

The Suffering of Humanity

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He will wipe away every tear from their eyes,
and death shall be no more,
neither shall there be mourning,
nor crying,
nor pain anymore,
for the former things have passed away.
(Revelation 21:4 ESV)

And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things
and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes
and be killed,
and after three days rise again.
(Mark 8:31 ESV)

Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect,
so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God,
to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

For because he himself has suffered when tempted,
he is able to help those who are being tempted.
(Hebrews 2:17-18 ESV)

If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you.
If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you.
In the world you will have tribulation.
But take heart; I have overcome the world.
(John 15:18, 20bα, 16:33b ESV)

For God speaks in one way, and in two, though man does not perceive it.
In a dream, in a vision of the night,
Man is also rebuked with pain on his bed and with continual strife in his bones,
so that his life loathes bread, and his appetite the choicest food.
His flesh is so wasted away that it cannot be seen,
and his bones that were not seen stick out.
His [life] (nephesh)¹ draws near the pit, and his life to those who bring death.
(Job 33:14-15a, 19-22 ESV)

David said to Nathan,
“I have sinned against [YHWH].”²

And Nathan said to David,
“[YHWH] also has put away your sin; you shall not die. ...”

Thus says [YHWH],
“Behold, I will raise up evil against you out of your own house. ...”
“Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house ...”
(2 Samuel 12:13, 11a, 10a ESV)

The history of the human race is a history of suffering. Human beings have perpetrated great suffering on one another through war, slavery, and abuse. Famines and natural disasters have repeatedly killed millions and destroyed the lives of the survivors. People have always suffered deformities and illnesses from birth. Many women have died in childbirth. Contagious diseases have wiped out millions at various times. Today we also face epidemics of cancer, heart disease, and other degenerative diseases.

¹ The Hebrew word, נֶפֶשׁ - nephesh, and the Greek word, ψυχή - psyche, are both correctly translated by the English word “soul”. However, the English word “soul” has been rendered an unusable word due to the implication of the pagan concept of the “immortal soul”. Hence, in this paper, a more meaningful word is substituted. The most general word is “being”, but more specific words such as “mind”, “heart”, “life” are also used. For further discussion, see *Excursus 2 - נֶפֶשׁ and ψυχή* in the paper “**The Transfiguration and the Tabernacle**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

² The tetragrammaton, יהוה, in the **ESV**, as with most English translations, is rendered LORD or GOD. These translations are ambiguous. It is useful to consider who this Divine Being is when the name is used; hence, in this paper, YHWH, is always substituted.

Why is there all this suffering? Did God create human beings to suffer? The short answer is that suffering results from sin. Adam and Eve chose to sin bringing on death. The human race has lived in a world of sin and death under the sway of Satan the Devil ever since the Garden of Eden. The scope of suffering in the world is directly attributable to Satan the Devil.

However, **God does make use of suffering.** Each and every human has to come to grips with the fact that there is a vast gulf between God and man. The purpose of this life is to learn about that gulf – to come to see God in the true light. Suffering impresses upon we human beings how weak and small we are compared to God. God holds out to each and every person who has ever lived, the opportunity to traverse the gulf between God and man. God created man to have the potential to become part of the God Family. The purpose of this life is for each person to make his/her own choice as to whether or NOT he/she desires to be part of the God Family.

This paper, “The Suffering of Humanity”, examines what the Bible says about “suffering”.

The history books and the statistical summaries provide ample data on the scope of human suffering. This paper does NOT rehash those data. God’s purpose and his plan are thoroughly discussed in the document “**The Three Pillars of Revelation**” which exists in three papers located at

www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca:

- **Pillar One - The Nature of God**
- **Pillar Two - The Plan of God**
- **Pillar Three - The Way of God**

This paper first looks at the **origin of suffering**, then examines the many object lessons God has given us in the Biblical record of **King David**. A major theme of the **Book of Job** is human suffering; this is examined. The Prophets of God have down through the ages suffered for their efforts, in particular, the **Prophet Jeremiah** is considered. Then the New Testament example of **healing diseases and infirmities** is examined. The **suffering of Christians** in general, and specifically **John the Baptist** and the **Apostle Paul** are then examined. Finally, The **Servant Songs of the Prophet Isaiah** are analyzed, with emphasis on the fourth Servant Song, the **Suffering Servant**, which, of course, leads into a detailed discussion of the **suffering of Jesus Christ**.

To close the paper, **the day when suffering will end is identified.**

Please enjoy reading this paper!

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1. The Origin of Human Suffering

Human suffering began when Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden. Eve was told that she would suffer in childbirth. Adam was told that he would suffer in providing sustenance:

To the woman he said,

“I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing;

in pain you shall bring forth children.

Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.”

And to Adam he said,

“Because you have listened to the voice of your wife

and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you,

‘You shall not eat of it,’

cursed is the ground because of you;

in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life;

thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you;

and you shall eat the plants of the field.

By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread,

till you return to the ground,

for out of it you were taken;

for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

(Genesis 3:16-19 ESV)

Life in the Garden of Eden was idyllic. Adam and Eve chose to make their own decision as to what is right and what is wrong and succumbed to the temptation of Satan the Devil.

As a result, life became hard for them:

... therefore **[YHWH] God sent him out from the garden of Eden**

to work the ground from which he was taken.

He drove out the man ...

(Genesis 3:23-24a ESV)

This has been the lot of humanity ever since. Had Adam and Eve made the right choice, the lot of humanity would no doubt have been very different.

However, the Apostle Paul affirms that the suffering of each person is due to his/her own sin:

Therefore, just as **sin came into the world through one man,**

and death through sin,

and so death spread to all men because all sinned ...

... for **all have sinned** and fall short of the glory of God ...

(Romans 5:12 3:23 ESV)

It is clear that suffering is caused by sin. We see this again in the next event reported in the **Book of Genesis** – Cain’s killing of Abel:

So **Cain was very angry,** and his face fell.

[YHWH] said to Cain,

“Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen?

If you do well, will you not be accepted?

And if you do not do well, **sin is crouching at the door.**

Its desire is for you, and **you must rule over it.**”

Cain spoke to Abel his brother.
And when they were in the field,
Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him.
(Genesis 4:5b-8 ESV)

Adam and Eve suffered for their own sin. **Abel suffered for the sin of Cain.** Although all human beings have sinned, suffering is often inflicted by others with no provocation by the sufferer.

By the time of Noah, the suffering was so bad God had to destroy humanity and start over again:

[YHWH] saw that **the wickedness of man was great in the earth,**
and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight,
and **the earth was filled with violence.**
And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt,
for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth.

And God said to Noah,
 "I have determined to make an end of all flesh,
 for the earth is filled with violence through them.
 Behold, I will destroy them with the earth. ..."

(Genesis 6:5, 11-13 ESV)

But **Noah found [grace]³ in the eyes of [YHWH].**

But **I will establish my covenant with you,**
and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you.
(Genesis 6:8, 18 ESV)

The covenant that God established with Noah and his sons was intended to set the baseline for all human society that would be derived from their descendants.⁴ **A purpose of the covenant was to establish the sanctity of human life.** God's intention was to prevent the suffering resulting from the violence of the pre-flood world. If all human societies had embraced the fundamental principle of justice, much human suffering would have been alleviated:

And **for your lifeblood I will require a reckoning:**
from every beast I will require it and from man.
From his fellow man **I will require a reckoning for the life of man.**
 "Whoever sheds the blood of man,
 by man shall his blood be shed,
 for **God made man in his own image.**"

(Genesis 9:5-6 ESV)

The **Synoptist Luke** reports an incident in Jerusalem, probably at a Feast, where **Jesus commented that suffering is the common lot of human beings:**

There were **some present** at that very time
who told him about **the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.**
And he answered them,
 "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans,
 because **they suffered in this way?**
No, I tell you; but **unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.**
Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them:
do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem?
No, I tell you; but **unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.**"

(Luke 13:1-5 ESV)

God clearly introduced suffering onto humanity due to the sin of Adam and Eve.

But down through history, under the influence of Satan the Devil, **human beings have taken suffering to levels never intended by God.** The sin and suffering of **the inhabitants of the land of Canaan** is evident from their vile practice of child sacrifice.⁵ The sin and suffering of Israel throughout the period of the Judges is evident from even a casual reading of the **Book of Judges.** We will pick the story up with **King David.**

³ The Hebrew masculine noun יָחַד - yehen is the technical term for God's grace; see **TWOT** article 694a page 303.

⁴ For further discussion of this covenant, see section **2. The Covenant of Justness** in the paper "**Covenants of Grace**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

⁵ See Leviticus 20:1-5, Deuteronomy 18:9-12

2. The Suffering of King David

God gives us **many object lessons on suffering** through what has been recorded about the life of King David.⁶ A large number of King David's life lessons involved suffering. David learned much from what he suffered, and God has seen fit to have it recorded so that we can learn from David's suffering. As the youngest of six or seven older brothers,⁷

David received his fair share of reproach from his brothers:

Now Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spoke to the men.

And **Eliab's anger was kindled against David**, and he said,

"Why have you come down?

And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness?

I know your presumption and the evil of your heart,

for you have come down to see the battle."

And David said,

"What have I done now?

Was it not but a word?"

(1 Samuel 17:28-29 ESV)

Mild persecution, as from a sibling, if taken properly, can prepare a person to deal with more serious persecution in later life. **David seems to have learned this.**

2.1 Persecution of Saul

David was not in Saul's service long before **Saul became jealous of him:**

As they were coming home, when **David returned from striking down the Philistine**, the women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tambourines, with songs of joy, and with musical instruments.

And the women sang to one another as they celebrated,

"Saul has struck down his thousands,

and **David his ten thousands.**"

And **Saul was very angry**, and this saying displeased him.

He said,

"They have ascribed to David ten thousands,

and to me they have ascribed thousands,

and **what more can he have but the kingdom?**"

And **Saul eyed David from that day on.**

The next day a harmful spirit from God rushed upon Saul,

and **he raved within his house** while David was playing the lyre, as he did day by day.

Saul had his spear in his hand.

And Saul hurled the spear, for he thought,

"I will pin David to the wall."

But David evaded him twice.

(1 Samuel 18:6-11 ESV)

David found himself in the horrible position of working for someone who was unstable and was actively trying to kill him. Saul made many more attempts on David's life.⁸

Saul resorted to treachery to try to have David killed:

Now **Saul's daughter Michal loved David.**

And they told Saul, and the thing pleased him.

Saul thought,

"Let me give her to him,

that **she may be a snare for him**

and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him."

Therefore Saul said to David a second time,

"You shall now be my son-in-law."

⁶ For general discussion of King David see the paper "**David – A Man After My Own Heart**",

see also section **2.2.2 King David** in the paper "**To Be a King**"; both papers are located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

⁷ See 1 Samuel 16:10, 1 Chronicles 2:13-14

⁸ See 1 Samuel 19:9-11, 23:15, 26:1-2

And Saul commanded his servants,

"Speak to David in private and say,

'Behold, the king has delight in you,

and all his servants love you.

Now then become the king's son-in-law."

Then **Saul said,**

"Thus shall you say to David,

'The king desires no bride-price except a hundred foreskins of the Philistines,

that he may be avenged of the king's enemies."

Now **Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines.**

(1 Samuel 18:20-22, 25 ESV see also 18:28, 19:1)

Despite all that Saul plotted against David, **David continued to respect Saul** as the King and as his father-in-law. Twice when Saul tried to kill David, David had a clear chance to kill Saul, but each time David used the opportunity to attempt reconciliation with Saul:

When Saul returned from following the Philistines, he was told,

"Behold, David is in the wilderness of Engedi."

Then **Saul took three thousand chosen men** out of all Israel

and went to seek David and his men in front of the Wildgoats' Rocks.

And he came to the sheepfolds by the way, where there was a cave, and Saul went in to relieve himself.

Now David and his men were sitting in the innermost parts of the cave.

And the men of David said to him,

"Here is the day of which [YHWH] said to you,

'Behold, I will give your enemy into your hand,

and you shall do to him as it shall seem good to you."

Then **David arose and stealthily cut off a corner of Saul's robe.**

And **afterward David's heart struck him**, because he had cut off a corner of Saul's robe.

He said to his men,

"[YHWH] forbid that I should do this thing to my lord, [YHWH's] anointed,

to put out my hand against him, seeing he is [YHWH's] anointed."

Afterward David also arose and went out of the cave, and called after Saul,

"My lord the king!"

And when Saul looked behind him, David bowed with his face to the earth and paid homage.

And David said to Saul,

"Why do you listen to the words of men who say,

'Behold, David seeks your harm'?

See, **my father**, see the corner of your robe in my hand.

For by the fact that I cut off the corner of your robe and did not kill you,

you may know and see that there is no wrong or treason in my hands.

I have not sinned against you, though you hunt my life to take it. ..."

(1 Samuel 24:1-6, 8-9, 11 ESV see also 26:6-25)

In running from Saul, David took to protecting the people in the area in which he operated.

The **town of Keilah** was under attack from the Philistines, so David came to their rescue.⁹

David learned the hard way that you cannot always expect gratitude for good works:

Now **it was told Saul that David had come to Keilah.**

And Saul said,

"God has given him into my hand,

for he has shut himself in by entering a town that has gates and bars."

Then David said,

"[YHWH], the God of Israel,

your servant has surely heard that Saul seeks to come to Keilah,

to destroy the city on my account.

Will the men of Keilah surrender me into his hand?

Will Saul come down, as your servant has heard?

