January 1  
  
"AN IMAGE" PART 1  
  
"In a beginning Elohim created the heavens and the earth." (Genesis 1:1)  
  
The first thing that comes thru in this verse are the first three words;

"In a beginning."

This is not "the" beginning of God creating; it is "a" beginning of God creating. It is when God first uses the title "Elohim." Elohim is plural (the "im" make it so).

Many teach, and I assume believe that these are God the Father and God the Son creating, and will use this verse to prove this to be so. Although you never read the words "God the Son" anywhere in the Bible, it is something that is believed by the majority. To say it is not so is considered blasphemy. Yet, if one reads this verse and the entire first chapter of Genesis, and pays close attention to verse 26: "And Elohim said: Let Us make humanity in Our image and according to Our likeness." the question that should be asked is: "What image is humanity made in?"

It can't be in the image of the One God, for that image is invisible, as God is said to be Spirit (John 4:24), at least that is what Jesus said.

Paul tells us this in 1 Timothy 1:17: "Now to the King of the eons, the incorruptible, invisible, only, and wise God."

The apostle John in his first Epistle writes: "No one has ever gazed upon God." (1 John 4:12).

So we can see from Jesus and Paul, and John that God “is” Spirit (not "a" spirit) is invisible, and no one has ever seen Him.  
  
So what, or Who is the Image that God created humans to resemble?  
  
And was God creating before the words of Moses in Genesis chapter one verse one?  
  
Tomorrow we will take a closer look at the title Elohim, and why it is used in Genesis chapter one.

January 2  
  
"AN IMAGE" PART 2  
  
"So Elohim created humanity in His image; in the image of Elohim He created it: male and female He created them." (Genesis 1:27)  
  
The Title Elohim means: Placer, Subjector. We saw yesterday that (*im*) makes the title plural, the One(s) Who created what we see, and what we do not see, and placed them where they all are.  
  
However you view creation, a big bang, a six day process, or something that took eons to complete, it all came out of God.   
  
Before God created all what we would call the celestials, the earth, and all that is on it, He created The Channel through which all would be created; that Channel is the Christ, the Son of God, the beginning of God's creation.  
  
John writes in Revelation 3:14 concerning the creation of Christ that He was: "God's creative Original." Christ was The First to come out of God.  
  
Paul tells us in Colossians 1:15 this about Christ:

"Who is the Firstborn of every creature."

Before all others were created, Christ was brought forth.  
  
Jesus said that God loved Him from before the disruption (A.V. foundation) of the world (John 17:24), before the earth's foundation was set the Son was with the Father.  
  
Christ was/is The Original; the first born (created) out of God, The God Who is The Originator of all.    
  
Paul tells us how they worked together in creating in 1 Corinthians 8:6, and Colossians 1:17:  
   
 "Nevertheless for us there is one God, the Father, out of Whom all is, and we for Him, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through Whom all is, and we through Him........ All is created "through Him" (Christ), and for Him (Christ), and He (Christ) is before all (creation), and all has its cohesion (held together) in Him (Christ)."  
  
The Image that God (El, singular, also Placer and Subjector) created all through is Christ, He is called in the scriptures the image of the invisible God (Colossians 1:15).  
  
   
January 3  
  
"AN IMAGE" PART 3  
  
In John chapter one verse fourteen John wrote:

"And the Word became flesh and tabernacles among us, and we gaze at His glory, a glory as of an only-begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth."

John saw the only-begotten of the Father. He saw the Original Created One that was made flesh, the Image of the invisible God revealing Himself to humans. Not the Image that was created in the beginning of creation, Paul saw that Image on the road to Damascus, when he saw a light brighter than the Sun (Acts 26:13-16). Paul than asks the Image "Who are You Lord?" and the Image answers "I am Jesus Whom you are persecuting."

What John, and those who were alive at the time of Jesus' time in Israel saw was the Image that God sent in the form of humanity, the One Who came to identify with us.

What Paul saw was the Image created in the beginning, the glorified Christ, the Image Jesus longed for while He was on the earth, as He states in John 17:5:

"And now glorify Thou Me, Father, with Thyself, with the glory which I had before the world is with Thee."  
  
The writer of Hebrews (probably Paul) concerning the form God assumes when revealing Himself to humans on earth, and in the celestials wrote:  
  
"Whom He appoints enjoyer of the allotment of all, through Whom He also makes the eons; Who, being the Effulgence of His glory and Emblem of His assumption." (Hebrews 1:2-3)  
  
The Effulgence of His glory is the Image Paul saw on the road to Damascus. He saw the glory of God through the Son. The celestial Son, Christ. The Effulgence is what radiates out from God, like the beams from the Sun. We don't actually see the Sun; we see the effulgence, beams, or brightness of it. As was said previously; "No one has seen God." (1 John 4:12)

But we will see His Image.  
  
John saw the Emblem (Image) God assumed when He condescended to humans, a fleshly form; the earthly Son, Jesus.  
  
Both are Images that God assumes/assumed.   
  
The One celestial (from the beginning), in His glory.   
  
The other terrestrial (from His incarnation), His taking on the form of humanity in Bethlehem.

JANUARY 4

"AN IMAGE" PART 4  
  
Paul wrote this of Christ's inherent Image.  
  
“(Christ) Who, being inherently in the form of God, deems it not pillaging to be equal with God, nevertheless empties Himself, taking the form of a slave, coming to be in the likeness of humanity, and, being found in fashion as a human, He humbles Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” (Philippians 2:6-8)

Christ deems it not pillaging to be equal with God; not to be God, but to be equal with God, to be at one with God in purpose, to actually be worshipped as God.

Thomas recognized this equality when he saw the risen Jesus; he cried out “My Lord, and my God.” Thomas realized at that moment that the Image he was looking at was the Image of God in flesh and bone.

Paul (above) tells us Christ has always existed in the Image of God: "Being inherently in the form of God." He emptied Himself of His celestial Image of glory and came in the likeness of humanity, in the image of a human, an image that God created humans in, but He was not recognized as the Image of God until He rose from the dead.

Who other than the Image of the invisible God is worthy of such praise?  
  
Only the One Who left His first state and humbled Himself and was obedient to all God's will. Everything Jesus did, He did to glorify His Father, God. (John 17:4)

John, in the first verse of his gospel tells us: “In the beginning was the word, and the word was toward God, and God was the word. This was in the beginning toward God.” Some versions say “with” instead of toward. But the rendering “toward” is more correct in that it reveals to us what the Word actually does. It points us toward God.  "Toward" actually removes the confusion, how can you be with someone, and be the someone who you are with? You can’t. But you can point toward the one you are with.  
  
 “And the Word became flesh and tabernacles among us and we gaze at His glory, a glory as of an only-begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14)  
  
Everything the living Word (Christ) did, and does, points us towards God. He shows us truth concerning His Father and God, as well as the grace of God. Only the Image of God can do this, and He did it by example, as Peter tells us: " For for this were you called, seeing that Christ also suffered for your sakes, leaving you a copy, that you should be following up in the footprints of Him." (1 Peter 2:21) To follow in His footprints is being conformed into His Image. Not His earthly Image, His celestial Image, which will be the final image of all humans.

January 5  
  
"AN IMAGE" PART 5  
  
Most of Christianity it seems is struggling to become the image of the terrestrial Jesus. They seem to be unable to get past His earthly image. They place Him in a manger in December and a few months later, stick Him on a cross, get a glimpse of His resurrected Image, and seven to eight months later put Him back in a manger, and go through all the drama again, and again, and again. The celestial Image (the One that we are being conformed into) is lost in space (literally).   
  
Their mantra is "What would Jesus do?   
  
It should be: "Look what Jesus has done", and move upward.

Paul wrote: “So that we, from now on, are acquainted with no one according to flesh. Yet even if we have known Christ according to flesh, nevertheless now we know Him so no longer.” (2 Corinthians 5:16)

What Paul is saying is: “We all have to get past the life we live in the flesh, our earth image is of no real lasting importance, it is being replaced by that which is celestial, actually for those who believe it has been replaced, we await it”

Paul goes on to tell us this is so in the next verse:

“So that, if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: the primitive passed by. Lo! There has come new!”

What is the old?

What is the new?

The old image is the image Christ donned when He came to identify with “US,” the Adamic image, the one we all wear, the one He shed.

The new image is the image we will don when we are conformed to “HIM.”

The Image that we are now identified in with Him.

We aren’t identified with His earthly image, that is the primitive, it has passed away; we are to set our affections on those things which are above, where Christ sits.

“If, then, you were roused together with Christ, be seeking that which is above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Be disposed to that which is above, not to that on the earth, for you died, and your life is hid together with Christ in God. Whenever Christ, our Life, should be manifested, then you also shall be manifested together with Him in glory.”  
(Colossians 3:1-4)

We are hid together in Christ. His Image covers ours. That is our image, the one in glory, up above everything else. The terrestrial image, the one we inherited from Adam, is passing away.

January 6  
  
"AN IMAGE" PART 6

“If there is a soulish body, there is a spiritual also…… And according as we wear the image of the soilish, we should be wearing the image also of the Celestial.”

(1 Corinthians 15:45, 49)

I think by now it is getting clearer what Image we are created in, when Elohim said “Let us make humans in Our Image.” It is not the image we look at everyday in the mirror, that image is only the seed of what our true image is; quite literally I might add, as it was formed out of the soil. The image we wear now gets us from the cradle to the grave, not beyond it. God works in it to reveal Himself to us, He directs its steps, He admonishes us to seek Him with it, to love our neighbors with it, to care for it while we are in it, and His spirit dwells in it, even though it is perishing day by day Paul reminds us:

"Wherefore we are not despondent, but even if our outward man is decaying, nevertheless that within us is being renewed day by day," that within us reminds us that: "if our terrestrial tabernacle house should be demolished, we have a building of God, a house not made by hands, eonian, in the heavens." (2 Corinthians 4:16, 5:1); which is our lasting image.  
  
