capsized/overtaken. Species appear in the correct place horizontally as well. That is to say, species bound to a particular area of the world for survival are found only in that same region in the fossil record, whereas a global flood would have displaced some species horizontally. Typically that species' footprints, feces, and nests appear in that same region whereas floodwaters would separate all these realities in virtue of their varying sizes, as Greg Morton has discussed. Furthermore a global flood would have left chemically detectable marks in tree ring layers and ice core layers. None have been found. Consider also forests found on top of forests in the fossil record, on different layers, with all the trees standing upright on each layer. Whereas a global flood could only deposit a single forest into the fossil record due to the earth's single surface (single forest). Moreover physical laws limiting how fast sediment can fall through water deprive a global flood of sufficient time to deposit the whole fossil record. Accordingly the present writer understands Noah's account to be a local Mesopotamian flood rather than a global one. In addition, the accuracy of long-term radiometric dating is powerfully confirmed by short-term dating methods. What methods? Tree rings for example. Each ring is examined for chemical changes indicating a shift from winter to summer thus verifying it took a whole year to form. Using this technique, trees have been dated 13,000 years old, thus blowing a six thousand year earth totally out of the water. Coral reefs have bandings ("rings") that can be dated much like tree rings, and some have been dated over a hundred thousand years old. Layers of vapor penetration into volcanic glass yield ages up to 200,000 years. Finally glacial ice cores function much like tree rings, and have been dated one million years old. The crucial point is that when radiometric dating is applied it confirms all the numbers obtained from ring-based methods, thus verifying that radiometric dating is itself a very reliable science. YECs employ at least two deceptive strategies to impugn radiometric dating. First, they write articles about the pitfalls of Carbon-14 dating without even mentioning either the wider body of radiometric

dating or the alternative methods. Scientists esteem Carbon 14 dating only in cases where these well-known pitfalls are accounted for. Second, they likewise misuse and misquote the well-known pitfalls of radiometric dating. These “scientists” can’t get published in scientific journals because their documents are junk science. To my knowledge there has never been even one single case of genuinely discredited professional radiometric dating.

<sup>25</sup> Do we need to honor the Sabbath? A day is a day is a day. Days are all the same, including Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>, excepting authorizations. The Sabbath system wasn’t simply weekly but required the Israelites, every seventh year, to cancel each other’s debts and abstain from farming (Lev 25:3-6, 20-22; Dt 15:1). The divine Voice authorized this system *for ancient Israel* in accordance with God’s intent to provide plentiful rain, clement weather, and abundant harvests. The individual of today should ask Him which day(s), if any, he or she should rest from work, and then heed conscience. To insist, without authorization, that one particular day will bring blessings or curses sounds like witchcraft.

What now of the diet authorized for ancient Israel? Although all *days* are alike, *foods* differ significantly, medically speaking. Even here, however, conscience must dictate. One should not just presume the OT diet binding, given the passages seemingly contrary (Mk 7:15-23; Acts 10:11-15; Rom 14:20; Col 2:21).

<sup>26</sup> Unger acknowledged that the daylight at Gen 1:3 constituting the first of seven days was the glory of God that lights the heavenly city, since the sun was not created until thirteen verses later (Merril F. Unger, “Rethinking the Genesis Account of Creation,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 115:457 (1958), p. 29).

<sup>27</sup> Breath or Wind is always a better translation than Spirit. *Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology* on “Spirit” states:

The Hebrew word for 'spirit' is ruah...It is used more often of God (136 times) than of persons or animals (129 times). Its basic meaning is wind (113 times)...Breath is also a basic meaning of this term. It is the Lord who gives breath to people (Isa 42:5) and to lifeless bodies (Ezek 37:9-10)...It is also used of bad breath – Job's breath was repulsive to his wife (Job 19:17).

Again, “‘Breath’ is the rendering of neshamah [“soul”], and of ruach...both signifying primarily 'wind,' then 'breath,' though the former suggests a gentler blowing, the latter often a blast” (*International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* on breath). Strong's Dictionary reports that pneuma comes from a word for breathing

or blowing hard and means "a current of air, i.e. breath (blast) or a breeze" (*Strong's Dictionary* on Greek 4151 "spirit"). Again, ruach and pneuma are "used primarily in the Old Testament and the New Testament of the wind... [e.g.] Heb 1:7 (angels, 'spirits' or 'winds')" (Ibid, on "spirit").

<sup>28</sup> The ISBE states, "It is the 'breath from Yahweh,' the Spirit of God, who alone can give life to the spiritually dead" (*International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* on "regeneration").

<sup>29</sup> Thomas Oden commented on Jn 20:22, "Jesus himself chose the expression 'Holy Breath' to designate the Comforter to follow Him (John 20:22)" (see Thomas C. Oden, *Life in the Spirit: Systematic Theology Volume Three* (Peabody: Prince Press, 2001, reprint), p. 16). As is well known, each of Oden's conclusions is important because his systematic theology is actually a survey of classical scholarly consensus among all Christian denominations. John Gill similarly concluded on John 20:22 that Jesus here defined the Third Person as "The Holy Breath" (see John Gill's *Exposition of the Entire Bible* on John 20:22). *Vincent's Word Studies* on Jn 20:22 says, "Every word of Christ which is received in the heart by faith comes accompanied by this Divine breathing." Paul even characterized Scripture as God-breathed (2Ti 3:16).

<sup>30</sup> In fact Lewis Sperry Chafer, president and founder of Dallas Theological Seminary, argued that angels are physical since "the term spirit...in both Hebrew and Greek is primarily a material term, indicating wind, air, or breath" (Lewis Sperry Chafer, "Angelology Part 1," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 98:392 (1941), p. 401, Galaxie Software). In that article he named several church fathers who viewed angels as physical: Tertullian, Clemens Alexandrinus, Origen, and Caesarius.

<sup>31</sup> An immaterial mind provides no humanly comprehensible theory of mind-body interaction. As an immaterialist, Hodge admitted that mind-body interaction "is incomprehensible. We do not know how the body acts on the mind, or how the mind acts on the body" (Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology Vol. II: Anthropology* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2001), pp. 44-45). Millard J. Erickson resigned himself to a compromise consisting of an immaterial mind somehow materialized during this life, then immaterialized momentarily during the transition to the next, and finally rematerialized in heaven (Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2001, reprint), pp. 555-56). He's correct to postulate a

material soul, but he's unreasonably asking us to believe that spirit can become matter and vice versa.

<sup>32</sup> Tertullian realized that, since physical substances have an impact upon our conscious experience, the mind must be a material substance (ANF, Vol 3, Part First, Sec 9). Although he lived centuries before sexual hormones were discovered, he argued that mind and body self-evidently are mutually influential in romantic love (ibid). He realized that a mental decision to move a limb sets it in motion (ibid), and that a mental decision to depart propels the body to a new location (ibid). In defense of materialism, he wrote in regard to pneuma and ruach, that the soul "in its material nature [is] wind and breath" (Tertullian, "Treatise on the Soul," ANF, Vol 3, Part First, Sec 9). This soul is spread throughout the entire human body. On Gen 2:7, Tertullian remarked that after God "breathed upon the face of man the breath of life...surely that breath... spread itself throughout all the spaces of the body (ibid).

<sup>33</sup> Does Catholicism address the mind-body problem? According to the *Catholic Encyclopedia* on "soul," the Council of Vienne of 1311 approved Thomas Aquinas' (somewhat Aristotelian) definition of soul as the form of the body. Aristotle seems to *imply* shape (while evidently denying such) because this form endows a lump of generic raw material with its distinctive characteristics, and is not separable from it. Aquinas' version allows for a created immaterial soul but overall seems even less clear than Aristotle. The upshot is that Catholicism doesn't provide a clear, convincing solution to the mind-body problem.

<sup>34</sup> Young emphasized that God's speech is the exhaled breath of His mouth (see Edward J. Young, "The God-breathed Scripture," *Grace Theological Journal*, Vol 7:3 (1966), p. 8. Oden's work is especially important because it is a summary of classical consensus. He wrote:

Spirit as Invisible Wind. No words can be said without wind moving through the flexing chambers of our voices...In speaking with Nicodemus [at John 3:8], Jesus compared the Spirit to the wind that moves where it wills...Ruach is the outbreathing, the proceeding, the going forth of the life of God (Thomas C. Oden, *Life in the Spirit: Systematic Theology Volume Three* (Peabody: Prince Press, 2001, reprint), p. 42)..

<sup>35</sup> *Keil & Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament*. Thomas Oden similarly sees the OT divine Word as both an utterance and a Person (Thomas Oden, *The Word of Life: Systematic Theology Volume Two* (Peabody: Prince Press, 2001), p.

69). Admittedly Jesus proved His bodily resurrection by asserting, “Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have” (Lk 24:39, KJV). Nonetheless, as Lewis Sperry Chafer recognized, materiality is not here denied of spirit. The point rather is that angels and disembodied spirits are not encased within a shell of flesh and bones such as found in Christ’s pre-crucifixion body (Lewis Sperry Chafer, “Angelology Part 1,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 98:392 (1941), p. 400).

<sup>36</sup> According to Genesis 1, the earth was formed from waters. See *Albert Barnes Notes* on 2Pet 3:5. The *New International Version* of the Bible translates 2Pet 3:5 as “the earth was formed out of water.” Other versions render it as an earth “consisting of water” or “subsisting of water.” *Robertson’s Word Pictures*, as well as John Gill’s *Exposition of the Entire Bible*, as well as the *Treasury of Scripture Knowledge* deemed “consisting” acceptable. The *Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Commentary* allows either “consisted of water” or “formed out of water.” The World English Bible reads “formed out of water and amid water.” *Vincent’s Word Studies* finds at 2Pet 3:5 a possible reference to “the original liquid condition of the earth.” *Family NT Notes* states, “consisting out of water and by water. The reference is to the chaotic watery mass out of which the earth was formed (Ge 1:2).” Adam Clarke remarked, “Now, these heavens and earth which God made in the beginning, and which he says were at first formless and empty, and which he calls the deep, are in the very next verse called waters...[The] earth was made out of some fluid substance” (*Adam Clarke’s Commentary* on 2Pet 3:5). John Calvin assented, “The world no doubt had its origin from waters” (*Calvin’s Commentaries* on 2Pet 3:5). Keil & Delitzsch elaborated:

And darkness was upon the face of the deep.”[Hebrew] תהום, from הום, to roar, to rage, denotes the raging waters, the roaring waves (Psa 42:7) or flood (Ex 15:5; Deut 8:7); and hence the depths of the sea (Job 28:14; Job 38:16)...The chaotic mass in which the earth and the firmament were still undistinguished, unformed, and as it were unborn, was a heaving deep, an abyss of waters (ἄβυσσος, LXX) (*Keil & Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament* on Gen 1:2).

<sup>37</sup> The *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (ISBE) on “creation” admitted that the Book of Genesis provides no clear evidence for creation out of nothing. As a result, the writers of the ISBE preferred to base their doctrine of



creation out of nothing on Heb 11:3, which says the worlds were framed from things unseen. However, that verse is hardly proof of creation out of nothing. Although the original raw material is *currently* unseen by the average believer, all such unseen things are viewable by revelatory visions, a fact which is the whole point of Heb 11.

<sup>38</sup> The orthodox God has no size and shape and is thus said to be unextended in space and indivisible into parts. This is called *spatial* simplicity according to the Wikipedia article on the broader topic of divine simplicity. As Hodge confirms of orthodoxy, mind and matter are two different “substances; the one extended, tangible, and divisible...the other unextended and indivisible” (Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology Vol. II: Anthropology* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers), 2001, reprint, p. 46).

“Extension cannot be an attribute of spirit” (R. L. Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, Ch. 20). Only “Matter possesses the attributes of extension, form, inertia, divisibility” (Lewis Sperry Chafer, “Part 1: Theology Proper,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 95:379 (1938), p. 283, Galaxie Software).

<sup>39</sup> “Whatever is divisible is material,” (Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology Vol II: Anthropology* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2001, reprint), p. 59).

Speaking of a hypothetically divisible soul, Brakel likewise affirmed it would be material, “The soul would be divisible, and having parts it would not be a spirit but a [material] body” (Wilhelmus Brakel, *The Christian’s Reasonable Service*, ch 10, Ephesians Four Group’s free Bible Study Library on CD ROM).

Phillip Schaff affirmed that the orthodox God is neither extended in space nor divisible into parts:

The divine substance is absolutely indivisible [into parts] by reason of its simplicity, and absolutely inextensible [in space] and untransferable by reason of its infinity; whereas a corporeal substance can be divided [into parts] (Phillip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church Vol III*, sec 130, public domain, bracketed comments mine).

[http://www.ccel.org/s/schaff/history/3\\_ch09.htm](http://www.ccel.org/s/schaff/history/3_ch09.htm)

<sup>40</sup> Tertullian likewise objected to an immaterial soul that it would be a substance without substance and thus nothing at all, “For nothing it certainly is, if it is not a bodily substance” (Tertullian, “Treatise on the Soul,” ANF, Vol 3, Part First, Sec 9).



<sup>41</sup> Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology Vol. III: Theology* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2001), p. 382.

<sup>42</sup> The notion of an outpouring doesn't make sense if God is already infinitely present everywhere – how can He be *transferred* to a place where He already resides? Schaff seems to concede as much by (correctly) applying the word untransferable to the orthodox God.

The divine substance is absolutely indivisible [into parts] by reason of its simplicity, and absolutely inextensible [in space] and untransferable by reason of its infinity; whereas a corporeal substance can be divided [into parts] (Phillip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church Vol III*, sec 130, public domain, bracketed comments and italics mine).

[http://www.ccel.org/s/schaff/history/3\\_ch09.htm](http://www.ccel.org/s/schaff/history/3_ch09.htm)

<sup>43</sup> Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2001, reprint), p. 367.

<sup>44</sup> The Trinity must be divisible into parts because it was only the Son who became flesh. Clearly it was not “that the whole Godhead became flesh, but the Word became flesh” (Thomas Oden, *The Word of Life: Systematic Theology Volume Two* (Peabody: Prince Press, 2001), p. 113).

<sup>45</sup> John Dahms admitted that the union of two natures in Christ leads to an “X and not X” situation contrary to ordinary logic. He also admits it logically contradictory to speak of the threefold Trinity as a simple, indivisible, uncompounded substance. He was probably not denying orthodox theology but raising the prospect of a higher logic transcending ordinary human logic (John v Dahms, “A Trinitarian Epistemology Defended: A Rejoinder To Norman Geisler,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, Vol 22:2 (1979), p. 138).

<sup>46</sup> The theory that Adam was our representative is indefensible. About twenty percent of Lewis Johnson's article praised Berkouwer's six hundred page book *Sin* for exhibiting an acumen exceeding even that of Karl Barth (S. Lewis Johnson, “G. C. Berkouwer and the Doctrine of Original Sin,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 132:528 (1975), pp. 316-26). The rest of Johnson's article stressed the obvious injustice of Adam as our representative (also called federalism). Johnson comments on Berkouwer's 600 page book, “Berkouwer has shrewdly pointed out the weaknesses of both realism and federalism, but as John Murray has commented, ‘Berkouwer is

not successful in providing a fruitful alternative” (Ibid). In a nutshell orthodoxy has no solution to the problem of original sin. John Murray also praised Berkouwer’s book as “unexcelled” scholarship (John Murray, “Book Reviews,” *Westminster Theological Journal*, Vol 35:2 (Winter, 1973), p. 230).

In 1966 William Brunner published *Children of the Devil* highly esteemed by Charles Ryrie (C.C. Ryrie, “Book Reviews,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 124:495 (1967), p. 269). After demonstrating immaterialism’s historic failure to explain the taint of original sin, it proposed that Adam’s stained soul endlessly clones or duplicates itself out of nothing. Ryrie predicted this theory’s unpopularity.

A Catholic catechism admitted, “transmission of original sin is a mystery that we cannot fully understand” (article 404). Likewise Donald Bloesch admits he has no solution for how a taint can be transmitted and conceded that, logically speaking, a moral taint cannot be defined as a biological imperfection (Donald G. Bloesch, *Essentials of Evangelical Theology Volume 2: Life, Ministry, and Hope* (Peabody: Prince Press, 2001, reprint), pp. 14-15, 107).

According to Romans 5 sin entered the world through Adam – but Eve sinned first! Two possible ways to resolve this contradiction:

- (1) Adam is the author of human sin because Eve was actually a fragment of his soul pulled from his ribs.
- (2) Individuals such as Eve cannot really sin because the rep Adam alone matters.

The problem with #2 is that the whole Bible *does* count individual sin, including Eve’s disobedience (1 Tim 2:14).

<sup>47</sup> Those identifying Adam as our rep might argue that it’s true justice because God foreknew that we’d all behave like Adam if given the choice. In other words we all act alike. Actually free beings do *not* all act alike. For example some of the angels sinned while others abstained. If we all act alike, you should be happy to go to prison for any crime I commit because your behavior, in all respects, *is identical to mine*. And thus it makes no sense, if we all act alike, for God to limit a flood, epidemic, or other judgment to a particular generation or region. Interestingly enough Jesus Himself promised rewards to a given individual in proportion to his good behavior (parable of talents), and punishment in proportion to bad (few blows vs. many blows). This makes zero sense if we all act alike. If we all act alike, it must

needs be attributed to the Engineer who so designed us, for which He alone is to blame. At any rate, God is apparently the following kind of jerk. He makes Adam as our rep, who then sins. Knowing that Adam's offspring now stand condemned, he allows Adam to generate billions of them, instead of being kind enough to start all over with Bob and Sue. Nice. This is so evil and irresponsible it's at minimum criminal negligence and, worse yet, His own poor Son had to die on the cross just to pick up the pieces of this infernal mess.

On a different matter, I want to anticipate an objection to my own view. Since free agents do *not* act alike, is it possible that some of Adam's thought-currents were not complicit in the sin? Thus maybe part of Adam never sinned? Firstly, these soul-fragments are not separate independent agents in the usual sense, so we must allow the possibility that all complied. Anyway suppose some of them abstained. So what? After the fall God likely removed them from Adam's body and they are now in heaven – and yet the Bible doesn't mention it? Wouldn't the Bible celebrate on almost every page such a successful abstention from sin, as one of the most momentous events of history? Actually it wouldn't likely mention it all. How many verses celebrate the abstention from sin among the holy angels? Such verses are hard to find because the biblical purview is the sin of mankind and associated redemption.

<sup>48</sup> Bloesch recognized that it's illogical to suggest that the taint of original sin is transmitted via physiology/ biology. He writes, "Original sin is not a biological taint but a spiritual contagion." He then relegates the means of transmission to the "inexplicable," thereby clearly conceding that it cannot be solved on orthodox assumptions (Donald G. Bloesch, *Essentials of Evangelical Theology Volume 1: God, Authority, and Salvation* (Peabody: Prince Press, 2001, reprint), p. 107).

<sup>49</sup> Tertullian realized that materialism offers the only possible explanation of universal condemnation in Adam, namely that "All our souls were contained in Adam, and are transmitted to us with the taint of original sin upon them" (*Catholic Encyclopedia* on Tertullian). Millard J. Erickson tries to stand on both sides of the fence. He maintains that the soul is by nature an immaterial substance but is reified as material (it is somehow materialized) the moment it is placed in the human body. Accordingly "we were actually present within Adam, so that we all sinned in his

act” (Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2001, reprint), p. 654).

All Traducianists, including Tertullian and Erickson, claim that the child obtains his soul from the parents but most shun the implied materialism. Dabney was a Traducianist who conceded, “Traducianism is therefore vehemently accused of materialist tendencies” (Robert Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, ch 29, Ephesians Four Group’s free Bible Study Library on CD ROM). Brakel affirmed of Traducianism, “The soul would be divisible, and having parts it would not be a spirit but a [material] body” (Wilhelmus Brakel, *The Christian’s Reasonable Service*, ch 10, Ephesians Four Group’s free Bible Study Library on CD ROM). Traducianists situate us in Adam’s loins but need be reminded that we are guilty (and tainted) only if volitionally complicit in his sin. The opposing view, Creationism, is that God creates a fresh new soul for every human being, but how is it stained? The Creationist Charles Hodge replied that such fresh souls deprived of sanctifying grace grow up beastly in character involuntarily. Hodge’s position unacceptably brands an involuntary situation as sin. See Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology Vol. II: Anthropology* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers), 2001, reprint, p. 253.

<sup>50</sup> The famous physicist Isaac Newton invented the theory of gravity but insisted it was foolhardy to take it literally. After all, to suggest that one cluster of matter can exert a “force” on a distant piece of matter is like accusing me of pulling you into a swimming pool from afar. Accordingly Newton vacillated as to whether gravity is the hand of God or some kind of atmospheric pressure.

Einstein did not explain gravity. Suppose I formulate a new theory of velocity. When an experiment proves my numbers wrong, I defend like this, “I just need to factor in the curvature of space and time.” Having so factored, I now have a *numerically* accurate theory of velocity, perfectly satisfactory for applied science, but have I either *understood* or *explained* it? Neither, because “curvature of space and time” is a humanly incomprehensible concept. It’s gibberish. Worse yet, Einstein’s theory of special relativity is patently false. After all, relative velocity is a principle both empirical and highly intuitive. For example it’s safest to jump from one truck to another when they are both moving at the same velocity, because one has zero speed relative to the other. Relative velocity holds true for all matter,

concedes Einstein, *except* for light particles because the speed of light, he claims, is constant relative to *anything*. This exception is logically absurd, as one paper on the web demonstrated. Per this paper, imagine sprinting toward a train rapidly approaching you. Light from the train's headlights should, *logically* speaking, be approaching you extra-fast due to relative velocity. To maintain that light's speed remains unchanged relative to you, Einstein alleges that time slows down. Next the paper added a second train to the picture – moving rapidly away from you. Logically speaking, its light should be approaching you extra-slow due to relative motion. To maintain this second light's speed constant, Einstein must now acquiesce that time speeds up. The contradiction? Einstein earlier claimed that time was slowing down but now claims it is speeding up. To propose that time “speeds up” or “slows down” is humanly incomprehensible in the first place. It's gibberish – and equally so when he defines gravity as a curvature of space wherein the shortest distance between two points is *not* a straight line because only “curved space” connects them. Pretending to comprehend such gibberish is like the delusion of fathoming a square circle.

<sup>51</sup> Did God really need to allow us to hurt each other? One option would be for Him to consistently intervene at the last moment, right before the blow lands, but this wouldn't be very conducive to free will, since people would soon desist from most attempts to inflict harm for lack of success. In fact once I realize it's impossible to harm my neighbor, nothing I do to him can even be counted as sin.

A second option is keeping each person in a perpetual dream-like state in which he mistakenly thinks he's interacting with, and inflicting harm upon, real people. But who will inflict pain upon the dreamer? God would have to do it, since He would be the one sustaining the dream state. Evidently He didn't relish this assignment.

The bottom line is, given the enormity of the task that God faced – the task of becoming holy – it would seem inconsiderate of us to begrudge Him a world of free will as His reward. He earned it. He did what He had to do to keep us all safe in the long run.

<sup>52</sup> Scripture nowhere insists on creation ex nihilo. The biblical words for “create,” affirmed Hodge, can actually be translated as forming and shaping



something out of existing material (Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology Volume I: Theology*, pp. 556-558).

*Keil & Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament* at Gen 1:1 admits that the Hebrew word “bara” (create), in the final analysis, “does not exclude a pre-existent material.” The *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* on “creation” admitted that Genesis 1 provides no clear evidence for creation ex nihilo.

<sup>53</sup> Eph 5:31-32 powerfully confirms the physical nature of the indwelling divine Presence:

For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak *concerning Christ and the church* (KJV, italics added).

In intercourse, a man penetrates a woman forming one flesh/body with her in a mutual caress achieving sexual ecstasy. According to this passage, Christ likewise forms one flesh/body with His bride, physically penetrating her for the sake of mutual caress unto joyful ecstasy. Admittedly this isn't really “sexual” but it's potentially far more ecstatic. For example, consider the Light particles penetrating Moses' body, kissing it at innumerable many infinitesimally small points. Thus the Father reveals His affection for His babes as any human father would, by gently kissing them all over.

“Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?” (Ps 85:6, KJV). Until revival hits, most Christians haven't the faintest idea of what happiness is supposed to feel like for lack of any inkling how much joy/ecstasy that God is capable of imparting. Let's attempt to make it more clear. Even the most intoxicating drug is merely an inanimate substance and therefore isn't actually *skilled* in physical stimulation. Try to imagine, then, the capabilities of a supremely skillful *living Narcotic*. “Be not drunk with wine...but be filled [*drunk*] with the Holy Spirit” (Eph 5:18, KJV). Indeed the potential heights of divinely inspired intoxication are *unimaginable* - which is precisely the point of Eph 5:20:

Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory (Eph 5:20-21, KJV).

How do I know this passage is describing joyful highs? It refers to God exceeding our wildest imaginations. Standard miracles are easy to imagine, whereas there are levels of joy, happiness, and intoxication surpassing our wildest dreams. As noted



earlier, a full exposure to the divine Light would emotionally stimulate us to a fatal extent.

On a related note, the modern Prosperity Gospel (the doctrine that Scripture guarantees wealth to all Christians) stems from at least two mistaken premises: 1. That those who are materially poor *cannot* be happy. 2. That the material prosperity promised to Israel is equally scoped to the Gentiles.

<sup>54</sup> Calvin implicitly conceded the quantitative distinction between a light sprinkling of the Holy Spirit versus being filled. He correctly regarded Christ's exhaling of the Spirit into the Twelve at John 20:22 as a mere light sprinkling in contrast with the voluminous filling on Pentecost, "Christ at [Jn 20:22] bestowed the Spirit [again] on the Apostles by *breathing*" who thereby "were only sprinkled by his grace, but were not *filled* with power [until Pentecost]" (*Calvin's Commentaries* on John 20:22, italics added; Galaxie Software).

<sup>55</sup> How did Christ become temptible on earth if His enthroned holiness can only regress at a snail's pace? This makes for a formidable objection but is not insurmountable. First let's reflect on God's granularity of control over conscious experience. Suppose I had to teach someone a simple task such as washing dishes. This is fairly easy to do if he's very intelligent, as I merely have to explain it to him. Alternatively, suppose I had to surgically modify his brain as to impart the ability to wash dishes without really understanding (intellectually) what he's doing – which is knowledge without knowledge. This is an inconceivably complicated surgery, for starters I would need intimate knowledge of each of the brain's 100 billion neurons. And yet this is precisely the sort of thing which God has accomplished in each and every species on planet Earth, for example a spider that spins a web without real cognitive knowledge of what it's doing. He gets precious little glory for this unfathomably sophisticated accomplishment because most Christians write it off as "mere" animal instincts easily instituted by a magical God. "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (Ps 139:14, KJV). Imagine the difficulty of engineering a reliable vehicle whose every internal motion (liquids, pressures, pumping, vapors, rotations, combustions, etc.) must push and pull thought-currents in ways conducive to proper balances of intellect, emotions, conscience, survival, relationships, and socialization. This is humanly inconceivable.