[YHWH], the God of Israel, please tell your servant."

And [YHWH] said,

"He will come down."

⁹ See 1 Samuel 23:1-5

Then David said,

“Will the men of Keilah surrender me and my men into the hand of Saul?”

And [YHWH] said,

“They will surrender you.”

(1 Samuel 23:7, 10-12 ESV see also 23:19-20, 25:10-11)

Saul’s pressure on David was so great that twice David was driven to consorting with the Philistines:

Then David said in his heart,

“Now I shall perish one day by the hand of Saul.

There is nothing better for me than that I should escape to the land of the Philistines.

Then Saul will despair of seeking me any longer within the borders of Israel,
and I shall escape out of his hand.”

So David arose and went over, he and the six hundred men who were with him,
to Achish the son of Maoch, king of Gath.

(1 Samuel 27:1-2 ESV see also 21:10-15)

David was able to convince the **King of Gath** to give him control of the **village of Ziklag**,
from which he was able to surreptitiously pillage Philistine allies.¹⁰

One day when they returned to Ziklag, they found disaster:

Now when David and his men came to Ziklag on the third day,

the **Amalekites had made a raid against the Negeb and against Ziklag.**

They had overcome Ziklag and burned it with fire

and taken captive the women and all who were in it, both small and great.

They killed no one, but carried them off and went their way.

And when David and his men came to the city, they found it burned with fire,

and their **wives and sons and daughters taken captive.**

(1 Samuel 30:1-3 ESV)

David was able to recover everything,¹¹ but no doubt suffered considerable anguish
over his potential loss. After this, David went on to become king, first in Hebron over just Judah,
then over all Israel, and he had a whole new series of sufferings to endure. David spent about
eight years avoiding King Saul.¹² Consider the things he suffered during this period:

- Jealousy of Saul, **“Saul eyed David from that day on”**
- Scheming and treachery by Saul,
“Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines”
- Constant danger from Saul, **“I will pin David to the wall”**
- David stooped to actions he regretted,
“David arose and stealthily cut off a corner of Saul’s robe”
- David was betrayed by people he trusted, **“they will surrender you”**
- David was driven to such desperation that he subjected himself and his men
to work for the enemy, **“I should escape to the land of the Philistines”**
- David suffered the loss of his family, **“wives and sons and daughters taken captive”**

All of this suffering taught David Many lessons that were valuable to him as he became King of Israel.
However, even **as “king” David had much to learn.**

¹⁰ See 1 Samuel 27:5-12

¹¹ See 1 Samuel 30:17-20

¹² See the chronological chart “**The Life of David**” located at <https://mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca/chronological-charts>
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2.2 The Bathsheba/Uriah Incident

David's early years as King of Israel were eminently successful. He captured **Jerusalem** from the Jebusites to make it his capital.¹³ He defeated the Philistines.¹⁴ He successfully moved the **Ark of the Covenant** to Jerusalem.¹⁵ He was promised by God that his dynasty would last forever.¹⁶ He established Israel as the dominant regional power.¹⁷ **All this success, apparently, went to David's head**, because after he had accomplished all this **he made the worst mistake of his life**.

His mistake caused death and suffering, not only for many in his household, but also for many of his subjects:

In the spring of the year, the time when kings go out to battle,
David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel.
And they ravaged the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah.

But David remained at Jerusalem.

It happened, late one afternoon,
when David arose from his couch and was walking on the roof of the king's house,
that he saw from the roof a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful.

And **David sent and inquired about the woman**.

And one said,

"Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, **the wife of Uriah the Hittite?"**

So **David sent messengers and took her**, and **she came to him**, and he lay with her.

(Now she had been purifying herself from her uncleanness.)

Then she returned to her house.

And the woman conceived, and she sent and told David,

"I am pregnant."

(2 Samuel 11:1-5 ESV)

The rest of the story is well known.¹⁸ After **Uriah is killed** at David's order, the **Prophet Nathan** confronts David with his famous parable of the "rich man" and the "poor man's lamb".¹⁹ David accepts his guilt and is informed of the consequences.²⁰ Despite **David's**, and presumably also **Bathsheba's**, **deep repentance, a curse was placed on David** that would plague him to his death:

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your [hesed],²¹

according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.

Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!

For **I know my transgressions**, and my sin is ever before me.

Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight,
so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;

wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have broken rejoice.

Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

(Psalm 51:1-4, 7-11 ESV)

David said to Nathan,

"I have sinned against [YHWH]."

And Nathan said to David,

"[YHWH] also has put away your sin; you shall not die. ..."

¹³ See 2 Samuel 5:6-9, 1 Chronicles 11:4-8

¹⁴ See 2 Samuel 5:17-25, 1 Chronicles 14:8-17

¹⁵ See 2 Samuel 6:1-15, 1 Chronicles 15:1-15, 25-28

¹⁶ See 2 Samuel 7:4-17, 1 Chronicles 17:3-15

¹⁷ See 2 Samuel 8:1-14, 10:1-19, 1 Chronicles 18:1-13, 20:1-3

¹⁸ See 2 Samuel 11:6-27

¹⁹ See 2 Samuel 12:1-6

²⁰ See 2 Samuel 12:7-12

²¹ The most important word for understanding the Nature of God is *hesed*. Briefly, *hesed* is the expression of God's covenantal commitment to fulfill his side of a covenant agreement. See section **1.4.3 Attributes of God's Character** in the paper "**First Pillar - The Nature of God**" and **Excursus 2 - hesed** in the paper "**Covenants of Grace**"; both papers are located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca. See also the discussion in **Excursus 1 - The Necessity of Love**.

Thus says [YHWH],
 “Behold, I will raise up **evil against you out of your own house.** ...”
 “Now therefore **the sword shall never depart from your house** ...”
 (2 Samuel 12:13, 11a, 10a ESV)

This incident is **an object lesson about sin and suffering**:

- When things are well, one must be wary, **“David remained at Jerusalem”**
While people are saying,
“There is peace and security,”
then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman,
 and they will not escape.
 (1 Thessalonians 5:3 ESV)
 They have healed the wound of my people lightly, saying,
‘Peace, peace,’
when there is no peace.
 (Jeremiah 6:14 ESV see also 8:11)
I will put an end to the pride of the strong, and their holy places shall be profaned.
 When anguish comes, **they will seek peace,** but **there shall be none.**
 (Ezekiel 7:24b-25 ESV)
- David did NOT resist temptation, **“David sent and inquired about the woman”**
 But each person is **tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.**
 Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin,
 and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.
 (James 1:14-15 ESV)
- David ignored what he fully knew, Bathsheba was married, **“the wife of Uriah the Hittite”**
 And **you shall not lie sexually with your neighbor’s wife**
 and so make yourself unclean with her.
 If a man commits adultery with the wife of his neighbor,
 both **the adulterer** and **the adulteress** shall surely be **put to death.**
 If a man is found lying with the wife of another man,
 both of them shall die,
 the man who lay with the woman, and the woman.
So you shall purge the evil from Israel.
 (Leviticus 18:20, 20:10, Deuteronomy 22:22 ESV)
- David abused his position, **“David sent messengers and took her”**
 So Samuel told all the words of [YHWH] to **the people who were asking for a king** from him.
 He said,
“These will be the ways of the king who will reign over you:
he will take ...”
 (1 Samuel 8:10-11a ESV)
 And **he shall not acquire** many wives **for himself**, lest his heart turn away,
 nor shall he acquire for himself excessive silver and gold.
 (Deuteronomy 17:17 ESV)
 And **Jesus called them to him and said to them,**
“You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them,
and their great ones exercise authority over them.
But it shall not be so among you.
But whoever would be great among you must be your servant,
and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. ...”
 (Mark 10:42-44 ESV)
- Bathsheba was also complicit, **“she came to him”**
 But **when a righteous person** turns away from his righteousness and does injustice
 and **does the same abominations** that the wicked person does, shall he live?
The [person] (nephesh)²² who sins shall die.
 (Ezekiel 18:24a, 20a ESV)

²² See footnote 1
 Sunday, August 30, 2026

- Repentance brings forgiveness, **“YHWH also has put away your sin”**
Who is a God like you, **pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression**
for the remnant of his inheritance?
He does not retain his anger forever, because he delights in [hesed].²³
(Micah 7:18 ESV)
Say to them, As I live, declares the Lord [YHWH],
I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked,
but that the wicked **turn from his way and live;**
turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel?
(Ezekiel 33:11 ESV)
- Repentance does NOT necessarily remove the penalty for sin,
“evil against you out of your own house”,
“the sword shall never depart from your house”
I will restore their fortunes, both the fortunes of Sodom and her daughters,
and the fortunes of Samaria and her daughters,
and **I will restore your own fortunes** in their midst,
that you may bear your disgrace and **be ashamed** of all that you have done,
becoming a consolation to them.
You bear the penalty of your lewdness and your abominations, declares [YHWH].
(Ezekiel 16:53-54, 58 ESV)

David no doubt contemplated deeply the things he learned from his errors.
We have the record of his contemplation in the Davidic Psalms. Nevertheless, as time went on,
he experienced fully that **“the sword shall never depart from your house”**.

2.3 Absalom's Revolt

David had another bitter lesson to learn: he **trusted too much in those who were close to him.**

This is never more apparent than his relationships with his children.

When David was approaching death, his oldest surviving son, **Adonijah**,
was taking steps to **usurp the throne** that had been promised to Solomon:

Now **Adonijah** the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying,
“I will be king.”

And he prepared for himself chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him.

His father had never at any time displeased him by asking,
“Why have you done thus and so?”

He was also a very handsome man, and he was born next after Absalom.
(1 Kings 1:5-6 ESV)

Clearly, Adonijah had NO respect for the wishes of David or YHWH.

It was clearly YHWH's intention that Solomon would be King:

For **David said**,

“Solomon my son is young and inexperienced,
and the house that is to be built for [YHWH] must be exceedingly magnificent,
of fame and glory throughout all lands.
I will therefore make preparation for it.”

So David provided materials in great quantity before his death.

Then he called for Solomon his son and charged him to build a house for [YHWH], the God of Israel.

David said to Solomon,

“My son, I had it in my heart to build a house to the name of [YHWH] my God.
But **the word of [YHWH] came to me, saying,**

“You have shed much blood and have waged great wars.

You shall not build a house to my name,

because you have shed so much blood before me on the earth.

Behold, a son shall be born to you who shall be a man of rest.

I will give him rest from all his surrounding enemies.

For his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quiet to Israel in his days.

²³ See footnote 21

He shall build a house for my name.
He shall be my son, and I will be his father,
and I will establish his royal throne in Israel forever' ..."

(1 Chronicles 22:5-10 ESV)

Adonijah's ambition and lack of respect were his undoing:

Then **King Solomon swore** by [YHWH], saying,

"God do so to me and more also **if this word does not cost Adonijah his life!**

Now therefore as [YHWH] lives,

who has established me and placed me on the throne of David my father,

and who has made me a house, as he promised,

Adonijah shall be put to death today."

(1 Kings 2:23-24 ESV)

The sad circumstances that led to Adonijah's being the oldest surviving son are even more telling of the poor relationships David had with his sons. **David had six sons born in Hebron:**

These are the sons of David who were born to him in Hebron:

the firstborn, **Amnon**, by Ahinoam the Jezreelite;

the second, **Daniel**, by Abigail the Carmelite,

the third, **Absalom**, whose mother was Maacah, the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur;

the fourth, **Adonijah**, whose mother was Haggith;

the fifth, Shephatiah, by Abital;

the sixth, Ithream, by his wife Eglah;

(1 Chronicles 3:1-3 ESV)

The Bible contains no information on the second son, Daniel. Likely he died very young.

The eldest, **Amnon**, like Adonijah, **hatched a nefarious plot**, which, like Adonijah, **cost him his life**.

His actions, like Adonijah's, demonstrated **total disrespect for David**:

Now **Absalom**, David's son, **had a beautiful sister**, whose name was **Tamar**.

And after a time **Amnon**, David's son, **loved her**.

And Amnon was so tormented that **he made himself ill because of his sister Tamar**,

for she was a virgin, and it seemed impossible to Amnon to do anything to her.

But Amnon had a friend, whose name was Jonadab, **the son of Shimeah, David's brother**.

And **Jonadab was a very crafty man**.

And he said to him,

"O son of the king, why are you so haggard morning after morning?

Will you not tell me?"

Amnon said to him,

"I love Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister."

Jonadab said to him,

"Lie down on your bed and pretend to be ill.

And when your father comes to see you, say to him,

'Let my sister Tamar come and give me bread to eat,

and prepare the food in my sight,

that I may see it and eat it from her hand.'"

Then **David sent home to Tamar**, saying,

"Go to your brother Amnon's house and prepare food for him."

So Tamar went to her brother Amnon's house, where he was lying down.

And she took dough and kneaded it and made cakes in his sight and baked the cakes.

And she took the pan and emptied it out before him, but he refused to eat.

And Amnon said,

"Send out everyone from me."

So everyone went out from him.

Then Amnon said to Tamar,

"Bring the food into the chamber, that I may eat from your hand."

But he would not listen to her, and being stronger than she, **he violated her and lay with her**.