This soilish image is dying every second of every day; it is not a lasting image, and not one that is fit to spend eternity in, as Paul tells us:   
  
“Now this I am averring, brethren, that flesh and blood is not able to enjoy an allotment in the kingdom of God, neither is corruption enjoying the allotment of incorruption.” (1 Corinthians 15:50)  
  
To spend forever with God these images that we now wear must change, and will change, as Paul reminds us these images are “to be conformed to the image of His Son.” (Romans 8:29)  
  
When Elohim said “Let us make humans in our Image”, He modeled it after His Image, the One He dwells in fully, "Christ, for in Him the entire complement of the Deity is dwelling bodily." (Colossians 2:9), the One we will eventually see, and that we “are being transformed into the same image.” (2 Corinthians 3:18) The time of our change is coming when we will fully realize this.

John, in 1 John 3:2 tells us this will be so;

“Beloved, now are we children of God, and it was not as yet manifested what we shall be. We are aware that, if He should be manifested, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him according as He is.”

We shall be like Him; we will wear the image of the Celestial.

I started these daily thoughts at the end of the journey for the believer, Christ's body, there is much more about this Image in the scriptures, volumes could be written on it, and I am sure have, but these thoughts are only primers, to get you started searching on your own. Tomorrow we will begin to look at what the scriptures reveal God’s plan is for all His creation.

January 7  
  
"UNPARDONABLE?" PART 1  
  
The unpardonable sin that was committed by the scribes in Jesus' day, and that many who believe in Christ today claim is committed by some now, and won't be forgiven, is just not true, it will be forgiven. The idea of an "unforgivable sin" came from bible translators that inserted a "Header Note" at the beginning of the verses in the bible that they claim say there is "an unpardonable sin", a header placed there that reads something like:

"THE SCRIBES COMMIT THE UNPARDONABLE SIN".   
  
The so called unpardonable sin can be found in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. Here are all three sections of scripture that many claim is the unpardonable sin from the New King James Version, starting from Marks account:  
  
 “Assuredly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they may utter; but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to eternal condemnation”—  (Mark 3: 28,29)  
  
Now Luke's account:  
  
"And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemes against the Holy Spirit it shall not be forgiven."  (Luke 12:10)  
  
And Matthew's account:  
  
“Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come."  (Matthew 12:31, 32)  
  
Notice, first, Mark's account, and Matthew's account, read them both carefully.

Notice something?  
  
How long is forgiveness withheld in those two accounts?  
  
Mark basically tells us forever, or at least as long as eternity last, which I have to assume is forever, so in Mark there is no forgiveness, ever.  
  
Matthew says there will be no forgiveness in this age (the age we are in now) and the age to come (the millennium age).  
  
Luke just tells us whoever commits this "sin" won't be forgiven (no time limit).   
  
Tomorrow we will look into this "unpardonable sin", and also see why there are these discrepancies in the time frames for forgiveness, and also look into these two words eternal and age that are used by the translators. And, if there is an age when this unpardonable sin will be pardoned.  
  
January 8  
  
"UNPARDONABLE?" PART 2  
  
What is the "Unpardonable sin"?  
  
It is attributing the works of Christ by the power of God's Spirit, to demons. And the penalty for this blasphemy (which cannot be committed in this era of grace) was missing out of the Millennium age, the thousand year Kingdom age to come, which we will see from the scriptures.  
  
"And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemes against the Holy Spirit it shall not be forgiven."  (Luke 12:10)  
  
Luke's account of the "unpardonable sin" is probably the simplest to see the penalty for those who are said to have committed this transgression. Luke tells us simply; “they won't be forgiven." Every word spoken against Jesus will be forgiven, those who speak blasphemes against Jesus will not receive a penalty, they will be forgiven. On the other hand, those who blaspheme the holy spirit will not be pardoned for their words spoken against it, they will receive a penalty, they won't get a free pass.

What is this penalty for committing this act against the holy spirit?

Luke doesn't mention it; you have to go to Matthew to get a glimpse of the answer.  
  
“Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come."   Matthew 12:31, 32  
  
Matthew tells us that whoever commits this act of blaspheme against the holy spirit will not be forgiven in this age or the age to come.   
  
"Or in the age to come.”

When is that?  
  
Not until the end of the Millennium age.   
  
At the end of the Millennium age is when we see the Great White Throne, where judgment is handed out to all who did not believe, and obviously for those who have blasphemed the holy spirit during Jesus’ life time on earth, and didn't repent of doing so. What will be their judgment, we are not told, what Matthew is telling us is they will miss out of the Millennium age. By committing this sin they have forfeited eonian life, life in that age to come (could this be their penalty?).   
  
But, we still have Marks account that claims they will never be pardoned (from the New King James, and many other versions that make this claim). And as we can see there is a discrepancy in the three accounts. One account says no forgiveness, another; not in this age or the next, another; none for eternity.

Is God's word that careless?

That inconsistent?

Or are the translators careless and inconsistent?   
  
Tomorrow we will go a little deeper into this unpardonable sin.

January 9  
  
"UNPARDONABLE?" PART 3  
  
If you are someone who thinks they have committed the unpardonable sin you probably will hold onto Matthew's account, at least you have a hope, Luke has a glimmer, but Mark, well, you’re done.   
  
But are you?  
  
The words used in both Mark and Matthew, "age and eternal" are from the one Greek word "aonian". Our English equivalent is "eonian" and it means that which pertains to an eon, or an age, it never means eternal: having no beginning or end. To have eternal condemnation would be to have condemnation that never started and never ended, but has always been, as that is what eternal means. God is eternal, did He have a beginning, will He have an end?  
   
This is very poor translating, and inconsistent translating.  
  
That is where the confusion comes to play. If you were to read Matthew's account, you would be led to believe they would not be pardoned until the end of the next age, or the beginning of the final age, the age of ages, and you would possibly think, that is fair. Properly translated Mark's account would be fair as well. It would read (staying consistent with eternal meaning an age):  
  
"Verily I say to you, that all the sins shall be forgiven to the sons of men, and evil speaking's with which they might speak evil, but whoever may speak evil in regard to the Holy Spirit hath not forgiveness -- to the age, but is in danger of age-during judgment;"  
  
The words eternity and eternal are not scriptural words. They are mistranslated from the Greek words Aion, and aionios, meaning; Age, age-during, or even better: eon, eonian. God judgments only go as far as the ages, they are not eternal, and they do not go on into eternity, they are age lasting, or eonian, belonging to the ages (eons) of time, but never beyond.  
  
Now all we have is Luke's very blunt claim: "shall not be forgiven."   
  
Is that true, or consistent with a loving God?

It is with humans, but God!  
  
Tomorrow we will look into Luke's remarks.

January 10  
  
"UNPARDONABLE?" PART 4  
  
"And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemes against the Holy Spirit it shall not be forgiven."  (Luke 12:10)  
  
As has been stated (inferred), because you are not forgiven you will incur judgment. You won't escape it, you won't be let off. That is the sense behind these words of Luke's.

The beginning of the verse demonstrates this: Those who speak a word against Jesus will be let off, pardoned.   
  
The ones who committed this sin were the scribes and Pharisees. They were stubborn to the spirit of God, as they believed only they had the truth concerning spiritual matters. You read in the Book of Acts, when Stephen was debating the Christ with them, and getting nowhere, he said: “Stiff-necked and uncircumcised in your hearts and ears, you are ever clashing with the holy spirit! As your fathers, you also!" (Acts 7:51)  
  
They hadn't changed, even with all the witnesses concerning Christ. The spirit of God was not dwelling in them, they were what we would call "unsaved", they were very religious but lost.  
  
The hardest person to bring truth to is a religious person, their path has been set. Only the work of the spirit of God will cause them to see the truth. Paul ( who was once a Pharisee) is our example of that; he was saved on the road to Damascus. He wasn't pardoned; he was justified by the grace of God, like all of us who now believe.

When the Millennium age comes to an end, and those who committed this sin of attributing the works of God's spirit to demons stand before the Great White Throne, what will win, their sin, or God's love and grace?  
  
Luke travelled with Paul, he heard first hand about God reconciling all to Himself. Does anyone really believe that the sin of the scribes and Pharisees is more powerful than God's power to save?

That there is a sin that is so powerful that God is helpless against it? Luke didn't.  
  
Read Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians, read all of Paul's letters, and then ask the question if that is even possible. Never confuse God's judgment with anything else but making what is wrong right.       
  
Luke's account agrees with Matthews and Marks, those who committed that sin won't be pardoned in this age or the next, but in the final age they will.

January 11  
  
"UNPARDONABLE?" PART 5  
  
That Matthew, Mark and Luke agree that this so called "unpardonable" sin is pardonable is further brought out by Jesus Himself.  
  
All through the gospel accounts Jesus is in a war of words with the scribes and Pharisees. They tried on numerous occasions to trap Him. They tested Him concerning the Laws of Moses, the laws of Rome, as well as badgering Him to show them a sign proving Himself to be the Son of God. When He could not be trapped they found false witnesses to accuse Him of saying things He never said which led to His crucifixion.   
  
Jesus on the other hand called them a brood of vipers, whitewashed tombs, blind guides, and hypocrites.  
  
It would not be too hard to believe this religious group would find no forgiveness.   
  
But Jesus tells them:  
  
"Verily, I am saying to you that the tribute collectors and the prostitutes are preceding you into the kingdom of God." (Matthew 21:31)  
  
He tells them even the prostitutes and tribute collectors will "precede" them. These leaders of religion were going to be the last to enter. He doesn't tell them they will be excluded from being with God, He tells them these others will "precede" them; go before them.   
  
So we can see that Christ's power to forgive goes much further than any human’s thoughts about who should or who shouldn't be forgiven, and His salvation reaches further than what denominational doctrines teach.  
  