Let's now return to the original question. God's holiness isn't a directionless disposition but rather an orientation toward a specific set of benevolent goals. Given His granularity of psychological control (His skills as demonstrated above), it's not that he's *mechanically* incapable of reversing His own holy passions, it's rather that those passions won't allow Him to initiate a mechanical reversal antithetical to those benevolent goals. The Incarnation was not antithetical to those goals but on the contrary fully pursuant to them. Therefore the Son's holy passions did not put up any resistance when the Father made a move to reduce their intensity.

<sup>56</sup> Chafer evidently realized that the prophets depended on a feeling of absolute certainty to recognize God's voice unmistakably. He argued that false prophets prophecy out of their own heart whereas true prophets knew when God was speaking because "true revelation...convinced the messenger of the divine authority off his message" whereby "they were caused to know with certitude" (Lewis Sperry Chafer, "Revelation," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 94:375 (1937), pp. 275-76, Galaxie Software).

John Wesley recognized that God used 100% certainty to call Abraham. He writes, "The God of glory appeared to [Abraham] to give him this call, appeared in such displays of his glory as left Abram no room to doubt" (*John Wesley's Notes on Gen 12:1*).

On the whole, the biblical theophanies exhibited "clear, unmistakable signs that the communications were really from heaven" (*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Commentary on Ex 3:5*). The description "unmistakable" implies 100% certainty.

<sup>57</sup> "For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power" (1Cor 4:20, KJV). "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you" (Acts 1:8, KJV). At age 30 Jesus received a prophetic anointing of such convicting power that He merely had to say, "Follow me," to enlist His disciples for life. Without it He was fated to ineffective door-to-door evangelism instead of drawing large crowds – and these people lacked modern transportation. Similarly John the Baptist, walking in a prophetic anointing of Elijah-magnitude, easily drew large crowds. If Christ was serious about evangelism, therefore, He desired to endow His the Twelve with His own prophetic anointing. The effect upon the Twelve on Pentecost – the ability to draw crowds – was *immediate and instantaneous*, even as Christ Himself had

become *suddenly powerful* at age 30. Despite the perpetual debate on *ordo salutis*, therefore, the church should at least be in consensus that evangelism and missions call for this kind of power.

<sup>58</sup> The written Word preached and obeyed is merely OT and NT law, essentially stone tablets, powerless to save and frequently stimulative of sinful passions (Rom 7:5-13). As Andrew Murray put it, "The letter of the Word, however we study and delight in it, has no saving or sanctifying power." See Andrew Murray, *The Secret of True Obedience*, Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1999-9-29, v1.0, public domain, from the chapter "The Secret of True Obedience,"

<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/murray/obedience.htm>

Elsewhere he insisted that "the written Word is powerless" (Andrew Murray, *The Inner Life* (Springdale: Whitaker House, 1984), p. 75). Only the spoken, exhaled "Word that we get from the mouth of God," specified Andrew Murray, "brings the power to know [His will] and to do it" (Ibid, p. 143). Either Christ or a preacher must speak/exhale the Word/Breath into audiences initially for their salvation and incrementally for their sanctification. Chamblin's exegetical analysis rightly deduced that Paul's usage of the term "gospel" sometimes refers not only to the doctrines expressed during preaching but also to a Person released into the heart by that preaching (Rom 1:16; 1Th 1:5; 2:13). Verse 1:16 of Galatians is a record not of Paul's preaching about Christ, concludes Chamblin, but of his preaching Christ (Knox Chamblin, "Revelation and Tradition in the Pauline Evangelion," *Westminster Theological Journal*, Vol 48 (1986), pp. 1-16). Surely, if preaching/exhaling releases Christ, He must be on those occasions the Breath of our mouth. Jesus said to the Twelve, "Ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you" (Jn 15:3, KJV).

<sup>59</sup> The accounts in Luke-Acts of men being filled with the Spirit are almost always for the purpose of prophetic utterances, leveraged in Acts for evangelism, which was the major conclusion drawn in James Shelton's important book. Shelton's masterful redaction criticism of the Greek texts compared every verse of Luke with Matthew and Mark while surveying Acts in order to surface peculiarly Lukan themes (see James B. Shelton, *Mighty in Word and Deed: The Role of the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991).

Walt Russel drew the same conclusion. He noted of Luke's gospel that Elizabeth, Zechariah, Simeon, and John the Baptist are filled with the Spirit to make prophetic utterances, and this kind of utterance defines the evangelism of Acts (Walt Russell, "The Anointing With The Holy Spirit In Luke-Acts," *Trinity Journal*, Vol 7:1 (1986), pp. 48-74).

Turner affirmed that noted scholars "Gunkel, Leisegang, Schweizer, Lampe and Haya-Prats have been right to point to Luke's emphasis on the pentecostal gift of the Spirit as the 'Spirit of prophecy,'" (M. B. Turner, "The Significance of Receiving the Spirit in Luke-Acts: A Survey of Modern Scholarship," *Trinity Journal*, Vol 2 (1981), p. 15, Galaxie Software).

<sup>60</sup> "The fact that Jesus was transfigured as He prayed is a fact of some practical importance" (S. Lewis Johnson, "The Transfiguration of Christ," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 124 (1967), p. 136).

<sup>61</sup> Luke apparently wrote more about prayer than any other writer. In the King James Version, for example, forms of the word "pray" occur about 65 times in Luke-Acts compared to about 40 times in Paul's writings. Furthermore Lk: 11:1-13 and Lk 18:1-14 are two long passages dedicated to prayer.

<sup>62</sup> Shelton's volume on Luke-Acts rightly identifies John the Baptist as a cornerstone for defining the evangelism in Luke-Acts as prophetic utterance. John is the prophet in the magnitude of Elijah (Lk 1:15-17) who arrives to preach the NT gospel in the inspired, authoritative words of the OT prophets, and thus forms a bridge of continuity between the two testaments. For example Lk 3:1-3 describes John's ministry in a common OT format that began with "The word of the LORD came to the [OT] prophet" (*repeatedly*) except here the prophetic Word is for the sake of NT evangelism, "The word of God came unto John" (Lk 3:2, KJV). Shelton deduces that John received the standard repetitive, recurring OT anointing that falls again and again upon the prophet, whenever an utterance is needed, as an ongoing model for NT believers today. Therefore Shelton correctly recognizes two types of filling, one is the abiding Spirit of holiness for sanctification, the other is a transitory filling for a prophetic utterance. Part of his rationale is that Christ, being holy, must have been filled with the Spirit of holiness long before He received a prophetic anointing at age 30. Even John the Baptist was filled with the Spirit from

his mother's womb (James B. Shelton, *Mighty in Word and Deed: The Role of the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991), p. 40)

<sup>63</sup> Bellshaw attested to a historic scholarly majority favoring the view that “the tongues of Acts were known languages (William G. Bellshaw, “The Confusion of Tongues” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 120 (1963), p. 149).

Many scholars take the tongues of Acts to be known languages (see Stanley Touissant, “A Symposium on the Tongues Movement Part II: The Gift of Tongues and the Book of Acts,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 120 (1963), pp. 309-10; Zane Hodges, “A Symposium on the Tongues Movement Part I: The Purpose of Tongues,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 120 (1963), pp. 231-32); John F. Walvoord, “Contemporary Issues in the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit Part IV: Spiritual Gifts Today,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 130 (1973), pp. 321-22).

Ironically enough, Howard Ervin, in his books supposedly championing the Pentecostal view of tongues as the sign of Lukan Spirit-baptism, seems to somewhat reluctantly ascribe this significance to prophetic utterance instead. For example his reading of Acts 19:6 is, “They *prophesied in tongues*” (Howard Ervin, *Spirit-Baptism: A Biblical Investigation* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1987), p. 80).

Ervin does it again when he correctly interprets Christ's words citing Isaiah at Lk 4:18-21, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor” (KJV), as an appointment to prophetic ministry after the fashion of Isaiah's ministry. This Spirit-baptism was, said Ervin, “empowerment for a prophetic ministry” and moreover “a paradigm for subsequent Christian experience.” By his own words, then, the paradigm for “subsequent Christian experience” is obviously prophecy, not unknown tongues. He puts a question mark in the following statement, indicating an awareness of the apparent contradiction in his conclusions, “It should at least be noted here that prophetic utterance was (and is?) the initial response to the fulness of the Holy Spirit's presence and power” (Howard M. Ervin, *Conversion-Initiation and the Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1984), pp. 5-6, 10-11). On Pentecost the audience “*heard not tongues* but inspired prophecy in their own languages” (Howard Ervin, *Spirit-Baptism: A Biblical Investigation* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1987), p. 80, italics added). Admittedly tongues counts as prophecy



when the gift of interpretation is present (1Cor 14:5), but that gift is conspicuously absent from the evangelism of Acts. Given Ervin's frequent insistence that we shouldn't conflate Luke with Paul, do we really want to subsume Paul's gift of unknown tongues into the Lukan Spirit of prophesying?

<sup>64</sup> Regardless of how evangelism is defined in Luke-Acts as a whole, there has always been scholarly backing for viewing Pentecost itself as prophetic utterance. Cessationist Farnell writes, "According to Joel, the same prophetic gift that was empowered by Yahweh's Spirit among the prophets would be restored in even greater measure...Joel 2 and Acts 2 establish a fundamental continuity between OT and NT prophecy" (F. David Farnell, "Is the Gift of Prophecy for Today? Part 2" *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 149:596 (1992), pp. 391, 393; Galaxie Software). Farnell quotes Geisler as affirming the same. Cessationist Boyer likewise admits that Pentecost was a fulfillment of Joel's promised Spirit of prophesying (James L Boyer, "The Office of the Prophet in NT times," *Grace Theological Journal*, Vol 1 (1960), p. 15). Thus leading cessationists such as Farnell, Boyer, Geisler, and Gaffin admit that Acts 2:17-18 celebrates the rearrival of the OT prophetic anointing on Pentecost. What about later passages in Acts often adduced for tongues? Hermeneutics dictates the exegesis, meaning that the paradigm established at the outset of Acts establishes the conceptual framework for interpreting the remainder of the book. Accordingly Tertullian, as early as 200 A.D., classified all the possible tongues-passages in Acts as prophetic utterances in known languages (Tertullian, ANF, Vol 4, Part Fourth, Section 8, chapter 8). Walt Russell interprets the Counselor as a prophetic unction outpoured on Pentecost, citing in support Barrett, M.E. Boring, M.E. Isaacs, H.S. Benjamin, D.A. Carson, and George Johnston (see Walt Russell, "The Holy Spirit's Ministry in the Fourth Gospel," *Grace Theological Journal*, Vol 8:2 (1987), pp. 236-37). Gary Fredericks also shows approval of Russell's view that Pentecost outpoured Christ's prophetic anointing for preaching upon the apostles who, Fredericks argues, already had the Spirit of sanctification hitherto (Gary Fredericks, "Rethinking the Role of the Holy Spirit in the Lives of OT Believers," *Trinity Journal*, Vol 9:1 (1988), p. 87). Walvoord recognized that Jesus already had the Spirit of sanctification when He received a prophetic anointing at age 30 (see John F. Walvoord, "The Person of the Holy Spirit," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 98:389 (1941), pp. 43-56, Galaxie Software).



Any alleged distinctions between OT and NT prophets seem to be rubbish. Joel's OT prophethood was translated into the Greek text of Acts as NT prophethood (Acts 2:17-18). Thenceforth Acts constantly uses the same Greek term for prophets indiscriminately for both OT and NT prophets (3:24-25; 7:42, 52; 10:43; 11:27; 13:1, 15, 27, 40; 15:15, 32, 24:14; 26:22, 27; 28:23). Furthermore the prophet John the Baptist is the bridge between the testaments, arriving in the spirit of the OT prophet Elijah to preach the NT gospel, as Shelton demonstrated so convincingly in his book *Mighty in Word and Deed: The Role of the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts*.

Grudem sees NT prophecy as less authoritative than OT prophecy because 1Cor 14:29 refers to evaluating or judging prophecy. Actually in both testaments the only authority is conscience. Even if the Prophet Himself speaks to me, it has zero authority unless it influences my conscience. Every person in the congregation should evaluate, judge, and doubt a supposed prophecy (14:29) unless and until it imparts 100% certainty to his or her conscience. Does this mean we should doubt even Scripture itself? *Absolutely*, because no one should *presume* his or her religion true. Presumption is an arrogance spawning excessive religious intolerance including religious wars and suicide bombings. In fact it is the foundation of all false religions, cults, and occult practices. Personally I don't presume the Bible true but rather *opine* it true based on sufficient certainty to obligate my conscience, admittedly less than 100%.

Gaffin insists that any present-day prophecy undermines the canon's authority. Again, neither God nor the canon has any authority. The only authority is conscience. Citing verses about God's authority won't help, because conscience is the overriding authority that dictates whether to heed the canon, or heed a given utterance. (See Gaffin's essay in Grudem, Wayne. *Are Miraculous Gifts for Today?: 4 Views* (Counterpoints: Bible and Theology) (pp. 44- 47). Zondervan. Kindle Edition). Robert Saucy responded to Gaffin that prophets, throughout history, executed their ministry without undermining the existing canon (ibid, p. 68). Also prophecy hasn't ceased since the two witnesses of Revelation 11 are called "prophets" (ibid).

<sup>65</sup> Acts 4:31 is a clear expression of Luke's formula, for "When they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled

with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness” (KJV). How do we know this is prophetic utterance? For two reasons. First, Acts is dealing with empowerment for verbal testimony, “Ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses” (1:8, ASV). Even a non-Christian can talk on his own. Therefore empowerment to witness *cannot be ordinary talking* but is rather Spirit-inspired speech, as the “Spirit gave them utterance” (2:4, KJV), “For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say” (Lk 12:12, KJV). Thus “it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you” (Mat 10:20, KJV). The second reason Acts 4:31 was prophetic utterance is that Luke was writing in the tradition of the biblical historians. Throughout the OT the Spirit of prophecy often came down from heaven for an immediate utterance, for example “the Spirit of the LORD will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them” (1Sa 10:6; cf. Num 11:25-26; 1Sam 10:10; 19:20; 1Ch 12:18; 2Ch 20:14-15; 24:20; Lk 1:41-42, 67). Luke simply prefers the phrase “he was filled with the Spirit” over the OT phrase “the Spirit came upon him.” More importantly, Shelton’s masterful redaction criticism powerfully demonstrated, throughout his book, that Lukan pneumatology is the same before and after Pentecost, as Luke uses a consistent Greek terminology throughout Luke-Acts to describe the Spirit of prophecy. Thus Luke’s unchanging language and phenomenology utterly rule out any notion of a new era of the Spirit (see James B. Shelton, *Mighty in Word and Deed: The Role of the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991)). Interestingly there is no mention of a new covenant in Acts. The only mention of such was at the Last Supper and couched in sacramental language. This won’t help the new-era position because if the Last Supper instituted a new-era of the Spirit, the disciples would have received the outpouring at that moment. Here too, one must resort to special pleading and bogus, unfounded, a-covenantal “transitional periods.”

<sup>66</sup> See Albert Barnes’ Notes on Acts 4:31. Also Adam Clarke’s Commentary on same passage.

<sup>67</sup> The Cornelius-outpouring (Acts 10) is actually another sturdy example of post-salvation chrismation. The Spirit of prophecy in Luke-Acts is *normally* conferred upon the already-faithful. After all, Pentecost established a paradigm for the rest of Acts and, on that day, many “*devout men*” (Acts 2:5) were visiting

Jerusalem to express their devotion. In fact the *Expositors Greek New Testament* parallels these “devout men” to the devout Simeon at Lk 2:25. Peter promised them the Spirit of prophecy subsequent to water-baptism (Acts 2:38-39). The Holy Breath came upon Peter at Acts 4:8 for an inspired speech. The next outpouring at 4:31 once again falls upon the already-faithful. He filled the faithful Stephen for a vision orally attested (7:55). Next the residents of Samaria believed, were baptized, and then received the Spirit of prophecy by hand-transfer whereas Simon was *denied the gift despite having believed* (8:20). Ananias hand-transferred the Holy Breath to Paul three days after his conversion (9:17). And then the Spirit of prophecy fell on Cornelius, a man defined early in the game as a “*devout man*, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always” (10:2, KJV, italics added). Paul was refilled for a prophetic utterance at 13:9. Finally Paul hand-transferred the Spirit of prophecy to the already-faithful disciples of John at Ephesus (19:1-7).

If Peter preached to devout men on Pentecost, why did he accuse them of crucifying Christ? And why did he tell them to repent of their sins? Fortunately for Luke’s evangelistic program, Peter used language flexible enough to address all parties – believers, unbelievers, and future generations of both. As for crucifying Christ, all parties do. As for repenting of sin, all should do so daily.

<sup>68</sup> According to some, a Christian receives the Spirit once-for-all at conversion, even though Luke-Acts (and the entire OT) regularly has the Spirit of prophecy falling *after* saving faith. They argue that Christ baptized His church on Pentecost once-for-all, unrepeatably, for “He shall baptize you with the Holy [Wind], and with fire” (Mat 3:11, KJV). How could Pentecost have baptized/ immersed those of us unborn? Pentecost was merely one of the endlessly repeatable OT outpourings continued in the NT. Here thinkers such as Gaffin will still reply that Pentecost was special and unrepeatable, for two reasons. (1) They claim that Pentecost was the birthday of the church. Astonishingly Gaffin goes to the extreme of stating, “Without Pentecost there is no salvation. Period.” See Wayne Grudem, *Are Miraculous Gifts for Today?: 4 Views* (Counterpoints: Bible and Theology) (p. 36). Zondervan. Kindle Edition. That claim is patently false because, per the Covenant of Grace, *all* of the Reformed creeds rightly regarded OT saints as the church saved, regenerated, and sanctified by the indwelling Spirit via the retroactive

crucifixion. Thus the NT believers in Acts received a *secondary* outpouring, for prophecy, subsequent to the Spirit of regeneration, as OT saints often did. In fact Pentecost was at least tertiary since the Twelve already had a secondary outpouring at Jn 20:22. Need I add that they also ingested Body and Blood at the Last Supper? Gaffin hurls multitudes of wholly gratuitous statements against subsequence, as special pleading. (2) They claim that Pentecost was special because the Son's ministry of dispensing the Spirit (supposedly) pended His ascension and thus pended Pentecost. Actually the Father merely scheduled the Twelve's immersion in Fire post-ascension to reveal (*unveil*) to NT saints the Son's OT ministry of outpouring the Spirit from the Father's right hand. Contrary to Gaffin, procession/ outpouring was a continual OT ministry rather than a novelty of Pentecost. Thus:

The [Twelve's scheduled, post-ascension outpouring of the] Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified (Jn 7:39, ASV).

That's the only way to make sense of the verse, since the Spirit clearly was given to OT saints. Let's settle this matter once and for all. Was Pentecost a unique, unrepeatable outpouring? Peter classified the outpouring upon Cornelius' household as a repetition of Pentecost (Acts 11:15-17). Here "Peter vividly recalls the events at Pentecost" (*Robertson's Word Pictures* on Acts 11:15), thereby "leading to the common labeling of this event as the 'Gentile Pentecost'" (*Baker's Evangelical Dictionary* on Baptism of the Holy Spirit) because indeed "a Gentile Pentecost had come" (*Robertson's Word Pictures* on Acts 10:46). *Vincent's Word Studies* on Acts 11:15 likewise noted, "Peter compares the outpouring on the Gentiles with that of the day of Pentecost." Similarly Walvoord observed, "No doubt a reference to Pentecost" and insisted that Pentecost was not an unrepeatable event (John Walvoord, "The Person of the Holy Spirit Part 7: The Work of the Holy Spirit in Salvation," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 98 (1941), p. 429, Galaxie Software). A few scholars even inferred that the Spirit actually became visible again like Pentecost (e.g. John Gill's *Exposition of the Entire Bible* on Acts 11:15; *Adam Clarke's Commentary*). Ronald E. Cottle agreed that Pentecost was recurrent in the "Pentecostal effusion described in Acts 2, 8, 10, and 19" (Ronald E. Cottle, "All Were Baptized," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, Vol 17:2 (1974), p. 79, Galaxie Software). Omitted in this list is Acts 4:31 already

admitted by F. F. Bruce to be reminiscent of Pentecost (F. F. Bruce, *Commentary on the Book of Acts*, p. 107).

“Did ye receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed?” (Acts 19:2, ASV). Some take this verse as attesting to a norm of receiving the Spirit of Acts at saving faith, but then supply incoherent reasons for exceptions to this “norm,” including unfounded “transitional periods” as special pleading. Does the verse indeed point to a norm? Did ye receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed – believed what? In Yahweh? Nope. In order to plant charismatic churches, God had to invest apostolic preaching with charismatic authority. Thus most anyone who accepted/ believed it partook of the Spirit of prophecy, typically by hands-laying after salvation (8:14-15). This particular group of disciples had only heard John’s message to date (19:3-4). Hence Paul shared the *apostolic* message, and then when he “laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke with other languages and prophesied” (19:6, WEB). This is perfectly consistent with the post-salvation pattern so typical of Luke-Acts. Certainly it’s *possible* to receive the Spirit of prophecy at saving faith, but such generally wasn’t the norm for OT saints. Moses’ body transferred the Spirit of prophecy to 70 elders (Num 11:25).

Baptism simply means immersion. Although Luke used this term for immersion in the Spirit of prophecy, Paul used it for immersion in the Spirit of regeneration (1Cor 12:13). Gaffin refuses to distinguish the two immersions. In my view, 1Cor 12:13 refers to Water baptism by Paul into the Living Water - *after believing* – as a cleansing, regenerating, sanctifying Water baptism. This kind of outpouring is far removed from the Elijah-style prophetic anointing of Luke-Acts and the entire OT prophetic experience. Even Jesus Himself did not receive His prophetic anointing until the age of 30. Since a post-believing outpouring was good enough for Christ, it’s good enough for us. In fact Dr. Futon has shown that post-believing outpourings are solidly rooted in the church fathers (see Joseph B. Futon, *Modern Pentecostal Controversies*, 1997; see also George Montague and Killian McDonnell, *Christian Initiation and Baptism in the Holy Spirit: Evidence from the First Eight Centuries* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1994)). For example Futon cites the Liturgy of St. James originating around 200 A.D. (ANF, Vol 7) where the preacher prayed:

That thy Spirit the Comforter may be sent down upon me, strengthening and fitting me for this service...[the Spirit] that descended in the form of a dove on our Lord Jesus Christ at the river Jordan, and abode on Him; that descended on Thy

apostles in the form of tongues of fire in the upper room of the holy and glorious Zion on the day of Pentecost: this Thine all-holy Spirit, send down, O Lord, upon us.

<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0717.htm>

Here the preacher who articulates this petition - at every service - is requesting the Pentecost-outpouring anew as a fresh outpouring of power for that day's preaching, in conformity to the OT and NT convention of post-believing outpourings. Some of the Eastern Orthodox churches (and/or their cousins) still use this ancient Liturgy.

How does Gaffin explain away all subsequence in Luke-Acts? He takes Acts as documenting a special apostolic era passed away and thus irrelevant to today's debates:

Acts intends to document a *completed* history, a unique epoch in the history of redemption—the once-for-all, apostolic spread of the gospel “to the ends of the earth”...the history that interests Luke is *finished* (Grudem op. cit., p.37).

Gaffin is mistaken. Luke's program isn't finished yet because the gospel is still spreading “to the ends of the earth.” Furthermore the (Abrahamic) Covenant of Grace, not the Law, confers the Holy Spirit to OT and NT saints. Gaffin needs to tell us what special covenant caused the Spirit to behave differently in Acts, thereby interrupting Abraham's covenant declared uninterruptable at Gal 3:15 and 3:17. Gaffin's logic is, “Don't trust Luke's pneumatology because he wrote it during the apostolic period.” Well, when did *Paul* write? How can we be sure that what Paul said of the Spirit still applies today? In fact cessationists outright deny Paul's gifts of the Spirit for today. Gaffin's hermeneutic proves too much, undermining the very canon that he is at such pains to protect.

In reply to Gaffin, Samuel Storms sees Pentecost as *inaugural*, commencing the subsequence-pattern (ibid. p. 73). Thus Joel's charismatic promise is for all called (Acts 2:39). He also objects to Gaffin's exclusively accreditory view of signs and wonders (p. 75). In fact, if miracles merely accredit the apostles, then miracles done by a non-apostle (Acts 6:8) undermine apostolic authority. Gaffin wants to categorize *all* early-church prophecy as “foundational to the canon” but Storms identifies (pp. 79-80) purely ministerial prophecy and tongues throughout 1Cor 14 and Acts (e.g. Acts 21:9).



Signs and wonders, cessationists claim, were the accrediting foundation for the canon. So if I see someone doing miracles, I should embrace his or her religion? That's insanity. Elevated certainty, not signs *per se*, produced converts. Now, can God create certainty without signs? Yes! Why then the signs? *Yahweh's personal preference*. Strictly speaking signs have absolutely nothing to do with accrediting but merely reflect *how the Lord prefers to glorify Himself*. And since He is unchanging, He still wants such glory today. Put yourself in His shoes after all. Suppose you spent 13 billion years building a skillset. And you never get to show it off? No glory for it?

<sup>69</sup> The fact that Paul's evangelism ("witnessing") was a form of prophethood is attested by scholars Lake and Cadbury who paralleled it to the prophetic witness alluded to at Rev 19:10, "Paul was to bear witness...and therefore he must receive the Spirit for 'the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy'" (K. Lake and H.J. Cadbury, *The Beginnings of Christianity: The Acts of the Apostles Part 1. Vol 4* (London: Macmillan, 1933), p. 104).

<sup>70</sup> Ideally "it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you" (Mat 10:20, KJV). Verse 18 used the standard Greek word for witnessing. Thus time and again Scripture defines witnessing as testifying to things seen and heard in prophetic experiences. The Book of Revelation calls itself a "book of prophecy" (1:3; 22:18-19) understood as an account of visions witnessed by John. Several verses in the book identify witnessing with prophesying. God said: "I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days...[until] they shall have finished their testimony [witness]" (11:3, 7, KJV; cf. 1:2, 19:10, 22:9,). Also the prophet "John [the Baptist] bare witness, saying, I have beheld the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven; and it abode upon [Christ]" (Jn 1:32, ASV). Here John gave witness/ testimony to seeing both Christ and the Holy Spirit at the same time. Christ's prophecy (foretelling) that Judas would betray Him was called a witness/testimony (13:21). Christ was the Father's witness, for "what [Christ] hath seen and heard [from the Father], that he testifieth [bears witness]" (Jn 3:32, KJV, italics added). "I speak that which I have seen with my Father" (Jn 8:38, KJV). Again and again Christ attributed His teaching to messages heard directly from the Father (Jn 5:30, 37; 7:15-16; 8:26, 40, 47; 14:10, 24; 15:15; 16:13; 17:8).

<sup>71</sup> Several verses in Luke-Acts use the term witness in reference to seeing Christ face to face, for example as witnesses of His resurrection, namely Lk 1:2; Acts 1:22; 2:32; 3:15; 4:33; 5:32; 10:39, 40-41; 13:31; 14:3; 22:18; 23:11; 26:16. In this vein Peter said, “This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses [of His resurrection]” (Acts 2:32, KJV). Thus “Peter claims the whole 120 as personal witnesses to the fact of the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead and they are all present as Peter calls them to witness on the point. In Galilee over 500 had seen the Risen Christ at one time (1Co 15:6)” (*Robertson’s Word Pictures on Acts 2:32*; cf. *Adam Clarke’s Commentary*; *Albert Barnes’ Notes*; *John Gill’s Exposition of the Entire Bible*).