(2 Samuel 13:1-5, 7-10a, 14 ESV)

The rape of Tamar set in motion a series of events which rocked David's life and the stability of his kingdom for many years. Within two years, Absalom murdered Amnon in revenge.²⁴

Absalom then fled to Geshur, from where his mother had come.²⁵ After three years, Joab, David's nephew and the commander of David's army, took steps to have Absalom reinstated.²⁶ Once Absalom was back in the good graces of David, he hatched his plot. Absalom surreptitiously gained the favour and trust of a large following and commenced a rebellion against David.²⁷ David fled to the east side of the River Jordan to Mahanaim.²⁸ There David organized the troops that had followed him, and a battle ensued during which Joab personally killed Absalom.²⁹ All this was in fulfillment of the curse put on David over the Bathsheba/Uriah incident, **"the sword shall never depart from your house"**.

Nevertheless, in this series of tragedies, **David's failings contributed to the suffering:**

- Clearly David put too much trust in his wives and concubines and the tutors of his children; he did not build strong relationships, **"his father had never at any time displeased him"**
- David allowed to exist a "palace culture" where a nephew of his was tolerated when he was clearly a troublemaker, **"Jonadab was a very crafty man"**
- David was clearly out of touch with his children as he was unaware that Amnon began to have desires for Tamar, **"he made himself ill because of his sister Tamar"**
- When Amnon began to play out the scheme of Jonadab, David was sucked in, **"David sent home to Tamar"**
- After the rape, David apparently took no positive actions to reconcile the situation; **Absalom was simply left to plot the murder of Amnon**

Again these failings of David resulted in immense suffering for him and his household.

The rebellion of Absalom resulted in suffering and death of many Israelites. The final event of rebellion, the death of Absalom, again brings out David's propensity to over trust those close to him:

And **the king ordered Joab** and Abishai and Ittai,
"Deal gently for my sake with the young man Absalom."

And all the people heard when the king gave orders to all the commanders about Absalom.

And a certain man saw it and told Joab,
"Behold, I saw Absalom hanging in an oak."

Joab said,
"I will not waste time like this with you."

And **he took three javelins in his hand and thrust them into the heart of Absalom**
while he was still alive in the oak.
(2 Samuel 18:5, 10, 14 ESV)

Joab repeatedly went his own way contrary to what David instructed him, yet David continued to trust him. This is exemplified again after the Absalom rebellion. David tried to replace Joab with David's nephew and Joab's cousin, Amasa:

Then **the king said to Amasa,**
"Call the men of Judah together to me within three days, and be here yourself."

When they were at the great stone that is in Gibeon,
Amasa came to meet them.

Now Joab was wearing a soldier's garment,
and over it was a belt with a sword in its sheath fastened on his thigh, and as he went forward it fell out.
And Joab said to Amasa,
"Is it well with you, my brother?"

²⁴ See 2 Samuel 13:23-29

²⁵ See 2 Samuel 13:34-38

²⁶ See 2 Samuel chapter 14

²⁷ See 2 Samuel chapter 15

²⁸ See 2 Samuel 17:24

²⁹ See 2 Samuel chapter 18

And Joab took Amasa by the beard with his right hand to kiss him.
But Amasa did not observe the sword that was in Joab's hand.
So Joab struck him with it in the stomach
and spilled his entrails to the ground without striking a second blow, **and he died.**
(2 Samuel 20:4, 8-10 ESV)

Despite Joab's unreliability, **David continued to trust Joab.** Finally, Joab played a role in the last reported event of David's life – the census of Israel.

2.4 The Census of Israel

The Bible is NOT specific on David's motivation in taking a census, but the Chronicler ascribes it to Satan. Even Joab recognizes that it was a bad thing:

Then Satan stood against Israel and incited David to number Israel.

So **David said to Joab** and the commanders of the army,
"Go, **number Israel**, from Beersheba to Dan,
and bring me a report, that I may know their number."

But Joab said,

"May [YHWH] add to his people a hundred times as many as they are!
Are they not, my lord the king, all of them my lord's servants?
Why then should my lord require this?

Why should it be a cause of guilt for Israel?"

(1 Chronicles 21:1-3 ESV see also 2 Samuel 24:1-3)

Joab carried out the census, but normal to his ways, he did fully comply with David's orders:

But he **did not include Levi and Benjamin in the numbering**,
for the king's command was abhorrent to **Joab**.

(1 Chronicles 21:6 ESV)

Whatever was David's motivation, the action was considered a great sin of David's,
but as king of Israel, **the whole nation suffered for his actions:**

But God was displeased with this thing, and he struck Israel.

So [YHWH] sent a pestilence on Israel, and 70,000 men of Israel fell.

And David said to God,

"I have sinned greatly in that I have done this thing.
But now, please take away the iniquity of your servant, for I have acted very foolishly."

And David said to God,

"Was it not I who gave command to number the people?
It is I who have sinned and done great evil.

But **these sheep, what have they done?**

Please let your hand, [YHWH] my God, be against me and against my father's house.

But do not let the plague be on your people."

(1 Chronicles 21:7, 14, 8, 17 ESV)

Once again David had to deeply repent of a sin, and God accepted the repentance,
but the penalty for the sin was NOT removed. **David suffered greatly** to see 70,000 of his subjects die.
Those 70,000 **suffered the loss of their lives** and their families **suffered the loss of a family member.**
Sin causes suffering.

3. The Suffering of Job

The suffering of Job is famous:³⁰

... so I am allotted months of emptiness,
and nights of misery are apportioned to me.
When I lie down I say,
‘When shall I arise?’

But the night is long, and I toss and turn till the dawn.

My flesh is clothed with worms and dirt;

my skin hardens, then breaks out afresh.

My days are swifter than a weaver’s shuttle and come to their end without hope.

I loathe my life;

I will give free utterance to my complaint;

I will speak in the bitterness of my [life] (nephesh).³¹

My spirit is broken; my days are extinct; the graveyard is ready for me.
(Job 7:3-6, 10:1, 17:1 ESV)

My days are past; my plans are broken off, the desires of my heart.
They make night into day:

‘The light,’ they say, ‘is near to the darkness.’

If **I hope for [the grave] (sh^e’ol)³² as my house,**

if I make my bed in darkness,

if I say to the pit,

‘You are my father,’

and to the worm,

‘My mother,’ or ‘My sister,’

where then is my hope?

Who will see my hope?

Will it go down to the bars of [the grave] (sh^e’ol)?

Shall we descend together into the dust?”

(Job 17:11-16 ESV)

My breath is strange to my wife,

and I am a stench to the children of my own mother.

Even young children despise me; when I rise they talk against me.

All my intimate friends abhor me,

and those whom I loved have turned against me.

My bones stick to my skin and to my flesh,

and I have escaped by the skin of my teeth.

(Job 19:17-20 ESV)

And now my [heart] (nephesh)³³ is poured out within me;

days of affliction have taken hold of me.

The night racks my bones, and **the pain that gnaws me takes no rest.**

With great force my garment is disfigured;

it binds me about like the collar of my tunic.

I am a brother of jackals and a companion of ostriches.

My skin turns black and falls from me, and my bones burn with heat.

My lyre is turned to mourning, and my pipe to the voice of those who weep.

(Job 30:16-18, 29-31 ESV)

Few human beings could survive what Job suffered, **“my flesh is clothed with worms and dirt”, “my bones stick to my skin and to my flesh”, “the pain that gnaws me takes no rest”**. Job was at the point of despair, **“I loathe my life”, “my spirit is broken”, “where then is my hope”**. Job looked to death as preferable to life, **“I hope for the grave as my house”, “shall we descend together into the dust”, “my lyre is turned to mourning”**. Seeing all this suffering, three “friends” of Job came to comfort him.³⁴

³⁰ For a detailed discussion of the Book of Job see the paper “Analysis of the Book of Job” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

³¹ See footnote 1

³² The Hebrew word שְׁאוֹל - sh^e’ol, should always be translated “death”, “grave”, or a synonym. To transliterate as “Sheol” implies that there is a place of consciousness where the “dead” go, “Dante’s Hell”. This is a pagan concept. See TWOT article 2303c pages 892-893.

³³ See footnote 1

³⁴ See Job 2:11-13

3.1 Assessment of the “Friends”

The fact that sin causes suffering was evidently well known to Job’s three “friends”, **Eliphaz**, **Bildad**, and **Zophar**. They relentlessly tried to convince Job to acknowledge his sin. They were convinced that his great suffering had to be the result of grievous sin that he was hiding:

Eliphaz

Remember:

who that was innocent ever perished?

Or where were the upright cut off?

As I have seen, **those who plow iniquity and sow trouble reap the same**.

By the breath of God they perish, and by the blast of his anger they are consumed.

The roar of the lion, the voice of the fierce lion, the teeth of the young lions are broken.

The strong lion perishes for lack of prey, and the cubs of the lioness are scattered.

(Job 4:7-11 ESV)

Bildad

If your children have sinned against him,

he has delivered them into the hand of their transgression.

If you will seek God and plead with the Almighty for mercy,

if you are pure and upright,

surely then he will rouse himself for you and restore your rightful habitation.

And though your beginning was small, **your latter days will be very great**.

(Job 8:4-7 ESV)

Zophar

If you prepare your heart, you will stretch out your hands toward him.

If iniquity is in your hand, put it far away, and let not injustice dwell in your tents.

Surely then you will lift up your face without blemish;

you will be secure and will not fear.

You will forget your misery;

you will remember it as waters that have passed away.

(Job 11:13-16 ESV)

Eliphaz

Is not your evil abundant?

There is no end to your iniquities.

For you have exacted pledges of your brothers for nothing and stripped the naked of their clothing.

You have given no water to the weary to drink, and you have withheld bread from the hungry.

The man with power possessed the land, and the favored man lived in it.

You have sent widows away empty, and the arms of the fatherless were crushed.

Therefore snares are all around you, and sudden terror overwhelms you, or darkness, so that you cannot see, and a flood of water covers you.

(Job 22:5-11 ESV)

Eliphaz contends that an innocent person will NOT suffer misery, “**who that was innocent ever perished**”; therefore, since Job is suffering, he must have iniquity, “**those who plow iniquity and sow trouble reap the same**”. **Bildad** alludes to the death of Job’s children, that it was obviously due to their sin, “**he has delivered them into the hand of their transgression**”. **Bildad** then assures Job that great reward will ensue following repentance, “**your latter days will be very great**”, “**if you will seek God and plead with the Almighty for mercy**”. **Zophar** promises healing upon admission of iniquity, “**you will forget your misery**”, “**if iniquity is in your hand, put it far away**”. **Eliphaz** flatly accuses Job of great sin, “**is not your evil abundant**”, “**there is no end to your iniquities**”, and then goes on to catalogue a litany of social abuses, which he contends are the cause of Job’s plight, “**therefore snares are all around you**”.

After listening to all this, Job realizes that the three “friends” are not helping at all.

They clearly have no understanding. Job knows he has no hidden sin.

He has lived a blameless life. He holds to his integrity:

I have heard many such things; **miserable comforters are you all**.

Shall windy words have an end?

Or what provokes you that you answer?

I also could speak as you do, if you were in my place;

I could join words together against you and shake my head at you.

I could strengthen you with my mouth, and the solace of my lips would assuage your pain.

(Job 16:2-5 ESV)

Is there any injustice on my tongue?

I am blameless; I regard not myself;

I am a laughingstock to my friends;

I, who called to God and he answered me,

a just and blameless man, am a laughingstock.

(Job 6:30a, 9:21a, 12:4 ESV)

... as long as my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils,

my lips will not speak falsehood, and my tongue will not utter deceit.

Far be it from me to say that you are right;

till I die **I will not put away my integrity from me**.

I hold fast my righteousness and will not let it go;

my heart does not reproach me for any of my days.

(Job 27:3-6 ESV)

Job faces a serious problem. He knows he has no grievous sin.

But **why then is he suffering?** **Job is convinced that somehow God is responsible.**

He decides that he must present his innocence to God as in a court of law.

3.2 Job's Case

Job develops his case carefully, **knowing the omnipotence of God**, he must ultimately plead for mercy:

Truly I know that it is so:

But **how can a man be in the right before God?**

If one wished to contend with him, one could not answer him once in a thousand times.

He is wise in heart and mighty in strength—who has hardened himself against him, and succeeded?

How then can I answer him, choosing my words with him?

Though I am in the right, I cannot answer him;

I must appeal for mercy to my accuser.

If it is a contest of strength, behold, he is mighty!

If it is a matter of justice, **who can summon him?**

Though I am in the right, **my own mouth would condemn me**;

though I am blameless, he would prove me perverse.

For he is not a man, as I am, that I might answer him, that **we should come to trial together.**

There is no arbiter between us, who might lay his hand on us both.

(Job 9:2-4, 14-15, 19-20, 32-33 ESV)

But I would speak to the Almighty,

and **I desire to argue my case with God.**

Today also my complaint is bitter;

my hand is heavy on account of my groaning.

Oh, that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat!

I would lay my case before him and fill my mouth with arguments.

I would know what he would answer me and understand what he would say to me.

Would he contend with me in the greatness of his power?

No; **he would pay attention to me.**

There an upright man could argue with him,

and **I would be acquitted forever by my judge.**

But **he knows the way that I take**;

when he has tried me, I shall come out as gold.

My foot has held fast to his steps;

I have kept his way and have not turned aside.

I have not departed from the commandment of his lips;

I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my portion of food.

(Job 13:3, 23:2-7, 10-12 ESV)

Job is convinced of the “justness” of God – he knows he will get a fair hearing, **“I would lay my case before him”, “he would pay attention to me”**. Because Job is innocent, he has lived by the **Way of God** all his life, **“he knows the way that I take”**, Job is confident of a NOT GUILTY verdict, **“I would be acquitted forever by my judge”, “when he has tried me, I shall come out as gold”**.

