

Theology

- Creation and *Fall*.
- The Sovereignty of God.
- The Trinity.
- The person of Christ.
- The Holy Spirit.
- Angels.
- Satan and demons.
- Man.

Creation

There is one God who is sovereign. He has total power in the entire universe. None can come against Him. He is not in battle against anything. No creature in heaven, or on earth, or under the earth can exist one moment beyond divine permission. God is the creator. He made all things, all creatures, all powers and all governments.

No creature can do the slightest thing in opposition to the will of God. The worlds were made through Christ, by whom He upholds all things by the word of His power (Heb 1:2-3). God created the heavens and the earth and all that is in them in six days and rested on the seventh day. This is where we get the period of a seven day week.

God said "let there be light" and there was light, before He made the sun. This indicates the futility of sun worship, or worship of any creature. While Genesis does not provide scientific details, it does provide statements of historical fact. The text in 2 Pet 3:8, "To the Lord a day is a thousand years," has no application to Genesis. Peter is speaking about God's long suffering, His patience in withholding punishment and does not make any reference to creation.

Genesis 1 is the chronological account of creation while Genesis 2 is a thematic account of the same event, not chronological or contradictory. This is Hebrew form, where a matter is introduced in one section and expanded in the next section. Most verses in the Proverbs follow this form, as do other historical accounts in the Old Testament.

Adam and Eve lived in harmony with the animals and none ate meat. Lions were not created to eat meat, as many animals today have large teeth, but are not meat eaters. Meat was given to man to eat after the Flood of Noah and therefore vegetarianism cannot be justified on biblical grounds.

This may have had something to do with changed conditions reducing the nourishment or range of plant life. Human life span was significantly reduced after the Flood, with a presumed increase in the variety of diseases. It seems apparent that it did not rain before the Flood and that instead a mist went up from the earth that watered plant life (Gen 2:5-6). This would result in a greater greenhouse affect, with no polar ice and very limited U.V. radiation from the sun with a denser atmosphere.

There are so many other possible differences regarding pre-Flood conditions, including a lack of oceans and mountain ranges and a possible dividing of continents after the Flood. We do not make conclusions about these things here, for each point in itself would require a lot of research into biblical language and other matters. God knew the *Fall* would occur and may have made provision for that in His original creation.

The Fall

In Genesis 3 it is clear that sin entered the world through Adam and Eve. There was nothing poisonous in the forbidden fruit, for all God made was "very good" (Gen 2:17, Gen 1:31). The *tree of*

the knowledge of good and evil was so-called because, if Adam and Eve chose to disobey God and eat from it, they were choosing to be their own judge in good and evil.

Satan introduced *Post-Modernism* here. Eve was invited to interpret God subjectively. The serpent said Eve would be as God, knowing good and evil. Adam and Eve would be wise in their own sight and decide for themselves between right and wrong. They would be their own god (Gen 11:4, Is 14:13, Dan 3:5, 4:30). This was how Jesus was tempted (Matt 4:3). He could make His own way, rather than obey the Father. Jesus chose obedience, not self-will.

As a result of Adam's sin, self became the centre of man's nature. This brought separation from God, physical death, sickness and the entire curse we see upon the earth today. Wars are the fault of man, not of God. God pronounced the curse, not Satan and God uses the curse as a catalyst to bring His people to Christ (Rom 8:20).

This means that fossils are not leftovers of animals that existed before the *Fall* of man. God did not use the process of death and murder to create life by a long cycle of evolution and self-centred *survival of the fittest*. That would have been inconsistent with His nature. God is good and His creation was *very good*.

Theistic evolution (the idea that God used evolution to create) is inconsistent with the gospel of Jesus Christ. If death did not come through the sin of Adam, there is no need for Christ to come to save us from sin by dying on the cross. Christ died for sin and thus to put death to death. He has the keys of hell and of death and is the resurrection from the dead. It is evident that Adam's sin resulted in physical and not just spiritual death:

1. Paul spoke of physical death coming from Adam, when speaking of the resurrection of the body in 1st Corinthians 15.
2. Adam's sin resulted in the curse, which includes death and sickness. The snake "eating" dust, the thorns, thistles, sweat, labour pains increased and the reduced age of man in the years ahead, are all aspects of physical death which followed as the *Fall* and curse impacted upon all creation (Gen 3:14-19).
3. God slew an animal to clothe Adam and Eve after they sinned. The physical death of the animal was a result of Adam's sin and foreshadowed Christ's physical death for our sin. Adam could see in the death of the animals the consequence of his sin. "The soul that sins must die." (Ezek 18:20).
4. Christ died physically for our sin. "He bore our sin in His body on the tree." (1 Pet 2:24).
5. Physical death is an enemy of God, so He did not use it to create the world slowly through evolution (1 Cor 15:26).

Some say that autumn leaves died before the *Fall*, because there were seasons (Gen 1:14). There was the sun, moon and stars, but the seasons mentioned here were only to measure day, night and years. Other seasons, as we know them today (including cold, heat, summer and winter), were not mentioned until after the Flood (Gen 8:22). We do not know what happened in those earlier days, or the biological and horticultural changes that followed and cannot make assumptions.

So God in His power created man and though He did not author sin or tempt Adam, He allowed the temptation, to give man free will. Adam had free will and in no way was his decision to sin controlled by God. It was Adam's free choice.

God chose to allow Adam to sin so that He could redeem His chosen people to be His church. In this way, salvation would be by God's free grace. This was God's plan before creation, since Christ was "crucified from before the foundation of the earth" (Rev 13:8).

Some ask, why does God allow wars and suffering? Because they are the result of man's sin and this condition has not changed. Why then does not God change this? He has, through sending Jesus Christ and raising Him from the dead, but man does not accept this.

This tendency of shifting blame to God is exactly what Adam did after he *fell*, "The woman *You* gave me, gave me to eat..." (Gen 3:12). The Bible so accurately describes human nature.

God as Governor

God's sovereignty continued after the Fall. Some have said that God gave the earth to man when He told man to have dominion before the *Fall* and when Adam sinned Adam handed the earth over to Satan. The Bible does not state this. Adam's dominion was under the Lordship of God, so long as he obeyed God's commands. The Psalms claim that "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof." (Ps 24:1). God still exercises full dominion over His creation.

Nebuchadnezzar claimed that he built Babylon by the power of his own hand and for that reason God removed from him His grace, to show Nebuchadnezzar that he was able to do nothing by himself. He lost his mind and ate grass with the cattle for seven years (Dan 4:34-37).

In God's time, his mind returned to him and Nebuchadnezzar's first thought was that "God reigns in all the earth and puts in power whomsoever He wills and brings down one king and raises up another." (Dan 4:32). Some say today that territorial spirits rule certain districts of the earth. God rules the earth, not the devil or anyone else. Anyone who claims someone other than God rules is "eating grass with Nebuchadnezzar".

God said concerning Pharaoh, "For this reason I have raised you up." (Rom 9:17). Pharaoh thought his wisdom and his gods gave him power, but it was God's sovereign will to raise up Pharaoh, that He might show His power to His elect people Israel. The book of Colossians says that all powers and dominions are subject to Jesus Christ (Col 1:16-23). This means spiritual powers and human governments. They are all in place by His permission and for His purpose.

Does this mean that God is responsible for the evil that they do? No, they do evil out of the depravity of their own nature. But God works all things together according to the counsel of His own will (Eph 1:5). He can even harden the heart of a sinner if it suits His purpose, as He did with Pharaoh (Rom 9:18).

Some have argued that Satan rules the nations because he is called *the prince of the power of the air, which now rules the sons of disobedience* (Eph 2:2). Satan does this by God's permission and under His supervision. The supervision of God over Satan's works is clear from Job, where God gave Satan permission to test Job, but under a clear limitation that Satan was not able in the least bit to resist (Job 2:1-6).

It is even seen in the Old Testament that God once summoned a lying spirit to take a wicked king in his own folly (1 Kings 22:22). 1 Cor 10:13 says there is no temptation that God will not oversee and give sufficient grace to escape. Jesus said not one hair falls from our head without our Father's knowledge (Matt 10:30). God has knowledge of every single event, no matter how minor, which means that He is everywhere at the same time.

Satan Does Not Rule

It is further argued by some that because Satan tempted Jesus saying that he ruled the kingdoms of the earth and could give them to Jesus, then this must have been true, or it would not have been a temptation. It is true that Satan had a fleeting power over the disobedient, those who follow the fashions of the world in their desires, but this is under God's sovereign control. Jesus was not fooled by this temptation and He knew that:

1. Satan is a liar.
2. Authority cannot be had unless the Father gives it.

What Satan said was not true. Jesus said to Pontius Pilot, "You can have no authority unless it is given you from above." (John 19:11). The Bible is clear; Satan has nothing that God has not given him and God can take it away without the slightest dispute. *Satan does not even rule fallen men.* Fallen man is ruled by the *law of sin and death*. He is governed and held captive by His own sin nature, under God's sovereignty.

Man Does Not Rule

Another belief in this area is that Christians are mini-gods and have creative power. Moses was as a god to Pharaoh in that he was God's mouthpiece; but Moses had no right to choose his own words. He spoke as God directed him. Even Jesus only followed and obeyed the Father (John 5:19).

Today, Christ leads His church through the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, "All authority in heaven and in earth is given to Me, go therefore and make disciples..." (Matt 28:18). If Jesus has *all* authority, it follows that there is no authority left for Satan or for us. The only authority we exercise as believers is by the will of God.

Some claim that by visualisation or confession we can create, but the blessings of God are of grace, not of works. For example, Abraham did not receive the Promised Land because he visualized it. God brought him to stand in the centre of the land to show him what He had already given him. He told Abraham to look to the east, west, etc and said all you can see I *have* given to you (Gen 15:18).

Abraham received the land as a gift, by grace, provided by God from before the foundation of the earth. We do not confess our own thoughts to create what we choose. We confess what God has done in us already. Paul said "we believe, therefore we speak" (2 Cor 4:13). We speak according to God's gift of faith, which is received by grace. God gives us the faith first and we speak what He is doing.

Similarly, when God told Joshua, "wherever your foot treads I have given you", it was because God had brought Joshua to the place that He had *already* given to Abraham and Israel (Josh 1:1-9). The key was not Joshua's foot, but what God had already given. The boundaries were already marked. If Joshua stepped out of those boundaries his *foot* would not have helped him much!

If God has not done it, speaking or visualisation will not achieve anything of lasting value. This is occultism. This was Eve's temptation, "You shall be like God.". Occultism is an attempt to use God's power apart from God's grace. Visualising and self-encouragement are good in the sense of planning and then working towards those plans, but this has nothing to do with God's power. They are just normal life principles that apply to everyone, Christian or not.

Using visualisation to manipulate the spiritual realm is Buddhism, not Christianity. Man and Satan can make their plans, but God is sovereign (Pr 16:9, 19:21). The gospel is a gospel of grace in what Christ has done through His merits. This is not to undermine faith, which "calls things that are not as though

they were” (Rom 4:17). When we take away God’s sovereignty and place man at the fore it is not faith.