  
January 12  
  
"UPARDONABLE?" PART 6  
  
"Happy and holy is he who is having part in the former resurrection! Over these the second death has no jurisdiction, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will be reigning with Him the thousand years." (Revelation 20:6)  
  
Every Israelite longed/longs for the arrival of the context in the verse above, to be priests of God and Christ (Messiah) during the thousand year kingdom. The scribes and the Pharisees especially. To miss out was unheard of, but miss out they would if they didn't repent, and from all accounts they didn't, at least not up to Stephen's death (Acts 7:51), and during Paul's ministry.  
   
But how does no forgiveness for the present eon (age) and the next eon (age) be forgiven?

Matthew tells us in Matthew 1:21:

"Now she shall be bringing forth a Son, and you shall be calling His name Jesus, for He shall be saving His people from their sins."  
  
Who are Jesus' people He will save from their sins?   
  
According to His flesh; Israelites.   
  
Up until His crucifixion Jesus proclaimed the kingdom to come, and that kingdom was all Israel (the nations were to be blessed through them). During His earthly ministry Jesus said that He only came for the house of Israel, Matthew 15:24 tells us this is so:

"Now He, answering, said, "I was not commissioned except for the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

His sacrifice was for all, but His earthly commission was for Israel. They rejected Him for the most part, and still do today, but His sacrifice at Calvary assures them salvation, and will fulfill Matthew 1:21 which tells us "He shall be saving His people from their sins."  
  
These scribes and Pharisees were part of the lost sheep of the house of Israel, the ones that He shall be saving from their sins. They won't come to a realization of this until the thousand year kingdom has ended, as Matthew 12:32 and Mark 3:29 reveal. There is no forgiveness for them now, they have to wait in death, until the Great White Throne judgment, at that time they will be raised and the fulfilling of Paul's words will begin to be fulfilled:  
  
"For I am not willing for you to be ignorant of this secret, brethren, lest you may be passing for prudent among yourselves, that callousness, in part, on Israel has come, until the complement of the nations may be entering. And thus all Israel shall be saved, according as it is written, Arriving out of Zion (Israel) shall be the Rescuer (Christ). He will be turning away irreverence from Jacob (Israel). And this is my covenant with them whenever I should be eliminating their sins. As to the evangel, indeed, they are enemies because of you (the nations, also who Christ died for), yet, as to choice, they are beloved because of the fathers. For unregretted are the graces and the calling of God." (Romans 11:25-29)  
  
Nothing is "UNPARDONABLE", all sin will be forgiven, even the sin of the scribes and Pharisees, who were enemies to the spirit of God in Christ, and they will be justified at there appointed time (Romans 5:18).

January 13  
  
DON'T ADD OR TAKE AWAY  
  
When we hear about something like the so called "unpardonable sin" many have the problem of making up more sins that they believe are unpardonable. An example of this would be what is called "THE SIN OF UNBELIEF". If you happen to commit this "sin", you, to, qualify to be a member of the unpardonable's, according to those who have added it to the list of unpardonable sins.   
  
There is no such thing as the sin of unbelief. Again, it is another made up doctrine to enforce another made up doctrine; eternal torment.  
   
Here is what one commentator wrote concerning the "UNPARDONABLE SIN", from Matthew.  
  
"The sin which will not be forgiven is the stubborn refusal to heed the Holy Spirit's conviction and accept the forgiveness that Christ offers." He went on to say; "to attribute them to Satan is to call the work of heaven a work of hell."  
  
That is what man does to God's word, adds to it. Now the "Unpardonable sin", according to this commentator, is a refusal to accept Christ's offer of salvation. We read over the last couple of days what this sin that was committed by the scribes and Pharisees was: "attributing Christ's work (the miracles He preformed), by God's spirit, to demons," that is what Jesus said. No where did He "OFFER" salvation to them and they refused, that is man adding to the word of God. Yes they didn't believe who He was, but that was not what He said was unforgivable in this age and the age to come.  
  
This inability to stop adding to God's word is something we have to learn to do. Eve was the first human to add to what God had said. When confronted by the serpent in the Garden concerning eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, Eve said "we are not to even touch it." God never said that to them, He said do not eat of it. Eve added to God's word. I believe the Adversary knew at that moment he had her, she was ignorant of God's words, the Adversary could now say anything and she would believe him, and she did.  
  
Paul said: "that in us you may be learning not to be disposed above what is written.....not walking in craftiness, nor yet adulterating the word of God" (1 Corinthians 4:6, 2 Corinthians 4:2)  
   
We all have to be careful when handling God's word, and to heed Paul's words to all of us who call ourselves believers; not to be disposed above what it written, nor twist the word of God. We should also not lessen what has been written, because it too will lead us into false teachings concerning God's word. Also, we should not add to His judgments on those who at present, and from the past, do/did not believe. John warns of this in Revelation 22:18-19:  
  
"I am testifying to everyone who is hearing the words of the prophecy of this scroll: If ever anyone may be appending to them, God shall be appending to him the calamities written in this scroll. And if ever anyone should be eliminating from the words of the scroll of this prophecy, God shall be eliminating his part from the log of life, and out of the holy city, that is written in this scroll."  
  
We all should be mindful of the words from Paul, as they are written to us, Christ's body. As well as heed John's words to the seven churches, of adding or taking away from God's judgments. In doing so we allow God's words to speak, not ours.

January 14

GOOD AND EVIL PART 1  
  
KNOWING GOOD AND EVIL   
  
"Behold! The human becomes as one of us, knowing good and evil." (Genesis 3:22)  
  
To know good and evil and to have knowledge of good and evil are two very different things. You can have knowledge of something, but until you experience it, you can never fully know it. Many historians write about war, but until you actually are in the trenches, being shot at, you will never really know war. You will have knowledge of war, but know it, no you won't.   
  
Adam and Eve skipped the first part, knowledge of good and evil, they had no idea what good was or evil. After their meeting with the serpent and its deception, they knew evil. Today we all have a knowledge of good and evil, and many of us know both, we have experienced them, often time side by side.  
  
To have an experience of good and evil is one of, if not the most important lessons we can experience. This is why both good and evil were of the same tree. Neither one has a benefit in our lives without the other. We wouldn't know happiness without sorrow, health without sickness, peace of mind without distress; contrast is what this world is made up of.  
  
When God caused the tree of the knowledge of good and evil to sprout from the ground (Genesis 2:9) there was a purpose for it. It is to bring us closer to Him. Elohim could have stopped Eve, but He didn't.  
  
Why?  
   
He knew in order for humans to know Him we had to become in part like Him, knowing both good and evil. Without the experience of both we can never know God, we can have knowledge of Him, but to know Him, no we won't.

January 15  
  
GOOD AND EVIL PART 2  
  
To say that God had no part in bringing evil into creation is to give credit to another being capable of creating.  
  
Isaiah tells us where evil came from in Isaiah 45:7:

"Former of light and Creator of darkness, Maker of good and Creator of evil. I Yahweh make all these things."  
  
Evil came from God, as did everything else in creation. He is The Creator, there is no other.  
  
Amos asked the question: "Would a trumpet be blown in a city and the people not tremble? Would there come to be evil in a city and Yahweh not have done it? (Amos 3:6)  
  
Jeremiah also asks: "Who is this who speaks and it comes about if Yahweh does not determine it? Do not both the evil and the good come forth from the mouth of the Supreme?  (Lamentations 3:37-38)  
  
Notice the verse in Isaiah above. God had to create evil and darkness. He didn't have to create light and good, they have always existed, they are eternal, as they are attributes of God.

1 John 1:5 tells us: "God is light, and in Him there is no darkness."

The psalmist in numerous places tells us "God is good." (Psalm 107, 1, 106:1, 118:1) and many, many more places throughout the Scriptures we read the same.   
  
Evil and darkness are not eternal, they had to be created.  
  
One might then ask: "Why were evil and darkness created?"  
  
The answer is very simple, but hard for most to digest: that we will eventually see ourselves for who and what we are without God. So we would know light and good, or better, know the One Who is Light and Good.   
  
So with this in mind we will look into some of the ways God used and uses evil (from the Scriptures) to get our attention, and perhaps we to will be able to say as Job did, after God brought all the evil that fell on him:

“From the hearing of the ear I had heard of You, but now my eyes have seen You."  (Job 42:5)

January 16

GOOD AND EVIL PART 3  
  
GOD USES EVIL   
  
Although God created evil it does not make Him evil. Evil is neutral until someone, or something acts out the deed, much like love. Evil is never used by God to destroy permanently; the end result is always for good.  
  
A couple of examples of God using evil to bring about good would be Joseph, Job and Jesus.  
  
First Joseph:

Joseph was the favorite son of Jacob (Israel), and his brothers were jealous of him. One day his brothers conspired to kill him, and cast him into a pit. But Reuben talked them out of killing Joseph, so instead they sold him to a caravan of Ishmaelite's who took Joseph to Egypt and sold him to Potiphar, who was a court official of Pharaoh. Over time and trial Joseph worked his way up the ranks of Egyptian government to be second to Pharaoh. There comes to be a famine in the land, but Joseph had made stores of grain so none would starve. Later Joseph's brothers came to Egypt to buy grain, Joseph recognizes them, but they don't recognize him (probably thinking he was either dead or a slave). Then after a time Joseph reveals himself to them, and they fear for their lives because of the evil that they did to Joseph, thinking Joseph will want revenge, but Joseph tells them: "As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today." (Genesis 50:20) Joseph was given the wisdom to understand that the evil his brothers brought on him was all a part of God's plan to save the people from starvation. God caused Joseph's brothers to hate him by giving Joseph dreams of ruling over them, making Joseph's brothers jealous to the point of doing him evil, and all was in accord to the plans of God. Read Genesis chapters 37 to 50 for the complete account.  
  