<sup>72</sup> Calvin’s belief that the new birth amounts to seeing God emerged in the following issue. Heb 11:3 depicts faith as the only means to understand that God created the world. Anticipating the objection that many people without faith already have this understanding, Calvin replied that their concept of God remains inaccurate and idolatrous until the Spirit opens the eyes of their blinded minds to “behold the true God” (*Calvin’s Commentaries on Heb 11:3*). In other words their mind’s eye perceives a conceptual idol until the new birth. A considerable number of verses picture the new birth as a transitioning from a state of darkness and blindness unto a state of beholding God, for example Eph 4:18, “Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart” (KJV). Darkness, blindness, and thus an inability of the eyes to see characterizes unbelievers (Ps 69:23; 115:5; 135:16; Isa 6:10; Mt 13:15-16; Mk 8:18; Lk 8:10; Jn 12:40; Rom 11:8-10; 2Cor 3:14-15; 2Cor 4:4), while the ability of divine revelation to open blind eyes to see marks believers (Ps 19:8; 119:18; 2Cor 4:3-6; Jn:12:40-41; Acts 26:18; Eph 1:18). This, said Vincent, is the “new vision of the new man. He sees not only God, but the kingdom of God” (*Vincent’s Word Studies on John 3:5*) because “the new birth imparts a new vision” (*Ibid.*, on Jn 3:11). Eph 1:17-18 states,

That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints (Eph 1:17-18, KJV).

John Calvin commented, “Surely, if [the Ephesians] require a new enlightening, they must in themselves be blind...[even as David] prays, ‘Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law,’ (Ps. 119:18)” (Calvin, *Institutes*, Book Second, chap 2, sec 21, public domain),

<http://www.ccel.org/c/calvin/institutes/institutes.html>

<sup>73</sup> Here’s a rather decisive text on sacramentally eating and drinking Christ:  
I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is [literally] my flesh, which I will [literally] give for the life of the world (Jn 6:51, KJV).

Since Christ’s flesh was literally given for the world, it’s not metaphor. “The Word became flesh” (Jn 1:14, ASV). Christ consisted of two parts, an earthly body and blood made of protoplasm, and a (flesh-like) Mind comprised of divine Body and Blood. Moreover the Holy Breath also indwelt Him as Body and Blood as well. *All* these components were nailed to the cross and spilled for the world (although the Son alone actually *suffered* the nervous-system pains of crucifixion). Yahweh has an enormous supply of divine Body and Blood available as bread and wine. Antisacramental commentaries unconvincingly attempt to explain away this verse. Jesus continues:

Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him (Joh 6:53-56, KJV).

The term “indeed” (G230 in Strong’s concordance) is always used as a synonym for “verily” - all 21 occurrences. Since Jesus had no stronger language at His disposal, He either was attempting to hopelessly confuse and mislead us, or meant those words literally. Given that OT idolatry was serious, indeed Catholics bowed down to their Eucharist for centuries, Christ’s language is only counterproductive unless literally true – in fact many of His followers abandoned Him at that point (6:66)! Absent 100% certainty, however, today’s bread and wine should never be presumed divine. And transubstantiation is cultic. Nonetheless every Christian, unknowingly, has ingested particles of Christ’s Body and Blood. He “dwelleth in me, and I in him” (vs. 56). This confirms physical interpenetration. A rock thrown in the ocean dwells in it, but the ocean dwells in the rock only if the penetration is

mutual. Thus Christ asserted the *mutual* indwelling of man and God to confirm physical interpenetration. Here again, was He attempting to confuse/ mislead us? This is not to deny the usage of food as a metaphor, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me” (4:34, WEB). Human behavior – doing the will of God – obviously cannot be physically ingested as real food. Whereas in the other texts, Christ invited us to “eat *my* flesh” - a particular instance of flesh, as with Mat 26:26-29:

Take [this bread], eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new [covenant], which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom (KJV).

All this literal eating and drinking cannot be metaphor. Antisacramentalists, however, seize upon a parallel version, “This cup is the new [covenant] in my blood, which is shed for you” (Lk 22:20, KJV). They argue that the cup itself is not liquid blood and is thus somewhat metaphoric/ metonymic. Firstly this is precious little to go on. It's an argument excessively nitpicky given all that Jesus was trying to accomplish in one short sentence! In those few words He conveyed the remission of sins by His shed blood, the termination of old covenant ceremonies, and a sacramental new covenant in replacement. Secondly the gospels generally used marker-words for similes and metaphors, “The Kingdom of Heaven is *like* a grain of mustard seed” (Mat 13:31, WEB, italics added). No such marker-words are found here. Thirdly a metonymic reading isn't even necessary. Most of the heavenly architecture and accouterments (such as cups and bowls) probably consist of divine Word. Thus the (fully ingestible) Cup, Blood, and New Covenant are all the same thing – outpourings of the divine Word. Which brings us to a sacramental argument raised by Thomas Aquinas. He pointed out that OT foods, beverages, and accouterments were shadows prefiguring New Covenant realities. Therefore New Covenant substances are the divine realities themselves, not the Old Covenant shadows. “Thomas claimed that the difference between the Eucharist and the Old Covenant sacraments is a difference between “figure” and “reality” and went on to quote Heb 10:1 to support this formulation” (Peter J. Leithart, “What's Wrong With Transubstantiation? An Evaluation of Theological Models,” *Westminster Theological Journal*, Vol 53:2 (1991), p. 300, Galaxie Software). Just as the OT high priest sprinkled the people with blood as a shadow,

so too does our High Priest sprinkle us with His divine Blood (Heb 10:22; 1Pet 1:2). In fact even some evangelical fundamentalists went so far as to “hold that Christ’s literal blood is divine and not human blood, totally unlike the physical blood of the rest of the human race, and as such has the ability in and of itself to bring about remission of sin” (Rolland McCune, “Doctrinal Non-Issues in Historic Fundamentalism,” *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal*, Vol 1 (1996) p. 181). Calvin admitted that, “This is my body,” cannot be metaphorical because it clearly refers to particular visible substances. Then to avoid full sacramentalism he claimed that God unleashes ordinary bread and wine upon the soul even as a Real Presence would bless it. Thus the elements function exactly *like* ingested Body and Blood – which is still similes and metaphors! Jesus did not say, “This [bread] is *like* my body,” but rather, “This [bread] *is* my body.” Similarly Erickson classifies Jn 15:3 as a metaphor, “I am the vine, ye are the branches” (Jn 15:3, KJV), as a basis for dismissing all sacramental texts as metaphor (Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2001, reprint), pp. 1129-30). Firstly Jn 15:3 is not a valid parallel to the Last Supper. A valid parallel would be Christ stating, “This vine in my hand is my body” (specific visible substances). Secondly Jn 15:3 isn’t a metaphor because a material Word that assumes all shapes and sizes (for instance by permeating all matter) rarely lends itself to metaphors. For example God is literally Fire. In the same way He is literally a physical Vine, and by implication we are His physical branches.

Ervin brilliantly used 1Cor 10:2-5 to defend sacramentalism in his book *Conversion-Initiation and the Baptism of the Spirit*:

And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they [died] in the wilderness (1Cor 10:2-5, KJV).

Note the parallel. Israel ate and drank but died in judgment. Likewise many Corinthians ate and drank but died in judgment (11:30). Paul’s warning is essentially this, “If you think you have a leg up on OT saints, think again. They had the same spirituality as you but died.” The same spirituality? Paul said the Corinthians were baptized by the Spirit and drank of Him (12:13). To create a valid warning/ parallel, then, Paul had to pick an OT example of real Spirit-baptism and

Spirit-drinking commensurate with what the Corinthians experienced. If the Rock and drink weren't sacramental, after all, the Corinthians *did* have a leg up on Israel. Ervin's argument is solid.

<sup>74</sup> *Albert Barnes' Notes* on Gen 18:1-33 acknowledged that at least one of the three men appearing to Abraham was God (Online Bible free software); cf. Robert Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, ch 14, Ephesians Four Group's free *Bible Study Library on CD ROM*.

<sup>75</sup> Visions define the new birth. It is God's arrangement "that everyone which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life" (Jn 6:40, KJV). Here the Greek word for "see" is *theoreo* present 57 times in the NT. Of those 57 cases, more than 50 times the term unambiguously refers to seeing distinctly shaped objects or figures whether physically or in visions. A few times it possibly refers to the understanding (viz. I see what you mean). However, in every case where it refers to seeing a person, especially seeing Christ, the context provides decisive evidence for seeing Him as a shaped figure. Noted evangelical commentators rightly interpret John 6:40, therefore, as the visual beholding of Christ by divine illumination. For instance *Robertson's Word Pictures* on John 6:40 claims that we behold Him "by the eye of faith;" (c.f. *Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Commentary* on Jn 6:40; John Gill's *Exposition of the Entire Bible* on 6:40; *Vincent's Word Studies* on John 6:40).

<sup>76</sup> "Ye have neither heard his [physical] voice at any time, nor seen his [physical] shape, and yet have not his [physical] word dwell in you" (Jn 5:37, KJV). Lewis Sperry Chafer adduced this verse as evidence that angels are physical beings. Chafer was founder and president of Dallas Theological Seminary. In a statement remarkably reminiscent of Tertullian, he hints that God is physical as well:

As compared with human and animal existence, the angels may be said to be incorporeal; but only in the sense that they do not sustain a [decaying] organization. The Scriptures imply that the angels do have embodiment. God is a Spirit, yet, when addressing the Jews, Christ said of the Father, 'Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape' (John 5:37; cf. Exod 33:23; Ezek 1:1-28; Ps 104:1, 2). It is essential to a spirit that it have localized, determinate, spiritual form" (Chafer, "Angelology Part 1," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 98:392 (1941), p. 400, Galaxie Software).



Tertullian did use the term Spirit in his writings but was very clear to classify God as a material body. Also significant is that Chafer adduced Exod 33:23 as well, "And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen" (KJV). In the same paragraph Chafer argued that angelic corporeality explains how people have entertained angels unknowingly (Heb 13:2). It seems to me that if angels are physical, so too is God, because the terms *pneuma* and *ruach* are used for both angels, God, and men.

<sup>77</sup> "Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man" (Jn 1:51, KJV). John Gill's *Exposition of the Entire Bible* paralleled this verse to Jacob's vision of a "ladder standing upon the earth, and the top thereof touching heaven: the angels also of God ascending and descending by it" (Gen 28:12).

<sup>78</sup> According to Num 12:6-8 ordinary prophets to whom God spoke in puzzling dreams and riddles were less mature than Moses to whom He spoke plainly, that is, "in plain words and clear expressions; not in such enigmatical, parabolical, and allegorical terms as many of the visions and prophecies of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Amos, and Zechariah" (John Gill's *Exposition of the Entire Bible* on Num 12:8); cf. *John Wesley's Notes*; *Albert Barnes' Notes*; the *Matthew Henry Commentary*; the *Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Commentary*.

<sup>79</sup> John Gill's *Exposition of the Entire Bible* on Jn 16:25

<sup>80</sup> John Gill's *Exposition of the Entire Bible* on John 16:23 refers "that day" to Pentecost; cf. *Jamieson-Fausset-Brown* on Jn 16:23; *The Four Fold Gospel Commentary* on Jn 16:23.

<sup>81</sup> "The time cometh [on Pentecost], when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father" (Jn 16:25, KJV). "At that day ye shall *know* [with 100% certainty] that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you" (14:20, KJV, italics added). Albert Barnes commented that Christ had previously spoken to the Twelve in riddles but would send the Holy Spirit on Pentecost to speak plainly to them of the Father; cf. the *Matthew Henry Commentary*; *Geneva Bible Notes*; John Gill's *Exposition of the Entire Bible*.

<sup>82</sup> Falling within the scope of this vision of the Father is Christ seated at His right hand. Thus, "Ye shall see me, *because I go to the Father*" (Jn 16:16, KJV, italics added). Again, "Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye

[will] see me” (Jn 14:19, KJV). Since going to the Father cannot have reference to Christ’s apparitions on earth, John Calvin rightly opposed all anti-revelatory attempts to explain away verse 16:16, concluding that “Christ wishes to be seen by us” (*Calvin’s Commentaries* on John 16:16, Galaxie Software.). Likewise Calvin stated of 14:19 that the Spirit enables believers to always “behold him” by a “secret beholding of Christ” (ibid). Admitting that 14:19 parallels 16:16, *The Four Fold Gospel Commentary* stated of 14:19, “The present tense here indicates a continued vision; it cannot therefore refer to the [earthly] appearances of Christ after the resurrection, for that terminated at the end of forty days.” Several additional scholars admit that 14:19 refers to an ongoing vision of Christ (see *Vincent’s Word Studies*; *Robertson’s Word Pictures*; *John Gill’s Exposition of the Entire Bible*; *Albert Barnes’ Notes*; *Jamieson-Fausset-Brown*; Grant, Darby, and Coates in the *Online Bible Anthology of Commentaries*; *The Matthew Henry Commentary*).

<sup>83</sup> Namely Barnes, Vincent, Henry, Pink. These commentators recognize Jn 14:21-23 as an ongoing vision of Christ for the Twelve.

He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him...and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him (Jn 14:21, 23, KJV).

It also encapsulates the promise of the Spirit. The “coming” is an outpouring. Thus each substantial period of faithfulness elicits yet another coming/ outpouring. It’s *clearly* inexhaustible.

<sup>84</sup> Throughout history “God has shown himself visibly” (*The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* on “revelation”).

<sup>85</sup> Thus God has been seen in reduced splendor. See for instance *Keil & Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament* at Ex 33:7-11ff.

John Fish gleaned from Isaiah’s vision that the seraphim’s wings not only facilitate flight but also shade the eyes from unbearable radiance (John H. Fish III, “The Commission of Isaiah,” *Emmaus Journal*, Vol 4:1 (1995), p. 51).

<sup>86</sup> “Progressively and without interruption, and so unlike the transitory reflection of the Divine glory on the face of Moses” (*Expositors Greek New Testament*). Several commentators rightly parallel 2Cor 3:18 to Christ’s Transfiguration (see *Adam Clarke’s Commentary* on 2Cor 3:18; *Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Commentary*; *The People’s New Testament Commentary*; *Vincent’s Word*

*Studies*). Likewise they read it as betokening an incremental, sanctifying transformation of ever-increasing glory caused by contemplating the divine radiance (See *Albert Barnes' Notes on 2Cor 3:18*; *Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Commentary*; *The People's New Testament Commentary*; *Robertson's Word Pictures*; *William Burkitt's New Testament Notes*; John Gill's *Exposition of the Entire Bible*; *Matthew Henry Commentary*). Gordon Fee was particularly adamant on this topic, stressing that any attempt to spiritualize the contemplation in opposition to a literal beholding contradicts the text. He comments on 4:4-6:

[We] behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ and are therefore transformed into that likeness with ever increasing glory...God has shined into our hearts so that through that 'light' we might see his glory, which is located 'in the face of Jesus Christ...To theologize this passage in such a way as to remove its experiential dimension is to divest it of its 'real life' setting...To behold Christ is to see the glory of the Lord, because Christ is the 'image/likeness of God' (Gordon Fee, *God's Empowering Presence* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), pp. 317, 19, 20-21).

How do the "spiritualists" try to reason away this passage? They try to parallel it to James 1:23, "For if any man be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass" (KJV). Parables in Scripture are introduced by the word "like" – e.g. "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed." But Paul did not say that we are *like* a man beholding God's glory. Rather we behold God's glory.

<sup>87</sup> The Book of Revelation consistently depicts the voice of both God and angels as an external sound originating from an external speaker, often of thunderous volume (Rev 1:10, 15; 5:11-14 6:1, 9-10; 7:2, 10; 8:13; 10:13; 11:12, 15; 12:10; 14:2, 7, 9, 15, 18; 16:1; 18:2; 19:1, 6, 17; 21:3).

<sup>88</sup> *Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown* on Heb 12:26.

<sup>89</sup> Tertullian likewise understood the material soul to be diffused throughout the entire human body from head to toe. After God, said Tertullian, "breathed upon the face of man the breath of life [at Gen 2:7]...surely that breath... spread itself throughout all the spaces of the body" (Tertullian, "Treatise on the Soul," ANF, Vol 3, Part First, Sec 9). Incidentally the fact that God physically pushed/ breathed Adam's soul into his body (Gen 2:7) is itself proof of its materiality.

In the same vein Andrew Murray insisted that the soul is not confined to a small part of the body like a person localized to a single room of a house but is merged with the whole body in a living, animated “vital union” as he explains:

I can dwell in a house without its becoming part of my being. I may leave it without suffering; no vital union exists between my house and me. It is not thus with the presence of our soul and spirit in our body. The life of a plant lives in and pervades every part of it; and our soul is not limited to dwell in such or such part of the body, the heart or the head, for instance, but penetrates throughout, even to the end of the lowest members. The life of the soul pervades the whole body; the life throughout proves the presence of the soul. It is in like manner that the Holy Ghost comes to dwell in our body. He penetrates its entirety. He animates and possesses us infinitely more than we can imagine (Andrew Murray, *Divine Healing* (public domain, from the chapter “Your Body is the Temple of the Holy Ghost”),

<http://www.WhatSaithTheScripture.com/>

The sensation of pain corroborates the soul’s distribution throughout the entire body. Recall that the soul, not the body, feels pain, for to maintain that the body feels pain would leave unexplained, if the soul was absent from the body, who is now feeling the pain. Anyway pain signals sent to the brain would at best cause a headache and thus cannot account for pain in the limbs. This is not to deny pain signals but rather to avoid giving them undue credit. Merleau Ponty’s famous book *The Phenomenology of Perception* was a refutation of Descartes’ attempt to localize the soul to the brain alone. Descartes was one of most influential philosophers in history in terms of perpetuating the myth of an immaterial mind. Ponty argued, for example, that human motility would require a constant and perfect knowledge of spatial coordinates (x, y coordinates) if such a localized soul were like a pilot steering a ship. When walking I don’t mathematically calculate an x-y coordinate for my next step and then tell my foot to move to that destination, rather my feet behave as though they have now learned for themselves how to walk. In like manner my hands play the piano, which Ponty describes as “knowledge in the hands.” The issue of x-y coordinates is especially a problem for animal motility. Do they calculate coordinates? At some point even Descartes himself conceded that pain in the limbs flies in the face of his own attempt to localize the soul to the brain alone. A mind situated in the brain is like a captain

situated in the hull of a ship. He might see from afar any damage in other parts of the ship but wouldn't feel it as his own pain. Thus Descartes wrote:

Nature also teaches me, by these sensations of pain, hunger, thirst, and so on, that I am not merely present in my body as a sailor is present in a ship, but that I am very closely joined and, as it were, intermingled with it, so that I and the body form a unit. If this were not so, I...would not feel pain when the body was hurt, but would perceive the damage purely by the intellect, just as a sailor perceives by sight if anything in his ship is broken...These sensations of hunger, thirst, pain, and so on...arise from the union, and, as it were, intermingling of the mind with the body (Rene Descartes, "Sixth Meditation," *Modern Philosophy* (ed. Forrest E. Baird and Walter Kaufman, Upper Saddle River: Prentice-Hall Incorporated, 2000, p. 50).

<sup>90</sup> Both Köstenberger and Kline concluded that the OT tabernacle and temple, when filled with the divine Glory, was typology for a human being filled with the Holy Spirit. See Andreas J. Köstenberger, "What Does It Mean To Be Filled With The Spirit? A Biblical Investigation," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, Vol 40:2 (1997), p. 230; Meredith Kline, "Investiture With the Image of God," *Westminster Theological Journal*, Vol 40:1 (1977), p. 50.

<sup>91</sup> The Greek word apo ("of") has a quantitative significance in the promise, "I will pour out of my Spirit" (Acts 2:17), according to *Robertson's Word Pictures* on Acts 2:17. This would support a volumetric metaphysics.

Why doesn't God automatically fill us with the Holy Breath all the time? For three reasons. First, a full revelation of Yahweh would kill us. Second, He created us for prayer and free will and thus needs us to participate in the process. Third, revival puts us in danger of judgment because (A) there's little excuse for sin when God has strengthened us and (B) spitting directly in someone's face is more offensive than spitting in the distance. Thus, "Ye are a stiffnecked people; if I go up into the midst of thee for one moment, I shall consume thee" (Ex 33:5, ASV). Hence the harsh judgments of the OT. Nothing has changed. Pentecost was a major revival that, as such, reinstated such judgments, hence the plagues and death unleashed upon the brazen Corinthians (1Cor 11:30). God is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb 13:8).

<sup>92</sup> Andrew Murray was a stickler for the concept of derived holiness. He insisted that "obedience is not holiness" but rather "Where God is there is holiness," for



“God alone is holy” (Andrew Murray, *The Believer's Secret of Holiness* (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1984), pp. 31, 53, 77). Thus the only thing needed for holiness, in his view, is more outpourings.

<sup>93</sup> Oden's systematic theology is important because it was only identifying points of universal agreement among classical Christian scholars across all the denominations. Oden argued that men can never develop holiness as a faculty of their own because the term holy encompasses all of God's perfections including His omniscience and thus God alone is holy. As a result, Oden argued, holiness is not a merit humanly achieved but a Substance humanly received from on high (see Thomas C. Oden, *Life in the Spirit: Systematic Theology Volume Three* (Peabody: Prince Press, 2001, reprint) p. 24).

<sup>94</sup> As Andrew Murray recognized. See Andrew Murray, *The Believer's Secret of Holiness* (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1984), p. 31. John Gill's *Exposition of the Entire Bible* on Ex 3:5 commented that the ground around the burning bush was temporarily holy in virtue of God's Presence suddenly within it; the *Matthew Henry Commentary* at Ex 3:5 drew the same conclusion as Gill.

<sup>95</sup> Calvin's *Commentaries* on Ex 40:36-38 reported that the pillar remained visible at night by becoming radiant Fire. What made the cloud visible even at night was a "beam of light and glory shining in it...Christ, the brightness of his Father's glory" (John F. Gill, *Exposition of the Entire Bible*).

It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that physical Light from God's face illuminates natural environments. John Gill's *Exposition of the Entire Bible* on Rev 21:23-24 admitted that God as Light illuminated the shepherds and currently makes visible in heaven His own face, angels, and fellow humans whereby we will walk not by faith but by sight – a significant concession from a theologian with the habit of prejudicially dismissing divine apparitions as merely symbolic of divine substance. Similarly in *The Online Bible Anthology of Commentaries* on Ex 26:33, Fuller admitted, “The Holy of Holies was without any other light than that which proceeded from the Divine Presence; in this it was the type of Heaven, see Rev 21:23.”

<sup>96</sup> All the utensils and equipment of the Law, evidently in sufficient proximity to receive some divine Radiation, became holy including the priestly garments (Ex 28:2), the crown (29:6), the altar (29:37), the anointing oil (30:25), the gifts offered



(28:38), and the consecrated foods (Lev 22:10), "All the males among the children of Aaron shall eat [consecrated food]...every one that toucheth [the consecrated food] shall be holy" (6:18, KJV).

<sup>97</sup> Andrew Murray understood the concept of Radiation quite well. Thus the farther away an object was from the Most Holy Place, he argued, the lesser was its degree of holiness. The upshot is volumetric, "The more of His presence, the more of true holiness...We have only as much holiness as we have of God Himself" (see Andrew Murray, *The Believer's Secret of Holiness* (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1984), pp. 59-60).

<sup>98</sup> A seraph took a tong and physically grabbed a live coal filled with Fire for application to Isaiah's unholy mouth (Isa 6:6), as a sanctification. Clearly it was a coal volumetrically full of divine Fire, as there is really no other humanly conceivable way to interpret it.

<sup>99</sup> The new birth is an injection of holiness. It makes us holy. Charles Hodge says of rebirth, "That which is derived from the Holy Spirit is holy" (Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology Vol. II: Anthropology* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers), 2001, reprint, p. 242). Louis Berkhof defines regeneration as "that act of God by which the principle of the new life is implanted in man, and the governing disposition of the soul is made holy" (Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1939, 1988), 469).

<sup>100</sup> Andrew Murray observed that "in the New Testament they are called saints, the holy ones" (Andrew Murray, *Abide in Christ* (Springdale: Whitaker House, 1979), p. 61). He inferred, "We are not only counted holy; we are holy" (Andrew Murray, *The Believer's Secret of Holiness* (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1984), p. 66).

<sup>101</sup> Another reason for regarding the new birth as holiness is that it puts to death the sinful nature (Phi 3:3; Col 2:11-13) and purifies the evil heart (Deut 30:6; Ps 51:10; Jer 24:7; 31:33; 32:39-40; Eze 11:19-20; 36:25-20; Mat 5:8; 12:33; 7:17-20; Jn 3:3, 5-8; 15:3; Acts 15:9; 1Cor 6:11; 2Cor 5:17; 1Ti 1:5; 3:9; 2Ti 1:3; 2:22; Tit 1:15; 3:5; 1Pe 1:3; 22-23; 2Pe 3:1 1Jn 3:9). "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor 5:17, KJV). The new birth is holiness because Scripture knows only two kinds of children, namely children of the devil versus children of God. The devil's children

are those who walk blindly in darkness, are evildoers, walk in death, are dead to God, have no light, hate God, hate their brother, hate truth, and disobey God (Lk 11:34-35; Jn 3:19-21; 5:42; 11:25; 12:39-40; Rom 1:21; 11:10; 7:5, 9-11; Col 1:13; 1Th 5:4-5; 1Jn 1:6; 2:4, 9, 11, 15-16, 3:8, 10, 12, 15; 4:8, 20). Whereas the children of God walk in Light, are alive to God, do good deeds, love God, love their brother, fellowship with God, and love truth (Mat 5:14-16; 6:22-23; Lk 1:79; 2:32; 16:8; Jn 1:4-5; 3:19-21; 5:21, 24; 6:35; 8:12; 12:35-36, 46; Acts 26:3, 18; Rom 6:5, 13; 13:13; 2Cor 4:4-6; 6:14; Col 1:12; Eph 5:8-14; 1Th 5:5; 1Pet 2:9; 2Pet 1:19; 1Jn 1:7; 2:3, 5-6; 10, 12-14, 29; 2:28-29; 3:6-7, 9, 14, 17, 24, 4:7, 16, 19; 5:1, 18). To Charles Hodge it was self-evident that what is born of the Holy Spirit is holy. After all, there is obviously a problem with the old man, in need of fixing. If the new birth doesn't fix it, what's the point? God "saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Tit 3:5, KJV), "but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified" (1Cor 6:11, KJV). When the Holy Spirit washes a substance, does He succeed or fail? He succeeds brilliantly. Surely Scripture must be referring to the reborn soul-fragment when it claims that he who "abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him...Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God...We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not" (1Jn 3:6, 9, KJV; cf. 5:18).