God sees all and knows all, even the thoughts of our hearts. Nothing is hidden from Him (Psalm 139). He does not need counsel for He has all knowledge and wisdom. God is *omnipotent* (has all power), *omniscient* (has all knowledge) and is *omnipresent* (is everywhere). This corrects teachings on the devil and human will. This is the first lesson of faith. As God is omnipotent, there can be no other power.

With the Ancient is wisdom; and in length of days understanding. With Him is wisdom and strength, He has counsel and understanding. Behold, He breaks down and it cannot be built again: He shuts up a man and there can be no opening. (Job 12:12-14).

I know that, whatsoever God does it shall be forever: nothing can be put to it, or anything taken from it: and God does it, that men should fear before Him. (Ecc 3:14).

When Jesus gave Peter the keys of the kingdom, He was speaking of the gospel message (Matt 16:19). He was not speaking of Peter’s personal authority. The Pharisees earlier had the keys, but tried to keep the kingdom locked up, meaning they changed the message of God into works and kept the truth away from others (Luke 11:52). Then they tried to force their way into the kingdom without repentance (Matt 3:7-9, Matt 11:12).

When Jesus said whatsoever the apostles loose on earth is loosed in heaven He was referring to the fruits of the gospel in the forgiveness of sins (Matt 16:20). It was not their personal authority, but the Lord working with them through His gift of faith in the gospel. When people are set free on earth by new birth it is evident that their name is written in heaven. Jesus was speaking of the operation of Christ in the New Covenant.

The Trinity

God exists in trinity. The trinity is one of the mysteries of God. The Bible does not explain where God comes from. The Bible just claims that God “was, is and ever will be” (Rev 22:13). This is a mystery to the human mind. It cannot be understood intellectually. We believe it because the word of God declares it. The trinity is likewise a mystery.

“Let us make man in *our* image” is not the “royal we” as the British monarch uses, for the Hebrew monarchs did not use it. The phrase is not referring to God *and* the angels, for the angels were not involved in God’s creation (Gen 1:26). Man was not made in the image of angels. “Us” refers to Father, Son and the Holy Spirit.

The New Testament says that God made all things through Christ and Genesis 1 shows the Holy Spirit was present in creation. At Jesus’ baptism and again later in the discourse of Jesus in John 14-17 the Father, Jesus and the Spirit are all individually identified. The trinity means one God in unity, in three persons. It is not polytheism, for the three are one God. The creeds say *one substance*. The creeds speak of the hierarchy in the trinity. Jesus claimed the Father was greater than He (John 14:28).

The Hierarchy

This is a voluntary hierarchy, as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all equally God. The Spirit’s submission to Christ enables us to test the spirits, for any spirit that does not place Christ at the forefront is not the Spirit of God (1 John 4:2). *Trinity in hierarchy* serves to the benefit of the redeemed.

Jesus' submission to the Father likewise demonstrates to us a faithful heart. "*The Father is greater than I.*" (John 14:28). Jesus is called the true and faithful witness (Rev 3:14, where "beginning" means *Head*). He had no personal agenda. Jesus' prayer, "Not My will but Yours be done", shows the *fellowship* that exists in the trinity (Matt 26:39). It is not a relationship of control.

God is love and love cannot exist on its own (1 John 4:8). Love must exist in relationship and in sharing. Love must give. Just as we cannot love God on our own, but in fellowship with the church, so God always existed in fellowship. God must exist in trinity – in fellowship.

God's creation is for the same purpose, to share His life with others. He created because love must share. God wanted to share the fellowship He had in the *family of His Godhead* with His people. Creation and redemption are to the praise of His glory and to call us into *His eternal fellowship* (Eph 1:6, 1 John 1:3).

Jesus Christ

Jesus is also called the Word of God and the Son of God. Jesus (*Joshua* in Hebrew) was His given name when born in the flesh. He has existed eternally as the Son. There was never a time that He did not exist as the Son. He has always been God the Son. The Nicene Creed puts it, "begotten not made".

"Begotten" did not mean that He did not exist at some point in eternity past. It meant that He proceeds in relationship and hierarchy from the Father. The *Athanasian Creed* is better, as it states that Christ is the eternal Son, "co-eternal, co-equal". In the scripture, *begotten* also refers to coronation, in Christ's case now as a man for us, after His resurrection. It means to invest with power (Ps 2:7, a coronation psalm).

Jesus Christ contains all the attributes of the Father. Is 9:6 includes "everlasting Father" and "mighty God" among Christ's titles. His *non-use* of some powers in His incarnation was not due to inability. It was voluntary. His "not knowing the day nor the hour" was voluntary non-use, not lack of omniscience (Mk 13:32). Christ voluntarily limited His use of powers to do the Father's will.

Christ chose humility to taste all things we face, to be our perfect High Priest (Heb 2:16-17). His expression: "I could call a legion of angels" and the way the soldiers fell when they came to arrest him, show that He possessed all power in His incarnation and could have used it (Matt 26:53, John 18:6). He gave Himself up to die on the cross because it was the Father's will. No one took His life (John 10:17).

Mary knew that Jesus had power before His first public use of it at Cana, where He *began* to show forth *His* glory. This was the Father's time (John 2:11). He was not only ministering by the Spirit, but also showing forth *His* glory. Before this His power was hidden to the public. His debating at age 12 shows He was always Spirit filled. He was Son "about His Father's business" and Sonship is by empowerment.

The title "only begotten of the Father" means Jesus was the only man who came from the bosom of the Father and could show the Father to mankind (John 1:14, 18). The term does not mean that He was begotten before creation and prior to that He did not exist. The Son is eternal God.

I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. (Rev 22:13).

Phil 2:7 does not say that He laid His power aside when He came in the flesh, but that He humbled Himself in His use of it. To deny He had power is to deny Him His glory, which is what He came to show forth. If He did not have power, Satan could not have tempted Him to use it at will. We talk on this more below when speaking about His ministry.

Eternal Sonship

Some have said that Jesus was the Word and became the Son at His birth in Bethlehem. This is not true. He is the Word, but was also the Son in the Old Testament, in His various appearances, such as in the fiery furnace in Babylon. He has always been the Son.

There is debate whether the Old Testament appearances were of Christ or an angel, but He received worship on several occasions. Christ appeared to Abraham (Gen 18:3), as Jesus said in John 8:56. He appeared to Moses (Ex 33:11), to Joshua (Josh 5:14), to Samson's parents and to others in the Old Testament (Jud 13:20).

These are called pre-incarnate appearances of Christ. It has been said that the one in the furnace in Daniel was "like the Son of God" only (Dan 3:25), but this term "like" is also used in Dan 7:13 describing the ascension of Christ to the Father's right hand.

His title "firstborn" does not mean there was a time when He did not exist, as the Jehovah's Witnesses claim (Col 1:15, 18). (They do not witness to the Jehovah of scripture.) *Firstborn* is a designation for the *pre-eminent one*. It means the superior one, the heir of the promises, the one who overcame.

In the Old Covenant the firstborn was the heir, not the one who was necessarily born first, as seen in the cases of Esau and Jacob (Ex 4:22) and Ephraim and Manasseh (Gen 48:7, Jer 31:9). *Firstborn* in Hebrew usage means He is Lord and inheritor of the kingdom. It is not talking about an actual birth at any time in history or in pre-history. It means pre-eminent one.

The Nature of Jesus Christ

Christ was born in Bethlehem of a virgin. He took on a mortal body, yet without inherited sin. In His nature He is fully God and fully man, in one nature and one person. His nature became a controversy in the 5th Century, known as the *Nestorian Controversy*.

Theodor and his pupil Nestorius (386-451AD) championed Nestorianism, holding that Jesus had two separate natures, the human and the divine. They were trying to counter an overemphasis on Christ's divinity in the Alexandrian sector of the church, where Mary received the title *mother of God*. The Nestorians held that there was divisibility in His nature, so that Mary was mother only of His humanity.

Some saw Nestorianism as reducing Christ's divinity. Some have taken the Nestorian position further and claimed that Jesus was a man who became the Son of God at His baptism, when the Holy Spirit allegedly entered Him. Nestorians differed in their position, but their official position was not always heretical.

Nestor was part of the Antioch Syria School of theology. This school was humanistic. They were semi-Pelagian. They did not see human nature as fully corrupted. They emphasised the humanity of Jesus. They were literal in their interpretation of the Bible, in opposition to the allegorical hermeneutics of the ascetic monasteries of North Africa.

In their humanist approach they sought to demystify all mysteries, such as the nature of Christ. How the human and divine can be one person in Christ is beyond human reason. Demystifying God is really an attack on faith. Nestorians also applied this to the communion, holding that the bread and wine were symbolic only.

In the 16th Century Luther rejected this, saying we must not deny what the Bible states and that Christ is present in the communion in a mystery. Science wants to see the chemical structure of the bread and would demand the same in relation to the claim that "Christ is in us". For Luther, authority was in

faith. The trinity, the nature of Christ, election and even water baptism (which is just water, but also the answer of a good conscience) are mysteries (1 Pet 3:21).

Their humanistic approach lent the Nestorian movement to syncretism in their missionary endeavours. Syncretism means that the gospel is adapted in line with human meanings found in local cultures. Though the Nestorians reached many nations in mission, in most places they so mixed the gospel with human values for ready acceptance that the church eventually died out.

The Roman position on the Nestorian dispute was that Christ had the two natures in one substance or person. It is difficult to know what this means, unless it was a compromise between Nestorianism and the African position. It seems to us that Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man, in one nature, for how can a person have two natures? It is a mystery, but we accept it on faith, because the scripture teaches it.

And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached to the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory. (1 Tim 3:16).

The humanity and divinity of Jesus Christ are indivisible in one person and one nature. The Arians arose in the 4th Century, saying that Christ was only human. This claim was also made by the liberal heretics of the 19th Century, who denied the miraculous, the spirit world and eternal life. Much of the Western mindset today is rationalistic, extending from the humanism of Nestorianism.

Christ's Divinity

The scriptures claim that the Messiah is God. He has all the attributes of God, was eternal before creation and was the Creator and is the Sustainer of creation. Jesus Himself acknowledged this. Jesus also received worship (Matt 28:17). He was either a liar, insane, or the eternal Son of God.

...has in these last-days spoken to us by his Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds. Who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. (Heb 1:2-3).

There are many such passages in the Old and New Testaments that declare the completeness of the divinity of Jesus Christ. His taking on of flesh did not in any way, at any time before or after His birth, reduce His divinity.

As the Nestorians tended towards a rejection of His complete divinity, others tended towards a rejection of Christ's humanity. The earliest Gnostic philosophies held that Christ was a spirit only and did not come in the flesh. They did this because in their dualistic doctrine the flesh was evil. Their teaching concerning Christ was the spirit of antichrist that the Apostle John spoke of (1 John 4:3).

The antichrist is not a person, but a false doctrine that opposes the doctrine of Christ, chiefly that He came as God in the flesh to redeem us by His blood. John said whosoever denies that Christ came in the flesh is the spirit of antichrist. He said that there were many antichrists in the world and that we know antichrist is coming. That is, there would be more doctrines against Christ.