Here is what happened after all the evil that befell Job:

"Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house: and they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all the evil that Yahweh had brought upon him. And each gave him one piece of money, and each a ring of gold. The Lord blessed the later days of Job more than his beginning……" (Job 42:11-12)

Although Satan was the tool God used, Job and those who knew him, knew that it was the Lord God who brought this evil upon him. It could be said that Job and his associates were given the knowledge of good and evil. An understanding of how God uses both to bring us to a complete understanding of Him, as Job says: "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; But now my eye sees You.” (Job 42:5) To see does not mean view, it means know.  
  
Jesus’ crucifixion was the greatest of evils, but His crucifixion brought about the salvation of all humanity, and God was the One who orchestrated the whole affair. Peter in Acts 2:22-24 tells us this is so:

"Men! Israelites! Hear these words: Jesus, the Nazarene, a Man demonstrated to be from God for you by powerful deeds and miracles and signs, which God does through Him in the midst of you, according as you yourselves are aware -- This One, given up in the specific counsel and foreknowledge of God, you, gibbeting by the hand of the lawless, assassinate, Whom God raises, loosing the pangs of death, forasmuch as it was not possible for Him to be held by it."  
  
God had arranged the whole affair: "This One, given up in the specific counsel and foreknowledge of God."  
  
Again, from Peter concerning God's hand in this evil:

"For of a truth, in this city were gathered against Thy holy Boy Jesus, Whom Thou (God) dost anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, together with the nations and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever Thy (God's) hand and Thy (God's) counsel designates beforehand to occur." (Acts 4:27-28)  
  
Isaiah prophesied concerning God's hand in Jesus’ crucifixion as well:

“Yet Yahweh, He desires to crush Him, and He causes Him to be wounded." (Isaiah 53:10)  
  
In all of these evils, God did not sin, He can't. God, as it can be seen in these few examples, uses evil to bring about good. He uses evil that we might know Him better. If you are undergoing an evil, know it is God drawing you closer to Him, not punishing you for some wrong you did. He is stripping you down to where there is only Him, and then He will build you up. He is giving you the knowledge of good and evil.  
  
Tomorrow we will look at how Satan is used by God.

January 17

GOOD AND EVIL PART 4  
  
SATAN A TOOL IN THE TOOLBELT   
  
Satan is no less a created being than you or I, and God can use, and does use all His creation whenever it pleases Him to do so.   
  
Satan can do nothing unless God allows.   
  
When Jesus was tempted in the wilderness, at the moment the Adversary's work was done Jesus told him: "Go away Satan" (Matthew 4:10), Satan immediately left.  
  
When Job went through his trial, God set the boundaries for Satan's attacks, He allowed him to go only so far. Before Job's first assault God told Satan: “Behold, all that he has is in your hand, but you must not put forth your hand upon himself."

Before the second assault God told Satan: "Behold he is in your hand; only keep his soul alive."   
  
In both cases, Jesus’ and Job's, the Adversary is only given what perimeters God allows, and no further.  
  
Satan does not, and never has had free reign to do as he pleases.  
  
Paul writes of two occasions when he used Satan for the purpose of teaching wayward believers. The first is a man who is having sexual relations with his father’s wife. Paul tells the ecclesia: "to give up such a one to Satan for the extermination of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." (1 Corinthians 5:5) This mans flesh was given over to Satan to do as he pleased, but his spirit was God's, Satan has no control over that.  
  
The second account of Paul using Satan can be found in Paul's first letter to Timothy, concerning two believers who were calumniating, Paul writes :"This charge I am committing to you, child Timothy, according to the preceding prophecies over you, that in them you may be warring the ideal warfare, having faith and a good conscience, which some, thrusting away, have made shipwreck as to the faith; of whom are Hymeneus and Alexander, whom I give up to Satan, that they may be trained not to calumniate." (1:18-20). We are not told how Satan operated with these men, but we can be assured that the desired results worked in God's favor.  
  
God uses everything in His creation to reveal Himself to His creation. Nothing is out of His control. You have heard people say "I came to the end of my rope", before some great change in their lives occurred. Guess who was used in all the events that brought them to that end!  
  
God's tool.   
  
To say that the Adversary is operating independently of God, outside of God's intentions, is no less a blasphemy against the working of God, than that of the scribes and Pharisees who were guilty of  blasphemy against the working of the holy spirit in their day. Not that the Adversary is working by the holy spirit, but the One Who is Spirit is controlling his, and our every move, and that makes Him The Sovereign, the One and Only God, and no one can or has withstood His intentions (Romans 9:19).  
  
God is Satan's God; there is no other God, even if he or anyone else does not admit it does not change the fact that God is God. Jesus as much as told the Adversary this after His testing in the wilderness: ''You shall not be putting on trial the Lord your God." (Luke4:12)   
  
God does all, and uses all, that we all might know Him.  
  
"That people may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is none besides Me; I am the Lord, and there is no other. I form light and create darkness, Maker of good and creator of evil; I am the Lord, who does all these things." (Isaiah 45:6-7)

January 18

GOOD AND EVIL PART 5  
  
THE SIFTER AND THE THORNE   
  
"Now the Lord said, "Simon, Simon, lo! Satan claims you men, to sift you as grain. Yet I besought concerning you, that your faith may not be defaulting. And once you turn back, establish your brethren."  
  
What was the purpose of Satan's sifting of Peter?  
  
And why did the Lord allow it to happen?   
  
Jesus could have denied Satan's request. But He didn't, He let Satan do what he does best; sift us of everything we believe is important in this life.

Today we are led to believe that one is one with God if their life is filled with wealth and blessings, no cares, no worries, no problems, but this is not the case. Peter was not wealthy or carefree, he wasn't even an educated man (Acts 4:13), but he was chosen by the Lord to be a Apostle, and he had some areas of his character that needed to be sifted; Peter needed to be humbled and who better to do it than Satan. Again, Satan could only go so far, Peter's faith would not be shaken. Peter would later write:  
  
"Be humbled, then, under the mighty hand of God, that He should be exalting you in season, tossing your entire worry on Him, for He is caring concerning you. Be sober! Watch! For your plaintiff, the Adversary is walking about as a roaring lion, seeking someone to swallow up; whom withstand, solid in the faith, having perceived the same sufferings being completed in your brotherhood in the world." (1 Peter 5:6-9)

Who else could be inspired to write this but Peter, having a firsthand experience?   
  
Paul, who was given much more spiritual insight than any other human wrote:

"Wherefore also, lest I should be lifted up by the transcendence of the revelations, there was given to me a splinter (thorn A.V.) in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, that he may be buffeting me, lest I may be lifted up. For this I entreat the Lord thrice, that it should withdraw from me. And He has protested to me, "Sufficient for you is My grace, for My power in infirmity is being perfected." With the greatest relish, then, will I rather be glorying in my infirmities, that the power of Christ should be tabernacling over me. Wherefore I delight in infirmities, in outrages, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake, for, whenever I may be weak, then I am powerful. (2 Corinthians 5:7-10)

Paul could have been puffed up with the knowledge that was revealed to him, he uses the words " lest I should be lifted up”, and might have been if not for this messenger of Satan who humbled him. He asked the Lord three times for this splinter to be removed, but the answer was no. God's grace was sufficient to sustain him through whatever this messenger of Satan was allowed to do.  
  
So with two of the paramount apostles, Peter and Paul, Satan was used by God to bring them both to a place of humility; where God's grace would shine above all else. After Peter's sifting, his faith was stronger, and grew. Paul's thorn in the flesh revealed to him that God's grace superexeeds all else, and is more than efficient to bring us through the trials we will go through. Although this is hard to accept by most, Satan was used in both men's lives by stripping them down to bring them to a greater knowledge of, and reliance on God.

January 19

GOOD AND EVIL PART 6  
  
BOUND LOOSED BOUND   
  
As has been shown over the last few days, Satan is not some out of control, self made evil identity, running amuck doing whatever he pleases. To hear some speak of him you would be made to believe he is equal with God, and in some areas stronger than God.   
  
What is misunderstood is that the Adversary is doing the bidding of God in covering the eyes of understanding of those who do not believe now:

"And therefore God will be sending them an operation of deception, for them to believe the falsehood, that all may be judged who do not believe the truth, but delight in injustice." (2 Thessalonians 2:11-12)

This operation of deception is carried out by the deceiver, Satan.

But both the deceived and the deceiver are God's: "With Him is strength and wisdom; the deceived and the deceiver are His." (Job 12:16)   
  
When Jesus was speaking the salvation of God to the Jews (who rejected Him), He quoted Isaiah;

"Therefore they could not believe, seeing that Isaiah said again that He (God) has blinded their eyes and callouses their heart, lest they may be perceiving with their eyes, and should be apprehending with their heart, and may be turning about, and I shall be healing them." (John 12:39-40)

Notice that God blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts.  
  
How does God do this, and not be "THE DECIEVER"?  
  
He created the one who is designed to deceive, the Adversary.   
  
Paul shows us this is so in 2 Corinthians 4:3-4:  
  
"Now, if our evangel is covered, also, it is covered in those who are perishing, in whom the god of this eon blinds the apprehensions of the unbelieving so that the illumination of the evangel of the glory of Christ, Who is the Image of the invisible God, does not irradiate them."   
  