<sup>102</sup> Only a mind divisible into parts can possibly explain the coexistence of a holy nature with a sinful nature. Many theologians, notably Charles Hodge, simply assert that the sinful nature persists without acknowledging the severe logical difficulty involved (see Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology Vol. III: Soteriology* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers), 2001, reprint), pp. 35-36; 220-21). Time and again, for an entire page and a half, Hodge insisted that the new birth is a transformation of the entire human nature, that all the tendencies and faculties of the heart are made entirely new (pp. 35-36), even going so far as to define regeneration, after the fashion of the whole Reformation, in terms of Christ's distinction between a good tree and a bad tree, where the good tree can only produce good fruit. How then is evil fruit produced? Admittedly Hodge does give one rationale – which is not the same as admitting the difficulty - namely that a freshly resurrected man might be weak and feeble (p. 221). But this misses the

point. According to Paul what made us dead is sin. Where there is sin, there is death. Life exists, therefore, only where sin is eradicated. The new man is thus holy. If he is still weak, as Hodge suggests, at worst this would mean weak holiness but not sin if regeneration obtains. It's somewhat misleading (and a bit frustrating to say the least) when theologians try to give their readers the impression that everything is copacetic, contrary to fact. Perhaps Hodge discussed this issue in other writings – but this does not excuse his 2,000 page systematic theology (with its supposed “defense” of Adamic representation). Likewise Millard J. Erickson's 1200 page systematic theology, *Christian Theology*, completely ignores the issue. He defines the new birth as total annihilation of the sinful nature (p. 957), a total restoration to what Adam originally was (ibid), and then speaks on the very same page of sanctification! What remnant of the sinful nature endures to be sanctified? And he never gives the poor confused reader the slightest hint that this scheme is severely problematical. Some theologians claim, notably Lewis Sperry Chafer, that the new birth, instead of putting the sinful nature to death (the biblical view!), simply creates a new man alongside him. This amounts to God creating out of nothing a new roommate to move in with the old man. The obvious problem is that these two human beings would be complete strangers unrelated to each other. See William Combs, “Does the Believer Have One Nature or Two?” *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal*, Vol 2 (1997), pp. 96-98. Apparently Chafer got this doctrine from Scofield (see Randall Gleason, “B.B. Warfield and Lewis S. Chafer on Sanctification,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, Vol 40 (1997), pp. 241-269). Warfield strongly objected to Chafer's addition of a second inner man to the new birth (ibid, pp. 253-54).

[103](#) Ok I'll admit that things can get a bit complicated here. If the neutral zone in the human heart taints itself, how will it freely choose to confess sin as to obtain cleansing? One possibility is that God takes it upon Himself to auto-cleanse part of it. Another possibility is to assume that an ordinary taint isn't as devastating as Adam's taint. Why not? The degree of evil in an act depends on the state of mind. If God showed Adam a vision of how bad the world would likely be (how many people would likely suffer and die) as a consequence of his eating the fruit, then his consumption of it was especially evil, left a terrible taint, and merited a very serious judgment.

**104** In regard to the analogy of a man with arm extended upholding a weight, suppose someone reads some Bible-verses to encourage him, thereby enabling him to persevere a *little* longer than usual. Does this prove that the written Word has power to sanctify? But it isn't very effective – it's not efficacious – and there's nothing supernatural about it, because reading some verses of the Koran would have the same effect on a Muslim. Paul made very harsh statements about the written Word (the law), he said it had no sanctifying power, awakens sinful passions, and is even a ministry of death (Rom 7, 8, 2Cor 3) although fortunately, in the revival of Moses' day, the law *came* with the sanctifying Spirit of life and glory seen in his radiant face (2Cor 3).

**105** Do we really need to pray for outpourings? Must we wait on the Lord for strength? Isaiah seemed to think so (Isa 40:29-31). There's really only two options here. Either strength is something obtained for free by a kind of faith-exertion, or we must wait on the Lord for it. Ask any Christian with an addiction to alcohol, cigarettes, food, drugs (or what have you) – faith-exertions don't work because, empirically speaking, they don't reduce the agony of temptation and thus strand us in the same deplorable situation as the non-Christian addict. If simple faith yields all strength, there would be no reason to pray for power. In point of fact Paul never urges the churches to appropriate power by faith-exertion, instead he prayed that God strengthen the churches (Eph 1:15-19; 3:14-19, Col 1:9-10; 4:12; Php 1:11; 1Th 3:12-13; 2Th 1:11-12; 2:17; cf. Mat 26:41; Mk 14:38; Jn 17:17). Nor did he himself rely on faith-exertion to obtain strength to minister but rather asked the churches to pray for him (Rom 15:30; Eph 6:18; Col 4:3-4; 1Th 5:25; 2Th 3:1; cf. Heb 13:18). Once we understand that God created us because He *needed* us and thus *needs* us to pray to (fellowship with) him, we'll desist from magic formulas such as exerting faith and quoting scripture. Faith comes by hearing God in response to prayer. Paul prayed that the Ephesians "be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith" (Eph 3:16-17, KJV). Faith is thus the *result* of Christ coming to dwell (as a fresh outpouring) in the heart in response to prayer. The Greek word there for "dwell" appears 42 times in the NT and always refers to a geographical location. Thus when it's a prospect prayed for – asking Christ to dwell - it can only mean a fresh outpouring, it's Christ arriving at a particular location. This parallels 1:17 where Paul prayed down upon the

Ephesian hearts more of the “spirit of wisdom and revelation” (1:17; KJV) as “a larger measure of the Spirit” (*Calvin’s Commentaries*) or “greater measures of the Spirit” (Matthew Henry).

Instead of advising the Twelve to rely on faith-exertion to obtain strength, Jesus prayed for their sanctification (Jn 17:1ff) and counseled them, in turn, to do the same, “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Mat 26:41, KJV; cf. MK 14:37-39; Lk 22:56). Let’s also call attention to the context of this exhortation. He was in prayer at Gethsemane experiencing a horrible agony of temptation. Why was He praying? Precisely because faith-exertion doesn’t produce strength. Rather, in response to His prayer, “there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him” (Lk 22:43, KJV). Unsurprisingly Luke, the theologian of prayer, was the *only* gospel writer to record this event. Jesus also prayed, “But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not” (22:32, KJV). Prayer thus strengthens faith.

What is even more problematical is that evangelicals don’t even quantify fullness. Most of them regard it as all-or-nothing, that is, either one has turned on his faith and thus switched the Spirit completely On, or still has Him turned completely Off. But if He’s completely turned On, wouldn’t I thenceforth always say No to the sinful nature? As I am now fully holy? How could it even make sense to speak of a sinful nature at that point?

Köstenberger carefully and rightly concluded that the numerous references in Luke-Acts to Spirit-filling seem to follow the pattern of the sudden, repeated OT arrivals of the anointing upon each OT prophet for immediate activations of prophetic utterance. Thus Spirit-fullness in the NT was not, he argued, a phenomenon self-initiated by faith-exertion. The notion that one can be Spirit-filled at whim and will by simple choice is a theological construct, not a fact of Scripture, he argued (see Andreas J. Köstenberger, “What Does It Mean To Be Filled With The Spirit? A Biblical Investigation,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, Vol 40:2 (June, 1997), p. 230.

<sup>106</sup> Seizing promised land was said to bring rest from enemies and war (Dt 12:10; 25:19; Jos 1:13; 14:15; 22:4; 23:1; Jdg 3:11, 30; 5:31; 2Sam 7:1, 11; 1Ki 5:4; 8:56). Joshua reminded Israel, “The LORD your God hath given you rest” (Jos 1:13, KJV).



<sup>107</sup> John F. Walvoord, "Contemporary Issues in the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit Part Two: Spiritual Renewal," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 130 (1973), p. 119, Galaxie Software.

<sup>108</sup> See *Albert Barnes' Notes on the Bible* on Acts 4:31. Also *Adam Clarke's Commentary* on same passage.

<sup>109</sup> Crowds followed Jesus for a very good reason. Revival is geographical and tends to follow apostles and prophets from region to region. For example when Moses distanced himself from the camp, the Presence followed him geographically:

Moses used to take the tent and pitch it outside the camp, far away from the camp, and he called it "The Tent of Meeting." Everyone who sought Yahweh went out to the Tent of Meeting, which was outside the camp... When Moses entered into the Tent, the pillar of cloud descended, stood at the door of the Tent, and spoke with Moses...[Moses returned to] the camp, but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, didn't depart from the Tent (Exo 33:7-9, 11,WEB).

Thus answers to prayer and spiritual growth are more likely in the presence of godly leadership. Incidentally Ron B. Allen stressed that the original Hebrew says that the pillar spoke rather than Jehovah spoke (Ronald B. Allen, "The Pillar of Cloud," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 153:612 (1996), p. 392).

<sup>110</sup> Wm. J. McRae finds a clear parallel between the NT exhortation to be led by the Spirit and the OT leadings in the wilderness by the Pillar (Wm. J. Mcrae, "Basics For Believers," *Emmaus Journal*, Vol 5:2 (1996), p. 147, Galaxie Software).

<sup>111</sup> Paul Yonggi Cho, *Prayer: Key to Revival* (Dallas: Word Incorporated, 1984), p. 16.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid, p. 151.

<sup>113</sup> On page 55 Cho provides an example of this practice.

<sup>114</sup> For example he prayed for an unsaved woman until he felt 100% certain of her impending salvation. As "I pled for her God said to me, 'Yes! yes!...'and I felt a *complete certainty* that her salvation was secure" (Charles Finney, *Autobiography*, (1876), public domain, from the chapter, "Beginning of His Work", italics mine).

<sup>115</sup> Ibid, from the chapter "Preaching as Missionary."

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.



<sup>118</sup> Ibid, from the chapter, “Revival at Antwerp.”

<sup>119</sup> Finney credited his effectiveness in both intercession and evangelism to the unmistakable presence of an intercessory anointing that he referred to as “the spirit of prayer.” He writes, “I will say that unless I had the spirit of prayer I could do nothing. If even for a day or an hour I lost the spirit of grace and supplication, I found myself unable to preach with power and efficiency, or to win souls by personal conversation” (Ibid, from the chapter, “Revival at De Kalb”

<sup>120</sup> The divine Word would displace all ordinary matter in our universe if too densely distributed. Although Andrew Murray always used standard orthodox terminology such as spirit, occasional statements unveiled his materialism. In the following citation he clearly intimates the issue of displacement, “There is no law in the natural *and the spiritual world* more simple than that two bodies cannot at the same moment occupy the same space” (Andrew Murray, *The Believer's Secret of Holiness* (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1984), p. 91, italics mine).

<sup>121</sup> Apparently Bloesch realized that no limit can be placed on the number of outpourings available to each believer, for he insists that there are special “anointings and visitations of the Spirit that equip the saints for special ministries” (Donald G. Bloesch, *Essentials of Evangelical Theology Volume 2: Life, Ministry, and Hope* (Peabody: Prince Press, 2001, reprint), p. 22).

At least most evangelicals do acknowledge multiple fillings. Walvoord maintained, “The Scriptures bear a decisive testimony that the filling of the Holy Spirit is a repeated experience” (John F. Walvoord, “The Person of the Holy Spirit,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 99:394 (1942), p. 164, Galaxie Software). F.F. Bruce drew the same conclusion (F.F. Bruce, *Commentary on the Book of Acts*, p. 107). Presumably Christ was already filled with the Spirit (for sanctification) prior to being filled with the Spirit of prophecy at Lk 3:21 and 4:1. Certainly Mary and Elizabeth were filled with the Spirit of prophecy before being refilled again on Pentecost. Long after Pentecost, “Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them” (Acts 4:8, KJV). Opposed to multiple fillings, Ervin’s reading is this, “Then Peter, still full of the Holy Spirit from Pentecost, said to them.” This is torturous. Shelton rightly objected that Luke isn’t so needlessly redundant.

<sup>122</sup> Part of his rationale is that Christ, being holy, must have been filled with the Spirit of holiness long before He received a prophetic anointing at age 30. Even

John was filled with the Spirit from his mother's womb (James B. Shelton, *Mighty in Word and Deed: The Role of the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991), p. 40)

<sup>123</sup> The churches of the Protestant Reformation produced official creeds and confessions correctly and unanimously holding that the Holy Spirit, in virtue of the Covenant of Grace, called, regenerated, indwelt, and sanctified all the OT saints. A small sample of these statements is presented here.

(1) The Westminster Confession states, "There are not, therefore, two covenants of grace differing in substance, but one and the same under various dispensations" (article 7:6). God enlists OT and NT saints in "the covenant of grace...requiring of them faith in him, that they may be saved, and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto life, his Holy Spirit, to make them willing and able to believe" (Ibid, article 7:3). "Wherefore they who are elected being fallen in Adam...are effectually called unto faith in Christ by his Spirit working in due season; are justified, adopted, *sanctified*, and kept by his power through faith unto salvation"(Ibid, article 3:6)

<http://www.ccel.org/contrib/cn/>

(2) The Canons of Dort speaks of the "covenant of grace" for "all those who shall be saved, both under the Old and the New Testament." God engages Himself "effectually to call and draw them to His communion by His Word and Spirit; to bestow upon them true faith, justification, and *sanctification*."

<http://www.ccel.org/b/brannan/hstercon/>

(3) The Belgic Confession defines a "universal Church, which is a holy congregation of true Christian believers, all expecting their salvation in Jesus Christ, being washed by His blood, *sanctified* and sealed by the Holy Spirit. This Church has been from the beginning of the world."

<http://www.ccel.org/b/brannan/hstercon/>

(4) According to the Second Helvetic Confession the "church has always existed and it will always exist." God "inwardly moves the hearts of his elect to faith by the Holy Spirit." Maturation "depends on the inward illumination of the Spirit."

<http://www.ccel.org/creeds/helvetic.htm>

(5) The Heidelberg Catechism summarized, “The Son of God from the beginning to the end of the world, gathers, defends, and preserves to himself by his Spirit and word, out of the whole human race, a church...washed [sanctified] by his blood and Spirit from *all* the pollution of [the] soul” (The Heidelberg Catechism, ed. Rick Brannan (Editor: Logos Research Systems), *Historic Creeds and Confessions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, v1.0, 2001-06-18, public domain).

<http://www.ccel.org/b/brannan/hstercon/>

<sup>124</sup> Kaiser correctly reduces both testaments to one covenantal Promise. The Promise is Christ in all His services to us (propitiation, regeneration, sanctification, and glorification). Kaiser considers the promise to Abraham merely a reiteration of the same Promise (the same covenant) made to all OT and NT saints, whereby God covenantally binds Himself to bless His people both retroactively and posthumously through Christ. The one Promise to Abraham is the OT and NT gospel eternally, irrevocably, and immutably in effect (see Walter C. Kaiser, “The Eschatological Hermeneutics of ‘Evangelicalism’: Promise Theology,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, Vol 13:2 (1970), pp. 91-99).

<sup>125</sup> Fee demonstrated convincingly that Galatians emphasizes sanctification far more than justification. As with Rom 8:1-16, argued Fee, Galatians stresses sanctifying “life” in the Spirit in verses such as the following.

For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might *live* unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I *live*; yet not I, but Christ *liveth* in me: and the *life* which I now *live* in the flesh I *live* by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me (Gal 2:19-20, KJV, italics added).

Galatians has still more on sanctification.

Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law...But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we *live* in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit” (Gal 5:16-18, 22-25, KJV; italics mine).

And again, “And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father (4:6, KJV). Howard Ervin remarked that 4:6

probably refers to a post-conversion anointing supplied to those who are already “sons.”

The word “Spirit” occurs about sixteen times in Galatians whereas “justification” appears only seven times. Fee rightly concludes, “The experience of the promised [sanctifying] Spirit, after all, not ‘righteousness [justification] by faith,’ forms the core of Paul’s argumentation in the one letter (Galatians) devoted primarily to this issue” (*God’s Empowering Presence* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), p. 815; cf. pp. 368-71, 425-458).

<sup>126</sup> “Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?” (Gal 3:3, KJV). The Galatians had begun by receiving the Spirit. They needed to continue in the same way they had begun – by receiving more outpourings. Based precisely on that perspective on “begun” at verse 3:3, Gordon Fee drew a similar conclusion at 3:5, “The clear implication is that even though [the Galatians] have already received the Spirit, there is another sense in which God ‘supplies’ the Spirit again and again” (Gordon Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), p. 388).

“Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?” (Gal 3:2, KJV). As Randy Clark pointed out, this question is asking them to recall receiving the Spirit as an experiential encounter. The same is true of Acts 19:2, “Did ye receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed?” (ASV). Clark’s research found that all English translations prior to 1901 favored subsequence at 19:2, “Did ye receive the Holy Spirit *since* ye believed?” (KJV, italics added). This was in accord, says Clark, with historic traditions in orthodoxy, spawned by the earliest church fathers, of laying hands after water baptism for chrismation. See Clark, Randy. *The Essential Guide to the Power of the Holy Spirit: God’s Miraculous Gifts at Work Today* (Kindle Locations 2139-2140, 2157). Destiny Image, Inc., Kindle Edition.

Insisting that the Ephesian disciples were already believers, Albert Barnes opted for “since ye believed” and paraphrased the question like this:

Have ye received the extraordinary effusions and miraculous influences of the Holy Spirit? Paul would not doubt that, if they had “believed,” they had received the ordinary converting influences of the Holy Spirit - for it was one of his favorite doctrines that the Holy Spirit renews the heart. But, besides this...the power of speaking with tongues, or of working miracles, was imparted as an evidence (Albert Barnes notes on Acts 19:2).

And subsequently “the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied” (19:2, KJV). The phrase “came upon” is standard OT lingo for the descent of a charismatic anointing. “While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit *fell on* all those who heard the word...speaking in other languages” (10:44, 46, WEB, italics added).

<sup>127</sup> Andrew Murray, *The Two Covenants*, from the chapter, “The Two Covenants in Christian Experience,” italics mine, public domain,

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<sup>128</sup> Andrew Murray, *Absolute Surrender*, from the chapter “Separated Unto the Holy Ghost,” italics mine, public domain,

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<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid, from the chapter, “Having Begun in the Spirit.”

<sup>131</sup> Ibid, from the chapter, “Lacking the Fruit of the Spirit.” Surprisingly even revival historians typically fail to equate sanctification with reviving outpourings. Look, it is either our job to self-sanctify by human effort, or Yahweh’s job to sanctify us miraculously. As these historians will testify, every major revival was a supernaturally induced, instantaneous increase in holiness across a community. If that’s not sanctification, one is at a loss to know what is. How do we get it? Jesus advised, “How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?” (Lk 11:13, KJV). Luke-Acts is 25% of the NT, and it emphasizes prayer. After all, why did God create us? He *needs* our fellowship.

<sup>132</sup> The prophet Abraham “looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (Heb 11:10, KJV), for “they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly” (11:16, KJV). Abraham anticipation of a heavenly city is attested in commentaries such as *Vincent’s Word Studies*; *Robertson’s Word Pictures*; *Albert Barnes’ Notes*; *Adam Clarke’s Commentary*; *John Gill’s Exposition of the Entire Bible*; *the Matthew Henry Commentary*; *the Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Commentary*; *the People’s New Testament*.

Heb 11:1 is often understood to mean a kind of blind faith. The above citations belie this conclusion. Faith is a certainty resulting from seeing the unseen by revelatory vision, which is the whole point of the chapter. Thus by visions the OT saints had only “seen [the promised heavenly realities] and embraced them from



afar” (11:13, WEB). By that same eye of faith Moses was consistently “seeing him who is invisible” (11:27, KJV). Verse 17 celebrates Abraham’s attempt to slaughter his son “by faith” – which can only mean 100% certainty.

The following Bibles have excellent translations of 11:1. The ASV, LBLA, ESV, YLT, NVI, and WEB differ slightly in wording but all roughly amount to, “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, a conviction [i.e. certainty] of things not seen.” Similarly the ISV, NIV, and ALT roughly amount to, “Now faith is the assurance of things being hoped for, confident assurance of things not seen.” Most of the other 11 versions consulted follow the unfortunate KJV-translation, “Now faith is the *substance* of things hoped for, the *evidence* of things not seen.” As for “substance,” the Greek word *hupostasis* can mean either assurance or substance, but faith is clearly a state of mind, a feeling of certainty, rather than a substance separate from the mind. As for “evidence,” the Greek word could mean either evidence or conviction. “Conviction” is more straightforward, but admittedly one could also argue in defense of “evidence” that, since the faith provided by God is a *compelling* mental vision, it eliminates any relevant distinction between evidence and faith/ belief, and hence faith=evidence.

The emphasis in Heb 11 is 100% certainty. For instance it is by faith that men “conquered kingdoms” (11:33). Absent 100% certainty, men are evil if they try to slaughter entire kingdoms (with the understandable exception of halting Hitler-type invaders in self-defense). The divine Voice tasked Moses and Joshua with annihilating seven nations, and Saul the Amalekites. In reality, however, 100% certainty is needed in everything because love does no harm to its neighbor (Rom 13:10). In a complex world, the only way to avoid accidentally harming one’s neighbor is a stream of infallible revelation. Consider the military. Suppose a leader, whether Hitler or one of his opponents, commands a soldier to drop a bomb on Hiroshima, potentially killing 200,000 people. Should he obey? To suggest that God has no interest in giving the soldier 100% certainty insinuates that He frankly *doesn’t care whether those civilians live or die*. Here too, a typical orthodox thinker wouldn’t hesitate to insult God almost as much as humanly possible.

Since everyone wants 100% certainty of salvation, a compassionate God is committed to it. Jesus promised it to His apostles like this, “Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (Jn 8:32, KJV). Only a person with 100% certainty can legitimately claim to *know* something.



<sup>133</sup> When God promised “this land” to the patriarchs He was probably showing them a vision of the heavenly city. One of the Reformed confessionals emphasized that the patriarchs heard promises both earthly and heavenly:

The Promises Twofold. And we acknowledge that two kinds of promises were revealed to the fathers, as also to us. For some were of present or earthly things, such as the promises of the Land of Canaan and of victories, and as the promise today still of daily bread. Others were then and are still now of heavenly and eternal things, namely, divine grace, remission of sins, and eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ....the ancients had not only external and earthly [promises] but also spiritual and heavenly promises in Christ (The Second Helvetic Confession, ch 13, public domain).

<http://www.ccel.org/creeds/helvetic.htm>.

<sup>134</sup> The Abrahamic inheritance is the promised Holy Spirit. Gal 3:14 states, “That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith” (KJV). According to Pyne, “Paul appears to identify that blessing as the promise of the Spirit (cf. vv. 2, 5)” (Robert A. Pyne, “The Seed, the Spirit, and the Blessing of Abraham,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 152 (1995), p. 218, Galaxie Software).

*Vincent’s Word Studies* on 3:14 likewise surmised that the “blessing is not God’s gift of justification...[but] the [*sanctifying*] life which comes through the Spirit.” Gordon Fee concurred of 3:14 that “the promise of the Spirit is equated with the blessing [the inheritance] of Abraham” (Gordon Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), p. 811).

<sup>135</sup> “He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Even as Abraham believed [God’s spoken promises]” (Gal 3:5-6, KJV). Many commentators recognize that 3:6 adduces Abraham as the *paradigmatic exemplar* of the claim at 3:5 that the Spirit is received by the hearing of faith. For instance Thatcher states, “The [Greek word] ‘kathos’ at 3:6 indicates that Abraham’s example parallels the point Paul has just made about God and the Galatians’ receipt of the Spirit” (Tom Thatcher, “The Plot of Gal 3:1-18,” *Journal of Evangelical Theology*, Vol 40:3 (1997) Galaxie Software, p. 409.

Similarly Calvin noted, “[Verse 3:6] refers only to the verse immediately preceding [namely 3:5], to the ‘ministration of the Spirit and of miracles by the

hearing of faith;' as if [Paul] had said, that, in the grace bestowed on [the Galatians], a similarity might be found to the case of Abraham" (*John Calvin: Commentaries*, tr. Joseph Haroutunian, public domain, italics mine).

<http://www.ccel.org/index/author-C.html>

Johnson also finds a tie between the hearing of faith at verse 5 and Abraham's mention at verse 6 in the sense of "a close logical connection between 'faith' in Gal 3:5 and Abraham's act of believing in Gal 3:6" (H. Wayne Johnson, "The Paradigm of Abraham in Gal 3:6-9," *Trinity Journal*, Vol 8:2 (1987), p. 185, Galaxie Software).

In the same vein Gordon Fee writes, "To Paul's question [at 3:5], 'by works of the law or by the hearing of faith?' the implied answer is [at 3:6]: 'by the hearing of faith, just as Abraham `believed God`'" (Gordon Fee, *God's Empowering Presence* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), p. 390).

The JFB commentary elaborated, "Gal 3:6 - The answer to the question in Gal 3:5 is here taken for granted, It was by the hearing of faith: following this up, [Paul] says, 'Even as Abraham believed,' (Gen 15:4-6; Rom 4:3). God supplies unto you the Spirit as the result of faith, not works, just as Abraham obtained justification by faith, not by works...Where justification is, there the Spirit is" (The *Jamieson, Fausset, Brown Commentary* on Gal 3:6, e-Sword Software).

Martin Luther likewise stated of verse 6, "The Apostle next adduces the example of Abraham" (*Martin Luther's Commentary on Galatians 3:6*, from *The Online Bible* software program).

<sup>136</sup> About half the Bible versions render Gal 3:16 like this, "The promises were made to Abraham and to his seed." The others correctly render it as, "The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed." The Greek word there is *rheo* translated "said" or "spoken" everywhere else throughout the KJV (about 24 times) except once "commanded" (Rev 9:4) where it still connotes "spoken." *Vincent's Word Studies* on Gal 3:16 affirmed that the literal translation is, "The promises were spoken to Abraham and his seed." The *Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Commentary* summarized, "Gal 3:16 - The covenant of promise was not 'spoken'...to Abraham alone, but 'to Abraham and his seed;' to the latter especially...His body, the Church."

<sup>137</sup> "Now to Abraham were the promises spoken, and to his seed" (Gal 3:16, ASV). This seed-covenant was already in effect when the divine voice warned the

serpent: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Gen 3:15, KJV). Morton Smith explained this reference to seed, "Collectively, it designates the people of God - the church - as opposed to the seed of the serpent or the world. Particularly, it has reference to the Seed - namely, to Christ himself. This same dual application of the term 'seed' occurs in the case of the seed of Abraham" (Morton H. Smith, "The Church And Covenant Theology," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, Vol 21:1 (1978), p. 53, Galaxie Software).

<sup>138</sup> "Now to Abraham were the promises spoken, and to his seed" (Gal 3:16, ASV). This is the Father-Son covenant because the Father spoke the same Abrahamic promises to the Son as principal Seed. Wilhelmus Brakel, among others, recognized in verse 3:16 a clear reference to the eternal "covenant between God and Christ" (Wilhelmus Brakel, *The Christian's Reasonable Service*, ch 7).