But there is more happening here than Job is aware of.

The hidden actor in all the dialogue between Job and the three “friends” is Satan the Devil.

The three “friends” have actually been puppets with Satan the Devil pulling the strings.

3.3 The Back Story

The story of Job’s suffering actually began in the Throne Room in eternity:

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before [YHWH], and Satan also came among them.

[YHWH] said to Satan,

“From where have you come?”

Satan answered [YHWH] and said,

“From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it.”

And [YHWH] said to Satan,

“Have you considered my servant Job,

that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man,
who fears God and turns away from evil?”

Then Satan answered [YHWH] and said,

“Does Job fear God for no reason?

Have you not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has, on every side?

You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land.

But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and **he will curse you to your face.”**

And [YHWH] said to Satan,

“Behold, **all that he has is in your hand.**

Only against him do not stretch out your hand.”

So Satan went out from the presence of [YHWH].

(Job 1:6-12 ESV)

YHWH challenges Satan to take a crack at Job, **“have you considered my servant Job”**.

YHWH knows that Job is **“a blameless and upright man”**, and trusts that Job will be able to resist Satan.

No where in the **Book of Job** is it ever revealed that Job is aware of Satan’s machinations.

Why then does YHWH challenge Satan to go after Job? Later YHWH gives Satan permission

to inflict suffering on Job, up to the point of taking his life.³⁵ The three “friends” pummel Job

with conventional worldly wisdom. **Their main theme being that Job only serves God because**

of material benefits. Satan’s ploy is that if he can get Job to believe this lie, Job will become disillusioned

and turn away from God. Job does NOT bite on the lie. **Job maintains his integrity**, which is good

in that it is enough to defeat Satan, but it is **actually the reason why God allows Satan to inflict**

Job’s suffering. The three “friends” had no inkling of this, but the young sage, **Elihu**, is on the right track.

3.4 The Young Sage

Before the first speech of Elihu, the narrator sets the stage:

So these three men ceased to answer **Job**, because he **was righteous in his own eyes**.

Then **Elihu** the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the family of Ram, **burned with anger**.

He burned with anger at **Job** because he **justified himself rather than God**.

He burned with anger also at Job’s three friends because they had found no answer, although they had declared Job to be in the wrong.

Now Elihu had waited to speak to Job because they were older than he.

And when Elihu saw that there was no answer in the mouth of these three men, he burned with anger.

(Job 32:1-5 ESV)

³⁵ See Job 2:1-7

The classic assessment of the Book of Job is that “Job was self-righteous”. That is NOT wrong, indeed, **“Job was righteous in his own eyes”, “Job justified himself rather than God”.** The deeper question is **what does it mean to be “self-righteous”?** Why did God deliberately allow Satan to inflict all this suffering on Job and his family? The young sage, Elihu, helps to answer these questions.

Elihu carefully lays out his logical analysis of Job’s suffering:

- First, he acknowledges Job’s contention that God is responsible:
Surely you have spoken in my ears, and I have heard the sound of your words.
You say,
 ‘I am pure, without transgression;
 I am clean, and there is no iniquity in me.
Behold, **he finds occasions against me**, he counts me as his enemy,
he puts my feet in the stocks and watches all my paths.’
(Job 33:8-11 ESV)
- Then, he identifies two ways that God communicates with man:
For **God speaks in one way**, and **in two**, though man does not perceive it.
In a dream, in a vision of the night,
when deep sleep falls on men, while they slumber on their beds,
then he opens the ears of men and terrifies them with warnings,
that he may turn man aside from his deed and conceal pride from a man;
he keeps back his [life] (nephesh)³⁶ from the pit, his life from perishing by the sword.
Man is also rebuked with pain on his bed and with continual strife in his bones,
so that his life loathes bread, and his appetite the choicest food.
His flesh is so wasted away that it cannot be seen,
and his bones that were not seen stick out.
His [life] (nephesh) draws near the pit, and his life to those who bring death.
(Job 33:14-22 ESV)
- God’s intention is to induce repentance:
... then **man prays to God**, and **he accepts him**;
he sees his face with a shout of joy, and he restores to man his righteousness.
He sings before men and says:
 ‘**I sinned and perverted what was right**, and it was not repaid to me.
He **has redeemed my [life] (nephesh)** from going down into the pit,
and my life shall look upon the light.’
(Job 33:26-28 ESV)
- Elihu then backs up to acknowledge Job’s position of righteousness:
For Job has said,
 ‘**I am in the right**, and God has taken away my right;
in spite of my right I am counted a liar;
my wound is incurable, though **I am without transgression**.’
(Job 34:5-6 ESV)
- Then, he extolls the Nature of God:
Of a truth, **God will not do wickedly**, and the Almighty will not pervert justice.
Who gave him charge over the earth, and who laid on him the whole world?
If he should set his heart to it and gather to himself his spirit and his breath,
all flesh would perish together, and man would return to dust.
(Job 34:12-15 ESV)
- And, Elihu points out the futility of challenging God:
For his eyes are on the ways of a man, and he sees all his steps.
There is no gloom or deep darkness where evildoers may hide themselves.
For **God has no need to consider a man further**, that he should go before God in judgment.
He shatters the mighty without investigation and sets others in their place.

³⁶ See footnote 1
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Job speaks without knowledge; his words are without insight.
Would that Job were tried to the end, because he answers like wicked men.
For he adds rebellion to his sin;
he claps his hands among us and **multiplies his words against God**.
(Job 34:21-24, 35-37 ESV)

- Next, Elihu points out the vast gulf between God and man:
Look at the heavens, and see; and behold the clouds, which are higher than you.
If you have sinned, **what do you accomplish against him?**
And if your transgressions are multiplied, what do you do to him?
If you are righteous, **what do you give to him?**
Or what does he receive from your hand?
Your **wickedness** concerns a man like yourself, and your **righteousness** a son of man.
(Job 35:5-8 ESV)
- Then, Elihu goes straight to **the cause of suffering**:
Behold, God is mighty, and does not despise any;
he is mighty in strength of understanding.
He does not keep **the wicked** alive, but gives **the afflicted** their right.
He does not withdraw his eyes from the righteous,
but with kings on the throne he sets them forever, and they are exalted.
And if they are bound in chains and caught in the cords of affliction,
then he declares to them their work and their transgressions,
that they are behaving arrogantly.
He opens their ears to instruction and commands that they return from iniquity.
If they listen and serve him, they complete their days in prosperity,
and their years in pleasantness.
But if they do not listen, they perish by the sword and die without knowledge.
The godless in heart cherish anger; they do not cry for help when he binds them.
They die in youth, and their life ends among the cult prostitutes.
He delivers the afflicted by their affliction and opens their ear by adversity.
(Job 36:5-15 ESV)
- Then, Elihu reverts to the greatness of God in **General Revelation**:
Remember to extol his work, of which men have sung.
All mankind has **looked on it; man beholds it from afar**.
Behold, God is great, and **we know him not**; the number of his years is unsearchable.
For he draws up the drops of water; they distill his mist in rain,
which the skies pour down and drop on mankind abundantly.
Can anyone understand the spreading of the clouds, the thunderings of his pavilion?
Behold, he scatters his lightning about him and covers the roots of the sea.
For by these he judges peoples; he gives food in abundance.
He covers his hands with the lightning and commands it to strike the mark.
Its crashing declares his presence; the cattle also declare that he rises.
(Job 36:24-33 ESV)
At this also my heart trembles and leaps out of its place.
Keep listening to the thunder of his voice and the rumbling that comes from his mouth.
Under the whole heaven he lets it go, and his lightning to the corners of the earth.
After it his voice roars; he thunders with his majestic voice,
and he does not restrain the lightnings when his voice is heard.
God thunders wondrously with his voice;
he does great things that we cannot comprehend.
For to the snow he says,
‘Fall on the earth,’
likewise to the downpour, his mighty downpour.
He seals up the hand of every man, **that all men whom he made may know it**.
Then the beasts go into their lairs, and remain in their dens.
From its chamber comes the whirlwind, and cold from the scattering winds.
By the breath of God ice is given, and the broad waters are frozen fast.
He loads the thick cloud with moisture; the clouds scatter his lightning.

They turn around and around by his guidance,
to accomplish all that he commands them on the face of the habitable world.
Whether for correction or for his land or for love, he causes it to happen.
(Job 37:1-13 ESV)

- Finally, Elihu concludes by again identifying the vast gulf between God and man:
Hear this, O Job; stop and consider the wondrous works of God.
Do you know how God lays his command upon them
and causes the lightning of his cloud to shine?
Do you know the balancings of the clouds,
the wondrous works of him who is perfect in knowledge,
you whose garments are hot when the earth is still because of the south wind?
Can you, like him, spread out the skies, hard as a cast metal mirror?
Teach us what we shall say to him;
we cannot draw up our case because of darkness.
Shall it be told him that I would speak?
Did a man ever wish that he would be swallowed up?
And now no one looks on the light when it is bright in the skies,
when the wind has passed and cleared them.
Out of the north comes golden splendor; God is clothed with awesome majesty.
The Almighty—we cannot find him; he is great in power;
[justness] (*mish*pat*)³⁷ and abundant righteousness he will not violate.
Therefore men fear him;
he does not regard any who are wise in their own conceit.
(Job 37:14-24 ESV)

By human standards, Job was “perfect”. He had lived by the Way of God all his life.

He was “righteous” and “blameless”. Job was like the man who inquired of Jesus, “he lacked one thing”:

And as he was setting out on his journey,
a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him,
“Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”
And Jesus said to him,
“Why do you call me good?
No one is good except God alone.
You know the commandments:
‘Do not murder,
Do not commit adultery,
Do not steal,
Do not bear false witness,
Do not defraud,
Honor your father and mother.’”

And he said to him,
“Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth.”

And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him,
“You lack one thing: ...”
(Mark 10:17-21a ESV)

Like Job, the “man” had lived by the Way of God all his life – he had lived a perfect life.
But, again like Job, he was told, “you lack one thing”. The one thing lacking in Job’s character was
an appreciation of the vast gulf between God and man. Job believed that his “perfect life”
was adequate to ensure salvation. In this, he was self righteous.
Only when Job is directly confronted by God, does Job come to see God in his true light.

³⁷ The most important meaning of the noun מִשְׁפָּט - *mish*pat*, is the character attribute of “justness”,
but it also frequently is used to mean the abstract concept of “justice”; other nuances also exist.
The meaning of *mish*pat* is thoroughly explored in the paper “**Godly Character**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.
Sunday, August 30, 2026 The Suffering of Humanity

3.5 God Deals with Job

YHWH accosts Job going straight to General Revelation:

Then [YHWH] answered Job out of the whirlwind and said:

“Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?

Dress for action like a man;

I will question you, and you make it known to me.

Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?

Tell me, if you have understanding.

Who determined its measurements—surely you know!

Or who stretched the line upon it?

On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone ...”

(Job 38:1-6 ESV)

Have you commanded the morning since your days began, and caused the dawn to know its place, that it might take hold of the skirts of the earth, and the wicked be shaken out of it?

Where is the way to the dwelling of light, and where is the place of darkness, that you may take it to its territory and that you may discern the paths to its home?

You know, for you were born then, and **the number of your days is great!**

What is the way to the place where the light is distributed, or where the east wind is scattered upon the earth?

Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades or loose the cords of Orion?

Can you lead forth the Mazzaroth in their season, or can you guide the Bear with its children?

Do you know the ordinances of the heavens?

Can you establish their rule on the earth?

Who has put wisdom in the inward parts or given understanding to the mind?

(Job 38:12-13, 19-21, 24, 31-33, 36 ESV)

YHWH continues the onslaught all through chapter 39, then **has another word with Job,** and Job, beginning to appreciate the greatness of God, humbly replies:

And [YHWH] said to Job:

“Shall a faultfinder contend with the Almighty?

He who argues with God, let him answer it.”

Then Job answered [YHWH] and said:

“Behold, **I am of small account;** what shall I answer you?

I lay my hand on my mouth.

I have spoken once, and I will not answer;

twice, but **I will proceed no further.**”

Then [YHWH] answered Job out of the whirlwind and said:

“Dress for action like a man;

I will question you, and you make it known to me.?

Will you condemn me that you may be in the right?

Have you an arm like God, and can you thunder with a voice like his?”

(Job 40:1-9 ESV)

Throughout the rest of chapter 40 and all of chapter 41, YHWH relentlessly hammers home the vast gulf between God and man. Job is overwhelmed. When YHWH finishes talking,

Job expresses what he has learned:

Then Job answered [YHWH] and said:

“I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.

‘Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?’

Therefore **I have uttered what I did not understand,** things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.

‘Hear, and I will speak;

I will question you, and you make it known to me.’

I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but **now my eye sees you;**

therefore **I despise myself,** and **repent in dust and ashes.**”

(Job 42:1-6 ESV)

God allowed the suffering of Job to bring him to a state of **humility** where he could be brought to see **“the one thing he lacked”**. Job’s perfection blinded him from seeing God as he really was. **Only through suffering was God able to reach him**. The rest of the story is that God restores to Job his life.³⁸ The **permanent lesson** from the **Book of Job** is greatness of God and the inferiority of we human beings. It is very unlikely that God will again give a personal theophany as he gave to Job. However, we have something Job did NOT have – the complete revelation of God in the Bible. The written word of YHWH. **God speaks to us through the Bible** as surely as he spoke personally to Job. The lessons are in Bible for those with **“ears to hear”**.