The Christians at Alexandria, the early Mary worshippers, tended to deny humanity. They were more Gnostic and denied the flesh. They claimed to focus on the spirit and sought to punish the flesh in asceticism in the monasteries. When the Reformation came many years later, Luther sought to dispute humanistic liberal theology (more *Antiochean*) on the one hand and allegorical superstition and idolatry (more Alexandrian) on the other.

The Baptism of Jesus

Edward Irving, a Presbyterian minister in 1830 in London, who many regard as a forerunner of modern Pentecostalism, emphasised the humanity of Christ in a similar way to the Nestorians. He claimed that without the baptism in the Holy Spirit, which he said Jesus received when He was baptized, He could do no miracles nor resist temptation. See *Edward Irving's Incarnational Christology* by David Dorries.

Pentecostal scholars today often claim that the experience of Jesus at Jordan is a pattern for all Christians. (See Roger Stronstad, *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke*.) They claim that all believers need to be filled with the Spirit in a second experience, after being saved and that this filling is to empower them for ministry. This is how they define the term *baptism in the Holy Spirit*.

However, reading the texts in Luke and John we see quite a different statement of purpose for the Spirit alighting on Jesus like a dove at His water baptism. John, for example, shows how Jesus was the Word with all power well before His baptism, even before birth (John 1).

The reason that Jesus gave why no public miracles were done before His baptism was not that He lacked power, but because His time had not yet come for Him to be revealed (John 2:4). Jesus, as God, could do miracles at any time He pleased. He could have come down off the cross.

The only reason why Jesus did not do miracles at any particular time was because He was submitted to His Father's programme. His will was in complete subjection to His Father's will by choice. It was voluntary inability, not a dynamic inability.

At Nazareth He "could" do no miracles because of their unbelief (Matt 13:58). This was not unbelief in miracles, but unbelief in the Son. Because they did not honour the Son, the Father did not lead Christ to show forth His power. This is not inability in terms of lacking power. When He said He could do nothing but by the Spirit, He was not saying that He lacked power. He confessed the opposite, "Before Abraham was I am." (John 8:58).

Jesus was always filled with the Spirit, because the Spirit proceeds from Him. He did not wait until Jordan to be filled with the Spirit. Jesus is a member of the trinity. There is never a time in which He is not filled with the Godhead. The position of both Roger Stronstad (referred to above) and Irving seems a little like Nestorianism.

It seems to us that another difficulty with Stronstad is that in drawing examples for Christians from before Pentecost, he does not acknowledge the distinction between the Old and New Covenants. He claims that Zechariah (John the Baptist's father) and others in the Old Covenant had the Spirit come upon them, or fill them, for service, which is true.

But saying that a *coming on of the Spirit* for ministry is a New Testament pattern is comparing apples with oranges. We cannot compare the two covenants. Whereas the *Spirit upon* was a term used in the Old Covenant for service, in the New Covenant it is used for initial baptism *for sonship and service*. After that there is a permanent indwelling of the Spirit in believers in the New Covenant.

Jesus ministered in the Old Covenant, fulfilling the law and thereby had the Spirit upon Him in the Old Covenant sense, though He could also have done anything at anytime as the Son of God. So *the Spirit anointing Him*, after He was about the age 30, could also have been associated with the law and therefore the Father's time. This is not a New Covenant pattern.

Jordan was His Annunciation

Both Luke and John say that the purpose of the Spirit alighting on Jesus at Jordan was not for His sake but for ours. "And I knew Him not: but that He should be *made manifest*, therefore I am come

baptising with water.” (John 1:31). The Father did three things to identify that Jesus was the Messiah to take away our sins:

1. He spoke from heaven, “This is My beloved Son.” (Luke 3:22).
2. He gave the vision of His Spirit alighting as a dove, to show that it is Jesus who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.
3. He sent John the Baptist to testify, saying to John ahead of time, “Him whom you see the Spirit ascending on as a dove, *this is He*. I sent you to *bear witness* of this to the world.” (John 1:31-34). This was *the sign* that the Father gave John.

So the purpose of the water baptism was *not* to empower Him who is eternal power, but it was for our sake: it was His manifestation to the world. “*Behold* the Lamb of God...” (John 1:29). That is what the text states. There is no mention, not even a hint, in the text that Jesus’ example is paradigmatic of a second experience for New Covenant believers.

When the Father said “This is My Son...” it was not for Him but for us. Jesus did not need reassurance. When He prayed for Lazarus He said, “I pray not for Myself, for You always hear Me, but for those who stand by...” (John 11:42). The purpose of Jesus’ baptism was so we could identify the one that the prophets said would come.

Pentecostalism is often similar to Nestorianism. It tends at times to see Jesus as a man needing help, not as God. This is a misconception of the Incarnation. Pentecostalism so builds up its *Pneumatology* (doctrine of the Spirit) that its Christology is left in tatters.

The Reformed position on Pneumatology is Christological. There is no separation. That is, the “Spirit proceeds from the Son.” (Nicene Creed). Jesus does not need to be baptized in the Spirit. Likewise, “He who has the Son has life.” (1 John 5:12). We receive Son and Spirit together.

Preparation For Ministry?

The baptism of Jesus is one of Pentecostalism’s strongest foundations for its theology. Jesus was about 30 years old, which under the law is the age required for priesthood (Num 4:3). He obviously was not receiving the Spirit for cleansing, for He had no sin, so it is thought that it must have been for ministry.

While it is understood by all that He could not have had sin, it is assumed by some that He did not yet have power. Others in the Old Testament received the Spirit *for ministry*, such as those who served in the tabernacle and the elders who helped Moses.

They were not born of the Spirit in the Old Covenant and so needed an external anointing, rather than simply a manifestation of the life of Christ already within. Luke speaks of the anointing in terms of *ministry* (Luke 1:67, 2:25), before the new birth and also speaks of Jesus’ ministry in this way (Acts 10:38).

In Acts 1:8 Luke continues the power theme for New Covenant Spirit baptism, but does not limit this power to service, showing that it includes “repentance and life” (Acts 10:15-18). Acts does not show a consistent *anointing for power* theme. It shows anointing for *cleansing and for power*. The Holy Spirit is seen consistently to work in regard to both these in one baptism.

Seeing *Spirit baptism* as power for service only and not in terms of New Covenant sonship is not the gospel. The meaning of *empowering* in the New Covenant is receiving power to become sons of God (John 1:12). The Greek word for *power* in John 1:12 is *exousia*, meaning “*ability, privilege, force, competency, freedom, power...*” (*Strong’s Greek Dictionary*).

This is the anointing (*enablement*) that John says we have all received (1 John 2:27). This power is not merely forgiveness, or authority, but a *dunamis* that changes the nature. We cannot be born again without *dunamis* (Greek for *power*, as in *dynamite*). “The gospel is the power (*dunamis*) of God to salvation...” (Rom 1:16). This gospel was received at Pentecost. See also 1 Cor 1:18 (*dunamis*).

Jesus went into the wilderness and fasted and then came out in the power of the Spirit. Some see this as a preparation for ministry and encourage others to follow the example for power. Nothing in the Gospels or the epistles of the New Testament supports this analysis. His power was not *derived* through works, but *resident* in Him as Son.

As God, the power was His own. As a Jewish man, He served under the law and was anointed by the Holy Spirit and gave Himself for our redemption. He was raised from the dead by the Spirit, but also through His own power (Rom 10:11) and by the glory of the Father (Rom 6:4). There is no doubt that the trinity act in concert in life of Christ. Concerning His life, Jesus said:

I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again...(John 10:17-18).

If we say that God anointed Him because He overcame temptation and fulfilled the law, besides the power that Christ already had as Son of God but submitted to the Father, then this also cannot apply to us in the New Covenant. Our anointing is freely given by the righteousness of Christ, through faith and it is not based on our own works.

Derived/Resident

The problem with viewing Jesus' power as something that He attained to, is that it leads to a *derived* (*acquired*) rather than a *resident* faith. We have power because of *who we are* (*identity*) in Christ, not because of *what we do* through works of religion. This is one of the major crossroads in Christian faith. Our Christology matters! It affects the whole way that we live our Christian life.

It is also said that since Jesus *grew in stature and grace* then He grew as a man and, therefore, did receive a new power at His baptismal encounter. This Christology emphasises His humanity. This position is oversimplifying the mystery of His incarnation. He is 100% man and 100% God, which in chemistry does not make sense. The Christological debate is a main issue in Pentecostal views today.

His fasting and temptation in the wilderness were not His preparation for ministry, but He overcame temptation *for us*, as the second Adam and Head of a new family of the redeemed. The first Adam fell and all fell in him. The second Adam did not fall and all in Him are not fallen. He was tempted as a man, but could not have sinned as God. Our salvation was never “in the balance” in His temptation. He was victor already.

The Spirit Upon Jesus

The details of Spirit baptism will be dealt with in a *subsequent* chapter (excuse the pun). In relation to Christology, the Bible often says that the Spirit of the Lord was upon Jesus (Matt 12:18, Luke 4:18, Luke 3:21). Some have pointed out a distinction between the Spirit coming upon us (power) and the Spirit filling or indwelling us (salvation). The terms are not a technical distinction: *filling* is also used for service in the Old Covenant (Ex 35:31, Luke 1:41). This *filling* though was not permanent for sonship then.

The term coming *upon* is used more in the Old Covenant for service (Num 24:2, Jud 3:10, 6:34, 11:29, 14:6, 14:19, 15:14, 1 Sam 10:6, 10, 11:6 and many more, including Mary in Luke 1:35), in which Testament Jesus also ministered. The term *upon* is also used for the *initial infilling* of believers in the New Covenant (Acts 1:8, 8:16, 10:43-45, 11:14-16, 19:6). *Upon* can also refer to the outward visibility of what is already within.

After the initial baptism in the Spirit, which Christians received, the term most common in the New Testament for works of power is “being filled with the Spirit”, speaking of the Spirit already within the believer (Acts 6:3, 7:55, 11:24). We know that the Spirit filling of sonship is permanent (2 Cor 1:21-22, 1 Pet 4:14, 1 John 2:27). The permanent filling is the “anointing”, power enablement for sonship and *charisma*. We cover this more in other chapters, especially looking at what *filled with* and *charisma* refer to.

The Work of Christ

Jesus taught the law in the *Sermon on the Mount* and at other times, to give us an understanding of our need of grace. He taught about the kingdom of God in parables, by using stories. His teaching was not subjective. He expounded the scriptures, giving a clear interpretation as to their intended meaning.

His teaching on the Spirit was prophetic, for it would not be fulfilled until His glorification, which was His death, burial, resurrection and ascension to the Father’s right hand. It was after this sitting down that the promise of the Spirit was to be given to the church (John 7:39).

The main work that Jesus did was His cross, burial and resurrection. He died to put away sin. Some have taught that He died only as an example of love and of turning the other cheek. This denies His atonement. Jesus died to do away with our sin.