The Adversary is the god of this eon, (this eon is called a wicked eon: Galatians 1:4) and the Adversary comes as a messenger of light to drive us into a belief in ourselves, with a self-help evangel. This is the Adversaries job, to take our eyes off of Christ, and focus on ourselves. He does this with great cunning; Paul tells us:

"For Satan himself is being transfigured into a messenger of light. It is no great thing, then, if his servants also are being transfigured as dispensers of righteousness -- whose consummation shall be according to their acts." (2 Corinthians 11:14-15)   
  
John tells us this of Satan in both his gospel account and his first epistle:

"He was a man-killer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, for truth is not in him. Whenever he may be speaking a lie, he is speaking of his own, for he is a liar, and the father of it.... for from the beginning is the Adversary sinning." (John 8:44, 1 John 3:8)   
  
If you have had your eyes opened, you don't have to look to far to see the Adversary’ work is alive and well, but he will only operate until God has finished with him and then as John tells us:  
  
"And I perceived a messenger descending out of heaven, having the key of the submerged chaos and a large chain in his hand. And he lays hold of the dragon, the ancient serpent, who is the Adversary and Satan, and binds him a thousand years. And he casts him into the submerged chaos and locks it, and seals it over him (lest he should still be deceiving the nations) until the thousand years should be finished. After these things he must be loosed a little time." (Revelation 20:1-3)  
  
Why not bind him now?  
  
God is not finished with him yet.  
  
Why loose him after the thousand years?  
  
Because humans throughout time have always turned their heads the other way when concerning the true God. Even during the thousand year reign of Christ human’s hearts will become rebellious. When Satan is loosed at the end of that time, he will drag humanity back down with him, and when his work is completed, they will stand before God at the Great White Throne, and finally see that they are nothing without Him. They will see that He is their God. The Adversary will be no more an adversary; he will experience his part in the Lake of Fire during the final eon.

John's words of the completed work of Christ; "For this was the Son of God manifested, that He should be annulling the acts of the Adversary." (1 John 3:8) will be fulfilled. The tool in the tool belt will no longer be necessary; evil will be no more, darkness will fade away, those two things that God created will have served there purposes, but good and light will remain as they are eternal.

January 20

SALVATION LOST ? PART 1  
  
IN ONE DAY, OUT THE NEXT   
  
Is it possible to lose your salvation?  
  
Is the once saved always saved, teaching really true?   
  
Or can you fall so far away from God that there is no chance of restoration?   
  
Is there such a thing as restoration?   
  
And by restoration I mean given your salvation back, that many claim you can lose. Is salvation that fragile that you can lose it by doing or not doing something, or living a lifestyle that is said to be unpleasing to God therefore causing Him to remove you from the list of saved people and placing you on the list of unsaved people, and after you repent of whatever it is you did, you are taken off the unsaved list and place back on the saved list until you slide back again and...... well you get it.

Is that possible?   
  
I recently was sent a list of scripture verses claiming that is indeed the way it works.  
  
First let me say, you will never convince anyone to change their minds on certain pet doctrines, only God can reveal truth to someone. You can point out the path to truth, but never will you be the one who will lead them down the path to truth, whatever that truth is. That is the holy spirits job, to lead us into all truth. Jesus tells us that:

"Whenever that may be coming -- the spirit of truth --it will be guiding you into all the truth, for it will not be speaking from itself, but whatsoever it should be hearing will it be speaking, and of what is coming will it be informing you." (John 16:13)

So truth comes by the spirit revealing the things of God to us.  
  
For the believer we are told:

"Now we obtained, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God, that we may be perceiving that which is being graciously given to us by God, which we are speaking also, not with words taught by human wisdom, but with those taught by the spirit, matching spiritual blessings with spiritual words." (1 Corinthians 2:13)

We are to compare scripture with scripture. If a scripture seems to contradict another verse of scripture our first thought should be; who is it written to.   
  
Much of what Jesus said was not directed to the church of today, He spoke mainly to Israelites, Jews. If we want to know what He is saying to the church today we have to go to the words He spoke through Paul in his epistles. Paul's words are Christ's words. Just because some versions have Jesus' words in red does not mean that all else written in the scriptures are not His words.  
  
So with these three thoughts in mind;

1. Jesus spoke mainly to Israel.

2. Paul spoke to the church.

3. And all the words spoken (written) are Christ's words, and that:  
  
"All scripture is inspired by God, and is beneficial for teaching, for exposure, for correction, for discipline in righteousness, that the man of God may be equipped, fitted out for every good act." (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

As well as this verse also from Paul:  
  
"Endeavor to present yourself to God qualified, an unashamed worker, correctly cutting the word of truth." (2 Timothy 2:15).

We will begin to examine some of these verses that claim to say you can lose your salvation, and compare them to verses that claim once saved always saved, and see if there are indeed contradictions in the scriptures or harmony.

January 21

SALVATION LOST? PART 2  
  
NOT A CHANCE   
  
There are no contradictions in the scriptures, just bad theology, and by that I mean human theology.  
  
There is not a chance that you can, or will, or did, lose your salvation, ever.  
  
One portion of scripture that some claim teaches you can lose your salvation, comes from the man who gives us the assurance there is no possibility of this ever

happening; Paul:  
  
"Faithful is the saying: "For if we died together, we shall be living together also; if we are enduring, we shall be reigning together also; if we are disowning, He also will be disowning us; if we are disbelieving, He is remaining faithful -- He cannot disown Himself." (2 Timothy 2:11-13).  
  
At face value this is a yoyo verse, enduring - reigning, disowning -disowned,

disbelieving- faithful, cannot be disowned.  
  
Let’s do a quick dissecting of these verses:   
  
"If we died together, we shall be living together." This is a promise that cannot be taken away. We are identified in Christ, not in any other. In Colossians 3:2-4, Paul says: "Be disposed to that which is above, not to that on the earth, for you died, and your life is hid together with Christ in God. Whenever Christ, our Life, should be manifested, then you also shall be manifested together with Him in glory."

We are so in Christ that we are hidden in Him. We cannot be removed from Him, this is our salvation.  
  
"If we are enduring, we shall be reigning together also." This has to do with reward and loss (Read 2 Corinthians 5:10). Our place/position in His celestial government will be determined by our endurance.   
  
“If we are disowning, He will be disowning us”: has to do with our position/portion in reigning with Him, not our salvation, that is secure, hid in Him, as Paul tells above in Colossians.   
  
And if we are disbelieving He is remaining faithful.

How do we know this to be true?

Reread this next verse from Timothy over and over again: "If we are disbelieving, He is remaining faithful-- He cannot disown Himself."

Paul also says the same in Romans 3:3-4: "For what if some disbelieve? Will not their unbelief nullify the faithfulness of God? May it not be coming to that!"

We cannot ever separate ourselves from God.  
  
Relatively speaking we have a part in enduring; we also have a part in the disowning and disbelieving.   
  
Our part; for an allotment with Christ is enduring. Christ' part; is awarding us a higher position in His reign for enduring.  
  
Our part; if we are disowning Him, will bring on Christ' part; of disowning our part in His reign, for our disowning.  
  
Our part; if we are disbelieving Him, will reveal Christ' part; His promise of remaining faithful to us His body, He will not disown it.   
  
Those who disown and disbelieve are saved: "yet they shall be saved, yet thus, as through fire." (1 Corinthians 3:15)   
  
Those who endure are said to be pursuing for the prize of God's calling above in Christ (Philippians 3:14), a special place in reigning.  
  
You cannot ever lose your salvation, but you can lose a higher position in Christ celestial reign.  
  
That we can never lose our salvation, no matter what we do, Paul tells us in Romans 8:33-39:  
  
"Who will be indicting God's chosen ones? God, the Justifier? Who is the Condemner? Christ Jesus, the One dying, yet rather being roused, Who is also at God's right hand, Who is pleading also for our sakes? What shall be separating us from the love of God in Christ Jesus? Affliction, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? According as it is written that "On Thy account we are being put to death the whole day, we are reckoned as sheep for slaughter." Nay! In all these we are more than conquering through Him Who loves us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor messengers, nor sovereignties, nor the present, nor what is impending, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord."  
   
Read the above verses a couple of times. Now read it by inserting your name in the blanks:  
  
"Who will be indicting God's chosen (\_\_\_\_)? God, the Justifier? (Answer: "NO") Who is the Condemner of (\_\_\_\_\_)? Christ Jesus, the One dying, yet rather being roused, Who is also at God's right hand, Who is pleading also for (\_\_\_\_) sake? (Answer; "NO") What shall be separating (\_\_\_\_\_\_) from the love of God in Christ Jesus? (Answer; "Nothing) Affliction, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? (Answer; "No") According as it is written that "On Thy account we are being put to death the whole day, we are reckoned as sheep for slaughter." Nay! In all these (\_\_\_\_\_\_) is more than conquering through Him Who loves us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor messengers, nor sovereignties, nor the present, nor what is impending, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creation, will be able to separate (\_\_\_\_\_\_) from the love of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord."   
  
Paul says he is persuaded, and so should you be persuaded!

January 22

SALVATION LOST? PART3  
  
FALL OUT OF GRACE   
  
With your salvation being secure, can you fall out of grace?  
  
The answer is; YES, you can.  
  
How, when yesterday you read those verses from Timothy and Romans?  
  
Paul tells us how in his letter to the Galatians:

"Exempted from Christ were you who are being justified in law. You fall out of grace. For we, in spirit, are awaiting the expectation of righteousness by faith." (Galatians 5:4-5)   
  
As with many today, the Galatians believed they had to work to maintain their faith and righteous standing in Christ, by following certain laws. They had become enslaved to their works, to the point of being legalistic and ritualistic, therefore falling out of grace.  
  
You can't fall out of grace by sinning (where sin abounds grace superexeeds. Romans 5:20), you can only fall out of grace by trying to work for it. Trying to work for it is a futile ordeal, as no one has ever, or can work hard enough to earn God's grace (favor), because grace is bestowed upon all of us who don't deserve it.   
  
By believing you can, or have to work for grace is no different than disbelieving God's work of grace, and that too will disqualify you from reigning, but not disqualify salvation. By believing you have to work to maintain your salvation you are actually disowning the gift of the One Who paid the price for your salvation; ("For in grace, through faith, are you saved, and this is not out of of you, it is a gift from God, not of works, lest any human should boast." Ephesians 2:8-9), and your freedom, as Paul tells us: "For freedom Christ frees us! Stand firm, then, and be not again enthralled with the yoke of slavery (the law)." (Galatians 5:1)  
  
Working, or, believing you have to work for your salvation is no less slavery than one who is tethered to a ball and chain, you are not free, you have set yourself up for condemnation, not that God will condemn you, but, you will constantly condemn yourself for falling short of what "you" believe God wants from you,.   
  