<sup>139</sup> Israel's "New Covenant itself will not occur until the Lord Jesus Christ returns" (Stephen R. Lewis, "The New Covenant: Enacted or Ratified," *Chafer Theological Seminary Journal*, Vol 8 (2002), p. 58, Galaxie Software). Dr. Lewis is Academic Dean of Chafer Theological Seminary. In my view Israel's New Covenant will not be in effect until she is resurrected from her graves at the rapture (Eze 37:12-13), permanently cleansed by efficacious grace (36:24-29), and ingathered from the nations to the New Jerusalem (11:17-20).

Luke 22:20 states, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, even that which is poured out for you" (ASV). The statement isn't especially clear but can hardly be an inauguration of Israel's New Covenant since Christ the High Priest hadn't died yet. The time-frame was still OT, as His blood wasn't yet shed. The Abrahamic Covenant spawns a potentially endless stream of new covenants. Knowing this, Jesus probably made this statement to issue a last-days new covenant - a covenant defined as the practice of commemoratively eating and drinking divine Body and Blood, as a shrewd way of officially terminating outmoded Old-Covenant ceremonies. Classic dispensationalists seem to substantially agree with this assessment of Lk 22:20, insisting that it wasn't an inauguration of Israel's New Covenant. They "taught that the New Covenant predicted for Israel in Jeremiah 31:31-34 was not the same as the New Covenant established with the church and referred to specifically by Christ and Paul" (Luke 22:20; 2Cor 3:6)" (Craig A.

Blaising, "Developing Dispensationalism," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 145:579 (1988) p. 277, Galaxie Software).

Thus classic dispensationalists such as John Nelson Darby, Charles Ryrie, and Lewis Sperry Chafer postulated this Gentile new covenant because God made Israel's New Covenant only "with the house of Israel and the house of Judah" (Rodney J. Decker, "The Church's Relationship to the New Covenant Part 1," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 152:607 (1995), p. 290, Galaxie Software). Since the ingathering of idolatrous Israelites scattered by divine judgment is a not-yet reality (Jer 32:27-40; Eze 11:17-20; 36:18-29), "Traditional dispensationalists have usually argued that...there is no present fulfillment or inauguration of [Israel's] new covenant at all" (Paul R. Thorsell, "The Spirit In The Present Age," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, Vol 41:3 (1998), p. 406, Galaxie Software). Thus "Darby's view is that the New Covenant of Jeremiah 31 was made strictly with Israel and will be fulfilled with Israel in the future millennial kingdom" (Rodney J. Decker, "The Church's Relationship to the New Covenant Part 2," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 152:608 (1995), p. 437, Galaxie Software). Israel's New Covenant can only commence when God finally grants her the New Jerusalem plus a perfected heart incapable of renegeing Canaan. It is a permanent heart-cleansing that terminates all her backsliding forever (Dt 30:5-6; Jer 24:6-7; 31:33; 32:37-40; Eze 11:17-20; Eze 36:25-29).

As already indicated, Dr. Stephen Lewis is a present-day objector to any notion of an already-inaugurated Israeli New Covenant. He asks rhetorically, "*Which part of [the Gentile community] would be the house of Israel, and which part would be the house of Judah?*" (Stephen R. Lewis, "The New Covenant: Enacted or Ratified," *Chafer Theological Seminary Journal*, Vol 8 (2002), p. 55, Galaxie Software). He rightly insists that Israel's New Covenant will not be inaugurated until the eschaton (*Ibid.*).

According to Wilber Wallis the irony of Israel's supposedly "New" Covenant is that all OT saints, as Abraham's seed, already partook at regeneration of that covenant's most definitive element, namely the writing of the law on the heart by the indwelling Spirit, for there "really is only one covenant of grace" (Wilber B. Wallis, "Irony in Jeremiah's Prophecy of a New Covenant," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, Vol 12:2 (1969), pp. 107 – 110).

“New Covenant Theology” is a recent theology that sees *all* Mosaic Law (including the Ten Commandments) as terminated in favor of “The New Covenant” for the Gentiles, although this New Covenant reinstates some of those commands. Thus the OT saints had law instead of gospel. This outlook is shallow for two reasons. Firstly, it inadvertently divests the OT saints of saved status contrary to how Romans and Galatians viewed Abraham and his seed/ offspring as justified by faith. Secondly God’s law is always love and can never be terminated (see the Ten Commandments). Admittedly a written command only captures the specifics of His will at one particular moment in history, but it remains in effect because its spirit/ essence is love. Imagine a switch in my home capable of activating sprinklers in case of fire. I tell my child, “Don’t touch that switch!” One day the house catches on fire and he turns it on. He disobeyed the *letter* of my command but not its spirit (protect the house). The command remains in effect, but *circumstances dictate how best to fulfill it*. Incidentally at least one “New Covenant” theologian argued for the “greater glory” (2Cor 3:8) of the present age, as though NT saints are entitled to more blessings than OT saints. Again, superficial analysis. Steering his readers away from the law’s outmoded rituals, Paul simply pointed their eyes to the fullness of glory merely betokened in Moses’ radiant face (3:7) but fully realized in Christ’s radiant face (4:6). The law itself had no glory but *came with* Christ’s glory whereby OT and NT saints ultimately enjoy the same Blessing of Abraham.

<sup>140</sup> Kaiser realized that Israel’s Old Covenant and her New Covenant are simply gracious applications of the Abrahamic Promise to the citizens of Israel (Walter C. Kaiser Jr., “The Old Promise And The New Covenant: Jeremiah 31:31-34,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, Vol 15 (1972), pp. 11-23.

<sup>141</sup> In terms of assessing the charismatic prowess of the Corinthians, the most difficult, potentially misleading verse is 1Cor 1:7.

Ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (1:7, KJV).

The Greek word so pivotal here has several possible translations similar to “lacking.” One of them is “destitute.” *Albert Barnes’ Notes* on 1Cor 1:7 commented, “The word is usually applied to destitution, want, or poverty.” Precedents for “destitute” include the prodigal son destitute of food (Lk 22:35) and the wedding destitute of wine (Jn 2:3). Therefore my translation of 1Cor 1:7



is, "You are destitute in not one of the gifts." Stated differently, "You are not devoid of any gift." Incidentally the same verse forecasts the gifts' persistence until Christ's return, as Charles Powell observed, "The syntax...indicates that the possession of all spiritual gifts continues until this 'eager expectation' is fulfilled." Charles Powell noted that 1Cor 1:7 is commonly adduced against cessationism; see Charles Powell, "Questions Cessationists Should Ask: A Biblical Examination of Cessationism," *Biblical Studies Press* (1997).

[www.bible.org](http://www.bible.org)

Paul recounted, "Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power [*dunamis*] of the Spirit of God...I have fully preached the gospel of Christ" (Rom 15:19, KJV). Similarly he reminded Corinth:

My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power [*dunamis*]: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power [*dunamis*] of God (1Cor 2:4-5, KJV).

Was this too an empirical show of miraculous power? Or just ordinary preaching? Later he uses the same Greek word *dunamis* three times in reference to the "working of miracles" (12:10, 28-29). Of interest is how he *defines* the Kingdom of God for all generations of Christians. It is a power empirically visible if he journeys to visit them:

Now some are puffed up, as though I would not come to you. But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power [*dunamis*]. For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power [*dunamis*] (4:18-20, KJV).

Any assembly failing of Paul's empirical definition is a man-made institution, something other than the Kingdom of God that Christ came to establish. Admittedly there is such a thing as a work in progress, where revival gradually transforms a man-made institution into the Kingdom of God, but the leadership must never lose sight of the ultimate goal. Healing the sick is part of this empirical picture, as James affirmed:

Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms. Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man



availeth much. Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit (Jas 5:13-18, KJV).

According to Dr. Ruthven's book *On the Cessation of the Charismata: The Protestant Polemic on Post-biblical Miracles*, several key passages underpinned the American faith healing movement, including Mt. 8:17; Mk. 16:17, 18; Jas 5:14. The first one ties healing to Christ's atoning work.

They brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses (Mat 8:16-17, KJV).

Which is reminiscent of Ex 15:26:

If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God..I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee (KJV).

The next one is in Mark:

These signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover (MK 16:17-18, KJV).

Dr. Ruthven finds exorcisms especially significant. Since the Kingdom of God is *always* an uprooting of Satan's domain, he points out, the casting out of devils cannot be confined to a cessationist past. Also relevant is Mat 13:58, "And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief" (KJV).

<sup>142</sup> "Covet earnestly the best gifts" (1Cor 12:31, KJV). I looked at 20 Bible translations and they were all in agreement on this rendering. Paul "urged his hearers to earnestly desire the higher gifts (1Cor 12:31), such as prophecy" (Donald G. Bloesch, *Essentials of Evangelical Theology Volume 2: Life, Ministry, and Hope* (Peabody: Prince Press, 2001, reprint), p. 108). Beckwith concurs, see Francis J. Beckwith, "Book Reviews," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, Vol 33:3 (1990), p. 396.

Paul wanted "men earnestly seeking, by prayer and watchfulness, and cultivation of their faculties, the greatest gifts" (the *Jamieson, Fausset, Brown Commentary* on 1Cor 12:31). The same conclusion is found in *Calvin's*

**Commentaries on 1Cor 12:31 and 1Cor 14:1. At 14:1, said Calvin, Paul “assigns the first place to *prophecy*. *Covet, therefore, spiritual gifts...* provided only *prophecy* holds the first place.”**

The Corinthians, maintained Chrysostom, “were the cause of their own receiving the lesser gifts, and had it in their power, if they would, to receive the greater. For when [Paul] saith, ‘desire earnestly,’ he demands from them all diligence and desire for *spiritual things*” (Chrysostom, NPNF, Part 1, Vol 13, Homily 32, Galaxie Software, italics added).

Since apostleship is simply prophethood invested with governmental authority, Paul simply stressed prophecy (1Cor 14:1ff). He had no need to place much emphasis on pursuing apostleship.

<sup>143</sup> “If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual” (1Cor 14:37, KJV). John Gill rightly commented on 1Cor 14:37 that to be spiritual means “not merely one that has the Spirit of God, is regenerated and sanctified by him...but one that is endued with spiritual gifts, with the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, with a discerning of spirits” (*John Gill’s Exposition of the Entire Bible* on 1Cor 14:37). The *JFB Commentary* on 14:37 chimes in, “Here one capable of discerning spirits is specially meant.” John Wesley commented on 14:37 that “spiritual” means “Endowed with any extraordinary gift of the Spirit.” The *People’s New Testament Commentary* refers it to one who “is inspired, or has spiritual gifts.” Albert Barnes links it to people “under the extraordinary influence of the Spirit.” Cambridge’s Bible on 14:37 regarded “spiritual” as “possessed of any special spiritual gift.” The *Expositors Greek New Testament* on 14:37 states, “The term πνευματικὸς [spiritual] includes every one endowed with a special gift of the Spirit.” *John Dummelow’s Commentary* on 14:37 defines “spiritual” as “possessing spiritual gifts.” *Meyer’s NT Commentary* on 14:37 depicts it as “spiritually gifted in any way” and thus anyone dubious of Paul’s teachings “would show him to be not a prophet or not inspired.” Phillip Schaff similarly defines it as someone “spiritually gifted” and thus in agreement with Paul’s teachings because “inspiration cannot disown inspiration” (*Schaff’s Popular Commentary* on 14:37). *Joseph Beet’s Commentary* on 14:37 portrays “spiritual” as “a wider term than prophet, denoting any one under a special influence of the Spirit.”

Furthermore some of the commentaries refer 14:37 back to 2:15 where “he that is spiritual judgeth all things” (KJV), e.g. *Thomas Coke Commentary* on 14:37 – the same passage classifying Corinthians as unspiritual babes (3:1-3). Hence the following logic is irresistible.

1. A spiritual man is a gifted man.
2. The Corinthians were unspiritual.
3. Therefore the Corinthians were deficient in the gifts.

The *remedy* is obvious, “Follow after love, and earnestly desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy” (14:1, WEB). “Desire earnestly the greater gifts” (12:31, ASV). How important is this fix? Consider that, if we include the Higher Wisdom passage (2:6-3:3), Paul spent approximately three full chapters on spiritual gifts!

<sup>144</sup> “Now concerning spiritual *gifts*, brethren, I would not have you ignorant” (1Cor 12:1, KJV). *Robertson’s Word Pictures* observed of 1Cor 12:1, “The word ‘gifts’ is not in the original text.” Thus Young’s Literal Translation (YLT) aptly renders it, “Concerning the spiritual things, brethren, I do not wish you to be ignorant.” For a scholarly argument against inserting “gifts” here, see Howard Ervin, *Spirit-Baptism: A Biblical Investigation* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1987), pp. 85-91. Ervin initially reads 12:1 as either “Concerning spiritual things” or “Concerning spirituals” or “Concerning the spirituals.” He then makes a powerful argument for “Concerning spiritual men” which would support our parallel with the (prophetic) “spiritual man” of 2:6-16. Gordon Fee opted for “Concerning the spiritual things of spiritual people” based partly on a parallel with 14:37, “If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual” (KJV). Fee defines spiritual things as the charismatic “manifestations of the Spirit” because, he argues, spiritual in the NT never means immaterial but rather Spirit-powered (see Gordon Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), p. 152-53, 160).

The fact that inspired speech such as prophesying is foremost in view at 12:1 becomes apparent as Paul continues, “Ye know that when ye were Gentiles ye were led away unto those dumb idols” (12:2). Idols are dumb (mute) versus God whose own speech inspires speech (prophesying) in us as Fee observed, “Paul scorns the idols as mute because they cannot hear and answer prayer; nor can they speak – in contrast to the Spirit of God who can” (ibid., p. 152). Thus, “No man speaking by

the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and no man can say that Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Ghost” (12:3, KJV). (The last part is unclear but the *Geneva Bible Notes* takes it to mean that we exist and move only by divine consent, consider for example my own view that God’s own hand sustains ordinary matter. Or Paul perhaps means that no one can *sincerely* and *non-idolatrously* confess Jesus as Lord except by divinely inspired speech). Naturally the “spiritual things” subsequently listed mostly involve inspired speech, namely “to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit...to another prophecy...to another the interpretation of tongues” (12:8-10, KJV). Ervin understands this passage as the Holy Spirit’s spontaneous, principally verbal manifestations during corporate worship (Ervin, op. cit., pp. 85-91). Holmyard’s summary of chapter fourteen likewise places the emphasis on inspired *speech*, “Paul discussed ‘spiritual things’ (pneumatika, v. 1), that is, things given by the Holy Spirit. Whether prayer or singing, tongues or prophecy, the assumption is that the Holy Spirit was giving the utterance” (Harold R. Holmyard III, “Does 1Corinthians 11:12-16 Refer to Women Praying and Prophesying in Church?” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 154:616 (1997), p. 462, Galaxie Software).

Similarly cessationist Weaver translates 12:1 as “spiritualities” (spiritual things) rather than as “spiritual gifts” (see Gilbert Weaver, “Tongues Shall Cease,” *Grace Theological Journal*, Vol 14:1 (1973), p. 14). Cottle reads it as “the spirituals” (Ronald E. Cottle, “All Were Baptized,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, Vol 17:2 (1974), p. 75).

Given that Paul had branded the Corinthians as unspiritual earlier (3:1-3), verse 14:12 is probably a bit sarcastic, “Since ye are zealous of spiritual [things], seek that ye may abound unto the edifying of the church” (ASV). This is a corrective to the Corinthian zeal for tongues without interpretation in the public assembly, but it also confirms that “spiritual things” refer to charismatic things. This is because, as Gordon Fee has pointed out, the term “spiritual” as used in the NT means Spirit-powered.

<sup>145</sup> Chrysostom realized that “spiritual things” (1Cor 12:1) are a matter of prophetic giftedness. The Corinthians, maintained Chrysostom, “were the cause of their own receiving the lesser gifts, and had it in their power, if they would, to receive the greater. For when [Paul] saith, ‘desire earnestly,’ he demands from

them all diligence and desire for *spiritual things*” (Chrysostom, NPNF, Part 1, Vol 13, Homily 32, Galaxie Software, italics added).

<sup>146</sup> *Robertson’s Word Pictures* on 1Cor 2:12.

<sup>147</sup> *Vincent’s Word Studies* on 1Cor 2:12.

<sup>148</sup> Walter C. Kaiser Jr., “A Neglected Text in Biblical Discussions: 1Cor 2:6-16,” *Westminster Theological Journal*, Vol 43:2 (1981), p. 311, Galaxie Software.

<sup>149</sup> *John Wesley’s Notes* on 1Cor 2:16, italics mine.

<sup>150</sup> *Calvin’s Commentaries* on 2:13.

<sup>151</sup> The Higher Wisdom passage begins like this, “We [mature apostles and prophets] speak [higher] wisdom among them that are perfect [i.e. *mature*]” (1Cor 2:6, KJV). The translation “perfect” doesn’t make sense here, because such a high standard would put it out of everyone’s reach. Examples of Bibles that correctly render it as “mature” are NIV, NLT, ESV, BSB, BLB, NASB, ISV, NET, and Weymouth. Apparently none of the Bibles advocate “mature” at 13:10, unfortunately.

<sup>152</sup> The topic of inspired speech – and thus prophetic speech - is the opening thesis of the Higher Wisdom passage, “We [apostles and prophets] speak wisdom among them that are perfect” (1Cor 2:6, KJV). It’s still the topic of 3:1, “I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ” (KJV). Therefore it’s most natural to ascribe 2:13 to that same vein of inspired speech, “Which things also we [apostles and prophets] speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth” (1Cor 2:13, KJV). This verse reads alike in 17 of the 20 New Testaments consulted. The 3 deviants (DRB, SRV, SSE) refer to “speaking the *doctrine* of the Spirit” rather than “speaking words *taught by* the Spirit.” There are two key Greek terms in play here, namely *didactos* (teaching/ doctrine) and *logos* (word). What the 3 deviants have done is omit *logos* altogether. *Didactos* is not a noun, so this verse isn’t about “doctrine” or “teaching,” but is rather a verbal adjective applied to the noun *logos* (word). As a result of this verbal function, even “doctrinal words” is unacceptable because it does not convey the dynamic *action* of teaching. What “we speak,” Paul was arguing, is “taught words.” *Vincent’s Word Studies* on this verse states, “Lit., in the *taught (words) of the Spirit*.” Similarly *Robertson’s Word Pictures* expounded:



Literally, “not in words taught by human wisdom.” The verbal adjective *didaktois* (from *didasko*, to teach) is here passive in idea and is followed by the ablative case of origin or source as in Jn 6:45...“They shall all be taught by God.”

John Gill states, “in the taught words of the Holy Ghost.” Fee considered “words taught” the unquestionably correct rendering (Gordon Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), p. 104), as Kaiser held (Walter C. Kaiser Jr., “A Neglected Text in Biblical Discussions: 1Cor 2:6-16,” *Westminster Theological Journal*, Vol 43:2 (1981), p. 316).

<sup>153</sup> Many evangelical scholars rightly find in 1Cor 2:10-13, especially at 2:13, a reference to God’s direct revelations to the apostles, and particularly those revelations needed to write the NT, also called “biblical inspiration.” For instance the *Matthew Henry Commentary* sees here a reference to apostolic inspiration. John Gill and John Wesley equated the inspired words of Scripture with these “words taught by the Holy Ghost” (2:13). *Albert Barnes’ Notes* equated these “words taught by the Holy Ghost” with the “Divine Inspiration” of the *apostles*. *Adam Clarke’s Commentary* also refers it to apostolic utterances. The *People’s New Testament Commentary* equates it with things “revealed by the Spirit to the apostles (to us).” A.A. Hodge adduced this verse as evidence of Scripture’s verbal inspiration to the apostles (A.A. Hodge, *Outlines of Theology*, from Chapter Four “The Inspiration of the Bible).

Likewise the official creed of the Master’s Seminary adduced it for biblical inspiration to the apostles (see “Editorial,” *The Master’s Seminary Journal*, Vol 4:2 (1993), pp. 121-135). Chafer understood it as infallible inspiration (Lewis Sperry Chafer, “Revelation,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 94:375 (1937), p. 268). Alfred Martin took it as proof of verbal inspiration to the apostles (Alfred Martin, “Christian Scholrship Versus Intellectualism,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 118:470 (1961), p. 146); cf. John a Witmer, “The Biblical Evidence For the Verbal-Plenary Inspiration of the Bible,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 121:483 (1964), p. 243-253); cf. Kenneth Wuest, “The Holy Spirit in Greek Exposition,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 118:471 (1961), p. 217; cf. Robert Duncan Culver, “The Apostles and Apostolate in the New Testament,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 134:534 (1977), p. 137).

<sup>154</sup> F. David Farnell, “When Will the Gift of Prophecy Cease?” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 150:598 (1993), pp. 171-202, Galaxie Software.

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<sup>155</sup> Ibid., pp. 182-83.

<sup>156</sup> Kaiser realized that the NT term for “revelation” is used for prophetic revelation but only reluctantly conceded its availability to all believers, “Paul also uses the same root of [‘revealed’] to say that God has given a revelation to the ordinary believer in Ephesians 1:17 (‘that God may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation’” (Walter C. Kaiser Jr., “A Neglected Text in Biblical Discussions: 1Cor 2:6-16,” *Westminster Theological Journal*, Vol 43:2 (1981), p. 314). Kaiser then had to make an effort to sidestep the implications of this concession, since he had just, in the same paragraph, construed “revelation,” based on the Higher Wisdom Passage (specifically 1Cor 2:10), as something unique to the apostles, prophets and biblical writers. He ends up positing some obscure, seemingly unintelligible distinction between the “revelation” intended for the Ephesians versus that experienced by Paul. Kaiser claims to clarify this distinction in other writings, but the reader already hears the ring of special pleading. Kaiser also realized that verses 12 and 13 are referring to “we apostles and prophets.”

As a debating tactic, cessationists continually spread paranoia that present-day prophetic revelation would endanger the canon. However, the literature of the early apostles was canonized largely because they lived in Christ’s generation. Since few Christians would vote for canonizing present-day literature, our zeal for revelation should dwarf and drown out the paranoia. Instead much of the church is still throwing out the baby with the bathwater. Personally I would happily trade in my copy of the canon plus 50 years of exegesis in exchange for one month in a classroom under a prophet such as Christ or Paul. The canon is simply not as crucial as cessationists would like us to believe. Imagine two sets of lab rats, one exposed to a medicine, the other to a placebo. After a month all the rats have the same incidence of disease. Conclusion? The medicine was ineffective. Exposed every Sunday to the canon as our weekly medicine, the church still has the same incidence of divorce as the world!

The NT writings radically broke away from the OT canon by decentralizing Israel as a nation, eradicating Hebrew liturgy, and highly prioritizing the Gentiles. Didn’t this monumental revolution pose an enormous threat to the OT canon? Shouldn’t the early church councils have recoiled in paranoia instead of canonizing the new documents? But then we wouldn’t even have a NT canon! In fact the Twelve should

apparently have shut their ears to Christ from day one shouting, “Don’t give us any more new revelation because you’re endangering the OT canon!” When the cessationist Gaffin warns us, as a standard fear tactic, that any present-day revelation would add to the canon, we ought to respond, “Adding to the canon is a logical impossibility because it already covers the world’s past, present, and future. The most a revelation can do is illuminate the existing canon.” Both the cessationist and the charismatic ask the Holy Spirit to illuminate the canon. How do they plan to recognize the illumination? Naturally both will rely on a feeling of certainty, although the one will call it illumination, the other prophetic revelation – but it’s exactly the same experience! Desperate to differentiate it, the cessationist will claim that petitions for very *specific* illumination involve special revelation. Therefore the cessationist won’t ask God for illumination on specific financial decisions? Specific family decisions? What if their son or daughter went missing? They wouldn’t ask God for illumination on the child’s specific whereabouts?

Consider the books of the Apocrypha. Does Roman Catholicism’s enlarged canon constitute a devastating threat to evangelicalism? Hardly. On a daily basis the evangelical doesn’t even give it a passing thought. If some people want a larger bible, that’s their concern. Why is Gaffin so paranoid that present-day prophecy will enlarge our canon? Has there been even the slightest signs of such since the charismatic movement began? He believes that God terminated prophetic revelation because it is a threat to the canon. That’s a little backwards, isn’t it? Suppose a sudden inundation of prophetic revelation corrected all our misunderstandings of Scripture. Is the church now in a worse position than before? Gaffin thinks so. He thinks that a church with revelation is a huge threat to the canon. Much better if we all walk around with tons of false doctrines in our heads. In fact the absolute worst thing God could do for us is raise up another Paul, Moses, or Isaiah, as such men would only threaten the canon.

When a charismatic feels he or she has a message from God, it is *never* for the whole worldwide church. He or she hopes and expects God to merely convict a small target audience on the matter. Since the rest of the church *will not be convicted*, he or she cannot hope, nor even would desire, to canonize the message. Gaffin mistakenly presumes that any authoritative revelation is inherently binding on the whole church and thus canonical. One wonders whether even Paul himself really expected to target the whole world with his letters.

Christians need to ask themselves, what is the goal of redemptive economy? Is it one's hope and expectation to spend eternity in a little heavenly room with a chair, a desk, a lamp, a Bible, and Strong's Concordance? Why are we so convinced that the canon is the lifeblood of the church? That to even imagine a day without it is taboo? That God is totally incapable of building and sustaining the church without it? Didn't Paul already prove us dead wrong on this matter? Let's recall how we got saved. The Holy Spirit gave us a feeling of certainty known as the Inward Witness. Despite lacking a canon, Abraham's saving faith didn't vacillate as to bounce him from one religion to the next, because the Inward Witness is *infallible*.

The anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him (1Jn 2:27, KJV).

2,000 years of canon-based tradition have obscured God's dilemma. With all kinds of books and religions *claiming* to be authentic, how can the fallible human mind reliably ascertain truth? Logically the only solution is an *infallible inward witness*. Hence cultivating it – loudening it – should be a significantly higher priority than the examination of religious texts. It is our *only* hope for reliable doctrine. Here Gaffin would ask, how can fallible men be considered partakers of infallible revelation? Simple. Ordinary thoughts tend to drown out the small voice until it loudens with maturity. Paul wrote, “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (3:11, KJV). The foundation of the OT and NT church has always been Christ as the infallible inward witness, not the NT canon.

Every Christian is entitled to the same experience of the Holy Breath as the apostles enjoyed. God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34; Rom 2:11). All of us are under the same Abrahamic Covenant – the same cross – and are therefore entitled to the same experience of God.

<sup>157</sup> Chrysostom, NPNF, Part 1, Vol 12, Homily 34.

<sup>158</sup> “But when that which is perfect [i.e. mature] is come, then that which is in part shall be done away” (1Cor 13:10, KJV). Disappointingly the Bibles I looked at (about 20 of them) unanimously feature “perfect” or “complete” at 13:10 instead of “mature.” The statistics are more favorable for the same Greek word at 2:6 (the first verse of the Higher Wisdom passage); at least half the Bibles correctly have

“mature” at 2:6. The *Expositors Greek New Testament* commentary correctly opted for “full-grown, mature” at 13:10, arguing that “τέλειος [mature] is contrasted with νήπιος [child]” both at 2:6 and 13:10. The ESV rightly opted for “mature” in most places where that same Greek word τέλειος is found (1Cor 2:6; 14:20; Eph 4:13; Php 3:15; Col 1:28; 4:12; Heb 5:14). A clear example where perfect doesn’t even make sense is Heb 5:14, “Solid food is for the mature,” since perfect would put it too far out of reach. This is particularly pertinent to the Higher Wisdom passage (1Cor 2:6-3:3) whose whole point is that solid food is for the mature, not for babes:

And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able (3:1-2, KJV).