4. The Suffering of the Prophets

Very little information has come down to modern times regarding the lives of most of the prophets. However, **Jesus’ brother, James**, suggests we can benefit from the example of the prophets:

As an **example of suffering** and patience, brothers,
take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.
(James 5:10 ESV)

In his defense speech, **Stephen alludes to the suffering of the prophets**:

You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit.
As your fathers did, so do you.

Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute?

And **they killed those** who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One ...
(Acts 7:51-52a ESV)

There is an apocryphal tradition that the **Prophet Isaiah** was “sawn in half” by **King Manasseh**.³⁹

This is possibly alluded to in the **Book of Hebrews**:

Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment.

They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword.

They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated ...
(Hebrews 11:36-37 ESV)

The **stoning of Zechariah ben Jehoiada** is recorded, and **Jesus alludes to it**:

Then the **Spirit of God clothed Zechariah** the son of Jehoiada the priest,
and he stood above the people, and said to them,

“Thus says God,

‘Why do you break the commandments of [YHWH], so that you cannot prosper?
Because you have forsaken [YHWH], he has forsaken you.’”

But they conspired against him,

and **by command of the king they stoned him** with stones in the court of the house of [YHWH].

(2 Chronicles 24:20-21 ESV)

Therefore also the Wisdom⁴⁰ of God said,

‘I will send them prophets and apostles,
some of whom they will kill and persecute,’

so that **the blood of all the prophets,**

shed from the foundation of the world,

may be charged against this generation,

from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah,

who perished between the altar and the sanctuary.

Yes, I tell you, it will be required of this generation.

(Luke 11:49-51 ESV see also Matthew 23:29-35)

³⁸ See Job 42:10-17

³⁹ See OTP volume 2, pages 143, 149, and 163-164

⁴⁰ See Proverbs 8:12, 22-23, 30, Matthew 11:19, Luke 7:35, 1 Corinthians 1:24, 30, Colossians 2:3

Only about the Prophet Jeremiah do we have much detail of his suffering.

There is no information as to how or where he died. Based on what is known of Jeremiah, it is reasonable to infer that other prophets also suffered similar depredations:

- Jeremiah was beaten and consigned to stocks overnight:
Now Pashhur the priest, the son of Immer, who was chief officer in the house of [YHWH], heard Jeremiah prophesying these things.
Then **Pashhur beat Jeremiah the prophet, and put him in the stocks** that were in the upper Benjamin Gate of the house of [YHWH].
(Jeremiah 20:1-2 ESV)
- Jeremiah had heated disagreements with false prophets:
Then the prophet Jeremiah spoke to **Hananiah the prophet** in the presence of the priests and all the people who were standing in the house of [YHWH], and the prophet **Jeremiah said**,
“Amen!
May [YHWH] do so;
may [YHWH] make the words that you have prophesied come true,
and bring back to this place from Babylon the vessels of the house of [YHWH],
and all the exiles. ...”
Then the **prophet Hananiah** **took the yoke-bars from the neck of Jeremiah the prophet and broke them.**
And **Hananiah spoke** in the presence of all the people, saying,
“Thus says [YHWH]:
Even so will I break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon
from the neck of all the nations within two years.”
But Jeremiah the prophet went his way.
And **Jeremiah the prophet said to the prophet Hananiah**,
“Listen, Hananiah, [YHWH] has not sent you,
and you have made this people trust in a lie.
Therefore thus says [YHWH]:
‘Behold, I will remove you from the face of the earth.
This year you shall die,
because you have uttered rebellion against [YHWH].’”
In that same year, in the seventh month, **the prophet Hananiah died.**
(Jeremiah 28:5-6, 10-11, 15-17 ESV)
- Jeremiah was banned from the Temple:
And **Jeremiah ordered Baruch**, saying,
“I am banned from going to the house of [YHWH],
so you are to go,
and on a day of fasting in the hearing of all the people in [YHWH’s] house
you shall read the words of [YHWH] from the scroll
that you have written at my dictation. ...”
(Jeremiah 36:5-6a ESV)
- Jeremiah was wrongly arrested and thrown into a dungeon:
Now when the Chaldean army had withdrawn from Jerusalem
at the approach of Pharaoh’s army,
Jeremiah set out from Jerusalem to go to the land of Benjamin
to receive his portion there among the people.
When he was at the Benjamin Gate,
a sentry there named **Irijah the son of Shelemiah**, son of Hananiah,
seized Jeremiah the prophet, saying,
“You are deserting to the Chaldeans.”
And **Jeremiah said**,
“It is a lie; I am not deserting to the Chaldeans.”

But Irijah would not listen to him,
 and seized Jeremiah and brought him to the officials.
 And the officials were enraged at Jeremiah,
 and they beat him and imprisoned him in the house of Jonathan the secretary,
 for it had been made a prison.
 When Jeremiah had come to the dungeon cells and remained there many days ...
 (Jeremiah 37:11-16 ESV)

- Jeremiah was thrown into a mud pit and left to die:
 Now Shephatiah the son of Mattan, Gedaliah the son of Pashhur, Jucal the son of Shelemiah,
 and Pashhur the son of Malchiah heard the words that Jeremiah was saying to all the people:
 “Thus says [YHWH]:
He who stays in this city shall die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence,
 but he who goes out to the Chaldeans shall live.
 He shall have his life as a prize of war, and live.
 Thus says [YHWH]:
 This city shall surely be given into the hand of the army
 of the king of Babylon and be taken.”
 Then the officials said to the king,
 “Let this man be put to death,
 for he is weakening the hands of the soldiers who are left in this city,
 and the hands of all the people, by speaking such words to them.
 For this man is not seeking the welfare of this people, but their harm.”
King Zedekiah said,
 “Behold, he is in your hands, for the king can do nothing against you.”
 So they took Jeremiah and cast him into the cistern of Malchiah, the king’s son,
 which was in the court of the guard, letting Jeremiah down by ropes.
 And there was no water in the cistern, but only mud, and Jeremiah sank in the mud.
 (Jeremiah 38:1-6 ESV)
- Jeremiah was under arrest during the final siege of Jerusalem:
 And Jeremiah remained in the court of the guard until the day that Jerusalem was taken.
 (Jeremiah 38:28 ESV)
- Jeremiah was put in chains to be led to Babylon, but he was released:
 The word that came to Jeremiah from [YHWH]
 after Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard had let him go from Ramah,
 when he took him bound in chains
 along with all the captives of Jerusalem and Judah who were being exiled to Babylon.
 The captain of the guard took Jeremiah and said to him,
 “[YHWH] your God pronounced this disaster against this place.
 Now, behold, I release you today from the chains on your hands. ...”
 (Jeremiah 40:1-2, 4a ESV)
- Jeremiah was forced to go to Egypt against his will:
 But Johanan the son of Kareah and all the commanders of the forces
took all the remnant of Judah who had returned to live in the land of Judah
 from all the nations to which they had been driven
 —the men, the women, the children, the princesses,
 and every person whom Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard
 had left with Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, son of Shaphan;
also Jeremiah the prophet and Baruch the son of Neriah.
And they came into the land of Egypt,
 for they did not obey the voice of [YHWH].
 And they arrived at Tahpanhes.
 (Jeremiah 43:5-7 ESV)

We can take the suffering of Jeremiah as typical of the suffering of the Prophets. The third of the Seven Last Plagues specifically alludes to the blood the Prophets along with the blood of the Saints. Along with Jesus’ blood, this is the basis of the New Testament Church:

The third angel poured out his bowl into the rivers and the springs of water,
 and they became blood.

And I heard the angel in charge of the waters say,

“Just are you, O Holy One, who is and who was, for you brought these judgments.

For **they have shed the blood of saints and prophets**,
and you have given them blood to drink.
It is what they deserve!”

And I heard the altar saying,

“Yes, Lord God the Almighty, true and just are your judgments!”

(Revelation 16:4-7 ESV)

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens,
but you are **fellow citizens** with the saints and **members of the household of God**,
built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets,
Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,
in whom the whole structure, being joined together,
grows into **a holy temple in the Lord**.
(Ephesians 2:19-21 ESV)

From the time of King David, God began working with individuals – a **remnant of True Worshipers**.⁴¹
The Bible gives very little information on the remnant; however, it is clear that **the prophets and their “disciples” were a key part of the remnant**. After the First Advent, the remnant community passed to True Christians, the **New Testament Church**.⁴² In the Roman Empire, the remnant, True Christians, quickly became the target of state persecution. Already in the Second Century, widespread heresy had corrupted the visible church. From the time of Constantine until modern times, True Worshipers have been persecuted by the visible church.

5. The Concept of Suffering in the New Testament

Herod the “Great” was a ruthless killer. He killed his wife, Mariamne, whom he professed to love.⁴³
Augustus said he would rather be Herod’s pig than his son.⁴⁴ Herod killed most of his sons,⁴⁵
including his eldest, Antipater, just days before his own death.⁴⁶

Herod’s action to murder the babies of Bethlehem was in perfect keeping with his character:

Now **after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king**,
behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying,

“Where is he who has been born king of the Jews?”

For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.”

When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him;⁴⁷
and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people,
he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.
They told him,

“In Bethlehem of Judea ...”

Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly
and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared.
And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying,

“Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word,
that I too may come and worship him.”

And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

Then **Herod**, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious,
and he sent and **killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region**
who were two years old or under,
according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men.
(Matthew 2:1-5, 7-8, 12, 16 ESV)

⁴¹ See section **5 Davidic Psalms** in the paper “David – A Man After My Own Heart” and section **5.1 A Remnant of True Worshipers** in the paper “**The Soon Coming Kingdom of God**”; both papers are located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

⁴² See sections **8.1 The Remnant Community** and **9.3 Corruption of the Visible Church** in the paper “**The Soon Coming Kingdom of God**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

⁴³ See Schürer, First Division, Volume 1, pages 422-423, 429-430

⁴⁴ “It is recounted by Roman historian Macrobius that Augustus remarked “It is better to be Herod’s pig than his son,” because of the many family members that Herod had executed on suspicion of treason, including sons Antipater, Alexander I, Aristobulus IV and wife Mariamne.” <https://israelintheirland.com/piece/it-is-better-to-be-herods-pig-than-his-son>

⁴⁵ See Schürer, First Division, Volume 1, pages 454-467

⁴⁶ See Schürer, First Division, Volume 1, page 464

⁴⁷ The people of Jerusalem were troubled because when Herod became troubled, they knew the killing would start.

Sadly, **Herod's character and his actions reflect, what is more often than not, the character and actions of most "leader" of nations** in the world today and, in fact, down through history. The "leaders" of the nations of this world are the primary perpetrators of most of the suffering in this world. **Herod's killing of babies at the First Advent is symbolic of this suffering.** The **Plan of God** ensures that the suffering will stop, but in the world that Jesus came into at First Advent, like the world today, there was untold suffering.

5.1 Healing the Sick

Among the prophesized "signs of the Kingdom" is "healing":

In that day **the deaf shall hear** the words of a book,
and out of their gloom and darkness the eyes of **the blind shall see.**

Then **the eyes of the blind shall be opened,**
and **the ears of the deaf unstopped;**

then shall **the lame man leap like a deer,**
and **the tongue of the mute sing** for joy.

(Isaiah 29:18, 35:5-6a ESV)

For **I will restore health** to you, and **your wounds I will heal,** declares [YHWH] ...

Behold, **I will bring to it health and healing,**

and **I will heal them** and reveal to them abundance of prosperity and security.
(Jeremiah 30:17a, 33:6 ESV)

Illness is one of the greatest curses of the world today. There is an epidemic of cancer.

Heart disease is rampant. Simple colds and flues cause misery for many each year.

Laboratories around the world dabble in biological weapons that will kill millions.

We have recently experienced the reckless greed of the pharmaceutical industry for their part in the "COVID plan-demic". When the Second Advent occurs the world will need healing even more than at the time of the First Advent. All the Gospel writers emphasized Jesus role as a healer.

Jesus healed many in the First Advent. He eased much suffering. Frequently there was a specific **object lesson associated with a healing.** At other times, **Jesus healed just out of pure compassion** for the suffering of the individual. At the Second Advent, healing will be a focal point of the program of restoration. But also, the program of restoration will include removing the causes of illness.