Grace is freedom, freedom from law, and works. Freedom to be who God intended you to be in Christ, not what others say you should be.  
  
Read what Paul asks the Galatians:  
  
"This only I want to learn from you: Did you get the spirit by works of law or by hearing of faith? So foolish are you? Undertaking in spirit, are you now being completed in flesh? (Galatians 3:2-3)  
  
The Galatians were being led to believe by a religion telling them they had to follow the law, and in following the law that would strengthen their faith. They might not have come out and said it, but everything about them revealed this was so.  
  
Even though these Galatians fell out of grace, they could never fall from it. Even though their flesh was working overtime to maintain righteousness with God, and they believed it would strengthen/establish their faith, the grace of God was still the only thing that kept their salvation sure, even though they believed the opposite to be true.  
  
Many quote Philippians 2:12:

"So that, my beloved, according as you always obey, not as in my presence only, but now much rather in my absence, with fear and trembling, be carrying your own salvation into effect."; believing it is up to themselves, and it is themselves bringing their salvation to fruition, but, if they read the following verse: "for it is God Who is operating in you to will as well as to work for the sake of His delight."; they will quickly see that they are the vessel God is working in to bring this about, not them.  
  
If you are following the Galatian rule, believing you can work out your own salvation by following rules and laws, whatever those rules and laws you are working at might be; stop, it will only lead you away from the truth in Christ.   
  
All you are, and all you will be, is all by the grace of God, don't try adding to it, because when you add to it you lessen it, and you fall out of grace.

January 23

SALVATION LOST? PART 3  
  
DOES GRACE REALLY SUPEREXEED SIN?

The short answer to the above question is: yes.  
  
But that does not give us license to do whatever we desire.  
   
But you could do whatever desire you have and grace would cover it.  
  
Paul was expecting this type of reasoning, "lets test grace," to his declaration:” Yet where sin increases, grace superexeeds." (Romans 5:20).

He asks a couple of verses later: "What, then, shall we declare? That we may be persisting in sin that grace should be increasing?" (6:1)

That would be the logical question from many who believe in a saved and kept by works gospel. Paul answers this question with: "May it not be coming to that!" (6:2)  
  
What Paul is saying is the strength of grace will always trump any sin that is committed, knowingly, or unknowingly.

Those who understand grace are more than likely to avoid situations that would cause them to sin. Grace is that strong that those who understand it know they don't have to test it to see if it is so. That does not mean they are perfect, no one is, they understand that if they do sin, (and we will) they do not have to live with a conscience that is always guilty.   
  
God's grace will always be glorified, even in our unrighteousness.   
  
A very good example of grace superexeeding sin is in 1 Corinthians. There was a man (a believer) who was having sexual relations with his fathers wife. It does not say with his mother, she may have been one of his father’s wives, or a second wife. At any rate, this man was having sex with her. Paul calls this a sin that is not even named among unbelievers. Paul never calls this man an unbeliever; he calls him one who is numbered among you. At the time of Paul writing this, after he was exposed, and more than likely he was counseled by the elders and told this must stop, the man would not stop this behavior.    
  
What is the remedy for this type of behavior?  
  
Paul says he gives such a one over to Satan, not sending him to hell (Paul knew there is no such place), Paul says let Satan have him to destroy his flesh, with whatever behavior, or lifestyle this man wants to live. And when Satan has finished with him, his spirit will be saved, but his flesh destroyed by his lifestyle (1 Corinthians 5:5). If this man persisted in this lifestyle he would have become of no earthly value to God, or the ecclesia, but he was still God's child and in the end grace would have trumped his sin.

To look at it from a human mindset, one would say God has given up on this man, there is no hope for him, and in his flesh it would seem so, but God's grace kept this mans spirit, although the actions of this man may have quenched the spirit working in him, the seal of the spirit can never be broken.   
  
We are never advised to test grace, we are encouraged to avoid lifestyles that do not honor God, and lifestyles that could cause others to stumble in their faith. Paul exhorts us to be responsible, but he knew, and God knows, we humans at times get caught up in the moment, and when it happens God's grace is there, keeping us in His hands, protecting our spirits, and when we are turned back around His grace is there to bring peace to our guilty consciences. Sin may destroy our lives, and our bodies, but never will it destroy God's grace and His love for us, that is immutable.

January 24

SALVATION LOST PART 4  
  
GRACE OVERWHELMS    
  
Grace is eternal, it was not created. It was with God always, waiting for the creation of us all, to be displayed. Paul, in 2 Timothy 1:9, tells Timothy: "the grace which is given to us in Christ Jesus before times eonian."  In God's plan, we were already in grace before the eons, but not until evil was created, and sin developed, would we actually know the grace of God, and then only after Christ revealed His love toward us.  
  
Paul, who at one time was a persecutor of all those who believed in Christ is an example of God's grace.   
  
He writes:

"I, who formerly was a calumniator and a persecutor and an outrager: but I was shown mercy, seeing that I do it being ignorant, in unbelief. Yet the grace of our Lord overwhelms, with faith and love in Christ Jesus." (1Timothy 1:14)  
  
Grace is so powerful that it overwhelms those who know they deserve the opposite. It is so powerful that nothing evil or no sin can stop it from being displayed. Actually grace needs evil and sin in order to be displayed. Without sin and evil we would never know the grace of God. Paul never knew God's grace until he was on the Damascus road, and God stopped him in his tracks. When Paul was given the realization that he was persecuting God's chosen, and deserving of being cast away from God for the eons, he was overwhelmed by the grace that God bestowed upon him.   
  
Paul called himself "a pattern" for those who are about to be believing on Christ.   
  
As believers, we are all overwhelmed by the grace that God pours on us. We all at one time were ignorant of God, and in unbelief, not until God opened our eyes and showed us we were estranged from Him did we realize how far away from Him we really were. Even those who are brought up in a Christian setting their whole lives will at one time realize how God's grace overwhelmed them.   
  
We now walk in the knowledge of His overwhelming grace, and with that knowledge He will open our eyes to see that one day that grace which overwhelmed us will overwhelm all who were ignorant of Him, and in unbelief.  
  
Paul is our pattern of the ignorant, and unbelieving. He called himself the foremost of sinners. Not just a sinner, but the number one sinner of his day. He is an example of all who will believe after him. Every "foremost sinner" of their day will experience the overwhelming grace of God, some now, others at the conclusion of the eons.   
  
If, as Paul tells us, ignorance and unbelief are the criteria for God's grace to be displayed, who fails to qualify?  
  
None of us.   
  
Therefore, none of us will escape His overwhelming grace. If any did, grace would not be eternal.

January 25  
  
GOD, THE KNOWER OF HEARTS  
  
The above title is a portion of the verse from Acts 15:8, I have it highlighted in my Bible.   
  
Jeremiah 17:10 tells us: “I am Yahweh Who investigates the heart, Who tests the innermost being. So as to give to each one according to his ways, according to the fruit of his actions."   
  
God is our investigator and judge, He knows our hearts. I like the way the Concordant Literal Old Testament transliterates this portion of the verse: "Yahweh Who investigates the heart." God looks deep into our hearts; He investigates our motives and intensions. He knows the "why" of our motives and intensions more than we do ourselves.   
  
There are many things we have intended to do, and our hearts were willing to do, but they never got off the ground, we just couldn't get them started, or finished. Many would call that failure, but not God.   
  
When we all stand before Him, He will investigate our hearts and reveal our motives for things we did do, and our intensions for the things we wanted to do but couldn't.  
  
Paul says something similar to that of Jeremiah in 1 Corinthians 4:5:

"So that, be not judging anything before the season, till the Lord should be coming, Who will also illuminate the hidden things of darkness and manifest the counsels of the hearts. And then applause will be coming to each one from God."  
  
"Do not be judging anything before the season." Many are quick to pull the trigger on someone who they feel is not doing their all for God. We, unfortunately judge from appearance, what we see, and by our own standards. We are all guilty of it to some degree. This is why that verse: "God, the Knower of hearts" is highlighted in my Bible to the point of bleeding through to the other page. Not only is it personal, between me and God, as He knows my motives and intensions, but it is a reminder (one that I have to remind myself of often), it is also between God and everyone else's motives and intensions. It tells me I shouldn't judge others as well, it’s not my job, its God's, He is the Knower of the motives and intentions of others, not me.  
  
Paul also says this from same chapter:

"Now to me it is the least trifle that I may be being examined by you or by man's day. But neither am I examining myself. For of nothing am I conscious as to myself, but not by this am I justified. Now He Who is examining me is the Lord." (4:3-4)  
  
Paul knew the One Who investigates the heart. He knew that a clear conscience did not mean all his motives and intentions were justified before God. Paul knew that the Lord is the Knower of our hearts; He would examine his heart and expose the true intent. Paul would not even examine himself, or let others who were examining him get to him. Paul knew that when the Investigator of hearts dug into his heart all would be brought to light, the hidden things of darkness, as well as the things that were seen by others. I lean toward the possibility that the hidden things of darkness could possibly be the things we wanted to do, and couldn't.

These intensions are hidden from the view of others (in darkness so to speak), we didn't get to do what we intended them to do, and when God investigates our hearts He illuminates them, and will applaud and reward our intensions.  
  
So, now, we should never feel we are a failure, nor judge ourselves because we couldn't accomplish what we set out to do, or wanted to do, the Knower of hearts will be our judge, not our peers, or ourselves, He will investigate the motives and intentions of our hearts, and when He has finished He will applaud all we did, as well as all we intended to do.