<sup>159</sup> “When I became a man, I put away childish things” (1Cor 13:11, KJV). Thus it was an endless cycle of maturation where “the emancipation from childish things took place as a matter of course *and it continues.*” (Robertson & Plummer, *I Corinthians in I. C. C.*, (1963), p. 298, italics added).

<sup>160</sup> Many cessationists recognize the principle of relative maturity at 1Cor 13:8-12. For instance cessationist Robert Thomas speaks of “the relative maturity that is implied in the illustration of v. 11 as well as the absolute maturity that is depicted in v. 12” (Robert L. Thomas, “Tongues...Will Cease,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, Vol 17:2 (1974), p. 86, Galaxie Software). Twenty years later Thomas cited Robertson and Plummer as affirming that the verb *kathvrghka* (“I *desisted* childish things”) is a relative maturity such that the desisting *recurs* with each new level of relative maturity (see Robert L. Thomas, “1Cor 13:11 Revisited: An Exegetical Update,” *Masters Seminary Journal*, Vol 4:2 (1993), pp. 187-203).

Virtually quoting Thomas verbatim, cessationist Farnell postulates a “relative maturity implied by the illustration in verse 11 as well as the absolute maturity depicted in verse 12” (F. David Farnell, “When Will the Gift of Prophecy Cease?” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 150:598 (1993), p. 195, Galaxie Software). Again, “In verse 11, a relative maturity is signified, while verse 12 indicates an absolute maturity...[The relative maturity] is constantly changing and increasing” (ibid, p. 193). Thus, “Pauline usage of [mature] never conveys the idea of absolute perfection” (ibid.). Cessationist Houghton sees the child analogy the same way, namely as relative



maturity (relative perfection) continually in progress (Myron J. Houghton, "A Reexamination of 1Corinthians 13:8-13," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 153:611 (1996), pp. 349-350). JFB comments on 1Cor 2:6: 'Perfect' is used not of absolute perfection, but relatively to 'babes.'"

<sup>161</sup> Gordon Clark points out that since knowledge will never be abolished, 1Cor 13:8-12 must be understood as saying that *imperfect* knowledge is what will cease (Gordon Clark, "Wisdom in First Corinthians," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, Vol 15:4 (1972), p. 198. Others in apparent agreement with this statement are *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; *Albert Barnes Notes*; *William Burkitt's NT Notes*; *Jamieson-Fausset-Brown*.

<sup>162</sup> 1Cor 13:12 states, "For now [in immaturity] we see through a glass, darkly; but then [in maturity] face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known" (KJV). Fee mentioned the clear parallel between Num 12:8 and 1Cor 13:12:

[At 13:12] This Greek word [for "darkly"], which appears only here in the NT, literally means "in a riddle, or figurative way." Very likely this echoes Num 12:8 (LXX) where God spoke with Moses directly ("mouth to mouth"), not as to the prophets, to whom he spoke through visions or dreams (v. 6), "in figures," implying that they received "pictures" of the truth that were not as clear as the direct words to Moses (Gordon Fee, *God's Empowering Presence* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), p. 210).

*Albert Barnes' Notes* and *Adam Clarke's Commentary* favor the reading "seeing through a glass darkly." Barnes understood "seeing darkly" at 13:12 as perceiving with the obscurity of contemplating a puzzling riddle unsolved. Cessationist Robert Thomas regards the "seeing" and "knowing" as the revelatory experiences and knowledge of prophets (see Robert L. Thomas, "1Cor 13:11 Revisited: An Exegetical Update," *Masters Seminary Journal*, Vol 4:2 (1993), p 190).

Toussaint likewise understood 1Cor 13:12 as a parallel to Num 12:6-8 in that Moses was there construed as privy to crystal clear direct revelation in contrast to the relatively dark, obscure visions and revelations received by immature prophets. Hence Toussaint regards the immature prophets "seeing darkly" at Num 12:6-8 as paralleling the immature Corinthians "seeing darkly" at 1Cor 13:12. Maturity would provide the Mosaic experience of seeing God face to face. Toussaint also remarked that few scholars would deny that 13:12 anticipates the second advent of

Christ whence He will be seen face to face (Stanley D. Toussaint, "First Corinthians Thirteen and the Tongues Question," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 120:480 (1963), pp. 312, 315).

Zuck also takes 13:12 as seeing God face to face whence our knowledge and understanding will be heightened (Roy B. Zuck, "The Role of the Holy Spirit in Hermeneutics," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 141:562 (1984), p. 129).

Cessationist Houghton proposes a minor modification to Toussaint's observations, arguing that that "face to face" at 13:12, while indeed referring to Moses-quality prophetic revelation, is not necessarily a face-to-face *physical proximity*, although this distinction seems largely irrelevant to me, from the standpoint of experience, since we always see by the mind's eye, whether physical objects on the one hand or conceptual objects on the other (see Myron J. Houghton, "A Reexamination of 1Corinthians 13:8-13," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 153:611 (1996), p. 352).

<sup>163</sup> Robert L. Thomas, "Tongues...Will Cease," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, Vol 17:2 (1974), p. 82, Galaxie Software.

<sup>164</sup> Cessationists Thomas, Houghton, Farnell, Weaver, Bellshaw all admit that knowledge and prophecy at 1Cor 13:8-13 refer to direct revelations such as words of knowledge, and that the fullness of what is *in part* (ἐκ μεροῦ) anticipates a *quantitative escalation* of this direct revelation rather than a termination (see Myron J. Houghton, "A Reexamination of 1Corinthians 13:8-13," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 153:611 (1996), pp. 349-350; Gilbert Weaver, "Tongues Shall Cease," *Grace Theological Journal*, Vol 14:1 (1973), pp. 12-25; F. David Farnell, "When Will the Gift of Prophecy Cease?" *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 150:598 (1993), pp. 192-194; Robert L. Thomas, "1Cor 13:11 Revisited: An Exegetical Update," *Masters Seminary Journal*, Vol 4:2 (1993), pp. 187-203; William G. Bellshaw, "The Confusion of Tongues" *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 120 (1963), p. 151.

Subsequently all five professors cessationally deduce that the fullness of that revelation was either the NT canon or early-church maturity. It is a category mistake, however, to compare apples and oranges; how can the fullness of direct revelation be its cessation in virtue of a canon or maturity? It is self-evident, but nonetheless necessary to emphasize, that the fullness of direct revelation can *only* be the fullness of direct revelation.

<sup>165</sup> See Robert L. Thomas, “1Cor 13:11 Revisited: An Exegetical Update,” *Masters Seminary Journal*, Vol 4:2 (1993), p. 190, Galaxie Software. “When that which is perfect [or mature] is come, then that which is in part shall be done away” (1Cor 13:10, KJV). The “in part” is quantitative. Consistency forces cessationists to quantitatively translate the Greek word το τελειον throughout the NT as “the mature” or “the complete,” versus the qualitative translation “the perfect” taken by non-cessationists such as Gordon Fee, F.F. Bruce, Robertson-Plummer, H. Conzelman, and many others as Farnell documents - see F. David Farnell, “When Will the Gift of Prophecy Cease?” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 150:198 (1993), p. 192. After all, “the perfect” (understood as an eschatological perfection qualitatively unique to heaven) would imply that until heaven we continue to “know in part and prophesy in part until the perfect comes” – contrary to an early cessation of the gifts. Hence cessationists prefer the quantitative translation “the mature” which allows for relative maturity (i.e. quantitative differences in maturity), which in turn allows the cessationist to argue that the church or the NT canon became mature enough to obviate prophecy.

<sup>166</sup> Myron J. Houghton, “A Reexamination of 1Corinthians 13:8-13,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 153:611 (1996), p. 350, Galaxie Software, italics added.

<sup>167</sup> Robert L. Thomas, “Tongues...Will Cease,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, Vol 17:2 (1974), p. 88, Galaxie Software, italics added.

<sup>168</sup> Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., *The Charismatic Gift of Prophecy: A Reformed Response to Wayne Grudem* (Memphis: Footstool, 1989), p. 54.

<sup>169</sup> Why did Paul spend a whopping forty verses in one chapter (1Cor 14) elevating prophecy over tongues? In Dr. John Ruthven’s hermeneutic, tradition isn’t ignored but refined to mirror the biblical emphases. Thus since a huge percentage of the NT is charismatic in emphasis, ecclesiology should be likewise. After all, Scripture is a very poor instructor if it contains the wrong emphases. Ruthven comments on the Holy Pneuma:

The NT shows similar percentages [as the OT]. Of the 279 cases or so of the divine Spirit in the NT (pneuma), *the category of 'prophecy' dominates* (revelation 65 cases, revelation as OT scripture 10, inspired utterances 72, Spirit guided prayer 16, miracles 35 cases = 198 cases). Also, spiritual 'life' 33, dominant attitudes (faith, love, joy, peace, freedom, fellowship) 36, and the Spirit of God

acted upon 11 times” (John Ruthven, “Charismatic Theology and Biblical Emphases,” *Evangelical Quarterly*, Vol 69:3 (1997), pp. 217-236, italics added).

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/eq/1997-3\\_217.pdf](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/eq/1997-3_217.pdf)

Citing a wealth of scholars, Ruthven defines the Kingdom of God as a blessed and merciful rule feasible only for a gospel preached with miracles that exorcise devils, disease, and suffering. The only “gospel” known to Christ and His apostles healed the sick out of compassion, not just to accredit themselves. Storms noted:

The verb translated “to have or show compassion” (*splanchnizomai*) is used eleven times in the New Testament to refer to God’s compassion toward sinners, nine of which refer to Jesus’ motivation in healing the sick! (Grudem, Wayne. *Are Miraculous Gifts for Today?: 4 Views* (Counterpoints: Bible and Theology) (p. 321). Zondervan. Kindle Edition).

Thus at some point it become increasingly apparent that cessationist thinking *originates in experience rather than Scripture*. Deere writes:

No one ever just picked up the Bible, started reading, and then came to the conclusion that God was not doing signs and wonders anymore and that the gifts of the Holy Spirit had passed away. The doctrine of cessationism did not originate from a careful study of the Scriptures. The doctrine of cessationism originated in *experience* (Jack Deere, *Surprised by the Power of the Spirit*, p. 99).

The mentality is, “Since we don’t see the gifts abounding today, it was evidently God’s will to cancel them” – and then various arguments are constructed to support this assumption. A hermeneutic that never even considers faulting the church is a very dangerous one.

<sup>170</sup> Let’s briefly summarize the gift of tongues (1Cor 14). Apostolic church services were far more lively, dynamic, and spontaneous than today’s highly structured routines. As the Spirit gave utterance – recognized by 100% certainty – anyone could suddenly speak out a message (14:29-31). One must examine chapters 12 to 14 through this charismatic lens. 1Cor 13 introduces the three gifts prophecy, knowledge, and tongues at verses 1-2 and then matures them at verses 8-12 as part of prophetic maturity. Since not even the tongues-speaker understands the language (14:2, 14), it is probably either angelic (13:1) or dead, “Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret” (14:13, KJV). The gift of interpretation (12:10, 30; 14:5, 13, 26-28), detected by 100% certainty, elevates it to the status of a prophecy suitable for public proclamation to the entire assembly (14:5). Otherwise he should only utter these unknown syllables privately

to himself and to God (14:28), which is called praying, singing, or praising with one's heart/ spirit alone (14:14-18) and thus without the mind/ understanding (to use loose terminology). Only with the gift of interpretation, then, can he pray, praise, and sing *both* with his heart/ spirit *and* with his mind/ understanding (14:14-19). Pentecostal theologians would mostly concur except for the lack of 100% certainty in their epistemology.

Once the larynx has learned how to form new syllables, however, it probably retains this ability naturally. Thus the initial Spirit-inspired experience of a typical Pentecostal probably evolves into repetition. Although Paul would obviously prefer all utterances to be Spirit-inspired, would he discourage the quiet, private use of repetition when inspiration is absent? After all, Jesus warned, "When ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking" (Mat 6:7, KJV) – but then He proceeds to articulate a *repeatable* our-Father prayer (6:9-13)! Suppose I lift my hands in prayer today, and then tomorrow again. Is that vain repetition? Even in a room full of people one can utter words without actually addressing anyone. Vain repetition consists of actions and words mentally unaddressed to the Father (especially a problem for pagans who have never met Him), or *devoid of an intent to elicit a fellowship-response from Him*. He wants our friendship, not mere babbling. Otherwise repetition is generally fine. However, to assume that a tongues-based repetition automatically confers more blessings than conventional prayer verges on witchcraft. Here's a great example of repetition, and it wasn't tongues-based at all, "When Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed. When he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed" (Ex 17:11, WEB).

<sup>171</sup> Astonishingly enough, cessationist Houghton asserted precisely such in regard to 1Cor 13:8-12, namely that believers today comprehend truth better than Paul since he died before the "perfect" canon (see Myron J. Houghton, "A Reexamination of 1Corinthians 13:8-13," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 153:611 (1996), p. 353). But how can believers at large – especially immature believers – possibly know NT truth better than Paul? Most present-day Christians do not even know Hebrew and Greek! Few could even name the ten commandments!

<sup>172</sup> Toussaint rightly objected to any corporate-metaphor reading of 1Cor 13:8-12 that "verse 11 is not illustrating the [corporate] church" (Stanley D. Toussaint,



**“First Corinthians Thirteen and the Tongues Question,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 120:480 (1963), p. 313, Galaxie Software).**

**<sup>173</sup> Cessationist Gaffin doesn’t fit into the three camps. He writes, “To argue, as some cessationists do, that “the perfect” has in view the completion of the New Testament canon or some other state of affairs prior to the Parousia is just not credible exegetically” (Grudem, Wayne. *Are Miraculous Gifts for Today?: 4 Views* (Counterpoints: Bible and Theology) (p. 64). Zondervan. Kindle Edition).**

**Gaffin dismissed the whole passage (1Cor 13:8-12) as unspecific on when prophecy ceases, and approved White’s defense of his view (R. Fowler White, “Richard Gaffin And Wayne Grudem On 1Cor 13:10: A Comparison Of Cessationist And Noncessationist Argumentation,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, Vol 35:2 (1992), p. 173). Paul wrote:**

**For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall [cease] (13:9-10, KJV).**

**Gaffin construes prophecy as one possible *means* (“media”) to obtaining some knowledge. Thus he’s forcing us to read the above passage like this:**

**For we know in part, and we [know] in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall [cease] (13:9-10, KJV).**

**Hence the above passage isn’t asserting a ceasing of prophecy, concludes Gaffin. However, consider:**

**Flour is bad. Bread is bad. What is bad will cease when perfection comes.**

**Believe it or not, Gaffin’s hermeneutic is denying that bread is here said to cease, because bread is just one of several possible *means* (“media”) to obtaining some flour. Thus he’s forcing us to make an erroneous substitution for the bread:**

**Flour is bad. [Flour] is bad. What is bad will cease when perfection comes.**

**Thereby he removes bread (prophecy) as to dismiss the passage as unspecific on *precisely* when prophecy ceases, but does infer that it will have ceased at least by the time perfect knowledge comes (13:12). (Technically though, he has no right to infer *anything* definite about prophecy because he removed it). Based on other logic, he believes that prophecy already died with the apostles. While he shows remarkable ingenuity in managing to find a way to divest this passage of prophecy, the end result unacceptably destroys the set of triplets so carefully constructed in the passage.**

**1. Three fruits abide (faith, hope, and love). These remain.**

2. A babe has three immaturities (13:11) - speaking, thinking, reasoning. These need to cease.
3. A man has three maturities - speaking, thinking, and reasoning.
4. A baby Christian has three immaturities – prophecy, tongues, knowledge. These need to cease.
5. A mature Christian has three maturities – prophecy, tongues, knowledge.

Admittedly Paul was far more concise than the above - not every verse mentions each of the three elements. But such brevity is common for Paul and hardly warrants destroying his parallels. Admittedly his parallelism *seems* somewhat fabricated, because immature faith, hope, and love need to cease as well. However, since our reborn nature does indeed abide incessantly in perfect faith, hope, and love, he understandably availed of this perfection for his parallel-based literary strategy.

Gaffin regards imperfect, fallible revelation to be an oxymoron. He thinks that all genuine revelation is infallible. Yet the entire passage would seem to call his attitude into question. My explanation for fallible revelation is simple. Even though God is an infallible speaker, the sinful nature's thoughts can largely drown out and thereby distort His voice. What would be Gaffin's explanation? Presumably he would stick to his guns. He would have to conclude that in this life, while prophets did indeed get perfect, infallible prophecy, it was still imperfect in the sense of being of *partial quantity*. This destroys his program. What's the best fix for a partial quantity of a perfect reality? Abolition? More prophecy! Abolition might be a suitable option if prophecy itself were fallible, but this possibility Gaffin will not allow.

Both Gavin and continuationists incorrectly anticipate perfection. Paul was merely envisaging relative maturity without specifically alluding to the Parousia's perfection. Quantitative increases in our relative maturity gradually fix in-part experience. Such steady progress fits better with Paul's analogy of a babe growing steadily into a man as opposed to being instantly perfected at the Parousia. Moreover even heaven will be a quantitative increase of sorts since Yahweh will still want hymns sung in angelic tongues. The alternative to a quantitative, relative maturity is a *qualitative* replacement abolishing all three gifts. God won't gift us with knowledge in heaven? He won't guide any of our utterances prophetically or in languages? Paul affirmed that the gift of knowledge will quantitatively increase

instead of cease, “Now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known” (13:12, KJV).

<sup>174</sup> F. David Farnell, “When Will the Gift of Prophecy Cease?” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 150:598 (1993), pp. 191-194, italics mine.

<sup>175</sup> Powell made a similar argument, see Charles Powell, “Questions Cessationists Should Ask: A Biblical Examination of Cessationism,” Biblical Studies Press (1997),

[www.bible.org](http://www.bible.org)

<sup>176</sup> Gordon Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), p. 252.

<sup>177</sup> Fee stressed this parallel (Ibid.).

<sup>178</sup> “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God” (1Pet 4:11, KJV). This refers to prophetic utterance. *Albert Barnes’ Notes* on 1Pet 4:11 states, “The word rendered “oracles” (λόγια logia) means, properly, something ‘spoken’ or ‘uttered;’ then anything uttered by God - a divine communication - a revelation.” *Adam Clarke’s Commentary* finds an allusion to those who “spoke as they were inspired by the Holy Ghost.” The *Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Commentary* refers 1Pet 4:11 to speaking in the corporate assembly “as a prophet, or divinely taught teacher in the Christian assembly.” *The People’s New Testament Commentary* sees here speech “through a gift of the Spirit. He must speak *not his own words*, but speak as though they were God’s oracles, speakers of a divine message” (italics mine). *Vincent’s Word Studies* calls it “divine utterances or revelations.”

<sup>179</sup> See Gordon Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), p. 33. Students of Scripture should not be surprised to feel confused about charismatic terms such as grace, gifts, manifestations, ministries, and offices. Gordon Fee observed that Paul never intended to lay out a systematic theology of spiritual gifts (ibid. pp. 160-61). In each of Paul’s enumeration of the gifts, argues Fee, he only provided a sample employed to demonstrate the diversity of the Spirit’s charismatic manifestations.

<sup>180</sup> Farnell wrote four articles defending his anticharismatic, cessational views; F. David Farnell, “Is the Gift of Prophecy For Today? Part 1,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 149:595 (1992), pp. 277-304; F. David Farnell, “Is the Gift of Prophecy for Today?

Part 2" *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 149:596 (1992), pp. 387-411; F. David Farnell, "Does the NT teach Two Prophetic Gifts?" *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 150:597 (1993), pp. 62-89; F. David Farnell, "When Will the Gift of Prophecy Cease?" *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 150:598 (1993), pp. 171-202.

**181** The foundation of apostles and prophets? Gaffin seems torn on choosing a foundation:

In this church-house the apostles and prophets are the foundation...Christ is the foundation "already laid"...Their witness is the foundational witness to the work of Christ...Here is the matrix for the New Testament canon, for the emergency of a new body of revelation...With this foundational revelation completed, and so too their foundational role as witnesses, the apostles and, along with them, the prophets and other associated revelatory word gifts, [have disappeared forever] from the life of the church (Grudem, Wayne. *Are Miraculous Gifts for Today?: 4 Views* (Counterpoints: Bible and Theology) (p. 44). Zondervan. Kindle Edition).

Until he makes up his mind on which of these options is the actual foundation, one cannot evaluate his position.

**182** Examples of scholarship viewing the "foundation of the apostles" at Eph 2:20 as something laid down by the apostles rather than the apostles themselves: *Vincent's Word Studies* on Eph 2:20; *Albert Barnes Notes* on Eph 2:20; *Adam Clarke's Commentary*; *Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Commentary*; *John Wesley's Notes*; the *Geneva Bible Notes*; the *People's New Testament*; *Calvin's Commentaries*.

Although cessationists use 1Cor 15:1-9 to argue that Paul was the last of the apostles, he was merely numbering himself last on the *current* list of apostles to have seen the risen Christ. While this indeed confirms the need for each apostle to be a face-to-face witness of Christ, Paul's primary intent here, as Ruthven suggested, was simply to construe himself as last-therefore-least of the apostles, "For I am the least of the apostles" (15:9, KJV). See Jon Ruthven, *On the Cessation of the Charismata: The Protestant Polemic on Post-biblical Miracles* (Word & Spirit Press, 2011, Kindle Edition), Appendix II.

**183** "The generations to which the Reformation brought the gospel of justification by faith [alone] found it difficult to understand that sanctification is as much by faith [alone]" (Andrew Murray, *The Believer's Call to Commitment* (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1983), p. 85. On page 19

Murray urged that a second Reformation was needed because the task of unburying justification by faith had taxed the Reformers to such an extent that sanctification by faith remained unclarified and misunderstood. On the same page he warns us against basing our standard of sanctification on the Reformation. Throughout the book he sets forth Paul himself as our standard of what the Christian life is supposed to look like.

<sup>184</sup> Andrew Murray, *The Two Covenants*, from chapter II, “The Two Covenants: Their Relation,” italics mine, public domain,

[www.ccel.org](http://www.ccel.org)

<sup>185</sup> Andrew Murray, *The Spirit of Christ* (Springdale: Whitaker House, 1984), italics mine, pp. 192-93.

<sup>186</sup> Andrew Murray, *In Search of Spiritual Excellence* (Springdale: Whitaker House, 1984), italics mine, p. 108. The topic of this book by Murray is prayer for the “second blessing” in the Wesleyan sense of holiness. It is not that Murray wanted to limit Christian experience to only two outpourings (i.e. a first blessing and a second blessing); rather he borrowed the terminology of the Keswick and Holiness movements merely because it served his purpose of connoting crisis experience (*conscious* experience). The “second blessing” meant for Murray the *unmistakably conscious* experience of sudden divine possession to a degree somewhat remotely analogous to demonic possession (this is just an analogy of mine, please don’t read too much into it). He also referred to it as “the full blessing of Pentecost” augmentable by *further* outpourings, for he wrote, “Can the full blessing of Pentecost be still *further* increased? Can anything that is full become still fuller? Yes, *undoubtedly*” (p. 81, italics mine). Thus Murray’s view of fullness was like a smoke-filled container to which additional fillings of smoke can be added almost endlessly. Only in the next life will the believer achieve perfect fullness; until then more outpourings are always needed for maturation.

On that note, I consider the Pentecostal doctrine of “*The* baptism of the Spirit” to be one of the most frustrating and destructive doctrines of church history. By prefacing it with the word “The” (as though there can only be one such outpouring/immersion in a believer’s life), they pretend to have a biblically authoritative doctrine of unrepeatability, which discourages the pursuit of further outpourings. Let’s recall Christ’s present ministry. He *continually* petitions the Father for the



Holy Breath who is then released *continually* to the earth. What is our role? To mimic this ministry on earth. The Christian is to continually petition the Father for outpourings to be released (as preached Word) to unbelievers for their salvation, and to fellow believers for their sanctification – not to mention the outpourings needed for his or her *own* sanctification. Calvin realized that Pentecost's Spirit-baptism was for the Twelve neither their first nor their last, "for he had baptized his apostles [in the Spirit] before this; and he baptizeth all the elect thus daily" (*Calvin's Commentaries* on Acts 1:5, Galaxie Software).

<sup>187</sup> Andrew Murray, *The Believer's Secret of Holiness* (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1984), p. 207.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid, p. 57.

<sup>189</sup> Andrew Murray, *Absolute Surrender*, from the chapter "Separated Unto the Holy Ghost," italics mine, public domain):

[www.ccel.org](http://www.ccel.org)

<sup>190</sup> Andrew Murray, *The Believer's Secret of Holiness* (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1984), p. 199, italics mine.

<sup>191</sup> Andrew Murray, *With Christ in the School of Prayer* (Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 2001-05-28) public domain, from the chapter "The Faith That Takes."

<http://www.ccel.org/m/murray/prayer/htm/i.htm>

<sup>192</sup> Ibid, from the chapter "Have Faith in God."

<sup>193</sup> Ibid, from the chapter "The Certainty of the Answer to Prayer", italics mine

<sup>194</sup> Ibid, from the chapter "The Holy Spirit and Prayer." My one disappointment with Andrew Murray is his tendency to believe in a new covenant, as though NT saints are entitled to a higher spirituality than OT saints.

<sup>195</sup> Several NT verses allude to all the saints needing to hear God's voice (Jn 10:27, Heb 3:7, 15; 4:7). Eph 4:21 states, "If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus." *Vincent's Word Studies* commented on this verse, "*Him* is emphatic...it was *Him* that ye heard. Compare Jn 10:27." Almost verbatim *The Jamieson, Fausset, Brown Commentary* on Eph 4:21 stated, "The 'Him' is emphatic: 'heard Himself,' not merely heard about him." The *People's New Testament Commentary* on 4:21 finds here no "doubt that they had heard and

been taught by Christ.” John Wesley read 4:21 as “heard Him teaching you inwardly by his Spirit.” *The Matthew Henry Commentary* on 4:21 accepts, “have been taught by him, inwardly and effectually by his Spirit.” According to Charles Hodge’s *Commentary on Ephesians* at 4:21 it “does not mean to hear about him” but rather recalls what it means “to hear the voice of God or Christ.”

<sup>196</sup> Andrew Murray, *The Secret of True Obedience* (Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1999-9-29, v1.0), public domain, from the chapter “The Secret of True Obedience),

<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/murray/obedience.htm>

<sup>197</sup> See the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* on “obedience.”

<sup>198</sup> *Strong’s Hebrew Dictionary*. Andrew Murray extrapolated the fact that “hear” and “obey” are the same Hebrew word, “There is but one Hebrew word for ‘obeying voice’ and ‘hearing voice:’...It is when I learn the will of God, not in the words of a man or a book [i.e. the Bible], but from God Himself, when I hear the voice of God, that I shall surely believe what is promised”, since faith comes by hearing God speak promises – Rom 10:17 (Andrew Murray, *The New Life: Words of God for Young Disciples*, from the chapter “Obedience,” public domain).