The following table summarizes the healing incidents in the Gospels:

Healing Incidents in the Gospels

<u>Scriptures</u>	<u>Particulars</u>	<u>Phase</u> ⁴⁸	<u>Significance</u>
Jh4:46-54	son of nobleman in Capernaum	Galilean Ministry	"unless you see signs and wonders, you will not believe"
Mk1:21-28 Lk4:31-37	demonic in synagogue in Capernaum, on Sabbath	Galilean Ministry	"you are the Holy One of God ... report went into all Galilee"
Mk1:29-34 Mt8:14-17 Lk4:38-41	Peter's mother in Capernaum on the Sabbath, many others in the evening	Galilean Ministry	"You are the Son of God" "He took our illnesses and bore our diseases" (Isaiah 53:4)
Mk1:39, Mt4:23-25	Throughout Galilee, healed all manner of disease, sickness, & demon possession	Galilean Ministry	"he healed them", "his fame spread throughout all Syria"
Mk1:40-45 Mt8:2-4 Lk5:12-16	leper, unspecified location, near Capernaum	Galilean Ministry	"if you will, you can make me clean" "great crowds gathered to hear and be healed"
Mk2:1-12 Mt9:1-8 Lk5:17-26	man lowered through roof, Jesus' house, Capernaum	Galilean Ministry	"seeing their faith ... your sins are forgiven" "the Son of Man has power to forgive sins"
Jh5:2-10, 17	man with infirmity 38 years, Sheep Gate pool, "Bethesda", in Jerusalem, on Sabbath	Galilean Ministry	"Do you want to be healed" "Sin no more" "My Father is working and I am working"

⁴⁸ These are from Robertson (HG).
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<u>Scriptures</u>	<u>Particulars</u>	<u>Phase</u> ⁴⁸	<u>Significance</u>
Mk3:1-6 Mt12:9-14 Lk6:6-11	man with withered hand, in a synagogue, on Sabbath	Galilean Ministry	"Is it lawful on Sabbath to do good or harm, to save life or kill" "grieved at hardness of heart"
Mt8:5-13 Lk7:1-10	centurion's servant, Capernaum	Galilean Ministry	"only say the word" "not even in Israel have I found such faith"
Lk7:11-17	raise widow's son, Nain	Galilean Ministry	"he had compassion on her" "God has visited his people"
Mk5:1-20 Mt8:28-34 Lk8:26-39	Gerasene Demoniac, east side of Sea of Galilee	Galilean Ministry	"Jesus, Son of the Most High God, do not torment me" "proclaim in Decapolis what Jesus had done"
Mk5:21-43 Mt9:18-26 Lk8:40-56	Jarius' daughter, and a woman who touches Jesus' garment, likely in Capernaum	Galilean Ministry	"your faith has made you well" "believe ... the child is sleeping ... little girl, I say to you, arise"
Mt9:27-34	two blind men, a dumb demoniac, Capernaum	Galilean Ministry	"Have mercy on us" "According to your faith be it done to you"
Mk7:24-30 Mt15:21-28	daughter of Syrophenician woman, near Tyre	Training the 12	"O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire"
Mk7:31-37	deaf mute, border of Decapolis	Training the 12	"they proclaimed ... He even makes deaf hear, mute speak"
Mk8:22-26	blind man, Bethsaida	Training the 12	"Jesus sent him to his home ... Do not even enter the village"
Mk9:14-29 Mt17:14-20 Lk9:37-43	demoniac boy, Caesarea Philippi	Training the 12	"your disciples were not able" "I believe, help my unbelief" "driven out by prayer and fasting"
Jh9:1-41	man born blind, Jerusalem, on Sabbath	Judean Ministry	"who sinned he was born blind" "the works of God be displayed"
Lk13:10-17	crippled woman, in a synagogue, on Sabbath	Judean Ministry	"the ruler of the synagogue indignant" "You hypocrites!"
Lk14:1-6	man with dropsy, house of a Pharisee, on Sabbath	Perean Ministry	"Is it lawful to heal on Sabbath, or not?" "they remained silent"
Jh11:1-44	raise Lazarus, Bethany	Perean Ministry	"Your bother will rise again." "I am the resurrection and the life."
Mk10:46-52 Mt20:29-34 Lk18:35-43	blind Bartimaeus, Jericho	Perean Ministry	"Receive your sight, your faith has made you well"

There are no reported healings during Jesus' Early Ministry.

The first reported healing is at the beginning of the Great Galilean Ministry.

The **Apostle John** styles it as Jesus' Second Sign.⁴⁹ The healing is in Cana of Galilee:

So he came again to Cana in Galilee,

where he had made the water wine.

And **at Capernaum there was an official** whose son was ill.

When this man heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee,
he went to him and asked him to come down and heal his son,
for he was at the point of death.

So **Jesus said** to him,

"Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe."

The official said to him,

"Sir, come down before my child dies."

Jesus said to him,

"Go; your son will live."

The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and went on his way.

As he was going down, his servants met him and told him that his son was recovering.

So he asked them the hour when he began to get better,

and they said to him,

"Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him."

⁴⁹ The First Sign being "water to wine" at the wedding in Cana; see John 2:1-11. For a summary of John's "signs", see the chronological chart "Framework of the Gospel of John" located at <https://mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca/chronological-charts>.

The father knew that was the hour when Jesus had said to him,
“Your son will live.”

And **he himself believed, and all his household**.

This was now the second sign that Jesus did when he had come from Judea to Galilee.
(John 4:46–54 ESV)

Each of the Seven Signs that the Apostle John highlights has a specific purpose.⁵⁰

Jesus makes the general statement, “**unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe**”, which specifies one purpose of all healings and miracles. In this case, the healing had the desired effect, “**the man believed the word that Jesus spoke**”, “**he himself believed**”, “**and all his household**”.

The next healing is **an exorcism** reported by Mark and Luke.

The report establishes **several common features of Jesus’ healings**:

And **they went into Capernaum**,

and immediately **on the Sabbath** he entered the synagogue and was teaching.

And they were astonished at his teaching,

for **he taught them as one who had authority**, and not as the scribes.

And immediately there was in their synagogue **a man with an unclean spirit**.

And he cried out,

“What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth?

Have you come to destroy us?

I know who you are—the Holy One of God.”

But **Jesus rebuked him**, saying,

“Be silent,

and come out of him!”

And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying out with a loud voice, came out of him.

And they were all amazed,

so that they questioned among themselves, saying,

“What is this?

A new teaching with authority!

He commands even the unclean spirits, and **they obey him**.”

And at once **his fame spread everywhere** throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee.

(Mark 1:21-28 ESV // Luke 4:31-37)

Analysis of typical healing incidents:

- Jesus made a point of healing “**on the Sabbath**” in order to demonstrate the fallacy of the Pharisee’s teaching; see the discussion in section **8.3 The Great Galilean Ministry**
- Being fully “divine” Jesus was sure of his teaching, “**he taught them as one who had authority**”
- When Jesus encountered a “demon”, “**a man with an unclean spirit**”, he exorcized it, “**Jesus rebuked him**” (see also Mark 3:10-12)
- People were astonished at Jesus’ control, “**he commands even the unclean spirits**”, “**they obey him**”
- The demons obeyed because they recognized Jesus, “**I know who you are**”
- Jesus did NOT want to bring attention to himself, but “**his fame spread everywhere**”

All three synoptists report the next healing. This healing is typical of many that Jesus did where it is **motivated only by compassion** – there is no particular lesson or other benefit to these healings:

And immediately he left the synagogue

and **entered the house of Simon and Andrew**, with James and John.

Now **Simon’s mother-in-law lay ill with a fever**,

and immediately they told him about her.

And **he came and took her by the hand and lifted her up**,

and **the fever left her**,

and she began to serve them.

(Mark 1:29-31 ESV // Matthew 8:14-15, Luke 4:38-39)

⁵⁰ See the presentation “**The Miracles of the Gospel of John**” in section “**OTHER PRESENTATIONS**” located at <https://mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca/presentations>

Later that evening, **Jesus similarly healed many other people:**

That evening at sundown they brought to him all who were sick or oppressed by demons.

And **he healed many** ...

(Mark 1:32, 34a ESV see also Matthew 8:16, Luke 4:40)

At this point, Matthew provides **a summary of Jesus' healing activities:**

And he went throughout all Galilee,
teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom
and **healing every disease** and **every affliction** among the people.

So **his fame spread throughout all Syria**,

and they brought him all the sick,
those afflicted with various diseases and pains,
those oppressed by demons,
those having seizures,
and paralytics,
and **he healed them**.

And great crowds followed him from Galilee and the Decapolis,
and from Jerusalem and Judea, and from beyond the Jordan.

(Matthew 4:23-25 ESV see also 9:35, Mark 1:39)

Next, all three synoptists report the **cleansing of a leper:**

While he was in one of the cities, there came a man full of leprosy.

And when he saw Jesus, he fell on his face and begged him,

"Lord, **if you will, you can make me clean**."

And Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying,

"I will; be clean."

And immediately the leprosy left him.

And **he charged him to tell no one**, but

"go and show yourself to the priest,
and make an offering for your cleansing, as Moses commanded,
for a proof to them."

But now even more the report about him went abroad,

and **great crowds gathered to hear him and to be healed** of their infirmities.

(Luke 5:12-15 ESV, see also Mark 1:40-45, Matthew 8:2-4)

Jesus recognizes the faith of the leper, "**if you will, you can make me clean**". Jesus does NOT want his healing activities to be associated with the popular "Messianic Expectation",⁵¹ "**he charged him to tell no one**"; regardless, Jesus' fame spread, "**great crowds gathered to hear him and to be healed**".

The next incident is in Jesus' home in Capernaum.

Jesus specifically heals by forgiving sin as an object lesson for the "scribes" who were observing:

And behold, some people brought to him a paralytic, lying on a bed.

And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic,

"Take heart, my son;

your sins are forgiven."

And behold, some of the **scribes said to themselves**,

"This man is blaspheming."

But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said,

"**Why do you think evil in your hearts?**

(Matthew 9:2-4 ESV see also Mark 2:1-6, Luke 5:17-21)

John's third miracle, "**healing at the Bethesda Pool**", is discussed in section **8.3 The Great Galilean Ministry**. The next healing reported by all three Synoptists, "**the man with a withered hand**", is also discussed in section **8.3 The Great Galilean Ministry**.

⁵¹ See the discussion in section **8.3 The Great Galilean Ministry**

The next incident, reported by Matthew and Luke, is an **object lesson of “faith”**. A centurion requests Jesus to heal his servant, but acknowledges that he is unworthy for Jesus to actually come into his house.⁵²

When Jesus heard these things, he marveled at him,
and turning to the crowd that followed him, said,
“I tell you, **not even in Israel have I found such faith.**”

And when those who had been sent returned to the house, **they found the servant well.**
(Luke 7:9-10 ESV see also Matthew 8:10-13)

Luke alone reports the **“raising of a widow's son”**, in Nain:

Soon afterward he went to a town called Nain,
and his disciples and a great crowd went with him.
As he drew near to the gate of the town,
behold, **a man who had died was being carried out,**
the only son of his mother, and she was a widow,
and a considerable crowd from the town was with her.

And when the Lord saw her,
he had compassion on her and said to her,
“Do not weep.”

Then he came up and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still.
And he said,

“Young man, **I say to you, arise.**”

And the dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother.

Fear seized them all, and **they glorified God,** saying,
“A great prophet has arisen among us!”
(alluding to Deuteronomy 18:15)

and

“God has visited his people!”
(alluding to Exodus 4:31)

And **this report about him spread** through the whole of Judea and all the surrounding country.
(Luke 7:11-17 ESV)

This healing is another example of Jesus’ healing purely out of compassion, **“he had compassion on her”**. This raising from the dead foreshadows Jesus later miracle of **raising Lazarus from the dead**. Although Jesus was NOT ready for the publicity this attracted, it came, **“this report about him spread”**.

All three Synoptists report the exorcism of the **Gerasene Demonic**. The country of the Gerasenes is an area to the east of the Sea of Galilee. It is part of the **Decapolis – a Greek area**, NOT a Jewish area. That is the significant feature of this incident. Jesus crossed the Sea of Galilee with some of his disciples. They are immediately accosted by one or two fierce demoniacs. **Jesus exorcises the demons,** who acknowledge him, **terrifying the locals.**⁵³

As they are leaving, **one of the restored demoniacs requests to join them:**

As he was getting into the boat,
the man who had been possessed with demons begged him that he might be with him.

And he did not permit him but said to him,
“**Go home to your friends and tell them** how much the Lord has done for you,
and how he has had mercy on you.”

And **he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis** how much Jesus had done for him,
and everyone marveled.
(Mark 5:18-20 ESV see also Luke 8:38-39)

This is the one incident where Jesus enjoins the healed person to proclaim the miracle, **“go home to your friends and tell them”**. There was no “Messianic Expectation” among the Greeks. Jesus was happy that the Gospel be spread among them, **“he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis”**.

⁵² See Matthew 8:6-9, Luke 7:2-8

⁵³ See Mark 5:1-17, Matthew 8:28-34, Luke 8:26-37

The next incident is complicated. It is reported by all three Synoptists. It actually comprises **two distinct healings.** First, a ruler of the synagogue, Jarius, has a dying daughter. He requests Jesus' help.⁵⁴ Jesus and some of the disciples make their way to the home of Jarius. The people there are in mourning over the death of the little girl, but **Jesus raises her up, as he had done in Nain.** Jesus enjoins the people NOT to spread the word, but, of course, they do.⁵⁵

The second healing is **an object lesson in faith and the power of the Holy Spirit.**

On the way to the home of Jarius, a woman touches Jesus' garment and is immediately healed of a long-standing infirmity.⁵⁶ **Jesus immediately recognized the power of the Holy Spirit:**

And **Jesus, perceiving in himself that power had gone out from him,**

immediately turned about in the crowd and said,

"Who touched my garments?"

And his disciples said to him,

"You see the crowd pressing around you, and yet you say,

'Who touched me?'"

And he looked around to see who had done it.

But **the woman**, knowing what had happened to her,

came in fear and trembling and fell down before him and told him the whole truth.

And he said to her,

"Daughter, **your faith has made you well;**

go in peace, and be healed of your disease."

(Mark 5:30-34 ESV see also Matthew 9:22, Luke 8:45-48)

The last reported healings during the Great Galilean Ministry are reported only by Matthew.

Two blind men accost Jesus, crying for mercy. Jesus tests their faith and heals them.

Jesus enjoins silence with the usual response.⁵⁷ After this, Jesus exorcises a demon to **the displeasure of some Pharisees** who demonstrate the depth of their corruption by their attitude of "blasphemy":

As they were going away, behold, a demon-oppressed man who was mute was brought to him.