January 26  
  
THE JOURNEY PART 1

FOLLOW THE LEADER   
  
Paul wrote in Colossians 2:6-7:

"As, then, you accepted Christ Jesus, the Lord, be walking in Him, having been rooted and being built up in Him, and being confirmed in the faith according as you were taught, superabounding in it with thanksgiving."  
  
Today we have the scriptures complete. We really have no need to go to others to complete our growth; God has given us all we need to know in the 66 books in the Bible. In saying that, God has also given us teachers, those who have put in the time to understand portions of the scriptures better than others. I enjoy reading the works of others, they often edify me. Many have brought out truths from verses that I have missed, or have seen in a different light.   
  
How we see God is how we will see the scriptures, and how we see the scriptures is how we will see God.  
  
Those who see God as an angry God will immediately see every verse tainted with that thought. Even verses that tell us God loves us will be marred with the thought "only if you love Him, He will love you." I know this to be true because that is the way I once believed God to be. I knew He loved me because I believed in Him, and I believed the words of others who believed in Him as well. Many of these teachers would say; “God loves all of us, but, in order for that love to be revealed we have to believe in Him, if we don't believe His love will be taken from us and our destiny will be one of eternal separation from His love.” I believed this teaching for about ten years then I began to see that I didn't know God at all, I was following the leader, and the leader was teaching that God only loved a select few, the rest were on the opposite end of the specter. I was becoming increasingly uncomfortable with that line of teaching. But who am I to question God? Then I realized, it is not God who I should question, it is the teachers of God's word I should question. So I did.  
  
I asked all sorts of questions, some made certain individuals squirm. Other questions brought on stiff rebukes. I was told on one occasion that some of these questions there are no answers for; you must close your eyes and take on the wings of faith, and trust that God is doing the right thing. Then I thought, what God is said to be doing is not what I see Him doing from my studies in the scriptures.  
  
I remember thinking; why were these questions agitating these so called learned men? And why did many of the answers not line up with the God I was coming to see from the Scriptures?  
  
I soon realized the answer, it came as plain as day. These men were following the leader of a teaching, not the Teacher.  
  
They were defending their "faith", not the faith. I know the same can be said about me, and all who discuss the things of God, but we should never feel uncomfortable when questioned about what we believe, and we should never answer like one man answered me when I questioned a certain doctrine about the final destiny of the unbeliever in Christ he held onto, he said with a mocking tone: "Are you actually denying the teachings of these men, who are learned scholars, men..... SCHOLARS, who have been teaching this for the past three hundred years......... YOU!  
  
I answered yes.  
  
Can you read the verse at the beginning of this article and say you are superabounding with thanksgiving in what you were taught? Your life is richer, you are at peace, God is in fact love, God is just, Christ truly is the Saviour, and you are at peace with the final destiny of those who do not believe as you do. If your answer is yes, the next several days you might not want to read. If it is no, maybe the next few days will help with that.

January 27  
  
THE JOURNEY PART 2

THE BEGINNING  
  
When I started to study out the teaching that God will reconcile all to Himself, or, God will be All in all, according to Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:28, I was filled with apprehension. I remember thinking how could this be true, how could God's justice be satisfied, what about hell, the Lake of Fire, why bother telling people about Christ if all are to be saved eventually. These were legitimate questions and concerns at the time. Questions that needed answers, and concerns that needed to be sorted out.   
  
I have never been one to shove aside someone's take on the scriptures without at least checking it out on my own. I will say, there was a time, when I first believed, that I took the word of teachers I was told were sound, and respected. I knew no better. And when certain verses seemed to pop out of my Bible that contradicted these author’s line of teaching, I would go and ask people who knew the scriptures better than I did what am I missing here. Often the answers were vague, or just another question to my question. I accepted the fact that I was ignorant of the deeper things of God, or at least ignorant to the answers I was given. There came a point when I knew I would have to go it alone, and search these queries I had out if I really wanted to know God, or at least have things settled in my mind.  
  
The first question I had was, if God is going to reconcile all humans to Himself, where is this in the Scriptures besides this verse in 1 Corinthians, and when will this occur, especially when most people since Christ's first advent have rejected Him. I had read the entire Bible through several times and the New Testament several more, and had not seen one verse that made this claim. I thought, what am I missing, if anything, so I started the journey.  
  
I started in Matthew and went through the New Testament, chapter and verse, to find verses that spoke, or possibly alluded to God reconciling all. I would compile the list and go over them in study. Also I would look for scriptures that said the opposite. I had been given a couple of books to read on God reconciling all, but my main source had to be the Scriptures, as my experience with writers was in question.  
  
I was going to try to be as unbiased as possible, have an open mind. I had no doctrine to defend, no church creed to protect, if the scriptures really taught the reconciliation of all I wanted to find out. I won't comment on all the verses I will put forth, I will only print them out as I found them; like I did twenty five years ago. When I finished I studied them out, and I weighed them against scripture that seemed to say the opposite (at the time). I won't print out the scriptures that seem to say the opposite, as I am sure most know them, or have at least read them and heard of them. I will take those scriptures on at a latter date. Also some of the parables allude to punishment having an end, and some speak of all the lost being found and reconciled. But first I would like to bring out some scriptures you may not have seen. (Note, at the time I was reading the King James Version with a Concordance, I now use the Concordant Literal Bible, so instead of eternity, it is properly transliterated eonian, hell/hades is the unseen, Gehenna is Gehenna (not hell), so some of the verses my not be the same, but if you are a searcher get out your concordance and check them out for yourself). I would also say that Paul, the writer to the church, in his letters clarified much of these verses from the Gospel accounts, as much of what Jesus said was directed to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matthew 15:24),  so be patient.    
  
It didn't take more than twenty one verses into Matthew and one popped out. "Now she shall be bringing forth a Son, and you shall be calling His name Jesus, for He shall be saving His people from their sins." (Matthew 1:21). The name Jesus means “Jehovah Savior” or “God is Salvation.”  I marked the verse and kept on reading.  
  
Twelve chapters later another verse popped out: "And whosoever may be saying a word against the Son of Mankind, it will be pardoned him, yet whoever may be saying aught against the holy spirit, it shall not be pardoned him, neither in this eon nor in that which is impending." (Matthew 12:32). I marked this one as well.  
  
Matthew 18:12-14 was the next portion of scripture that popped out:

“What are you supposing? If it should be occurring to any man, with a hundred sheep, that even one of them should be led astray, will he not leave the ninety-nine sheep on the mountains, and go and seek the one which is straying? And if he should come to find it, verily, I am saying to you that he is rejoicing over it, rather than over the ninety-nine that have not strayed. Thus it is not the will in front of your Father Who is in the heavens that one of these little ones should be perishing."  
  
When speaking to the chief priests and the elders, the ones who despised Jesus, He said: "Verily, I am saying to you that the tribute collectors and the prostitutes are preceding you into the kingdom of God." (Matthew 21:31)

And then I read:  
  
"Said the Lord to my Lord, 'Sit at My right, Till I should be placing Thine enemies underneath "Thy feet!"'?  (Matthew 22:44)  
  
After His resurrection:

"And, approaching, Jesus speaks to them saying, "Given to Me was all authority in heaven and on the earth." (Matthew 28:18)  
  
After I marked these verses, I said to myself, not much about this reconciling all to God in Matthew. We have: "The Son shall be saving the people from their sins; blasphemy of the holy spirit not forgiven in this eon or the next; it is not the will of your Father that one of these should perish; prostitutes and tax collectors proceeding Christ haters into the kingdom of God; all enemies placed at His feet, and all authority in heaven and on earth given to Christ."  
  
But, there was something in these verses that shone through, and beyond what I had originally believed, so I read on.  
  
January 28  
  
THE JOURNEY PART 3

NOT UNTIL JOHN   
  
I now believe Jesus is "THE" Saviour, not "A" Saviour. I believe that is why He was commissioned by His Father, to save us. To save us from our sins, and to rescue us out of death. At one time I believed salvation was to also rescue us from hell, but only for those who believed, Jesus was "A" Saviour for all who believed. That was the mind set I had at the beginning of my journey.   
  
I had been reading some books on the reconciliation of all, as well as reading the New Testament. The books were refreshing from what I had been reading and listening to for the past ten years or so. In Matthew, Mark and Luke, I saw a few verses that alluded to God reconciling all to Himself, but not until I read John, did a candle light up, and I thought there just might be something to this.  
  
Verse twenty nine of chapter one "Lo! The Lamb of God Which is taking away the sin of the world!" was the verse that lit the candle.   
  
As I said, I believed Jesus was "A" Saviour, that verse started to reveal to me, He is "THE" Saviour. This was confirmed by the time I read chapter four; after Jesus is speaking to the Samaritan woman at the well, it says:   
  
"As, then, the Samaritans came together to Him, they asked Him to remain with them. And He remains there two days. And many more believe because of His word. Besides, to the woman they said that "No longer because of your speaking are we believing, for we ourselves have heard Him, and we are aware that this truly is "THE" Saviour of the world, the Christ." (John 4:40-42)   
  
This might seem insignificant to many, but a Samaritan, who was despised by the Jews, who Jesus told his disciples not to go into the villages of when He sent them off to preach the kingdom (Matthew 10:5), were now shown the He is the Christ, and "THE" Saviour of the world. That He is not just Israel's Saviour is of far more significance then a lesson that Jesus is nice to a village of Samaritan's. He revealed Himself to "TRULY" be "THE" Saviour of the world.

Were they over-reaching by saying "truly the Saviour of the world.?"

I kept reading to find out more.  
  
Chapter twelve verses 32, 33 and 47: "And I, if I should be exalted out of the earth, shall be drawing all to Myself." Now this He said, signifying by what death He was about to be dying.....And if ever anyone should be hearing My declarations and not be maintaining them, I am not judging him, for I came not that I should be judging the world, but that I should be saving the world."  
  
What was meant by drawing all to Myself?