The whole scripture testifies as to why Christ came, to put away sin and sacrifice once and for all by the offering of Himself and shedding His blood as a propitiation, that is, to satisfy the just requirement of God’s righteousness (Rom 3:25). As it is written, “The soul that sins must die.” (Ezek 18:20). Jesus came to take that death upon Himself for us.

The Resurrection of Christ

The resurrection of Christ was likewise in fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy, that His kingdom would follow His sufferings (Is 53:10-12) and David prophesying not only of the manner of His death by having His hands, feet and side pierced (Ps 22), but also of His resurrection, that His body would not be left to rot nor His soul in the grave (Ps 16:10).

Concerning the historicity of the resurrection, secular historians record Jesus’ miracles, teaching and death and the rapid growth of the church that followed and records claims that the church made of His resurrection. Historians record no evidence by the enemies of the church against the resurrection. Secular histories from the 1st Century that mention Jesus include Vellius Paterculus, the Fables of Phaedrus, Martial, Tacitus, Josephus, Statius and Quintillian.

If the resurrection is not true, then what happened to all the prophecies concerning Christ and why did all the witnesses give their lives attesting to the resurrection? All 12 disciples were martyred testifying to the resurrection. And why did the church grow so quickly and fill the Roman Empire and beyond in 40 years?

Jesus rose in the flesh. The same body that was crucified was also raised from the dead. He rose with an immortal body, the same flesh, but immortalized. He still had His wounds, but was able to pass through walls (Luke 24:36). He could eat for fellowship, but did not need that food to sustain His life in the flesh (John 21:15).

The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is a person. He is God. He is a member of the trinity, the Godhead. He communicates the will of God to His people. He is God’s *hermeneutician*, who shows us God. He leads, guides,

teaches and works miracles, all to point to Jesus Christ (John 16:13-14). He regenerates the believer into new birth and implants within them the new divine nature (Titus 3:5).

Christianity is impossible without the Holy Spirit. Christianity is not a dogma, or believing certain things. It is not fulfilling certain requirements, or living a certain way, or following a certain type of religion or faith. We can do all of this and not be a Christian.

Christianity is the Holy Spirit within, sometimes referred to as being filled with the Holy Spirit. Only those who have the Holy Spirit are Christians. He comes to bring Christ into the heart, as Paul said, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ lives within me and the life 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 2:20).

If Christ is not alive within us, we are not a Christian (Rom 8:9). It is quite clear that God undertakes every part of our salvation by Himself. If He did not, then it would not work. He Himself, in His Son, died for our sin. He Himself, by His Spirit, brings us into His family.

The Old Covenant

In the Old Covenant the Spirit was with God's people, but He did not live within them (John 14:17). He moved upon certain people, such as kings and prophets, to fulfil His purposes. But it was not until the New Covenant that the Spirit would indwell His people *permanently* and would indwell *all* His people (1 John 3:24).

John the Baptist was filled with the Spirit and others in the Old Testament were filled (Ex 31:3), but this was for temporary ministry. They were filled in terms of being enabled, but not in terms of the New Covenant, where God's people are born of the Spirit and are children of God. The term *children of God* is used in different ways in scripture. In the New Covenant it means to be born of the Spirit, to have the divine nature (Gal 3:26).

Before the day of Pentecost Jesus said to His disciples concerning the Spirit, "You know Him for He is with you, but He shall be in you" (John 14:17) and John said "... the Spirit... was not yet given, for Christ was not yet glorified" (John 7:39).

The New Covenant

Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has shed forth this, which you now see and hear. (Acts 2:33).

The Spirit was sent by Christ after His glorification at the Father's right hand, to represent Christ as head of His body, the church. The Spirit comes in the name of Christ and speaks of Christ and ministers to the heirs of eternal life the blessings of Christ. Jesus said, "He will not speak of Himself...He will glorify Me...He will take that which is mine and show it to you." (John 16:14).

The Spirit does this through the gospel. He is the voice of Christ, speaking the word of God into our heart, to bring us into new birth. He sustains our life daily, by dwelling within our flesh. The Spirit will never disagree with the scriptures. He is the author of them and the fulfiller of them according to the will of Christ and Christ according to the will of the Father.

The Spirit gives gifts to the church, such as healing or miracles, special faith or knowledge, to sustain us in the time of need. These are given for our good and the good of His body, by the will of the Spirit and not by our own timing, way or making.

He also gives ministry gifts to the church, for the establishment of the church in any generation. All these things are by His will and not according to method, which men can learn and pass on, so that people might live by the love and power of Christ within and not be corrupted by self-reliance.

Pentecostalism Defined

Pentecostalism can be defined as *Spirit empowered witness to Christ*. The Spirit works in us to continue the ministry of Jesus Christ. He is not representing Himself in His own ministry. His testimony and witness is of Christ and not of Himself.

Jesus Christ is the one who died for sin, who is the Saviour. The Spirit empowers the Christian, but is not the object of our attention. He points to Jesus Christ. We do not pray to the Spirit nor worship Him. He is God, but God has directed worship as follows:

The Spirit takes us through Jesus Christ to the Father. He enables true worship. Without Him we cannot see God or know Him and we cannot please God or worship Him. This entire ministry of the Spirit is not undertaken in His own name, but in the name of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the person through whom the Spirit of God moves. The Father has willed that we honour the Son (John 5:23, 6:28-29, 1 John 4:3, 5:11-12).

In Acts, the early disciples were witnesses to the resurrection of Christ and “so too is the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 5:32). Where we see a spirit witnessing of himself, it is not the Holy Spirit. The emphasis of every sermon in the book of Acts is Jesus Christ, His death and resurrection. (See Acts 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 10, for example.) The Spirit’s testimony is always, “Jesus Christ is Lord.”

Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you slew and hanged on a tree. Him has God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to them that obey Him. (Acts 5:29-32).

In Acts 2, Peter spoke two or three verses from Joel when people asked what had happened. He said the Spirit was given through Christ and then for the rest of the chapter he preached Christ. The way to minister the Holy Spirit to people is to preach Christ, not to preach the Spirit. The Spirit is given through the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the baptizer in the Holy Spirit.

Any ministry that purports to do miracles and does not have Jesus Christ at the centre of its message and His atonement for sin and His resurrection from the dead and His Lordship and His transforming power in the new birth to deliver people from the power of sin and make them holy and that does not lift up the word of God as truth by which He will judge men, is not of God.

God allows these false ministries to have some miracles, or the appearance of miracles, to test men’s hearts, to show whether they have received the love of the truth and follow the truth, or whether they follow signs to their own destruction (2 Thes 2:10-12). “Test the spirits.” (Josh 5:13, 1 John 4:1).

Angels

Angel means *messenger*. Angels serve the Lord. They also serve God’s people. We do not have charge over angels. We do not pray to them or send them on assignments because:

1. This would lead to angel worship and idolatry.
2. Jesus said we should ask the Father in His name (John 16:23). He did not say we should pray to angels.
3. The Bible says that God “gives His angels charge concerning us” (Ps 91:11). That is, God directs how angels minister on our behalf.

4. If we directed the angels' ministry it would not work well. It would depend on us remembering to give the right instructions at the right time and upon us knowing everything that needed to be done. We do not have this knowledge, so if we forgot to give an angel charge in any matter, our lives would be in danger.
5. Jesus ever lives to make intercession for us, that the ministry of the angels should be sufficient for our need (Heb 7:25). This ministry for us is part of the New Covenant, which God said He would undertake on our behalf (Heb 1:14, Ps 103:20).

Another aspect on which people sometimes speculate is the hierarchy of angels. It appears that Gabriel and Michael were angels to Israel during the Old Covenant, but the scripture does not give details on this. Some (John Wesley and others) have said that Michael was an Old Covenant term for Christ. A careful study would be required to say any more.

The Bible also mentions *seraphim*. However, the scriptures do not give a clear description of a hierarchy, nor of the roles of the various angels. We do not know the details on these matters and we are not supposed to know. The Lord is the one who directs their work.

There is also the "angel of the Lord" often mentioned in scripture. The identity of this angel could vary according to the text. *Angel of the Lord* just means messenger of the Lord, but the term could also mean a manifestation of the Son of God Himself in angelic form, sometimes called a pre-incarnate manifestation of Christ.

It appears that the angel of the Lord often received worship, as was the case with the angel that Samson's parents met (Judges 13:20), the angel that Abraham met and ate a meal with, the angel of God's presence that was to follow Moses, the *captain of the Lord's hosts* that Joshua met when crossing into the Promised Land and Melchizedek.

There is some mystery in these cases. The book of Hebrews says Melchizedek was greater than Abraham who had the promises (Heb 7:6). He is the only figure in Hebrews that is not said to be inferior to Christ.

Sons of God may sometimes refer to angels in various texts, such as Job 1. This refers to majesty or rulership duties in God's kingdom. Angels are sometimes called *elohim* in Hebrew which means magistrate. God is the supreme *El*. Some of these angels are obedient to God and some rebellious, though they are all under His power (2 Pet 2:4).

The term "sons of God" does not always refer to angels. It can refer to men, to whom God gave dominion over the animals, under His will. In the Old Testament, it could also refer to men who walked with God. It can also mean *magistrate*, or mean one directly formed by God in His image, as Adam was. The Old Testament usage is never the same as the New Testament usage, meaning *one born of the Spirit*.

It may be that "the sons of God" who cohabited with the daughters of men in Genesis 6 were not angels but the descendants of the godly seed from Seth cohabiting with ungodly women. God did not want the godly seed and the ungodly to intermarry. He kept the lineage of Christ pure until the promised Seed came. Abraham was particular about who Isaac married (Gen 24:3).

Part of the reason for the Flood was to keep the lineage of Christ faithful and ensure the promise was fulfilled. Jesus said angels do not reproduce (Matt 22:30). Claims of some today that they have been impregnated by demons are not true.

The Hebrew for "giants" (KJV) in Genesis 6 can mean *men of renown*. These were ungodly and oppressive rulers like Nimrod and the kings of empires that followed later. They have no connection

with Goliath. According to the text of Genesis 6 God judged men for their evil hearts, not demons or angels. Jude 6 (and 2 Pet 2:4) is likely a reference to the rebellion of angels and not to Genesis 6.

Tales that ascribe demons to Genesis 6 are built on Jewish *pseudepigrapha* books (books using a false name for the author), written during the Intertestamental period. The book of *Enoch* is one of these. It was not written by Enoch, but books like this are useful in describing Jewish thought before Jesus came. That Jude was inspired to use a phrase from the book of Enoch does not mean that the book of Enoch was inspired.

Enoch and other apocryphal writings were used by early Christian writers, supposedly assuming licence from Jude and following the asceticism of Judaism and this led to a lot of false theology being incorporated into early church history, which the Koran also adopted.

The *Council of Laodicea* (364 AD) rightly discredited the book of Enoch and it then passed out of general circulation until recent times. Some modern teachings are rebuilding on these Jewish ideas. (See www.jewishencyclopedia.com).

These Jewish ideas are harmful and we agree with Calvin's commentary on 2 Pet 2:4:

But as Peter mentions here but briefly the fall of angels and as he has not named the time and the manner and other circumstances, it behooves us soberly to speak on the subject...