And when the demon had been cast out, the mute man spoke.

And the crowds marveled, saying,

"Never was anything like this seen in Israel."

But **the Pharisees said,**

"He casts out demons by the prince of demons."

(Matthew 9:32-34 ESV)

The next reported healing takes place in **Phoenicia, near Tyre and Sidon.**

A woman of Canaanite descent comes to Jesus and begs exorcism for her daughter.

At first Jesus does NOT respond,⁵⁸ but the woman makes **a startling statement of faith:**

But she answered him,

"Yes, Lord; **yet even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs.**"

And he said to her,

"For this statement you may go your way;

the demon has left your daughter."

And she went home and found the child lying in bed and the demon gone.

(Mark 7:28-30 ESV see also Matthew 15:21-26)

Only Mark reports the next two incidents. First, Jesus heals a man with a speech impediment.⁵⁹

Then Jesus heals a blind man.⁶⁰ In both cases, Jesus enjoins silence,

but the **"signs of the Kingdom" could NOT be hidden:**

And **Jesus charged them to tell no one.**

But **the more he charged them, the more zealously they proclaimed it.**

(Mark 7:36 ESV)

⁵⁴ See Mark 5:21-24a, Matthew 9:18-19, Luke 8:40-42a

⁵⁵ See Mark 5:35-43, Matthew 9:23-26, Luke 8:49-56

⁵⁶ See Mark 5:24b-29, Matthew 9:20-21, Luke 8:42b-44

⁵⁷ See Matthew 9:27-31

⁵⁸ See Mark 7:24-27, Matthew 15:21-26

⁵⁹ See Mark 7:31-35

⁶⁰ See Mark 8:22-25

And he sent him to his home, saying,
 "Do not even enter the village."
(Mark 8:26 ESV)
And they were astonished beyond measure, saying,
 "He has done all things well.
 He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak."
(Mark 7:37 ESV)

The next healing, reported by all three synoptists, is a forceful object lesson in **the power of the Holy Spirit**. Jesus expresses his intention over the incident:

And he said to them,
 "Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here
 who will not taste death
 until they **see the kingdom of God after it has come with power.**"
(Mark 9:1 ESV see also Matthew 16:28, Luke 9:27)

Then Peter, John, and James are witnesses to the **"Transfiguration"**.⁶¹ In the "Transfiguration", **the three Apostles did witness the Kingdom of God in vision**. Coming down from the mountain, Jesus observed a throng of people around some of the other disciples. A man had brought his demon possessed son for exorcism, but the disciple could NOT accomplish it.⁶² Jesus performed the exorcism,⁶³ but expressed his exasperation. **Later the disciples enquired of Jesus:**

And he answered them,
 "O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you?
 How long am I to bear with you?
 Bring him to me."
(Mark 9:19 ESV)

And when he had entered the house,
his **disciples asked him privately,**
 "Why could we not cast it out?"

And he said to them,
 "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer and fasting."
(Mark 9:28-29 ESV)

Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said,
 "Why could we not cast it out?"

He said to them,
 "Because of your little faith.
 For truly, I say to you, **if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed,**
 you will say to this mountain,
 'Move from here to there,'
 and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you."
(Matthew 17:19-20 ESV)

The disciples did NOT YET have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

They did NOT have the "power" to perform the exorcism:

And I will ask **the Father**, and he **will give you another Helper**, to be with you forever,
even **the Spirit of truth**, [which]⁶⁴ the world cannot receive, because it neither sees [it] nor knows [it].
You know [it], **for [it] dwells with you and will be in you.**
(John 14:16-17 ESV)

Now we come to **John's Sixth Sign** – the **"man born blind"**.⁶⁵

The key to the incident is in the introduction:

As he passed by, he saw **a man blind from birth**.
And his disciples asked him,
 "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

⁶¹ See Mark 9:2-8, Matthew 17:1-8, Luke 9:28-36; see also the discussion in the paper **"The Transfiguration and the Tabernacle"** located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

⁶² See Mark 9:14-18, Matthew 17:14-16, Luke 9:37-40

⁶³ See Mark 9:20-27, Matthew 17:18, Luke 9:42

⁶⁴ The Holy Spirit is the power of God. It is NOT sentient being; therefore, it should always be referenced with neuter pronouns. See section **1.5 The Holy Spirit** in the paper **"First Pillar - The Nature of God"** located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

⁶⁵ See John chapter 9

Jesus answered,

**“It was not that this man sinned, or his parents,
but that the works of God might be displayed in him. ...”**

(John 9:1-3 ESV)

The man’s blindness was not due to any particular sin of his or his parents, **“it was not that this man sinned”, “or his parents”**, – blindness and deformity are sadly common human ailments.

Jesus’ point is that this man’s misfortune was an opportunity that **“the works of God might be displayed”**. After the man is healed, the Pharisees interrogate him over their Sabbath interpretations. The Pharisee’s interrogation of the man is irrational and displays their predisposition to accuse Jesus.

Jesus last words to the man are aimed at the Pharisees:

Jesus said,

“For judgment I came into this world,
that **those who do not see may see,**
and **those who see may become blind.”**

Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him,

“Are we also blind?”

Jesus said to them,

“If you were blind, you would have no guilt;
but now that you say,
‘We see,’
your guilt remains.”

(John 9:39-41 ESV)

The “blind” are sinners, whom Jesus came to save:

Go and learn what this means:

‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.’
(citing Hosea 6:6 LXX)

For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”
(Matthew 9:13 ESV)

The Pharisee’s believed they were **“the righteous”, “those who see”**.

Those who are blind, **“if you were blind”**, can repent, **“you would have no guilt”**. Those who insist on their own “righteousness” are approaching the **“unpardonable sin”, “your guilt remains”**.

The self righteous must humble themselves and repent, **“those who see may become blind”**.

The next two incidents are reported only by Luke.⁶⁶ One is in a synagogue in Judea; the other is in the house of a Pharisee. In both incidents, **Jesus heals on the Sabbath deliberately to contradict the Pharisee’s corrupt teaching:**

And **Jesus responded to the lawyers and Pharisees**, saying,

“Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not?”

(Luke 14:3 ESV)

Then the Lord answered him,

“You hypocrites!

Does not each of you on the Sabbath
untie his ox or his donkey from the manger and lead it away to water it?

And ought not this woman,
a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen years,
be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?”

As he said these things,

all his adversaries were put to shame,

and all the people rejoiced at all the glorious things that were done by him.

(Luke 13:15-17 ESV)

⁶⁶ See Luke 13:10-17, 14:1-6
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The next healing is the **raising of Lazarus from the dead**.⁶⁷ This is the Apostle John's Seventh Sign. John did NOT report either the raising from the dead at Nain or the raising of Jarius' daughter – both incidents foreshadow this incident. John uses this incident to highlight the fantastic miracle of the **Resurrection of the Dead**.⁶⁸

Now a certain man was ill, **Lazarus of Bethany**, the village of Mary and her sister Martha.

But when Jesus heard it he said,

"This illness does not lead to death.

It is for the glory of God,

so that the Son of God may be glorified through it."

After saying these things, he said to them,

"Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awaken him."

The disciples said to him,

"Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover."

Now Jesus had spoken of his death,

but they thought that he meant taking rest in sleep.

Then Jesus told them plainly,

"Lazarus has died,

and for your sake I am glad that I was not there,

so that you may believe.

But let us go to him."

(John 11:1, 4, 11-15 ESV)

Martha said to Jesus,

"Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.

But **even now I know** that whatever you ask from God,

God will give you."

Jesus said to her,

"Your brother will rise again."

Martha said to him,

"I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day."

Jesus said to her,

"I am the resurrection and the life."⁶⁹

Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live,

and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die.

Do you believe this?"

She said to him,

"Yes, Lord; **I believe that you are the Christ**, the Son of God,

who is coming into the world."

(John 11:21-27 ESV)

Jesus said to her,

"Did I not tell you that **if you believed you would see the glory of God?**"

So they took away the stone.

And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said,

"Father, I thank you that you have heard me.

I knew that you always hear me,

but **I said this on account of the people standing around,**

that they may believe that you sent me."

When he had said these things,

he cried out with a loud voice,

"Lazarus, come out."

(John 11:40-43 ESV)

For **as the Father raises the dead** and gives them life,

so also the Son gives life to whom he will.

Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here,

when **the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God,**

and those who hear will live.

⁶⁷ See John 11:1-44

⁶⁸ See section **2.1.3 The Resurrection of the Dead** in the paper "Second Pillar - The Plan of God" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

⁶⁹ See also John 14:6

For as the Father has life in himself,
so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself.
(John 5:21, 25-26 ESV)

Analysis of the raising of Lazarus:

- Jesus' friend, Lazarus, became ill and died, "Lazarus has died"
- Jesus stated that the purpose of the death "is for the glory of God"
- The object of the death is "so that you may believe", where "you" is specifically the disciples who were accompanying Jesus; but by extension "you" includes all True Christians; and, eventually, all humanity
- Martha, as an example, states her faith, "even now I know", "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day"
- Jesus gets to the core of the matter, his divinity, "I am the resurrection and the life"
- Martha reiterates her faith in Jesus' divinity, "I believe that you are the Christ"
- Jesus emphasizes the necessity of faith, "if you believed you would see the glory of God"
- Jesus states the purpose of the sign for the observers, that some may become True Christians, "I said this on account of the people standing around", "that they may believe"
- Jesus calls Lazarus to life, "he cried out with a loud voice", "Lazarus, come out"
- Jesus had previously explained the need for the Father to resurrect him after the crucifixion, "as the Father raises the dead"
- Only those with whom Jesus has a living relationship, will participate in the First Resurrection, "so also the Son gives life to whom he will", "the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God"
- Inherent, self exiting life, is fundamental to God the Father and Jesus Christ, "as the Father has life in himself", "so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself"

The final healing of the Gospels is reported by all three Synoptists.⁷⁰

Jesus is on the final approach to Jerusalem. Jesus and his disciples pass through Jericho, where a blind beggar, Bartimaeus, calls out to Jesus:

And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth,
he began to cry out and say,
"Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

And Jesus said to him,
"What do you want me to do for you?"

And the blind man said to him,
"Rabbi, let me recover my sight."

And Jesus said to him,
"Go your way; your faith has made you well."

And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him on the way.

(Mark 10:47, 51-52 ESV see also Matthew 20:30, 32-34, Luke 18:30, 40-43)

The actual incident was a typical physical restoration of sight to blind person.

The implication of the incident is the need of all humanity to cry out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me". As the Gospel spreads to all the world in the World Tomorrow, all people will ask Jesus, "let me recover my sight": remove the spiritual blindness that has prevented humanity from understanding the Way of God. Then upon conversion, "your faith has made you well", all humanity will learn to live by the Way of God.

This is the fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah symbolized at the death of Christ
by the tearing of the Temple curtain:

On this mountain [YHWH] of hosts will make for all peoples
a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine,
of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined.⁷¹

⁷⁰ See Mark 10:46-52, Matthew 20:29-34, Luke 18:35-43

⁷¹ Physical food is a metaphor for spiritual food – the truth of the Bible.

And he will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations.

He will swallow up death forever;
and the Lord [YHWH] will wipe away tears from all faces,
and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth,
for [YHWH] has spoken.

It will be said on that day,
“Behold, this is our God;
we have waited for him, that he might save us.
This is [YHWH, Jesus Christ];
we have waited for him;
let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”

(Isaiah 25:6-9 ESV)

And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.
(Mark 15:38 ESV see also Matthew 27:51a, Luke 23:45b)

Disease, deformity, and demon possession, are some of the worst blights on humanity. Much of this suffering has been brought on by sin, but as in the case of “the man born blind” discussed in John chapter 9, there is often no specific sin at the cause. As in that case, the illness is simply an opportunity to heal, and at the Second Advent, healing will again become general – see the scriptures in section [9.1 The Purpose of Human Suffering](#).

Certainly, John the Baptist committed no sin which would justify his suffering.

5.2 The Suffering of John the Baptist

From a human perspective John the Baptist had a hard life.⁷² However, John was given a unique role in the Plan of God. John was a Nazarite from birth. We know little of his early life. Probably at about age eighteen, he retired to an ascetic life in the Judean wilderness. In the wilderness, John preached a message of repentance, and many came to hear him and be baptized. John attracted a dedicated group of disciples⁷³ in the wilderness. His preaching was preparatory for his commission to witness to the divinity of Jesus Christ. Soon after he accomplished his commission, he was imprisoned by Herod Antipas. John languished in prison for about a year, then was executed.

John performed his lifework with zeal and joy because he was imbued with the Holy Spirit from birth:

But the angel said to him,
“Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard,
and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John.
And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth,
for he will be great before the Lord.

And he must not drink wine or strong drink,
and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb.

And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God,
and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah,
to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,
and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just,
to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.”

(Luke 1:13-17 ESV)

John prepared himself for his commission by living an ascetic life in the wilderness:

And the child grew and became strong in spirit,
and he was in the wilderness until the day of his public appearance to Israel.
(Luke 1:80 ESV)

⁷² For general discussion of John the Baptist see the paper “[John the Baptist - More Than a Prophet](#)” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

For a summary of the life John the Baptist, see the chronological chart “[Life and Times of John the Baptist](#)” located at <https://mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca/chronological-charts>.