That answer wouldn't be totally revealed until Paul's letters, but Jesus did say those words, He spoke them to a people who were blind to the fact that He was their Saviour; how could they believe He was the Saviour of the world, and would draw all to Himself?  
  
In the upper room, on the last day of Jesus earthly life, before His crucifixion:

"These things speaks Jesus, and lifting His eyes to heaven, He said, "Father, come has the hour. Glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son should be glorifying Thee, according as Thou givest Him authority over all flesh, that everything which Thou hast given to Him, He should be giving it to them, even life eonian. Now it is eonian life that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Him Whom Thou dost commission, Jesus Christ." (John 17:1-3)  
  
Was this just a wishful prayer, for a chosen few?   
  
Or was this a prayer that all will come to realize?  
  
I was starting to realize that He was indeed the Saviour of the world, taking away the one thing that stood in our way: sin, and with that He is "THE" Saviour of the world Who will draw all humans to Himself, so that He should be saving the world, by the authority that God has given Him, and God would be glorified through Him.  
  
I knew most of what Jesus spoke of was from the other side of the cross, there was much more He had to reveal to His apostles (John 16:12-13), in particular a murdering Pharisee named Saul, who would call himself the chief of sinners, who was shown such grace and mercy that he called himself a pattern for those about to be believing on Christ (1 Timothy 1:13-17). He was the one who the risen Christ severed to reveal the reconciliation of all to God.   
  
This was exactly the opposite teaching I believed in at the beginning of my journey, a journey that I was half way through the New Testament scriptures to see if they had it so. Although a light had been lit, I still had many questions, and those I spoke with on this new dawning truth tried to dissuade me (some with threats of God sending me to the place I was also beginning to see was unscriptural "hell"), but still I had to know. 

January 29  
  
THE JOURNEY PART 4

ROMANS   
  
As a Christian today, you can tell people you actually saw Jesus, you saw limbs grow on people with amputated legs and arms, you've seen people who were dead for seven days brought back to life, people have their silver fillings miraculously replaced with gold fillings, Jesus took you to outer space and brought you back, and He also took you to hell to show you how bad it is, then up to planet heaven to have a harp lesson, later you said the Jabez prayer and the blessing were innumerable, and they will believe you. But tell those same people that you are coming to see the truth from the scriptures that God will have all humans be reconciled to Him, well, it is something they cannot accept.   
  
I'm fairly sure this is what Paul meant when he wrote: "Faithful is the saying and worthy of all welcome (for for this are we toiling and being reproached), that we rely on the living God, Who is the Saviour of all mankind, especially of believers." (1 Timothy 4:9-10)  
  
After I finished reading Paul's epistles there was no going back, the light was never to be extinguished. The verses were popping out off the pages of my Bible.  
  
Read Romans chapter five. You will read of the one humans (Adam) offence that affected the many, all of us (more than can be counted), resulting in sin and death. And you will read of the grace of God, which is of the One Man, Jesus Christ that is given to the many (same many as Adam's transgression, all of us), superabounds. We are spectators; we had no part in either.    
  
This chapter was instrumental in my realizing that God's grace, through Christ, is far greater than Adam's transgression that affected us all. And through that grace all will be reconciled to Him.   
  
The sad truth is many believe that Adam's transgression is greater than Christ's atoning for us all. I did at one time, and I know many I speak/spoke to believe this is true now. After reading, and rereading Romans chapter five, with this thought: "Nothing can superexeeds God's grace through Christ," I cannot imagine anyone ever believing God will not have all His creation reconciled to Him.  
  
Romans 11:32: "For God locks up all together in stubbornness, that He should be merciful to all."   
  
I had never seen this verse before. I had read it dozens of times, but I never really saw it in the way it is written. God locks us all in stubbornness, that He should be merciful to all. The same “all” here, as the many in Romans chapter five. Again, we are spectators to God's plan for humanity.  
  
All, and many, in both cases = more than can be counted, all of us.   
  
I didn't see where Paul, through inspiration of God, left anyone out. We are all, the many, in sin and death and stubbornness because of Adam, and are also the all, many, soon to be released from all three because of God’s grace and mercy.  
  
It is not our fault we are stubborn and in unbelief toward God (at least that is what Paul, by the inspiration of God tells us in Romans 11:32), and it is not us who chose to accept His mercy, it is God who is merciful. A believer believes that, but had no part in it.  
  
After reading Romans (with the thought of God reconciling all to Himself) I now believed in the reconciliation of all. I didn't know all the whys and when’s, that would take several years of study, but I was beginning to realize the how.  
  
Paul in his letter to the Corinthians told me when.

January 30  
  
THE JOURNEY PART 5

1 CORINTHIANS 15   
  
With Romans 5, I saw all in Adam being reconciled to Christ.   
  
In 1 Corinthians 15: 20-28 I saw when this will occur, at the consummation. Some versions say: the end, or the completion.  
  
When is the consummation, completion, the end?  
  
And what happens?  
  
We are told in 1 Corinthians 15:20-28:  
  
"(Yet now Christ has been roused from among the dead, the Firstfruit of those who are reposing. For since, in fact, through a man came death, through a Man, also, comes the resurrection of the dead. For even as, in Adam, all are dying, thus also, in Christ, shall all be vivified. Yet each in his own class: the Firstfruit, Christ; thereupon those who are Christ's in His presence; thereafter the consummation, whenever He may be giving up the kingdom to His God and Father, whenever He should be nullifying all sovereignty and all authority and power. For He must be reigning until He should be placing all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy is being abolished: death. For He subjects all under His feet. Now whenever He may be saying that all is subject, it is evident that it is outside of Him Who subjects all to Him. Now, whenever all may be subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also shall be subjected to Him Who subjects all to Him, that God may be All in all.)"  
  
Paul, in the first couple of verses above says much the same in Romans chapter 5: all in Adam die, all in Christ made alive (vivified), given life beyond the reach of death (immortal). Then he gives us the order of the dead rising: Christ was the first to rise from the dead (contraire to popular teaching), then those who are Christ's at His return (not before it, again contraire to popular teaching). Now Paul tells us when the rest of humanity will be raised and brought into reconciliation to God, through Christ, when He nullifies all sovereignty, authority, and power.   
  
If up to the present all who are supposed to be with Him are with Him now, what is the point of nullifying these enemies; all sovereignty, authority and power, and the last enemy, death?  
  
These are the four powers that hold/held the rest of humanity from believing in Christ. And He must place all four of these enemies under His feet, so all will be subjected to Him.  
  
John, in 1 John 3:8-9 tells us who is championing these four enemies that have deceived humanity: "Yet he who is doing sin is of the Adversary, for from the beginning is the Adversary sinning. For this was the Son of God manifested, that He should be annulling the acts of the Adversary."  
  
In 1 Corinthians 15 Paul is giving us the details of Christ annulling these acts of the Adversary, and tells us the outcome and purpose of this process. The subjection of all to Christ, that God my be All in all.  
  
No plainer section of scripture has been given to us that states the truth of God being All in all.  
  
Many (including myself at one time), have made the "all" only the all who believe during their lifetime, but this portion of scripture does not limit the all, it includes all (all = too many to be numbered) humanity.  
  
With this portion of scripture, I saw the truth that Paul was the one who was given the honor to complete the scriptures (Colossians 1:25). He was the one who God separated to reveal He would be the All in all.  
  
Paul, in these verses takes us beyond the book of Revelation (which ends with life in the final eon), he takes us to the consummation of time, the edge of eternity (so to speak) when time is no more, and God's purpose for us (His creation) has been achieved.  
  
I kept reading, for more details about this new (to me) truth.

January 31  
  
THE JOURNEY PART 6

TO HEAD UP ALL IN CHRIST

Paul wrote:

"Making known to us the secret of His will (in accord with His delight, which He purposed in Him) to have an administration of the complement of the eras, to head up all in the Christ -- both that in the heavens and that on the earth -- in Him in Whom our lot was cast also, being designated beforehand according to the purpose of the One Who is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will."  (Ephesians 1:9-10)  
  
These verses say so much: secrets revealed: an administration of believers to head up all in Christ in heaven and on earth, our calling was predestined; all is in accord with His will, making known to us the secret of His will.  
  
What is His will?  
  
To head up all in Christ. Or in other words to subject all in Christ. And in this era we are the compliment (the first fruits) of what is impending. When people see us, they are looking at what God has in store for them (even though they don't see it at present). We were no different then they are; only we now know who we are in Christ. We are the forerunners, and we will be used to head up all in the Christ, both that in the heavens, and that on the earth.

Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 6:2-3: "Or are you not aware that the saints shall judge the world?.....Are you not aware that we shall be judging messengers."  
  
Paul says a few verses later in Ephesians chapter one:   
  
"Rousing Him (Christ) from among the dead and seating Him at His right hand among the celestials, up over every sovereignty and authority and power and lordship, and every name that is named, not only in this eon, but also in that which is impending: and subjects all under His feet, and gives Him, as Head over all, to the ecclesia which is His body, the complement of the One completing the all in all." (1:20-23)  
  
We are the compliment of the One (Who) is completing the all in all. This is not of us, we had no choice. Most Christians have no knowledge of what is expected of them after the resurrection. We all need to be taught, shown, revealed what we are to do, because in the oncoming eons He will be displaying the transcendent riches of His grace to us (Ephesians 2:7). We will see first hand what He will do in the oncoming eons, and it will be the same as He has done with us, displaying His grace.  
  
This is how Paul could write:

“On this behalf am I bowing my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, after Whom every kindred in the heavens and on earth is being named." (Ephesians 3:15)

Paul saw in the believers of his time, what those who see this truth in our time see in ourselves, the grace of God in operation, and what we all will see in the coming eons: His grace working in every kindred in the heavens and the earth being called in His name. We are witnessing at present in ourselves the heading up of all in Christ, we will also be witnesses to this in the oncoming eons.