And indeed they who curiously inquire, do not regard edification, but seek to feed their souls with vain speculations. What is useful to us, God has made known, that is, that the devils were at first created, that they might serve and obey God, but that through their own fault they apostatized, because they would not submit to the authority of God; and that thus the wickedness found in them was accidental and not from nature, so that it could not be ascribed to God...

In all, we are instructed to accept what the scriptures say without speculating beyond what is revealed plainly. God said to Moses that the things that are revealed are for men, but the things that are not revealed are for God (Deut 29:29).

Occult means *hidden*. When we speculate on endless questions and build doctrines on things that are not of major importance in scripture we are outside of the will of God. Paul said do not do it:

Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying *which is in faith: so do*. (1 Tim 1:4).

Satan

Whether we are talking about angels or demons one thing must be understood. Though the Bible makes some statements about these it does not describe a detailed theology of them. The main reason for this is that both angels and demons are under God's rule and are His business, not ours.

Our task is to look to Jesus and give no place to the devil (Heb 12:2, Eph 4:27). Notice that God did not warn Adam of the serpent, but only told Adam to obey His word. Obedience is all that is required by us.

The scripture does not speak of the origin of Satan, or directly of his fall. It is also not stated in scripture what demons are. They could be the angels that fell, but the scripture says fallen angels are kept in chains, unless these chains just depict their defeat and torment (Jude 6). Demons are not disembodied spirits from a so-called pre-Adamic race. The Bible does not once mention a pre-Adamic race of men, but calls Adam the first man (1 Cor 15:45).

When Jesus said, "I saw Satan as lightning fall from heaven" He was not speaking of the original fall of Satan but of His own victory (Luke 10:17-19). He was referring to the coming of the kingdom to set men free, to the victory of grace over the law and the casting out of the accuser because of the cross of Christ. When He went to the cross He said, "Now is the judgement. Now is the prince of this world cast out." (John 12:31).

Similarly, Rev 12:7-10 ("there was war in heaven") does not speak of the original fall and apostasy of Satan, but it depicts the victory of Christ on the cross and the New Covenant. It means "the accuser of the brethren has been cast out." (Rev 12:10).

And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, which deceives the whole world: he was cast out into the earth and his angels were cast out with him.

And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation and strength and the kingdom of our God and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. (Rev 12:7-10).

This passage is about the New Covenant: "Now is come salvation and strength and the kingdom of our God and the power of his Christ."

Satan's Fall

The Bible does not speak in detail about Satan's fall and apostasy. We can only infer it from the character of his temptations of others. He tempted Adam and Eve to rebel against God and take the ambition of ascending to be God.

It has been said that Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 refer to Satan's fall. We have some problems with this view. First, nowhere in the Bible does it say that we should interpret these passages in this way. We interpret some passages as referring to Christ, because the New Testament authors do so. But neither Jesus nor any of the apostles interpreted Old Testament scripture in this way with regard to Satan.

Secondly, we cannot see why we should interpret Isaiah 14 as referring to Satan when the passage specifically states it is referring to the king of Babylon (vs. 4) and to a man (vs. 16). The passage describes all the king of Babylon did in laying waste to the nations. It describes his defeat, as was fulfilled after the prophecy.

The name *Lucifer* (KJV vs. 12) is not a name for Satan. Lucifer was first used by Jerome in the 4th Century Latin Vulgate, but in the original language the word means *morning star* (Venus). This word (from the Septuagint OT) is used in 2 Pet 1:19 to refer to Christ. In Babylon they worshipped the stars. The king was also the priest of the gods and carried their names. Isaiah 14 is speaking about the fall of Babylon and its king.

The verses on self-exaltation refer to the king's pride (vs. 13-14). The Ziggurats and the *Tower of Babel* were high (Gen 11). The priests and king would ascend upon them to "heaven". His pride is clearly seen in Daniel 4 in the story of Nebuchadnezzar. He was worshipped. If the ambition to be God represents anything else in scripture apart from the king of Babylon then it is mankind in general. This was the ambition of Eve and Adam in the garden.

Ezekiel 28 is a similar passage about the judgement upon the kingdom of Tyre. The passage is about the king of Tyre (vs. 2 and 12). It specifically says he is a man (vs. 2 lit. *Adam*). In Hebrew, Adam means *man*. It says he is wiser than Daniel. This is referring to his self-estimation, pride. He has become rich due to his trade. God said He will bring an army against him. This exactly describes Tyre and its fate.

Ezek 28:11 refers to the glory and riches of the kingdom. "You seal up the sum" means the king had everything. He was in *Eden*, from a Hebrew word for *paradise*, with music and all that was beautiful. His wealth in terms of the precious stones of his palace and temple are mentioned.

The "anointed cherub" and "holy mountain" refer to the king's role as high priest and to his presumption in spiritual things. His "perfection" refers to the splendour of his kingdom and "the day that he was created" (made) refers to his inauguration as king. This is what it means in Ps 2. "This day I have begotten Thee" refers to Christ's exaltation to the throne. This is poetic language describing the king's pride.

The king of Tyre's main sin was the "iniquity of your traffic", meaning *dishonest trade* (NIV). Satan did not trade. The passage concludes by saying the kings of the earth and all the people shall be astonished when they see him brought to ashes upon the earth. This is speaking about the destruction of Tyre. If the passage alludes to anyone else it is to the pride of Adam and Eve (man in general) in our fall.

Many have said that Ezekiel 28 teaches that Satan was the worship leader in heaven before his fall. The passage does not state this. To interpret scripture in this way makes the whole of the prophets arbitrary. We study context and history for the meaning and intention of the words. If we study commentaries on these matters we must go back to those written before Dispensationalism (or modern works that avoid it).

Princes

The idea that a *prince of a kingdom* refers to a spirit power was popularised by Scofield and others. Texts such as Dan 10:13 referring to "the prince of Persia" are used to depict demons fighting angels in the heavenlies.

The KJV Bible uses the word *prince(s)* hundreds of times in the Old Testament, but not once does it use the word to refer to a spirit ruler of an earthly nation. It is used for the angel Michael and for Christ. Every other time *prince* is used for a ruler of a nation it is always a human ruler.

Daniel 10 was written after Cyrus king of Persia ordered the Jews to return and rebuild Jerusalem. When Daniel 10 was written, Cambyses was ruler of Persia and opposing the work in Jerusalem. Because books are separated into historical, poetic and prophetic sections in the Old Testament, we may read a prophetic book without connecting it to the correct historical book and the related time period.

Daniel 10 was written during the time of Zerubbabel, when the Jews were opposed while rebuilding the temple. Daniel was prophesying at that time, but so too was Haggai and Zechariah. The prophets were helping the Jews by encouraging them with the word of the Lord. The angel Gabriel was standing with them and helping them, just as he had come to stand by Daniel in Daniel 10.

We agree with John Wesley, that the prince of Persia was the human ruler of Persia named Cambyses who was opposing Israel. Gabriel went to stand with the Jews and was delayed in coming to Daniel. God permitted the delay. Daniel 10 is not about a demonic prince of Persia, or of the angel Gabriel fighting a demon power in the heavenlies. It is not teaching that Satan can delay God's purposes. Wesley's commentary on Dan 10:13 states:

Withstood me - God suffered (allowed) the wicked counsels of Cambyses to take place a while; but Daniel by his prayers and the angel by his power, overcame him at last: and this very thing laid a foundation of the ruin for the Persian monarchies...(Gabriel) remained to counterwork their designs against the people of God.

Gabriel stated that the prince of Greece was coming (Dan 10:20). This was referring to the human ruler of Greece. In Dan 11:3 he is called a mighty king and we know this was Alexander the Great. In Dan 9:26 Gabriel said "the people of the prince who shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary" and we know this was the human ruler of Rome, who destroyed the temple and Jerusalem in 70AD.

If Persia was ruled by a demon prince and not by God, why did king Cyrus of Persia command Jerusalem to be rebuilt? The concept that nations have different gods that strive for dominance is a pagan concept. All the Greek leaders thought in this way. It leads to people giving their attention to devils rather than to God. An incorrect understanding of these passages leads to several problems:

1. It causes us to focus on Satan rather than on Jesus Christ.
2. It causes us to see Satan as the evil one and not man and his own sin. There is no difference in evil between Satan and the heart of fallen man. The issue is man's own sin and responsibility, not Satan's. This is why Jesus came. When John said Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil, he meant He came to deliver us from the law of sin and death and the curse God had spoken because of sin (1John 3:8).
3. It causes us to have an unbiblical approach to revival and prayer.

The New Testament

During the Intertestamental period the term *prince* began to be used (sometimes) to denote spiritual powers. Apocryphal books cited many demon powers, whom the Jews blamed for their captivity under the various earthly rulers. They were wrong. The Jews went into captivity by the hand of God because of their sin, as the Old Testament plainly states (Is 50:1). This aspect of human nature, blaming the devil for human behaviour, is common.

The Pharisees said Jesus cast out demons by the power of a demon prince called *Beelzebub* (Matt 12:24). Jesus called Satan the prince of this world (John 12:31). Paul in his epistles refers to principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness and spiritual wickedness. These are metaphors for spiritual opposition, not descriptions of a spiritual hierarchy (Eph 3:10, 6:12).

These are metaphors because Satan does not have rule over man. It is man's own sin and the law of sin and death that rules him. Satan can tempt man, but it is man's own sin that holds him captive to his own desires.

Paul also said these princes were coming to nought (1 Cor 2:6-9). Some of these references are to human rulers and some to spiritual powers (Titus 3:1). The New Testament did not present these powers as rulers of nations, or as successfully hindering the salvation of souls. God allows them to deceive where men's hearts are not right with Him (2 Thes 2:11).

The New Testament shows God as sovereign and the gospel as God's power, which no demon can hinder (Rom 1:16). It shows the enemy as opposing the gospel and our faith. God allows this opposition so we might learn to be soldiers (Eph 6:10, 2 Tim 2:3). He calls us not to fight the enemy, but to have faith and obey the gospel.

Soldier is a metaphor for preparedness and steadfastness (1 Cor 15:58). We are therefore encouraged not to fight Satan, but to resist (James 4:7), be vigilant (1 Pet 5:8), to watch (Matt 26:41), to stand in faith and the power of God's might (Eph 6:11) and to give him no place (Eph 4:27) and call upon the Lord (Eph 6:18), all the while being absolutely assured of our victory in Christ (1 Cor 15:57).

God of This World

In whom the god of this world has blinded the eyes of those who believe not, lest the glorious light of the gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine upon them. (2 Cor 4:4).

When we read this we think immediately of the one thing that blinds men's hearts to the gospel more than anything else and that is the law. Paul combated this source of blindness in every one of his epistles. Take Rom 10:1-4 for example. The Jews were ignorant (blind) to God's gift of righteousness, because they went about to establish their own righteousness through the law. The law blinded them. The veil in the tabernacle was to prevent vision into the glorious presence.