[www.ccel.org](http://www.ccel.org)

<sup>199</sup> *The King James Concordance*.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid.

<sup>201</sup> The Greek word *hupakouo* literally means “to listen, to harken...as one who on the knock at the door comes to listen who it is” (*The Online Bible Millennium Edition Greek Lexicon*); cf. Acts 12:13; According to Strong’s Dictionary it derives “From G5259 and G191; to hear under (as a subordinate), that is, to listen attentively; by implication to heed or conform to a command or authority: - hearken, be obedient to, obey.”

<sup>202</sup> Living Water is a reality. Rev 22:1 states, “And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb” (KJV). The Lamb “shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters” (7:17, KJV). Note that “feeding them” implies food *and* drink as clarified by the reference to living waters. How can the waters be alive, unless the concept of Living Water be true? “The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of

water springing up into everlasting life” (Jn 4:14, KJV). “Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he of the Spirit” (7:38-39, KJV).

<sup>203</sup> The NT regards water baptism as an instance of regeneration. For example:

We are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life (Rom 6:4, KJV; cf. Gal 3:27; Col 2:12; Tit 3:5; Heb 10:22; 1Pet 3:21).

This passage is an exposition on the new life of regeneration. It’s not a discussion of some ritual *symbolizing* the new birth. It’s exceedingly difficult to explain away such passages. Was Paul trying to hopelessly confuse us? Bloesch rightly noted, “Bible scholars generally agree that the washing of regeneration [at Tit 3:5] refers to the rite of baptism,” (see Donald G. Bloesch, *Essentials of Evangelical Theology Volume 2: Life, Ministry, and Hope* (Peabody: Prince Press, 2001, reprint), p. 12). At issue here is Bloesch’s chapter “The New Birth” (pp. 6-30). In the same chapter he has a subsection entitled “Baptism by water and Spirit” (p. 11). Here he opens up by reading Jn 3:5 thus, “Unless a man is born of water *baptism* and Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” In support of this reading he cites Acts 2:38, Rom 6:3-4, Col 2:12, Eph 5:26, Gal 3:27, Tit 3:5, and Heb 10:22 (pp. 11-12), but he ends up with a position somewhat unclear. He seems to regard initial saving faith as a mere precursor to the full saving faith reached during water baptism. As a stout evangelical, Bloesch wouldn’t mix water with saving faith if the biblical data didn’t demand it. Later we’ll see a better reading of John 3:5, however.

In a book that was in part an attack on sacramentalism including baptismal regeneration, Dunn reluctantly conceded the exegetical soundness of baptismal regeneration. He writes, “Verse 4 [of Romans 6] indicates that the rite of water-baptism not only symbolizes burial with Christ, but also that it helps in some way to effect it” (James D.G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1977), p. 145). Dunn further conceded, “On the testimony of Rom 6 alone one would be justified in arguing that in Paul’s view God operates ‘through baptism’ and by means of baptism to effect the spiritual transformation which the ceremony symbolizes” (Ibid).

John Calvin discerned water baptism, not Spirit-baptism, at Rom 6:4, Tit 3:5, and Acts 22:16 (*Calvin’s Commentaries on Acts* 1:5).

<sup>204</sup> John 3:5 is usually translated, “Unless a man is born of water [hudor] and Spirit [pneuma], he cannot enter the kingdom of God.” In play here is a very special

grammatical construct imposing a restriction monumentally influential upon historic theology, namely that water and pneuma are coequally responsible for the new birth. So compelling is this Greek construct that the doctrine of salvific water baptism appeared as early as the apostle John's death, starting with Hermas (100 A.D.) then Justin Martyr (115 A.D.), and the Church Fathers including Tertullian (180 A.D.), Cyprian, Augustine, Irenaeus, Origen, Ambrose, Athanasius, Gregory Nazianzen, Basil and Cyril (see William A. Bevier, "Water Baptism in the Ancient Church Part I," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 116:462 (1959), pp. 23, 139-40).

In fact Alan H. Hamilton insisted that *all* the Church Fathers took "born of water and Spirit" to mean that baptism is mandatory for salvation (Alan H. Hamilton, "The Doctrine of Infant Salvation: Part 1," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 101:403 (1944), p. 347). Certainly the Catholic Church regarded it as mandatory.

What is this special Greek construct? Consider these two versions. The second one is more faithful to the Greek.

Unless a man is born of water and of Spirit

Unless a man is born of water and Spirit

In Greek, oddly enough, the effect of removing the second instance of the preposition "of" logically connects the two agents as coequals. This makes zero sense to non-Greek readers but that's how Greek works. Hoyt discusses the Greek construct:

There is just one preposition "of" used with "water and Spirit." The conclusion is a most important one. Since there is just one preposition governing the entire phrase, this points to the fact that the words "water and Spirit" are to be regarded as one thing, and not as two separate things. Both of these things joined together as one are absolutely essential to bring about the new birth (Herman Hoyt, "The Explanation of the New Birth," *Grace Theological Journal*, Vol 8:2 (1967), p. 18, Galaxie Software).

Linda Belleville's article is important (see Linda Belleville, "Born Of Water And Spirit: John 3:5," *Trinity Journal*, Vol 1:1 (1980), p. 129). With the same Greek construct foremost in mind, she demonstrated why all historic solutions including even present day proposals have failed to satisfy the verse. For example she dismisses reading "born of water" as "born of womb" because such an idiom for natural birth is nonexistent in ancient languages (not to mention modern languages, since nobody would ever refer to natural birth that way), and thus too

unlikely of a lingo for Christ's keynote speech on salvation, and because the rest of the NT never finds it necessary to mention natural birth as a prerequisite for entering the kingdom of heaven. Also the notion of two separate births natural and spiritual ruptures the unity of the Greek construct. So what is her solution? She wants to read 3:5 adverbially as “born water-ly and spiritually.” However, “water-ly” is an incoherent adverb, for what would it mean for us to do something in a water-ly way? One thing seems certain – at the very least it would entail doing it in a liquid fashion! Thus her attempt to dehydrate the verse is very confusing and certainly unconvincing.

Many evangelical scholars want to take water as a metaphor for Spirit. This is a desperate solution lacking cogency. To begin with, a hermeneutic that marks a single phrase as half-literal and half-metaphor spawns exegetical chaos. Secondly, nobody even talks that way. Suppose for instance I often use the word lion as a metaphor for my boss. I would never coin a half-literal and half-metaphorical phrase such as, “Today I completed all the assignments of the lion and boss.” Thirdly, the half-and-half approach violates the coequal status required by the Greek construct – either *both* terms are metaphors or *neither* is. Which is precisely why Herman Hoyt and Zane Hodges ended up with “born of water and wind” understood as two (*unjustifiably redundant*) metaphors for an immaterial Holy Spirit. However, Christ’s use of two separate words “water and wind” implies two separate (coequal) agents, which works out fine – for materialism – but it’s not a good fit for the indivisible God of immaterialism, and moreover verses 6 and 8 *literally* have us born of Spirit (same Greek word). Exegesis is doomed to chaos if even the titles of the Godhead can be used both literally and metaphorically in a single passage. Doesn’t make sense. Furthermore just as “man” is not a metaphor for “man”, “pneuma” (wind) is not a metaphor for the Holy “Pneuma.”

McCabe likewise recognizes the desperate need to solve this verse and consequently tries to defend Linda Belleville’s adverbial solution mentioned above (“water-ly”), but admits it highly implausible because, for example, adverbial readings of parallel passages such as Mat 3:11 are incoherent. Mat 3:11 has the same Greek construct as Jn 3:5, note the parallel:

Baptize you in Wind and Fire (Mat 3:11)

Born of Water and Wind (Jn 3:5)



The translation “baptize you in Spirit and fire” would ignite the disciples! Here again the Greek construct demands two coequal agents. Since materialism *obviously* affords the only seamless rendering, either Scripture employed the Greek construct just to mislead us or materialism is the truth.

Note: Sources for earlier statements include: Herman Hoyt, “The Explanation of the New Birth,” *Grace Theological Journal*, Vol 8:2 (1967), p. 20; Zane Hodges, “Problem Passages in the Gospel of John Part 3: Water and Spirit – John 3:5,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 135 (1978) pp. 212-19; Robert McCabe, “The Meaning of ‘Born of Water and The Spirit’ in John 3:5,” *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal*, Vol 4 (1999), p. 104.

To escape material water James D. G. Dunn farfetchedly proposed a hendiadys translated “born of the water of the Spirit.” Ervin objected to this rendering that a grammatically correct hendiadys yields either “born of watery Pneuma” or “born of pneumatic water,” both material. Ervin ruled out the former on account of Greek’s lack of the adjective “watery” (see Howard Ervin, *Conversion-Initiation and the Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1984). p. 145).

Even some of the scholars committed to salvation by faith alone regard “born of water” at Jn 3:5 as a reference to water baptism, without any clear resolution of the apparent contradiction. See for example *Bengel’s Gnomon of the New Testament* on Jn 3:5; *Cambridge Bible* on Jn 3:5; *Ellicott’s Commentary* on Jn 3:5; *Lange Commentary* on Jn 3:5; *Meyer’s NT Commentary* on Jn 3:5; *People’s New Testament* on Jn 3:5; *Vincent’s Word Studies* on Jn 3:5; *Wesley’s Notes* on Jn 3:5; *Albert Barnes’ Notes* on Jn 3:5. In support Barnes cites Act 2:38, Acts 2:41; Acts 8:12-13, Acts 8:36, Acts 8:38; Acts 9:18; Acts 10:47-48; Acts 16:15, Acts 16:33; Acts 18:8; Acts 22:16; Galatians 3:27.

<sup>205</sup> At John 3:5 the “born of water [hudor] and [pneuma]” is often linked to the water and pneuma of Ezek 36:25-27 because the Greek OT (Septuagint) has hudor (water) and pneuma as well.

Then will I sprinkle clean [Hudor] upon you, and ye shall be clean...A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you...And I will put my [Pneuma] within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes (Eze 36:25-27, KJV).

Examples of scholarship that tie the new birth of Jn 3:5 to the above passage include the *Expositors Greek New Testament* on Jn 3:5; *Albert Barnes’ Notes* on Jn 3:10; *Ellicott’s Commentary* on Jn 3:5; John Gill’s *Exposition of the Entire Bible*

on Jn 3:5; *Jamieson-Fausset-Brown* on Jn 3:5; *William Kelly Major Works Commentary* on Jn 3:5; *Lange Commentary* on Jn 3:5; *Matthew Poole's Commentary* on Jn 3:5; *Meyer's NT Commentary* on Jn 3:5; *People's New Testament* on Jn 3:3; *Pulpit Commentary* on Jn 3:10; *Vincent's Word Studies* on Jn 3:5.

<sup>206</sup> John 3:5 credits the new birth to water and pneuma (wind). And the new birth is pictured in the NT as a burial and resurrection. As a result, many evangelical scholars identify the pneuma/ wind of Jn 3:5 with Ezek 37 where God's exhaled Wind resurrects dry bones. Such scholars include Linda Belleville, Carl Armerding, Matthew Henry, John Gill, D.B. Garlington, Randall C Gleason, Donald Bloesch, the ISBE, Gordon Fee, Zane Hodges, and Daniel Block cited below.

Block argues that Christ's comment at Jn 3:8 about the "wind bloweth where it listeth" (KJV) is a *direct reference* to Ezekiel's Wind synonymous with the Holy Spirit (see Daniel Block, "The Prophet of the Spirit: The use of Rwh in the Book of Ezekiel," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, Vol 32 (1989), p. 40).

Amerding claims that Jn 3:5 is *undoubtedly* a commentary on Ezekiel's exhaled Wind (Carl Armerding, "The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 92:368 (1935), p. 440).

Bloesch calls God's exhaled Wind at Ezekiel 37 typical of Spirit-baptism (Donald G. Bloesch, *Essentials of Evangelical Theology Volume 2: Life, Ministry, and Hope* (Peabody: Prince Press, 2001, reprint), p. 7).

The *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* on "regeneration" states that Jn 3:5 is actually a "New Testament exegesis of Ezekiel's vision of the dead bones (Eze 37:1-10). It is the 'breath from Yahweh,' the Spirit of God, who alone can give life to the spiritually dead."

In the NT, says Gordon Fee, regenerating life "reflects Ezekiel 37, where the Spirit of God breathes on dry bones and they 'live'" (Gordon Fee, *God's Empowering Presence* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), p. 526).

For examples of other scholars that tie Jn 3:5 to Eze 37, see *Matthew Henry Commentary* on Eze 37:5; John Gill's *Exposition of the Entire Bible* on Eze 37:5; D. B. Garlington, "Romans 7:14-25 And The Creation Theology Of Paul," *Trinity Journal*, Vol 11:2 (1990), p. 232; Randall Gleason, "Paul's Covenantal Contrasts in 2 Corinthians 3:1-11," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 154:613 (1997), p. 77; Zane Hodges,

**“Problem Passages in the Gospel of John Part 3: Water and Spirit – John 3:5,”**  
***Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 135 (1978) pp. 218-19.**

**<sup>207</sup>Vincent’s Word Studies on Jn 1:14; Robertson’s Word Pictures on Jn 1:14;**  
***Expositor’s Greek New Testament* on Jn 1:14.**

**<sup>208</sup> The Word did indeed take on “the likeness of the flesh of sin” (literal rendering of the Greek at Rom 8:3 per Charles Hodge and JFB), but Jn 1:14 is saying more than that. The Word *became* flesh. Since Rom 7-8 uses the term flesh for our (material) sinful nature, it would have been inappropriate for 8:3 to have the Son become flesh, and hence it opted for “the likeness of the flesh of sin.” On the other hand this passage does show that the sinful nature has a physical shape – the shape of the human body/ flesh, in frank refutation of the notion of an immaterial sinful nature. Throughout Rom 7-8 the body/flesh is the sinful nature and thus we must “mortify the deeds of *the body*” (see 8:12-13, KJV). It is the *body* doing the evil deeds, not some immaterial mind. “Mortify therefore your members” (Col 3:5, KJV). *Newell on Romans* renders Rom 6:12 thus, “Let not sin, therefore, be reigning-as-king in your mortal body, that ye should obey the desires of it (the body).” The parenthetical “the body” is his insertion, not mine. John Gill likewise associates 6:12 with “the lusts of the body, or flesh.” Charles Hodge’s *Commentary on Romans* at 6:12 clarifies, “That is, to obey sin in the lusts of the body. Sin is obeyed in gratifying the lusts or corrupt appetites of the body.” This is no trivial concession from Hodge, for he elsewhere credits conscious experience to the mind alone, not to the body. In fact “the body is dead because of sin” (8:10, KJV) - physiologically dead? Spiritually dead! It needs a spiritual resurrection.**

**John Macarthur received some criticism for concluding at chapters Rom 7 thru 8 that the physical human body is the sinful nature – rightly criticized because ordinary atoms cannot sin - but he would actually be correct if he had merely situated a fleshy mind within the body. Rom 8 goes on to say that the needed resurrecting, regenerating “life” is dispensed to our mortal bodies (8:11). James 3:6 classifies the human tongue as evil. James nowhere says that an evil mind misdirects the tongue, on the contrary he argues that the evil tongue seizes control of the whole body. Verses 7 and 8 even place the evil tongue *in the category of living creatures* potentially eligible for taming. Isaiah’s experience drives the nail into the coffin, because the angel had to apply a live coal full of sanctifying,**

reviving Fire directly to his unclean mouth (Isa 6). Clearly our body/ flesh is our material sinful nature – if Scripture be permitted to have any say in the matter.

<sup>209</sup> Geisler recognized it as physical Light within Paul's eyeballs, arguing that Paul's companions did not see Christ because he alone peered directly into the Light-source (Norm Geisler, "The Significance of Christ's Physical Resurrection," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 146:582 (1989), p. 159). Similarly Culver argued that Paul saw Christ in ordinary space-time with natural eyes (Robert Duncan Culver, "Apostles and the Apostolate in the New Testament," [www.graceonlinelibrary.org](http://www.graceonlinelibrary.org), 2001).

<sup>210</sup> Plenty of passages imply the materiality of angels. For starters, Scripture calls them pneuma, and we've already shown both human pneuma and the Holy Pneuma to be material. Secondly, when God sends an angel into the *proximity* of men to speak to them, He thereby implies physical interactions such as sound waves, as opposed to some kind of magical remote telepathy from afar. Thirdly, plenty of passages associate angels with a concrete environment. Standing or sitting means physical contact with the ground even as an angel physically rolled back Christ's tombstone and sat upon it (Mat 29:2-4). Angels are sufficiently tangible to stand around the throne (Rev 5:6-11), strike Peter in the ribs (Acts 12:7), walk ahead for Peter to follow (12:9), draw a sword from a sheath (Jos 5:13; 1Chr 2:27), open prison doors (Acts 5:19), wear garments (Mk 16:5; Lk 24:4), ride horses (Rev 6:1-8), open sealed scrolls (Rev 6:1-8), carry weight-scales (Rev 6:5), sound trumpets (Rev 8:6ff.), play harps (Rev 5:8), hold bowls of incense (Rev 5:8-9), shout in thunderous voices (Rev 10:1-4), carry off the dead (Lk 16:22), be fettered by chains (2Pet 2:4; Jud 1:6; Rev 20:1) and rapture away our bodies (Mat 24:31). (Incidentally the fettering by chains was one of Tertullian's favorite arguments for the materiality of angels). In Ezekiel's vision of angelic cherubim "their [physical] feet were straight feet; and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf's foot...Their wings were [physically] joined one to another" (Eze 1:7, 9, KJV). When they flew he "heard the [physical] noise of their wings like the noise of great waters, like the voice of the Almighty, a noise of tumult like the noise of a host: when they stood, they let down their wings" (1:24, ASV). To fly is to swim within a physical atmosphere called wind or air. Throughout Revelation entities cry out in *loud* voices or *mighty* voices (e.g. Rev 1:10, 15; 5:11-14 6:1, 9-10; 7:2, 10; 8:13;



10:13; 11:12, 15; 12:10; 14:2, 7, 9, 15, 18; 16:1; 18:2; 19:1, 6, 17; 21:3). Voices can differ in loudness only in virtue of gradations in the magnitude of sonic energy. John never categorized heavenly voices as purely “in the mind” or “in the heart.” Certainly he knew the difference, for he documented that earthly Babylon “saith in her heart, I sit [as] a queen” (18:7, KJV). At one point “there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour” (8:1, KJV). Silence means the cessation of *objective* sound, the environmental cessation of sonic energy. On the last day “the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a [sonic] shout, with the [sonic] voice of the archangel, and with the [sonic] trump of God” (1Th 4:16, KJV), “for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible” (1Cor 15:52, KJV). In Isaiah's vision of seraphim, “each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly...[crying] Holy, holy, holy” (Isa 6:2-3, KJV). “Round about the throne, were four beasts full of [physical] eyes...each of them six [physical] wings about him...[crying] Holy, holy, holy” (Rev 4:6-8, KJV). Using wings both to fly and to shade the eyes from unbearable radiance is physical motility. John Fish rightly deduced from Isaiah's vision that the seraphim's wings not only facilitate flight but also shade their eyes from unbearable radiance (John H. Fish III, “The Commission of Isaiah,” *Emmaus Journal*, Vol 4:1 (1995), p. 51).

Ezekiel saw Christ's throne riding upon a physical crystal platform (Eze 1:22, 25-26; 10:1) mounted upon winged and wheeled cherubim. David and Daniel also had visions of Christ enthroned upon wheels of cherubim (Ps 18:8-14; Dan 7:9).

In order to be an immaterialist, one must disregard every piece of metaphysical data in the Bible in favor of heathen philosophy.

<sup>211</sup> The *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* on “glory”

<sup>212</sup> Augustine, NPNF Part 1 Vol 3 Book 2 chap 10. Here Augustine argues that since Adam heard His voice, heard Him walking, and hid from his face, what else but a physical Man did Adam see?

<sup>213</sup> Augustine, NPNF Part 1 Vol 3 Book 2 chap 6, Galaxie Software.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid.

<sup>215</sup> Paul H. Seely, “The Firmament and the Water Above Part I: The Meaning of *raqiaà* in Gen 1:6-8,” *Westminster Theological Journal*, Vol 53:2 (1991), pp. 227-241; Paul H. Seely, “The Firmament and the Water Above Part II: The Meaning of ‘The



Water above the Firmament' in Gen 1:6-8," *Westminster Theological Journal*, Vol 54:1 (1992), pp. 31-46.

<sup>216</sup> Paul H. Seely, "The Firmament and the Water Above Part II: The Meaning of 'The Water above the Firmament' in Gen 1:6-8," *Westminster Theological Journal*, Vol 54:1 (1992), pp. 40-42.

<sup>217</sup> John Wesley's Notes on Gen 7:11; *Adam Clarke's Commentary* on 2Pet 3:5; Paul H. Seely, "The Firmament and the Water Above Part II: The Meaning of 'The Water above the Firmament' in Gen 1:6-8," *Westminster Theological Journal*, Vol 54:1 (1992), p. 42. Seely cites Dillow, Whitcomb, and Morris as advocates of flooding by superfirmamental water (J. Dillow, *The Waters Above: Earth's Pre-Flood Canopy* (Chicago: Moody, 1981); J. C. Whitcomb, Jr., and H. M. Morris, *The Genesis Flood* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1961) 399, 404–5.

<sup>218</sup> Paul H Seely, "The Firmament and the Water Above Part I: The Meaning of *raqia* in Gen 1:6-8," *Westminster Theological Journal*, Vol 53:2 (1991), p. 239, Galaxie Software, italics mine.

<sup>219</sup> On Ex 24:10 see Grant and Coates in the *Online Bible Anthology of Commentaries*; *Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Commentary*; the *Matthew Henry Commentary*; *Albert Barnes' Notes*; *Adam Clarke's Commentary*; *Cambridge Bible*.

<sup>220</sup> Where did Christ's material body ascend if not to a solid throne? Kenneth Alan Daughters' defense of Christ's material-body ascension underscored many verses alluding to His direct upward ascent to God's right hand (Acts 1:9-11; Mat 26:64; Mk 16:19; Jn 6:62; 20:17; Acts 1:2; Eph 1:20; 4:10; 1Tim 3:16; Heb 4:14; 1Pet 3:22). See Kenneth Alan Daughters, "The Theological Significance of the Ascension," *Emmaus Journal*, Vol 3:2 (1994), pp. 163-179.

In his *Systematic Theology* Louis Berkhof likewise interpreted biblical geography as undeniably pointing our eyes directly upward to the heavenly city and downward to hell (e.g. Mat 3:16; 28:2; Mk 1:10; Jn 1:32-33, 51; 3:13; 6:62; 17:1; 20:17; Acts 1:2, 9-11; 2:34; 11:5; Rom 10:6; Eph 4:8-10; Phi 2:10; 1Th 4:16; Rev 5:3, 13; 11:12).

Mare recognized that in both testaments "heaven" or "heavens" pointed the eyes upwards towards the cosmos, citing Elijah's ascension in a whirlwind as an example (W. Harold Mare, "The New Testament Concept Regarding the Regions of

Heaven with Emphasis on 2Cor 12:1-4,” *Grace Theological Journal*, Vol 11:1 (1970), p. 10).

<sup>221</sup> Norm Geisler, “The Significance of Christ’s Physical Resurrection,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 146:582 (1989), p. 160, Galaxie Software.

<sup>222</sup> See *Robertson’s Word Pictures* on Luke 3:21, e-Sword free software; cf. *Vincent’s Word Studies* on 3:21.

<sup>223</sup> *John Gill’s Exposition of the Entire Bible*, e-Sword Bible software.

<sup>224</sup> *The King James Concordance* on Greek 4977 (verb) and 4978 (the noun form), e-Sword software.

<sup>225</sup> As noted by Reformed theologian Dr. Kim Riddlebarger. Adamantly opposed to trichotomy, she writes:

But while the theologians of Evangelicalism, following the historic precedence, overwhelmingly reject the notion of trichotomy, the popular teaching and literature of Evangelicalism abounds with trichotomistic views of human nature in one form or another (Kim Riddlebarger, “Trichotomy: A Beachhead for Gnostic Influences,” *RPM Magazine*, Vol 12:47 (November, 2010).

[http://thirdmill.org/magazine/article.asp/link/http:%5E%5Ethirdmill.org%5Earticles%5Ekim\\_riddlebarger%5Ekim\\_riddlebarger.Trichotomy.html/at/Trichotomy](http://thirdmill.org/magazine/article.asp/link/http:%5E%5Ethirdmill.org%5Earticles%5Ekim_riddlebarger%5Ekim_riddlebarger.Trichotomy.html/at/Trichotomy)

<sup>226</sup> See the King James Concordance on G2588.

<sup>227</sup> See the King James Concordance on H3820 and H3824.

<sup>228</sup> George J. Zemek, Jr. agreed with T. Sorg that the NT usage of “heart” coincides with the OT usage (George J. Zemek, Jr., “Aiming the Mind: A Key to Godly Living,” *Grace Theological Journal*, Vol 5:2 (1984), p. 210, Galaxie Software).

<sup>229</sup> Jeffrey H. Boyd, “One’s Self-Concept And Biblical Theology,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, Vol 40:2 (1997), p. 214, Galaxie Software. Similarly the ISBE acknowledged that the principal meaning of “heart” is the biological organ (see *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* on heart).

<sup>230</sup> See Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology Vol. III: Soteriology* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers), 2001, reprint), p. 35.

<sup>231</sup> Most evangelical scholars rightly equate the inner man entirely with the heart. See for example *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* on heart; *Vincent’s Word Studies* on Rom 1:21; *Albert Barnes Notes* on Job 12:3; *Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown* on Prov 4:23 and 1Ti 1:5; George J. Zemek, Jr., “Aiming the

Mind: A Key to Godly Living,” *Grace Theological Journal*, Vol 5:2 (1984), p. 209. In support Zemek cites scholars Wolff, J. Barton Payne, Paul Heinisch, Friedrich Baumgartel (TDNT), Johannes Behm (TDNT), and the Brown-Driver-Briggs Lexicon.

<sup>232</sup> Augustine subsumed volition under heart (see Ronald N. Frost, “Aristotle’s Ethics: The Real Reason for Luther’s Reformation?” *Trinity Journal*, V 18:2 (1997), p. 229).

<sup>233</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, article 368.

<http://www.christusrex.org/www2/kerygma/ccc/searchcat.html>

<sup>234</sup> See John Gill’s *Exposition of the Entire Bible* on Mat 15:11, 18; cf. George J. Zemek, Jr., “Aiming the Mind: A Key to Godly Living,” *Grace Theological Journal*, Vol 5:2 (1984), p. 215.

<sup>235</sup> Precisely the conclusion reached by the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* on heart as well as *Easton’s Bible Dictionary* on heart.

<sup>236</sup> Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology Vol II: Anthropology* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2001, reprint), p. 49.