Going back to 2 Cor 4:4 we look at the context. Paul compared his ministry to Moses, who put a veil over his face because it shone and Israel was afraid (2 Cor 3:13-18). They were afraid because the law spoke of their sin. They could not see the acceptance of God in Christ. Paul said that even in his own day the veil still blinded the heart of those who hear the law. The veil blinded them.

We will come back to the context soon, but first we will look at what some other commentators have said about 2 Cor 4:4. Chrysostom and Augustine claimed that this is the *God* of this world, meaning God. (The Greek Bible text does not use capital letters.) They did so due to the Arians of their day, who said that if this god is Satan, Christ can also be a small "g" god. So to defend the divinity of Christ, Chrysostom took this position on the verse.

His position does have some currency:

What then? Israel has not obtained that which it seeks for (for it sought it through the law), but the election has obtained it and the rest were *blinded*...as it is written, God has given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they cannot see and ears that they cannot hear, to this day. And David said, Let their table be made a snare and a trap and a stumbling block and recompense to them: Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see and bow down their back always. (Rom 11:7-10).

This is big "G" God. He is the one who makes them blind here. Even if we disagree with Chrysostom and claim with Calvin that 2 Cor 4:4 refers to Satan, we must concede that whatever Satan does here, he does because of God's permission, not by any rule or government of his own. The phrase "god of this world" is god of this *age*, possibly referring to this present evil age (Gal 1:4). So does this mean that this god is Satan?

We can see man, Satan and God working together in Paul's explanation to the Thessalonians. The condition starts with man: he does not receive *the love of the truth*. Then God sends man *strong delusion* (hands him over to his lusts) by empowering Satan's *lying wonders*, that they might be damned (2 Thes 2:9-12). Man is responsible for his condition, not Satan.

We now get back to our context in Corinthians. What was the issue Paul was addressing? We study this at different times through this book. In brief, the problem was the *super apostles* (false apostles) and the false spirituality in the church. They taught that the law makes us spiritual and gives life. Some taught this as a form of Gnosticism, meaning the law gives a special spirituality, which in turn gives us a special knowledge (*gnosis*), raising us to a higher level of "salvation".

This is the matter Paul is addressing in 2nd Corinthians 3 and 4. Paul countered that law leads to death and that grace leads to liberty (life and freedom from sin). They went to the law for spirituality, but instead it worked blindness and death because of the frailty and sin of man. It was the law that blinded the Corinthians, lest they should see the acceptance of Christ. So, is Paul saying that law is the god of this world?

We now have another look at the term *god of this world*. What is the god of this world? Well, it is what the world worships. It is what the world makes its god. What is the world's god? If we look at animism and witchcraft we will say that it is Satan. The world that does not believe the gospel worships Satan.

Is human worship that simple? Certainly we are speaking here of idolatry. "You shall have no other gods before Me." is the first commandment. Idolatry is the default setting of the heart of all fallen mankind. But what is the main form of idolatry? It uses images and bows down to them and says "you are my god". But these images somehow feed the ego of man.

They support the rebellion of the ego. So the pagan in the land of Canaan was not really loyal to his god, but sought what he could get from it for his own goals. There is no real worship of the god. It is self that is worshipped. Self is where the loyalty lies. Thus today the main images are sports cars and houses. These gods enhance the real god's image, man's image of himself!

Jesus said we cannot serve God and mammon. The word *serve* here means *worship*. We worship mammon for what it can do for *us*. So mammon may be called the *god of this world*. When people look at the *New York Stock Exchange* they say that the dollar is the god of this world. Is that why they put "In God we trust" on the back of the dollar bill, to remind the people of the truth? God help the nation that forgets (Deut 8:18).

The god of this world is *self*. It is his ultimate goal to be god. The god of this world says "Not Thy will, but *my* will be done.". This is where wars come from (James 4:1). This is the spirit that works in the sons of rebellion (Eph 2:2). The spirit of this world is, "I do it my way. I am boss. I rule." At the *Tower of Babel* they erected a temple to "make a name for themselves" (Gen 11:4). It was self-worship.

Satan knows this and he feeds it with lies. He manipulates the nature that he knows man has. He tempted Eve by making her a god in her eyes. He tempted Jesus by showing the rule that He could have. He tries to make Christianity into something that enables us to get what we want. So why are we in the church? Is it because of loyalty to Christ, or do we have our own plans?

Satan appeals to man by making man the centre, because that is man's centre. He knows man's tune. So in this sense he is *the prince of this world*. He sings man's tune and uses him to work against the will of God. In election campaigns we see this. One says, "These are the principles I run on.". The other says, "This is what you will get."

This ignorance and blindness is not forced on man by Satan. It is within man, "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." (Eph 4:18). This says exactly what 2 Cor 4:4 says, but in Ephesians Paul says the blindness is due to the nature of man.

The nature of man has blinded him. They could not understand Jesus' parables, not because they were in code, but because of sin. "Go and tell this people, Hear, but do not understand and see, but do not perceive. Make the heart of this people fat and make their ears heavy and shut their eyes, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and convert and be healed." (Is 6:9-10).

So if this term in 2 Cor 4:4, *god of this world*, is referring to Satan, it is not referring to any dominion he has. Col 1:13 says God has delivered us from the power (*rule, dominion*) of darkness. Some say

darkness is a dominion and therefore has a king. This is not a dominion of government, but of slavery or imprisonment. Man is held captive not but Satan, but by his own sinful nature.

Paul shows that which *rules* in Romans 5. "For if by one man's offence death reigned." (Rom 5:15) This is death reigning within the human nature. Man's sin nature rules him. "That as *sin has reigned* unto death..." (Rom 5:21) Sin, in the nature, reigns as king and brings the man into captivity.

Man's god is self. That is why salvation and sanctification are by grace alone. In Christ God brings down self by not allowing us any part in our salvation, lest we should boast. Grace deals a death blow to self. "Unless you deny yourself..." Grace fulfils this in our life through Jesus Christ.

"*Much more* the grace of God and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, has *abounded* to many." (Rom 5:15). "Even so *grace reigns* through righteousness to eternal life *by* Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom 5:21). Just as sin reigned and I had no choice, now grace *reigns* by the fruit of Jesus' work and has the final say in me! This is the wonderful gospel. It is absolute gift. It could not be anything else.

In Corinthians, what is Paul saying to the church? He is saying that there is a veil over man's heart because of sin. If he seeks salvation through the law he will have death. But if he receives the grace of God in Christ Jesus, the Spirit of liberty will set him free from sin as a gift. He is not saying anything about spiritual warfare. He is speaking of man's heart condition and the solution, the grace of Jesus Christ.

In context, Paul is saying to the Gnostics of Corinth, "You say the law gives you special gnosis, rather it is a veil to you. You have become deceived by it." This verse is a direct correction to the Corinthian problem. Just as any conversation you listen to, you always hear a part of it in the context of the whole discussion. Is Satan behind this deception? Most definitely he is. But it is the changing of the heart through Christ that solves it.

The law brings blindness to man because of his nature. Man's heart is self-righteous and so law is a force of idolatry in his life. It could even be called the *god of this world*. The preaching of the grace of Jesus Christ removes that blindness. Modern *self psychology* is incompatible with the gospel. Preaching national Israel also reconstitutes the veil, by substituting Israel for Jesus Christ, rebuilding what Christ destroyed (Gal 2:18, Eph 2:15).

A Theology of Satan

There is no theology of territorial demon spirits in the Old Testament. Scripture states Satan opposes the work of God, but that he can go no further than God allows at any time. We should pray to God and continue doing His will, as His purpose will prevail. The Bible does not teach that we should pray against demon powers, except when casting out an evil spirit by a gift of faith.

The Old Testament has very little theology on Satan. The Bible shows us that Satan is:

1. God's creature and therefore subject to God's dominion. (Is 54:16 says God created the destroyer to destroy, to "take out the garbage".) This text does not refer to Satan but to Israel's enemies, but the principal is the same. God created all beings (Heb 1:3, Col 1:16).
2. Responsible for his own sin and rebellion (James 1:13).

God is morally upright and in Him there is no darkness, or shadow of turning (1 John 1:5). The question of evil has been tackled by many. God said He cannot be tempted with evil, or tempt any man (James 1:13). God tested Abraham's faith, but did not tempt him to disobey (Gen 22:1). The

book of Job is the best statement on the reason for evil, which basically says two things: Do not counsel God on what we do not understand and God will always do that which is right.

Yet in His sovereignty, God allowed Satan to fall. He uses Satan to achieve His purposes, as God said in Isaiah, "I create good and evil, light and darkness." (Is 45:7). This is referring to enemy nations, by which God brought down other nations in judgement. In all this, God is never responsible for evil. God is not the author of sin, but only of judgement in His time and way.

Man

One of the goals of ancient Greek education was to "know yourself". This became central in Europe after the Renaissance. It is known as *humanism*. In Hebrew thought, the goal of education was to "know your God". God and His glory were to be the centre.

The key to knowing our self is seeing our self as God sees us. The prodigal son "came to himself". He saw the truth about himself. The truth about our self is only to be found in God's word. It is only when the Holy Spirit takes God's word and shows man who he is that he has any hope of salvation and change.

The key to knowing self is not to be found in anthropology or psychology, but in theology, i.e. through God's word. When Adam sinned, self became his god. Man today is self-centred. When we preach we should not preach about self-improvement because this panders to man's sinful nature. Self-centeredness should be confronted.

We preach death and new life through Christ. Jesus did not come to improve our lives but to replace our life with His. He said he who finds his life loses it, but he who loses his life for My sake and the kingdom, shall find it. Paul said, "I live, yet not I, but Christ lives within me." (Gal 2:20).

Self-improvement will not work. It will not improve our marriage relationship and it will not make us a better person. It will not get us to heaven. It is not what we need. If it was, then Christ died in vain. Self-improvement denies one of the very fundamentals of the Bible and gospel message – total depravity.

Adam

Man was made from the earth, which is the meaning of *Adam*. God breathed into Adam and he became *a living soul*, the emphases meaning a living being (Gen 2:7). John Gill notes that by this, man is "not only capable of performing the functions of the animal life, of eating, drinking, walking, but of thinking, reasoning, and discoursing as a rational creature" (*Gill's Commentary on Genesis*).

Adam was earthly. He was not in Christ. Adam had fellowship with God when He appeared to his flesh, but he was not heavenly. He was not spiritually dead, but as Calvin put it, "before the fall of Adam, man's life was only earthly, seeing it had no firm and settled constancy" (*Calvin's Genesis Commentary*). Paul explained it, "The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam a living spirit." (1 Cor 15:45). We who are in Christ are heavenly (Phil 3:20-21).

Total Depravity

Without an understanding of *total depravity* firmly established there can be no understanding of the real gospel. The *Fall* of man was complete. Self is utterly at centre stage, so that there is no goodness or righteousness in man at all. We may claim that while man has problems or bad traits, he is basically good, but this is not the testimony of scripture. Paul said:

And you has He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience: Among

whom also we all had our life in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of our mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. (Eph 2:1-3).

This text speaks on the nature of all men. The problem with sin is not that we have committed sin, but that any person who is not born again is by nature a sinner. The problem is nature, not any particular issue of or act of sin. All men are born sinners by nature. They are not a sinner because they have sinned, but they sin because that is their nature. It starts with their nature.

There is no goodness in man. Jesus said, only God is good (Luke 18:19). Even the good that man does is not good. There is some trait in the motive that makes the act self-serving. Is 64:6 says even our righteousness is as filthy rags. Jer 17:9 says the heart of man is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can know it.

So, even when man thinks he has done good he does not know his own heart. He cannot know his heart and cannot be his own judge. The heart of man is deceitful above all things, so that includes above even the devil. People are shocked by this. They like to blame the devil for their sin, but the sin comes from their own nature.

People do not need the devil's help to sin. They sin because it is their nature to sin. Man can invent things from his own nature that would surprise even the devil. There is no difference between fallen man and the devil in nature. Man will always flatter himself. He does not acknowledge the truth about himself.

This does not mean that we adopt a harsh attitude towards men. It does not mean that we have less compassion on man, or disregard the good that God can do through man, even when they do not know Him. It just means that we recognize the truth about mankind.

This does not mean that if we are born again we cannot sin. It means that with Christ us, not in our own resources, we can live free from sin by grace. It does mean that in Christ we cannot go on living a life style of sin.

Human Nature

People will contend vigorously for the goodness of man. Some call all humanity children of God. Natural men are not the children of God, but the children of disobedience and wrath. Only born again people are the children of God, who have received as a gift a new nature. People may say that society shows the goodness of man, even without Christ. People can live harmoniously in society for different reasons, but man's goodness is not one of these reasons. They live in harmony because:

1. Of the restraint of law.
2. Of the restraint of the Holy Spirit.
3. Of the restraint of common grace.
4. Because God is restraining man to fulfil His purposes on the earth.
5. Because it is in their own self-interest to do so.

Common Grace

The moment God lifts His common restraining grace, man reverts to nature. So if there is any goodness, any law and order, social graces and good inventions that help man, any sensibility in human government, it is because of one of the following reasons:

1. Man likes to maintain order, so he can fulfil his selfish desires and do business, prosper and live in peace.
2. Society, including unregenerate men, has been blessed by the church in that society.
3. God has provided a common grace in order to achieve some purpose He has in mind and not with any reference to the goodness of the men in the society.

Common grace can be defined as those blessings that God gives generally to society not attached to salvation or saving grace. These can be sound government, rain, inventions to improve life, peace and skill. Men can be pilots and fly, dentists can treat, or men can perform different skills from which all men benefit.

Generally, God in kindness provides these blessings to society, that all men benefit from and squander, even when they do not know God or give Him thanks. A Christian does not need a Christian pilot to fly him in a plane, but a person who has skill, to whom God has given common grace.

Lifting of Restraint

When we see carnage and ethnic cleansing in Bosnia or Sudan we are not seeing the work of Satan or the judgement of God, but we are seeing human nature with the constraining power of common grace lifted from it. At times God simply allows people to behave according to their own nature without restraint.

When we see the immorality of our nations on the television we are seeing God's judgement in the form of lifting His restraining power on society and handing them over to their own nature. Usually God gives society what they do not deserve because He is good. Man never sees that, but just congratulates himself.

Image of God

Adam was made in the image of God. This does not mean that God lived in Adam, as Christ lives within us. Adam was created with self-awareness and with a conscience, so man would not live mainly by natural instinct, as animals do, but would consider his environment and make judgments according to God's will. But in the *Fall* Adam lost his innocence and so, after the *Fall*, it is not correct to say that mankind is still in the image of God.

Since Adam's sin every one is born in *the image of Adam*. Mankind is no longer in the image of God after the *Fall*. After the Flood, God told Noah that man must not murder man, because man was made in the image of God. This is referring to the original Creation. It is not referring to man's state after the *Fall*. The command meant that man must honour the distinction between humankind and animal-kind. After the *Fall*, God testified of man:

And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth and it grieved Him at His heart. (Gen 6:5-6).

And the Lord smelled a sweet savour; and the Lord said in His heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done. (Gen 8:21).

Of Jesus, John said:

But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men and needed not that any should testify of man: for He knew what was in man. (John 2:24-25).

And Jesus said of man (the Pharisees):

You are of your father the devil and the lusts of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own: for he is a liar and the father of it. (John 8:44).

Jesus did not mean this just for a few Pharisees, but for unregenerate man. They are not in the image of God, but in the likeness of the devil. This is the truth about man. This does not mean that we are without hope. It just means that our hope is not in ourselves.

Some claim that after the *Fall* man is still in the image of God, at least in part and the *Fall* has only marred that image or corrupted it. They claim this is evidenced by the good things man does, by his judgement in fairness, by his conscience, by his deeds of charity, by his value of art and by his inventive abilities.

The truth is that if there is any good, it is due to God's grace, to God not handing man over to his own corruption. It is not due to any goodness within man. Anything man has, whether it is salvation, or just general graces upon his life and society, is a gift. None of it is due to man's own intrinsic (internal) goodness. We have nothing "we did not receive" as a gift (1 Cor 4:7).

David Born in Sin

When David sinned with Bathsheba and murdered her husband Uriah, he was forced to understand certain things about himself and about sin. The study of sin is *harmartiology*, from the Greek word for sin, to *miss the mark*. The Bible says all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, which means the mark of His righteousness (Rom 3:23).

Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned and done this evil in Your sight: that You might be justified when You speak and be clear when You judge. Behold, I was shaped in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.

Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part You shall make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean: wash me and I shall be whiter than snow...Hide Your face from my sins and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God and renew a right spirit within me. (Ps 51:2-10).

First David noticed in Psalm 51 that *he* sinned. He did not blame Bathsheba or someone else or blame the devil. Nathan said to him, "You are the man". (2 Sam 12:7). It was not because of the circumstances. It was not his wife's fault, or his enemy's fault. It was his sin. It was not because he was tempted. It was his fault.

David recognised his sin was against God and against God's righteous law, not firstly against a human social custom. He had not done wrong just in the eyes of man, but in the eyes of God. He saw God as a person. But, David saw further than this. David saw he sinned because he was a sinner by nature. He did not just see his mistake. He saw why he made that mistake. He saw it was an outworking of who he was.

David recognized he was born a sinner. He saw his nature was the problem and no training, education or self-improvement programme could help him. He saw what is vital to see, that only God could help him. He did not just say he did something wrong that he could correct. He went beyond that and he saw the real need, "I was shaped in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me.". He saw his own sin nature.

He recognized he needed God to cleanse him and create in him a new heart. He saw the most crucial aspect, that he could not help himself. This is what *coming to our self* means. It means realizing our real state. David could not help himself. God must change his heart and renew his spirit. He had to have a miracle.

Mankind as a Whole

In Romans 5, Paul shows that Adam's sin and death passes to all men who are born. All men in every race on earth descend from Adam and not one is born without inheriting Adam's sin and state of spiritual death and separation from the life of God.

Adam is the federal head of the human race. When he sinned all men sinned, for all were in his loins and seed when he sinned. He sinned as the representative of all men, just as Hebrews says in Abraham Levi paid tithes to Melchizedek, being in Abraham's loins (Heb 7:9-10). Therefore, all are born sinners from Adam. The Bible says "in Adam all die" (1 Cor 15:22).

In Romans chapters 1 to 3, Paul describes in detail the nature of all men, to give a foundation for gospel truth. If Paul preached the gospel by starting with this truth, so should we. Paul needs to be quoted at length here. The following describes the nature of every person born of Adam, the whole of mankind:

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations and their foolish hearts were darkened.

Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man and to birds and to four footed beasts and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth into a lie and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

For this cause God gave them up to vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature; And likewise the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one towards another; men working that which is unseemly, receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet.

And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful.

Who knowing the judgement of God, that they that commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them. (Rom 1:18-32).

As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understands, there is none that seeks after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable, there is none that does good, no, not one.

Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood; Destruction and misery are in their ways; And the way of peace they have not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes. (Rom 3:10-18).

These passages are not speaking of just *bad people*. They are speaking of mankind as a race, all of us, "against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men", not just some of it. These passages set the whole context for anthropology and theology, in regard to man and salvation. All practical theology in mission, evangelism and education must start with the truths in these passages.

Unable to Help Himself

If it is true fallen man is totally depraved it means we can do nothing to save our self. It means we cannot come to God. It means we are even unaware of our spiritual state. Being dead in trespasses and sins we are not even aware of our sin. In fact, we deny we are a sinner. We rather accuse God.

The depravity of man means because man is spiritually dead he does not understand his position before God and how to fix it. He cannot have faith in God because faith is a spiritual power and quality he does not possess. He is in a state of enmity with God, as the Bible says, the natural mind and man is enmity with God (Rom 8:7).

Natural man, while being religious, hates God, is in rebellion, is reprobate, is unregenerate and dead in his spirit and can do absolutely nothing about it and is even totally blind to his state. He is absolutely without hope, as Paul said:

Without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in this world. (Eph 2:12).

Having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is within them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given themselves over to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. (Eph 4:18-19).

Natural men born from Adam are unable to come to God. They cannot have faith because their heart is in a fallen state. Their heart is full of self, hate, fear and unbelief. They have no faith in God and cannot have it because of the state of their own heart in death.

Down through the centuries this has been orthodox Christian faith: man's total inability with respect to righteousness, faith, love and the keeping of God's commandments. Notice also in the Romans text that the only reason why society is not totally undone at any time is because God has not handed man fully over to what he deserves, that is, to what his nature really is (Rom 1:24, 26).

Freedom of the Will

Does mankind have freedom of will? First, God does not determine the choices we make. He commands that every person repent and believe the gospel, as that is God's righteous requirement upon all men. No matter the ability or inability of man, God's requirement and command will not change. He still commands all men to repent because that is His righteous requirement.

If any man does not repent God has not determined the will of that man not to repent. Man is free to choose as far as God is concerned. In fact he has been commanded by God to repent. God has not willed that any man not repent. God's will is that all men repent and come to the knowledge of the truth and thus He commands all men to do so.

This does not mean man has the ability to repent and believe the gospel. Man is born a slave to sin and as a slave he is not free. Just as any man born in the house of a slave is also a slave, so the man born in sin in Adam is a slave of sin. Man is not free, not because of God, but because of his own nature which he inherited from Adam. His nature holds him in bondage to sin. Why then is he accountable for Adam's sin? He is not. Every man has sinned and has become accountable for his own actions.

Man's Will

Man does not have the ability within his nature to repent. This is the consequence of his own sin and not of God's decree. God does not determine man's will. His own sin has bankrupted his nature of any helpfulness or ability or righteousness.

As Paul said, "That which I would, that I do not and that which I would not, that I do. I find a law working in my members, the body of sin..." (Rom 7:15-17). This is the case with every person born in sin. Man is under bondage to sin. That is, no man is free to choose, not because of God, God is not responsible for this, but because of our own sinful nature.

Jesus answered them, Truly, truly, I say to you, Whosoever commits sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abides not in the house for ever: but the Son abides ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, you shall be free indeed. (John 8:34-36).