<sup>237</sup> Trichotomists seize upon the phrase “spirit, soul, and body” (1Th 5:23), arguing that a list of three elements necessarily implies three parts. But actually they have a sub-list of three elements admitted to mean only one part, for they say that mind, will, and emotions only add up to one part (the soul). Thus they violate their own claim that a list of three elements necessarily adds up to three parts.

<sup>238</sup> Lewis Sperry Chafer, “Trinitarianism: Part 1”: *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 101:401 (1944), p. 19.

<sup>239</sup> Jeffrey H. Boyd, “One’s Self-Concept And Biblical Theology,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, Vol 40:2 (1997), p. 212.

<sup>240</sup> Norman Geisler, “In Defense Of The Resurrection: A Reply To Criticisms,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, Vol 34:2 (1991), p. 249.

<sup>241</sup> Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology Vol II: Anthropology* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2001, reprint), p. 49.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid*, p. 50.

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid*, p. 51.

<sup>244</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>245</sup> Jeffrey H. Boyd, “One’s Self-Concept And Biblical Theology,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, Vol 40:2 (1997), p. 208.

<sup>246</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, article 367.

<http://www.christusrex.org/www2/kerygma/ccc/searchcat.html>

<sup>247</sup> At conversion atonement seemed simple, but placing it under a microscope exposes complexity. The biblical language is slightly unclear and imprecise, partly for brevity. Consider Scripture’s assertion that Christ died for us. This is technically imprecise because His moment of death – the *cessation* of His suffering – is not what atoned for us but rather all the suffering leading up to it. Atonement wasn’t an event, therefore, but a process of suffering begun at least from the moment He emerged from Mary’s womb. Arguably it began before creation and is still ongoing today. Indeed our intercessory prayer is a priestly mediation that actually atones in the secondary sense of spurring Him on to continue atoning. Suppose for example my son asks me, “Where are you are going Dad?” I then respond, “I’m going out to wash my car.” My contribution is only secondary, because I actually just *pay someone* to wash my car. I’m the mediator for my car. I do wash my car, but only in a mediatory sense. Similarly Scripture asserts that Yahweh’s priesthood atones. In an important article, Freeman argued that the atoning efficacy of priestly mediation is *exegetically undeniable* (see Hobart E. Freeman, “The Problem of the Efficacy of Old Testament Sacrifices,” *Grace Theological Journal*, Vol 4 (1963), pp. 21-29). For instance Lev 4:35 states, “And the priest shall make an atonement for his sin that he hath committed, and it shall be forgiven him” (KJV). Moses’ intercessory prayer is counted as atonement at Ex 32:30, “Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the LORD [to pray]; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin” (KJV). The Hebrew word for “atonement” occurs about 102 times in the OT and is so translated about 73 times in the King James Version – each instance a clear, independent reaffirmation of sacrificial efficacy. A list of the 73 instances were copied here from the *King James Concordance* provided by e-Sword software: Exo\_29:33, Exo\_29:36-37 (2), Exo\_30:10 (2), Exo\_30:15-16 (2), Exo\_32:30, Lev\_1:4, Lev\_4:20, Lev\_4:26, Lev\_4:31, Lev\_4:35, Lev\_5:6, Lev\_5:10, Lev\_5:13, Lev\_5:16, Lev\_5:18, Lev\_7:7 (2), Lev\_8:34, Lev\_9:7 (2), Lev\_10:17, Lev\_12:7-8 (2), Lev\_14:18-21 (4), Lev\_14:29, Lev\_14:31, Lev\_14:53, Lev\_15:15, Lev\_15:30,

Lev\_16:6, Lev\_16:10-11 (2), Lev\_16:16-18 (4), Lev\_16:24, Lev\_16:27, Lev\_16:30, Lev\_16:32-34 (5), Lev\_17:11 (2), Lev\_19:22, Lev\_23:28, Num\_5:8, Num\_8:11-12 (2), Num\_8:19, Num\_8:21, Num\_15:25, Num\_15:28 (2), Num\_16:46-47 (2), Num\_25:13, Num\_28:22, Num\_28:30, Num\_29:5, Num\_31:50, 2Sa\_21:3, 1Ch\_6:49, 2Ch\_29:24, Neh\_10:33.

Of course a Hebrew scholar might object that “atone” strictly means “to cover” in which case perhaps we should not read too much into it. But what is being covered here if not sin? Freeman’s concerns are therefore warranted. And yet even Freeman struggled to escape the full force of these verses. His “solution” is to remind us of the obvious fact that the sacrifices secured forgiveness and daily cleansing by occasioning gospel-style repentance and faith. Admittedly repentance and faith *secure* forgiveness and daily cleansing, but they do *not* atone. Freeman’s solution would be valid only if these 73 verses had merely stated, “The priest shall make the sacrifice, and the offender will be forgiven.” Rather these verses state, “The priest’s sacrifice will *atone* for the sin whereby he shall be forgiven.”

Admittedly Hebrews insisted that the blood of bulls and goats cannot remit sin. It also *seems* to suggest that atonement occurs only where Christ’s blood is shed. Again, the language of Scripture is slightly unclear and imprecise. While it’s true that the blood of bulls and goats had no propitiatory value, the priestly mediation did atone. And Christ’s blood wasn’t His only contribution to atonement. *All* of His suffering contributed, including the bloodless agonies.

<sup>248</sup> Preterists regard the Second Coming as a past event. Dr. Ice explained, Preterists believe that they are compelled to take such a view because Matthew 24:34 and its parallel passages say that ‘this generation will not pass away until all these things take place’...Preterists contend that most of the biblical passages that I would see as future has already been fulfilled in the first century. R. C. Sproul has adopted this view in his recent book *The Last Days According To Jesus*” (see Thomas Ice, “Has Bible Prophecy Already Been Fulfilled? (Part One: The Problem Of Preterism),” *Conservative Theological Journal*, Vol 4 (2000), pp. 164, 170; Galaxie Software).

Dr. Ice stated (ibid, p. 172) that preterism stands principally on three verses (Mat 10:23; 16:28; 24:34).

<sup>249</sup> Jesus seemed to imply that his own generation would still be alive to see His second coming.



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So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled (Mat 24:33-34, KJV; cf. Mk 13:29-30; Lk 21:31-33).

Earlier we summarized how preterists attempt to solve this problem. How do traditional thinkers - those who are *not* preterists - deal with it? Do they imagine that God will reincarnate Christ's generation in the last days? Precisely to avoid such a conclusion, typically their proposal is to regard "this" generation as in fact meaning "that final generation." This is special pleading because everywhere else in the NT "this generation" means "this current generation" (Mat 12:42, 45; 16:4; 17:17; 23:36; Mk 8:12, 38; 9:19; Lk 7:31, 9:41, 11:29-32, 50-51; 17:25; cf. Acts 2:40). And in fact Christ *never* uses the phrase "that generation" anywhere at all. At any rate, their proposal renders the text like this, "Verily I say unto you, that final generation will not pass away until all those final things have been fulfilled." As Turner concluded in agreement with Ridderbos, this reading unacceptably divests Christ's words of all didactic value because it is too self-evident to reveal anything new or momentous (see David Turner, "The Structure and Sequence of Mat 24:1-41: Interaction with Evangelical Treatments," *Grace Theological Journal*, Vol 10 (1989), pp. 3-28). The word "Verily" *always* anticipates a momentous declaration (over 100 times in the NT) rather than a self-evident tautology.

Jesus knew the difference between "this" and "that." He knew how to use such terms to distinguish the proximate from the remote. Thus for example to distinguish His own city (this city) from another city, He refers to "that" city (Mat 10:14-15). Naturally, therefore, He would have said "that generation" if He had in mind a future one.

Moreover in those speeches Christ addressed the disciples as "You" indicating "You will see all these signs." Whenever He commented on *others*, the same speeches referred to them as "They." Therefore if he were referring to others such as "that" (final) generation, He would have said, "*They* will see all these signs." Instead He said, "When *you* see all these signs, know that the end is near."

As noted, David Turner refuted the recasting of "this generation" as "that final generation." What then is his own alternative proposal? "When ye see all these signs." He wants to limit this set of signs to events mentioned earlier in Christ's speech, and thus to any signs leading up to and possibly including the tribulation. Thus "this generation" would not actually be alive to see the *final* signs heralding

and including the second coming. This reading lacks fidelity to the text as well, however. Let's see why. The end is not instantaneous. Even though Christ's return will be sudden and visible like lightning, His gradual descent won't finish transpiring instantaneously. He *gradually* ascended (Acts 1:10-11) and will likewise descend. Thus there will be sufficient time for the Twelve to "lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh" (Lk 21:28, KJV). Look up to see what? The whole speech began with the Twelve's question, "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" (Mat 24:3, KJV). After discoursing on *preliminary* signs, Jesus is eventually able to address the question of the *final* signs toward the end of the speech.

And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory...So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled (Mat 24:30, 33-34, KJV).

He could have said, "This generation will live to see *some* of these signs." Instead He said they would live to see *all* of them, contrary to Turner's proposal.

The Olivet discourse is summarized briefly here. The three versions (Mat 24; Mk 13; Lk 21) are virtually identical in both content and sequence as follows. (1) Many will claim, "I am Christ." (2) Wars and rumors of war. (3) Nation rises against nation. (4) Earthquakes, famines, plagues. (5) Men seize/imprison you to testify before rulers. (6) Men betray men/you and kill (all?) you. (7) All nations hate you. (8) Gospel preached to all nations/end comes (*Matthew alone*). (9) "Abomination of desolation." (10) Judeans should flee to mountains. (11) Woe to moms nursing in this tribulation. (12) "They" (Jews?) shall fall by sword captive to all nations (*Luke alone*). (13) Jerusalem is trodden until Gentile times fulfill (*Luke alone*). (14) Heavenly bodies shake. (15) Christ returns.

From this I drew three conclusions. First, the twelve items common to all three versions - alike in both sequence and content - are probably in chronological order. Second, the three items *not* held in common (#8, #12, and #13) are possibly not chronological. Therefore the Gentile swording/ trampling of Jerusalem in items #12 and #13 could refer either to that of 70.A.D. or to that of the eschaton (Rev 11:2). Thirdly, given the uniformity on issue #9, there is probably only one *official*

“desolation,” namely Daniel’s eschatological “abomination of desolation” during the antichrist’s coming reign.

Therefore Jerusalem’s early “desolation” of 70 A.D. was not the “abomination of desolation” – it was not the official desolation at all. It was merely an *embryonic betokening* of it, a mere tribulation/ desolation *of sorts*. It might indeed be *mentioned* in the passage cited below (Lk 21:24), but is still not the official desolation. The following passage constitutes items #12 and #13 recorded by Luke alone.

And they [Jews? Christians?] shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled (Lk 21:24, KJV).

Let’s assume “Jews.” Here’s why this “fall by the edge of the sword,” though possibly having occurred in 70 A.D., could also take place in a future, post-sword eschaton fought with guns and bombs. Angels, demons, and Christ all wield physical swords (e.g. 1Chr 21:16, 27, 30; Rev 1:16; 2:12, 16; 6:4, 8; 19:15, 21) that judgmentally release the Spirit, demons, and plagues to either slay men or have them slay each other (6:4). The point is that death by physical sword isn’t limited to 70 A.D. – it could occur at any time in the future. (This is still a literal reading of the text because I have in mind literal physical swords). Those who prefer the 70 AD-reading will object, based on Mat 24:2, that the fall of the *contemporary* Jerusalem temple is in view. Actually Jesus merely told the Twelve: “There shall not be left one [temple] stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down” (Mat 24:2, KJV). Frankly it doesn’t matter *when* those stones plummet so long as they are *down* when the end comes. Let’s bear in mind that God retains options on how to fulfill a prophecy. For example He could resurrect that early temple, seen or unseen, just to fulfill the plummet during the “desolation” context in which it arguably (?) appears.

<sup>250</sup> Jesus blamed His own contemporary Jewish generation for executing *all* the prophets throughout Israel’s ancient history (Mat 23:35; Lk 11:50), as Stallard admitted (Mike Stallard, “A Review of R.C. Sproul’s Last Days According to Jesus: An Analysis of Modern Preterism Part II,” *Conservative Theological Journal*, Vol 6 (2002), p.192). Like most commentators, Stallard’s solution to “this generation” is to conflate all generations into one. Admittedly biblical genealogies may have *omitted* certain generations from their final tally, but they did not *conflate* multiple

generations into one. The only valid solution is to admit, on a materialist basis, that Israel is an everlasting generation.

<sup>251</sup> At least some of the Twelve will be alive on judgment day. “When they persecute you [Twelve] in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come” (Mat 10:23, KJV). How does Dr. Ice, a traditional thinker (a non-preterist) understand this verse? He basically assumes the conclusion yet to be proved, for he claims that this text parallels Mat 24 and is therefore wholly future, i.e., it’s not actually pertaining to the Twelve at all (Thomas Ice, op. cit., p. 173). The *question* is, does the immediate context permit a future outlook? The verse is dealing with persecution, and thus the point of the verse is to *encourage* the Twelve. It promises that some or all of the Twelve will *survive* the persecution, fleeing from city to city until Christ comes. He’s the Light at the end of the tunnel in other words. Thus the encouragement clearly indicated here is that at least some of the Twelve will see Him return *without* dying. Only reincarnation can explain this.

On other hand, there is a possible rebuttal. Does not Paul’s hypothetical speech at 1Th 4:15 serve as a valid precedent for reading the above verse as a purely hypothetical remark which, as such, was more likely to apply to a future a generation to the Twelve’s day? No, because 1Th 4:15 is *blatantly* and *obviously* hypothetical, whereas the debated texts, taken together, address the Twelve at such length and in such detail that a hypothetical reading is completely incompatible with hermeneutics.

Why do we say that 1Th 4:15 is obviously hypothetical? It reads, “we that are alive, that are left unto the coming of the Lord, shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep” (ASV). Here “We” pertains to any Christian alive anywhere in the world. Obviously Paul was *not* suggesting that every Christian would remain alive until Christ’s return. In fact Christians were often martyred without pause. The commentators are apparently unanimous that 1Th 4:15 speaks hypothetically.

<sup>252</sup> Jesus suggested that some of the Twelve would be alive at His Second Coming. “Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man *coming* in his kingdom” (Mat 16:28, KJV, italics added). The word “coming” in that verse is a powerful anchor for reincarnation because “coming” is a technical term throughout Matthew for

Christ's second coming (e.g. 24:27,30,37,39, 42,44,46,48,50; 25:19,31;26:64). Preterists regard this coming, seen inwardly, as a "spiritual" coming fulfilled in the first century (Dr. Ice, opt. cit., p. 176). A similar "solution" is the idea that *all* Christians inwardly see Christ coming in His kingdom. Both theories overstretch the language of 16:28 and overlook the vision's restriction to "some" of the Twelve. Plummer stressed this restriction in his *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Luke* (pp. 249-50). A third "solution" to 16:28, extremely popular, is to regard the Transfiguration as its fulfillment, but the problem here is that Transfiguration was clearly not a *coming* because He *was already there*. Dr. Ice admitted that "coming" means Second Coming but then invoked special pleading to equate 16:28 with the Transfiguration. This is not to deny the contextually obvious fact that the Transfiguration had 16:28 in retrospect, that it acknowledges 16:28 as a *foretaste* of the Second Coming, but the two should neither be conflated nor confounded. Hence there are only two possible solutions for 16:28, that is, two possible fulfillments of 16:28's promise that some of the Twelve would see the Second Coming. The first is that before tasting death, probably on Pentecost (viz. "Your young men will see visions"), several of the Twelve foresaw the Second Coming in a revelatory vision. The weakness of this solution is that, contextually, Jesus was apparently speaking of actually seeing His coming as a real-life event, not merely as a forevision. The best solution, therefore, is a reincarnation theory (explained a bit later in my document).

<sup>253</sup> Since Christ promised to return shortly (Rev 1:1), preterism concludes He already came back in 70 A.D. As we discussed in regard to Galatians, however, "promise" is the Bible's main theme. God speaks promises to encourage His people who then, on account of spiritual decline, usually proceed to *forfeit* these promised lands until the next life (as Hebrews warns). A good analogy is this. Suppose a father sets his children to do some chores all day Saturday. Near the end of the day, when they have almost finished the chores, he shouts to them from the first floor, "Be encouraged! Persevere! You're at the very end! I am coming soon with my reward!" But then the children rebel. They refuse to finish the work. Eventually the house gets dirty again, and they have to start the chores all over again on another Saturday. The time and date of the father's arrival was both *definite and foreknown* but nonetheless *postponed* as a result of disobedience.



254 John the Baptist was a fragment of Elijah's soul reincarnated (allowing for the rest of Elijah to return again in the eschaton, just before final judgment day, as we shall see). Some New Testaments call him "Elias." Twice Jesus identified John as Elijah (Mat 11:14; 17:13). Objecting that John himself *denied* being Elijah (Jn 1:21) only overlooks the paradoxes of subdivisibility, for example I am Adam in one sense and yet, in another sense, currently distinct from him. God promised:

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse (Mal 4:5-6, KJV).

Commentators seem unanimous that Lk 1:17 identifies John as the fulfillment of this prophecy, that is, the man who would "turn the heart of the fathers to their children." The angel Gabriel affirmed that John would turn the hearts of the fathers to the children.

And [John] shall go before [the Lord] in the spirit and power of Elias, *to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children*, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord (Lk 1:17, KJV; italics added).

19 of 20 New Testaments consulted had "spirit" in lower case at Lk 1:17, undeniably signifying a reincarnation of Elijah. Moreover the Holy Spirit had already been mentioned two verses earlier and thus is not in view here. Some Bibles such as the NKJV and NVI note in the margin that the angel Gabriel, when speaking about John as cited above, was actually quoting Mal 4:5-6 (also cited above), which is an Elijah-prophecy originating at Mal 3:1, a verse later identified with John at Mat 11:10 as some Bibles note in the margin. The point is that the NT clearly identifies John as the fulfillment of some of the Malachi prophecies.

And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John...more than a prophet. For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee...And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come (Mat 11:7,9-10,14, KJV).

The commentators seem unanimous that "spirit" at Lk 1:17 should be lower case and, in their seeming effort to avoid the implied reincarnation, equally unanimous in their "solution" that Elijah merely typified John even as David typified Christ, but this Davidic typing only strengthens my case since the NT does not identify Christ as David but, on the contrary, as the *Son* of David (Mat 1:1; 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30-31; 21:9, 15; 22:42; Mk 10:47-48; 12:35; Lk 1:32; 18:38-39; 20:41;

Jn 7:42; Rom 1:3; 2Ti 2:8; Rev 5:5; 22:16). Whereas John is never called “son of Elijah” – on the contrary Christ actually twice called him “Elijah” (Mat 11:14; 17:13). And although it was natural for OT prophets to refer to Christ typologically as “David” *prior* to His appellation “Jesus,” it would be quite another thing in *retrospect*. Speaking in *retrospect*, Christ – in the context of a long speech designed to speak *literally* about John’s persona – called him “Elijah” (Mat 11:1-15). It’s also significant, to put it mildly, that Jesus expressed doubts about our willingness to accept this truth, “And if ye will receive it, this is Elias” (11:14, KJV). This hypothetical expression betrays “some suspicion of unbelief and hardness of heart, as though they would *not* receive it” (John Gill), as though they were “disposed to *reject* [it]” (Barnes), as though “there would naturally be an *unwillingness* to receive [it]” (Vincent). Why would we have difficulty receiving it if it were mere typology? *Anyone* can accept typology, but reincarnation is what Christians have difficulty with. That’s precisely why today’s commentators generally don’t entertain it!

Furthermore Malachi’s prophecy also has Elijah reappearing yet again *immediately* before the day of the Lord (Mal 3:1; 4:1-5), judgment day, as *Keil and Delitzsch’s Old Testament Commentary* on 3:1 admitted. K&D admit that 3:1 and 4:1-5 bespeak John as the Elijah to come, but K&D fail to explain how John will *also* – without a reincarnation involved somewhere in the process - function as the *immediate* herald of the final judgment day still pending. (Admittedly John heralded Christ’s *incarnational* coming to His temple, but that was a primordial coming, only a precursor to the terrible coming of Mal 3:1 and 4:1-5). Clearly a twofold Elijah must obtain for the whole prophecy to be fulfilled. Elijah’s main fragment will return as the immediate herald of judgment day. After all, an ancient consensus on Mal 3:1 and 4:1-5 held that Elijah would come back immediately prior to judgment day (my source on this is cited later).

Recognizing the need for a second Elijah available for judgment day, a few scholars, apparently as a desperate act to avoid reincarnation, have tried to broaden Malachi’s prophecy to a typological scope encompassing all prophets, thus dubbing all subsequent prophets “Elijah” typologically. In this way any prophet could fulfill the role of the Elijah yet to come. Commentators such as K&D argued vigorously against this exaggerated symbolism because the language and

context of Malachi's prophecy clearly focus on one special prophet foundational to the Jewish tradition of reserving a cup of wine for the one and only real Elijah. As Rabbi Mordechai Dixler noted, "The cup is called 'Elijah's Cup' to express our hope that our guest will be Elijah himself coming to inform us of Messiah's coming."

<http://www.jewishanswers.org/ask-the-rabbi-category/the-jewish-calendar-and-holidays/passover/page/4/?p=1178>

The two witnesses of Revelation are probably Elijah and Enoch reincarnated since they both clearly went to heaven without dying and Rev 11:3 "seems to point to two well-known characters, like Elijah, Elisha" (*Robertson's Word Pictures* on Rev 11:3). As *Albert Barnes' Notes* on Mal 4:5 documents, some very important scholars held that Elijah will reappear before the Second Coming, including Tertullian, Justin Martyr, Hilary, Ambrose, Hippolytus, Chrysostom, and more. Indeed, says Barnes, "In Augustine's time it was universal belief."

<sup>255</sup> Commentators postulate exceptions to the idea that man is appointed to die but once (Heb 9:27) since Scripture records many instances of dead men resurrecting in this life presumably to die again.

<sup>256</sup> The millennial reign (Rev 20:1ff) is a difficult passage. Although this issue isn't central to the topics covered in this book, I decided to record my current stance on it. Mostly I'm just hazarding a guess on how to best interpret the passage, based on Walvoord's treatment (see John Walvoord, "Is Satan Bound?", *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 100 (1943), pp. 497-513).

Amillennialism accepts no literal 1000 years but rather has the saints reigning, whether in earth or in heaven, since Calvary (*Ibid.*). Postmillennialists expect a transitioning of the present era into a 1000-year golden age of the saints reigning until Christ's return, in which case the world won't behold the Second Coming for at least another 1,000 years. Unacceptably both views bind Satan 1,000 or more years before Christ's Second Coming contrary to Satan's antichrist-influence effective *until* Christ's Second coming (*ibid.*). The third option called premillennialism postulates a 1000-year reign of martyrs (Rev 20:4) instituted immediately *after* the Second Coming. This is overwhelmingly the majority position and is taken here. Thus after the Second Coming (scheduled to occur soon, I'm guessing), Satan is immediately bound for 1,000 years, thereby allowing any (former) martyrs to reign freely for those 1,000 years.

Confusingly the passage calls this reign the “first” resurrection (Rev 20:5-6) even though, by this point in time, the saints at large have already been resurrected/ raptured as part of the Second Coming on the “last day” (Jn 5:25; 6:39-40, 44, 54; 11:24, 12:24; cf. Mat 24:30-13; 1Cor 15:50-54; 1Th 4:14-17) with its white-throne judgment (Mat 19:28; 25:31-46). Why did he call it the “first” resurrection, then? Apparently because it’s the first fully consummated resurrection in the sense of *landedness*. In other words the underlying assumption is that the human body is supposed to be resurrected unto life on planet Earth, and this is the first major group to so land. After the 1,000 years the rest of us will then get landed as well and thus, “the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished” (Rev 20:5). Here too the language is confusing because it seems to suggest that the rest of us won’t even be alive during the 1,000 years. Will we be in suspended animation? Although the first group apparently landed on the old earth, the rest of us will presumably land on the new earth (Rev 21:1-3).

Will Israel partake of the millennial reign? Since it’s aimed at martyrs, she is probably not specifically in view. Hard to say. Probably one can safely say that, for the most part, Israel’s New Covenant primarily refers to her eternal home on the new earth, together with the rest of the church.

After the 1,000 years Satan will be loosed to rally the evil nations against the martyrs reigning in Jerusalem (Rev 20:7-10). What evil nations? Wouldn’t Christ have already separated the sheep from the goats at the Second Coming’s white-throne judgment (Mat 25:31-36)? Certainly, in which case probably several instances of reincarnation feature here, perhaps involving Israelites, Gentiles, unused Adamic pneuma, their children, and the children of the reigning martyrs.

Wouldn’t the white-throne judgment of Rev 20:11-15 have already taken place at the Second Coming? Certainly, in which case 20:11-15 is either a non-chronological account of the original white-throne judgment, or a second white-throne judgment for the millennium’s populations, or the blurring of this distinction even as Scripture blurs all historic evangelism into the *single event* that “first the gospel will be preached to all nations. Then the end will come” (when in fact multiple preachings are necessary to take the gospel to the world).

Let’s switch gears briefly. Given that post-tribulationism seems taught at Mat 24:29-31, pre-tribulationism, with its odd left-behind concept and two separate comings of Christ, seems very questionable. Yet it is regularly asserted with

supreme confidence. Cults masquerade baldly problematical claims as self-evident truth. Here again, my primary complaint with the church is the pretense of ironclad knowledge and know-how. This pretense is a lie, and we cannot reasonably expect God to condone/ revive lie-based institutions. Even pastors who often disclaim, "Don't take my word for it, check out everything with Scripture," are nonetheless intimating, "I've already checked it out for myself. Examine it only for *your* benefit, not mine, because I know what I'm doing." None of us know what we're doing. All we've got are opinions.

<sup>257</sup> Personally I have met some Christians who, calling themselves Calvinists, insist on double predestination based on Rom 9:19-22. They believe that God created the non-elect only for the sake of condemning them, for His own glory. In reality the passage uses the term "wrath" clearly indicating sin and guilt. He only punishes the guilty.

<sup>258</sup> Phillip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church Vol III*, sec 130, public domain, [http://www.ccel.org/s/schaff/history/3\\_ch09.htm](http://www.ccel.org/s/schaff/history/3_ch09.htm)

<sup>259</sup> Ibid.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid.

<sup>261</sup> The *Catholic Encyclopedia* on the Athanasian Creed, <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02033b.htm>

<sup>262</sup> Phillip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church Vol III*, sec 132, italics mine, public domain.

[http://www.ccel.org/s/schaff/history/3\\_ch09.htm](http://www.ccel.org/s/schaff/history/3_ch09.htm)

<sup>263</sup> Robert Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, ch 13, Ephesians Four Group's free Bible Study Library on CD ROM.

<sup>264</sup> Phillip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church Vol III*, sec 130, public domain, [http://www.ccel.org/s/schaff/history/3\\_ch09.htm](http://www.ccel.org/s/schaff/history/3_ch09.htm)

<sup>265</sup> Robert Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, ch 13, Ephesians Four Group's free Bible Study Library on CD ROM.

<sup>266</sup> <http://www.copyright.gov/title17/92chap1.html>

<sup>267</sup> From Library of Congress website, <http://www.copyright.gov/fls/fl102.pdf>