Jesus said he that sins is the slave of sin. So the sinner is not free. That much is clear in scripture. Only Jesus can set the sinner free.

Those Born Again?

When we are born again we still have freedom of will in the sense that God does not determine our will, but because we have a new divine nature in the end we will choose those things that are pleasing to God. In this sense we are a slave to righteousness. We can do no other in the end, because this is our nature as children of God. One is either a "slave of sin" or a "slave of righteousness" (Rom 6:16-19).

No one can live to himself, but either to sin or to God. As Bob Dylan once wrote, "Gotta Serve Somebody". We serve either sin or righteousness. No one is free. Freedom is a humanist illusion. Biblical freedom means being free from sin and from self-love.

New Nature

A born again Christian has a new nature. When Paul taught we are justified by faith and not by what we do, people thought he was teaching that we could continue in sin and it would not matter. But Paul's answer was, "How shall we who have died to sin continue any longer therein?" (Rom 6:2).

Paul's claim here is that when someone is born again their old sinful nature is crucified and buried with Christ and so its power is broken. This is not a process, but an instantaneous miracle in the new birth. Therefore, Paul's teaching was, if the sinful nature is dead with Christ, then how can sin rule in our lives? The obvious answer is sin cannot rule in the life of one born again.

John said he who is born of God cannot sin because the seed of God remains in him (1 John 3:9). He was talking about the nature of Christ within the born again believer. Because of this new nature, the believer cannot continue in sin. This is not saying a believer will never sin, or will live in sinless

perfection. It is saying that sin cannot take dominion over any child of God. John said this is how you know those who are of God (1 John 3:7).

So a believer is not free to live a life of sin. This is because Christ lives within him and has put to death the body of sin. A believer will choose according to his nature. A believer chooses righteousness, not of himself, not of works, but of grace, by the life of Christ within, which makes him alive to Him daily.

Freedom

A person will choose according to his nature and his nature is according to his birth. That is, if we are born in Adam we choose according to that nature. If we are born in Christ we choose according His nature. This is not freedom in a humanistic sense, but it is freedom from sin. We are only free when we are a bond servant of the Lord Jesus Christ by faith.

Freedom does not mean that we are free to live for self. It means that the Son of God sets us free from sin. This is the only freedom, the freedom of the grace of God. His life gives us faith, hope and love and the desire to do His will. This is freedom. The Father has life in Himself and has given the Son to have life in Himself and to make alive whom He will. The Son's life gives us the ability to be free.

God commanded Israel that they should not make bond servants of their own people (Lev 25:39-40). This is because God had redeemed them from bondage, through the blood of the Passover lamb. We should never bring people into bondage. They are God's. And if we lord it over other people's faith, then they cannot stand on their own faith (2 Cor 1:24).

This redemption pictured in Israel also meant that if a person was in slavery for a debt he owed, in the seventh year he must be set free. But if the servant loved his master he could choose not to be set free. Then he would have his ear pierced as a mark that he was a love slave, by choice, for the rest of his life (Ex 21:1-6). This was a grace relationship. He served in love.

Paul (Rom 1:1, Phil 1:1), James (Jam 1:1), Peter (2 Pet 1:1) and Jude (Jude 1) all called themselves bond servants of Jesus Christ. In society today we talk of freedom, but redemption means that we are bought with a price, that we belong to the Lord, because by love He has changed our heart. We are servants of Jesus Christ, not of ourselves. And we are servants of one another in the Lord.

Adam's Sin

People have disagreed that Adam's sin nature passes to all men, claiming God cannot blame other men for the sin of Adam. Man's response to things like this is humanistic. Not only does man sin, but he lectures God on fairness. Children suffer for their parent's bad decisions. If Adam knew as the head of mankind he would surely die, then he knew he was including his own progeny in his sin (Rom 5:12).

Scripture states that God does not impute sin where there is no law. This law is the Law of Moses and also the law written upon the conscience of all men. While a person is born by nature a sinner they may not be personally accountable for that sin until they come to the age of accountability (Rom 5:13).

Paul said that those under the law are judged by the law and those not of the law are judged by their own conscience, so none is righteous. The law of the conscience in man convicts every person on earth without exception (Rom 2:12-16).

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered the world and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. (For until the law sin was in the world;

but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of Him that was to come. (Rom 5:12-14).

This shows us that man is not judged for Adam's sin, but for his own sin.

But sin, taking occasion in me by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead (not revealed). For I was alive (in my own estimation) without the law: but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. (Rom 7:8-9).

There is likely no specific age of accountability. God knows when that stage begins for each person, according to their circumstances and faculties. Paul said, "When the law came, sin revived and I died.". He was a sinner before the law came, but when the consciousness of sin came to his mind by the knowledge of the law, sin was made manifest and the guilt of it strengthened sin's control over his life.

Adam's Place

Just say we were born without a sin nature, just like Adam was created. In Adam's place we would have done exactly the same things Adam did. We would have disobeyed God also. The condemnation of man is not due to Adam's sin, but to our own sin. Does that mean that God created man biased toward disobedience and it is not man's fault?

God created man good without any predisposition to fail when tempted. Why he fell is difficult to say. Whenever we go beyond what the scripture clearly states we are going into philosophy, not theology. Theology is a study of what God says, rather than of what man thinks about what God has not said.

We know the reason that Adam fell was something to do with the liberty that God has given His creation. We also believe that it was inevitable that man would fall, so that he could be justified by grace and not by works.

God knew, before creation, that man would *fall* and yet He went ahead with the programme, because His plan from the beginning was a people in His Son, justified by the life of His Son and not by our own works. "But God could have done this in the beginning." Yes, but then we would not have known the difference between what we can (cannot) do by ourselves and what He has done through grace.

Just because we cannot see how something is justly done, it does not mean that it has not been justly done. It would be wiser to come down on the side of citing our own lack of understanding, than citing God's lack of justice. God is right in His judgement. There is no darkness in God and He cannot sin nor do any evil. His record is better than ours!

Abraham said, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do that which is right." (Gen 18:25). Abraham's expression ascribed righteousness to God. As it was, there were none righteous in Sodom and God saved Lot by grace for His chosen Abraham's sake. God is not wicked. His judgement shall be absolutely fair and just and on that Day everyone shall know it.

What about those who have not heard the gospel? We believe God will judge them according to the light they have. He will do that which is right. He made man and He will handle it. It is wrong to take upon yourself the burden of everyone's salvation. God made man, not you. Your task is to preach the gospel and speak and do the truth.

Humanism

In a summary of the above discussion we can say:

1. All men are accountable for their own sin.
2. God does not owe any man a chance of salvation, since all men have sinned knowingly either by the law or by their conscience.
3. God is not obligated to save any man or to redeem mankind. He is completely without blame in the matter.
4. God's salvation is entirely of grace and He does not owe the slightest debt to the human race.
5. Salvation is on the basis of mercy and love alone: God does not have a duty to provide men with a second chance.
6. God has the right to do what He will with His creation and no man can ask why. This is probably the hardest pill to swallow, but it is the truth. Humanism gives a different perspective on *justice*.

This means that God is free and sovereign. He owes man nothing and salvation is never on the basis of debt. *A denial of this changes the gospel at its heart*. Salvation is given as a free gift and on no other basis. It is given only by kindness and mercy, not a liability of justice. God saves in His freedom, not by fulfilling an obligation. This is the point Jesus made in *the parable of the workers* (Matt 20:1-16).

Ephesians chapters 1 and 2 summarize this: "grace", "blessed", "chosen", "adoption", "good pleasure", "His will", "praise of His glory", "in the beloved", "forgiveness", "abounded toward us", "He has purposed", "His counsel", "rich in mercy" and "great love". *Fairness* is not mentioned. God's gift is never based on fairness. This was the gripe of *the Prodigal's brother* (Luke 15:28). It is the gripe of many who oppose the gospel.

His Glory

If God bestows His love freely upon people without works, then why does He not do this for all men? Why not for the devil also? In fact, why is there a hell at all? We cannot give a human answer to this. We must adhere to scripture.

Firstly, there is no love without righteousness. There is no righteousness without hatred for sin. Love is not the absence of discrimination. Love discriminates against that which is wrong and which hurts people. If we do not hate sin we do not have love. God hates sin and judges it, because He loves the sinner.

Paul made some comments in this regard:

But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour and some to dishonour. (2 Tim 2:19-20).

This passage shows that God is glorified by those who are saved and by those who are reserved to judgment. This does not mean God takes pleasure in the death of a sinner. It means both demonstrate His holiness and other attributes. In a great man's house there are beautiful vessels to serve the finest drinks and bins to put out the rubbish. God's house (creation) is administered no differently.

Paul asked whether the fact that some are not saved showed His unrighteousness. He asked, "Can we judge God by our standards?":

But if our unrighteousness commends (highlights) the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who takes vengeance?...God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world? For if the truth of God has more abounded (by contrast) through my lie to His glory, why am I yet judged as a sinner and not rather...Let us do evil that good may come?...(Rom 3:5-8).

God reserves some in their wickedness to reveal His righteous judgement. The evil highlights that which is good. God saves us by changing our nature, but He does this in part by showing us the wrong and moving our hearts against it. God does not change us without the participation of our own awakened judgement and discernment.

God is not unjust in those He judges. It is their choice, even after urgent gospel appeals are made to them. Neither is He the author of their sin. Paul said if God forgave all how would He administer judgment to the world? There would be no justice. This was Paul's answer, whether or not we like it.

Some people think that hell is not real and that the doctrine of eternal suffering is a vestige not yet purged from the *Dark Ages*.

What if God, willing to show His wrath and to make His power known endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He has before prepared to glory, even us, whom He has called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? (Rom 9:22-24).

Is this love? Yes, upholding a standard of righteousness for His glory's sake, for the world's sake and for the elect's sake is love. So Paul says here, what if God kept one in reserve for judgement, while calling another in mercy? His answer in Romans 9 was that it is God's prerogative. We look at this in another chapter.

Rom 9:22-24 is not a rhetorical question, because Paul continues to argue for God's judgement in chapter 9 and again in chapter 11.

According as it is written, God has given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see and ears that they should not hear, to this day. And David says, Let their table be made a snare and a trap and stumbling block and a recompense to them: Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see and bow down their back always. (Rom 11:8-10).

See also Is 63:3-6, Luke 12:4-5, Rom 11:22, 2 Cor 2:15-16, 2 Cor 5:10-11. God has severity and goodness, judgement and grace, justice and mercy, which all glorify God. The *glory of God* is the prime object, not a strong *Renaissance* theme! God's primary motivation in all this is love, but not a love that is always humanly understood.

"God certainly desires nothing more than for those who are perishing and rushing toward death to return to the way of safety. This is why the gospel is today proclaimed throughout the world, for God wished to testify to all the ages that He is greatly inclined to pity." (Calvin, *Commentary on Jonah*).

Are we those who have received His mercy? That depends on how we respond to the grace of God. If we harden ourselves against His grace or go in evil then we will have His judgement. If we open to His grace and let Him work His love into our life then we will have His mercy. There is no denial of responsibility, just an acceptance that for any good we do, we do through His grace and not our own.