⁷³ See John 1:35, 3:25, Luke 7:18-20, 11:1, Matthew 11:2-3, Acts 18:25, 19:3-4

In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea,
“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said,
“The voice of one crying in the wilderness:
‘Prepare the way of the Lord;
make his paths straight.’”
(alluding to Isaiah 40:3)

Now John wore a garment of camel’s hair and a leather belt around his waist,
and his food was locusts and wild honey.

Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan were going out to him,
and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

And he preached, saying,
“After me comes he who is mightier than I,
the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie.
(Matthew 3:1-6, Mark 1:7 ESV see also Mark 1:1-6, Luke 3:3-6, John 1:23)

Jesus’ public ministry began with his baptism by John:

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.
And when he came up out of the water,
immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove.
And a voice came from heaven,
“You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”
(Mark 1:9-11 ESV see also Matthew 3:13-17, Luke 3:21-23)

Jesus’ baptism was the sign that John needed to fulfill his commission
of witnessing to the divinity of Jesus Christ:

The next day [John] saw Jesus coming toward him, and said,
“Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!
This is he of whom I said,
‘After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.’
I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water,
that he might be revealed to Israel.”

And John bore witness:
“I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him.
I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me,
‘He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain,
this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’
And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.”
(John 1:29-34 ESV)

Once Jesus commenced his public ministry, John made every effort to point his disciples to Jesus:

Now a discussion arose between some of John’s disciples and a Jew over purification.

And they came to John and said to him,
“Rabbi, he who was with you across the Jordan,
to whom you bore witness—look, he is baptizing, and all are going to him.”

John answered,
“A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven.
You yourselves bear me witness, that I said,
‘I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him.’

Therefore this joy of mine is now complete.
He must increase, but I must decrease.”
(John 3:25-28, 30 ESV)

Soon after Jesus commenced his public ministry, John was arrested:

But Herod the tetrarch, who had been reproved by him for Herodias, his brother’s wife,
and for all the evil things that Herod had done, added this to them all,
that he locked up John in prison.
(Luke 3:19-20 ESV)

From prison, John continued to point his disciples to Jesus:

The disciples of John reported all these things to him.
And John, calling two of his disciples to him, sent them to the Lord, saying,
“Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?”

And when the men had come to him, they said,
“John the Baptist has sent us to you, saying,
‘Are you the one who is to come,
or shall we look for another?’”

In that hour he healed many people of diseases and plagues and evil spirits,
and on many who were blind he bestowed sight.

And he answered them,

“Go and tell John what you have seen and heard:
the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear,
the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them.

And **‘blessed is the one who is not offended by me.’**”

(Luke 7:18-23 ESV see also Matthew 11:2-6)

After about a year in prison, John was executed:

For Herod had seized John and bound him
and put him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife,
because John had been saying to him,

“It is not lawful for you to have her.”

And though he wanted to put him to death,
he feared the people, because they held him to be a prophet.

But when **Herod’s birthday** came,
the daughter of Herodias danced before the company and pleased Herod,
so that **he promised with an oath to give her whatever she might ask.**

Prompted by her mother, she said,

“Give me the head of John the Baptist here on a platter.”

And the king was sorry, but because of his oaths and his guests he commanded it to be given.

He sent and had John beheaded in the prison,

and his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought it to her mother.

(Matthew 14:3-11 ESV see also Mark 6:17-28)

Analysis of the suffering of John the Baptist:

- John lived a lonely, solitary, life; he was NOT married; he was in the wilderness for probably around twelve years living off the land, **“he must not drink wine or strong drink”,**
“he was in the wilderness”, “his food was locusts and wild honey”
- Although many responded to John’s message of repentance,
“make ready for the Lord a people prepared”, “they were baptized by him”;
John became an enemy of the king, **“Herod the tetrarch”, “locked up John in prison”**
- Although the angel promised accolades for John, **“he will be great before the Lord”,**
he always knew his role was secondary and transitory,
“after me comes he who is mightier than I”, “he who sent me to baptize with water”
- Once he completed his commission, John knew that his time was very short,
“I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God”;
therefore, he pointed his disciples to Jesus **“he must increase”, “I must decrease”**
- Even from prison, John made effort to point his disciples to Jesus, **“calling two of his disciples”,**
“are you the one who is to come”; Jesus recognizing John’s purpose, assures the disciples,
“blessed is the one who is not offended by me”
- When the end came, John faced it bravely, **“he sent and had John beheaded in the prison”**
- John was eminently successful in his commission, and satisfied with his life, through the power of the Holy Spirit, **“he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb”,**
“this joy of mine is now complete”; despite all that he suffered, John **“was looking forward to the city that has foundations,** whose designer and builder is God”⁷⁴ - the Kingdom of God

⁷⁴ See Hebrews 11:10
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John the Baptist was the last of the Old Testament prophets.⁷⁵ He was also the first “Christian” – his commission was to witness to the divinity of Jesus Christ. John’s life is an object lesson for all True Christians – “**seek first the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness**”⁷⁶. Whatever suffering is endured in this life is of little consequence compared to the promise of eternal life.

5.3 Suffering of Christians

On the night of the first Christian Passover, Jesus explained to the disciples the relationship they would have with the world. This is **the relationship True Christians have had with the world** down through the centuries:

If **the world hates you**, know that it has hated me before it hated you.

If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own;

but because **you are not of the world**,

but I chose you out of the world, therefore **the world hates you**.

Remember the word that I said to you:

‘A servant is not greater than his master.’

(alluding to John 13:16, Matthew 10:24)

If they persecuted me, **they will also persecute you**.

If they kept my word, they will also keep yours.

But all **these things they will do to you on account of my name**, because they do not know him who sent me.

I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace.

In the world you will have tribulation.

But take heart; I have overcome the world.

(John 15:18-21, 16:33 ESV)

Early in his ministry, during the **Sermon on the Mount**, Jesus had taught the disciples that they would face persecution for his name.⁷⁷ Again, the same has applied to True Christians down through the centuries, but **Jesus’ real point is to learn “love” even for enemies:**

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you
and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward⁷⁸ is great in heaven,
for **so they persecuted the prophets who were before you**.
(Matthew 5:10-12 ESV)

Blessed are you when people hate you
and when they **exclude** you and **revile** you and **spurn** your name as evil,
on account of the Son of Man!

Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven;
for so their fathers did to the prophets.
(Luke 6:22-23 ESV)

You have heard that it was said,

‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’⁷⁹

But I say to you, **Love your enemies** and **pray for those who persecute you** ...
(Matthew 5:43-44 ESV)

But I **say to you who hear,**

Love your enemies,
do good to those who hate you,
bless those who curse you,
pray for those who abuse you.

(Luke 6:27-28 ESV)

⁷⁵ See Matthew 11:7-11, Luke 7:24-28

⁷⁶ See Matthew 6:33

⁷⁷ Some of the worst atrocities of mankind have been performed using the “name of Jesus Christ”; see section **9.3.6 Atrocities of the Church of Satan** in the paper “**The Soon Coming Kingdom of God**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

⁷⁸ The reward for Christian service is the opportunity for greater service in the Kingdom of God;

see section **11.4 Christian Rewards** in the paper “**True Worship of the True God**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

⁷⁹ This is a Pharisaic prescription – there is nothing like it in the Old Testament.

In explaining the **Parable of the Sower**,⁸⁰ Jesus emphasizes that persecution is a significant cause of people's lack of response to the Christian Calling:

And these are the ones sown on rocky ground:
the ones who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy.
And they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while;
then, **when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word**,
immediately **they fall away**.

(Mark 4:16-17 ESV see also Matthew 13:20-22, Luke 8:13)

When **Jesus** sent the Twelve on tour in Galilee,⁸¹ he **warned them of the general nature of persecution**:

Behold, I am sending you out as **sheep in the midst of wolves**,
so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.

Beware of men, for they will **deliver you over to courts** and **flog you** in their synagogues,
and you will be **dragged before governors** and kings **for my sake**,
to bear witness before them and the Gentiles.

When they deliver you over, **do not be anxious** how you are to speak or what you are to say,
for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour.

For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

Brother will deliver brother over to death,
and the father his child,
and children will rise against parents and have them put to death,
and **you will be hated by all for my name's sake**.

But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next,
for truly, I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.
(Matthew 10:16-23 ESV see also Mark 10:29-30, Mark 8:34b-35 // Matthew 16:24b-25 // Luke 9:23b-24)

In the **Olivet Prophecy**, Jesus is specific that **Christians will suffer persecution** in the Great Tribulation:

But be on your guard.
For they will deliver you over to councils,
and **you will be beaten** in synagogues,
and you will stand before governors and kings for my sake,
to bear witness before them.

And **you will be hated** by all **for my name's sake**.
But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

For in those days there will be **such tribulation**
as has not been from the beginning of the creation that God created until now,
and never will be.
(Mark 13:9, 13, 19 ESV see also Luke 21:12-17)

Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and **put you to death**,
and **you will be hated** by all nations **for my name's sake**.
But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

For then there will be **great tribulation**,
such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no,
and never will be.
(Matthew 24:9, 13, 21 ESV see also Revelation 7:9-14)

The brother of Jesus, **James**, provides motivation to endure suffering,
and the **Apostle Peter** elaborates:

Count it all joy, my brothers, **when you meet trials of various kinds** ...

Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial,
for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life,
which God has promised to those who love him.
(James 1:2, 12 ESV)

In this you rejoice, though now for a little while,
if necessary, you have been **grieved by various trials** ...
... then **the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials** ...
(1 Peter 1:6, 2 Peter 2:9a ESV)

⁸⁰ See Mark 4:3-20, Matthew 13:3-23, Luke 8:5-15

⁸¹ See Mark 6:7-11, Matthew 10:1-15, Luke 9:1-5

Do not repay evil for evil or **reviling for reviling**,
but **on the contrary, bless**, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing.
But even if you should **suffer for righteousness' sake**, you will be blessed.
Have no fear of them, nor be troubled,
but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy,
always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you
for a reason for the hope that is in you;
yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience,
so that, **when you are slandered**,
those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.
For it is better to **suffer for doing good**,
if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.
(1 Peter 3:9, 14-17 ESV)

Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh,
arm yourselves with the same way of thinking,
for **whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin** ...

Beloved, **do not be surprised at the fiery trial** when it comes upon you **to test you**,
as though something strange were happening to you.
But rejoice insofar as you **share Christ's sufferings**,
that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.

If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed,
because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.

But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler.

Yet **if anyone suffers as a Christian**,
let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name.
Therefore let **those who suffer according to God's will**
entrust their [lives] (psyche)⁸² to a faithful Creator while doing good.
(1 Peter 4:1, 12-16, 19 ESV)

Be sober-minded; be watchful.
Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.
Resist him, firm in your faith,
knowing that **the same kinds of suffering**
are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.

And **after you have suffered a little while**,
the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ,
will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.
(1 Peter 5:8-10 ESV)

Analysis of Christian suffering as summarized by James and Peter:

- Suffering has a purpose, **"count it all joy"**, **"stood the test"**, **"receive the crown of life"**
- Suffering is NOT fun, **"grieved by various trials"**
- God does NOT abandon a person in a trial,
"the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials"
- Avoid bringing on suffering, **"do good and suffer for it"**, **"suffering unjustly"**,
"do not repay evil for evil"
- Follow Christ's example, **"Christ also suffered for you"**, **"suffer for righteousness' sake"**
- Return good for evil, **"when you are slandered"**, **"bless"**
- Suffering helps overcome sin, **"whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin"**
- Trials are to be expected, **"do not be surprised at the fiery trial"**, **"the same kinds of suffering"**
- Persecution will come, **"suffers as a Christian"**, **"suffer according to God's will"**
- Suffering will end, **"after you have suffered a little while"**

⁸² See footnote 1
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Luke reports an early incident where

Peter and one or more of the other Apostles did suffer persecution:

Now many signs and wonders were regularly done among the people by the hands of the apostles.

And they were all together in Solomon's Portico.

But **the high priest** rose up, and all who were with him (that is, the party of the Sadducees), and filled with jealousy they **arrested the apostles and put them in the public prison.**

And when they had brought them, they set them before the council.

And the high priest questioned them, saying,

"We strictly charged you not to teach in this name,
yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching,
and you intend to bring this man's blood upon us."

But Peter and the apostles answered,

"We must obey God rather than men. ..."

... and **when they had called in the apostles,**

they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, **and let them go.**

Then **they left** the presence of the council,

rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name.

(Acts 5:12, 17-18, 27-29, 40-41 ESV see also Hebrews 10:32-33)

Peter elaborates on the efficacy of suffering in the Christian life:

Concerning this salvation,

the prophets who prophesied about the grace

that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully,

inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating

when [it]⁸³ predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories.

(1 Peter 1:10-11 ESV)

For this is a gracious thing,

when, mindful of God, **one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly.**

For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure?

But if when you **do good and suffer for it** you endure,

this is a gracious thing in the sight of God.

For to this you have been called,

because **Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example,**

so that you might follow in his steps.

He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth.

When he was reviled, he did not revile in return;

when he suffered, he did not threaten,

but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.

(1 Peter 2:19-23 ESV)

For **Christ also suffered once for sins,** the righteous for the unrighteous,

that he might bring us to God,

being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit ...

Beloved, do not be surprised at **the fiery trial** when it comes upon you **to test you,**

as though something strange were happening to you.

But **rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings,**

that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.

(1 Peter 3:18, 4:12-13 ESV)

In **Jesus'** final messages to the New Testament Church,

he **alludes to past persecution** and **explicitly warns of persecution to come:**

I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich)

and the slander of those who say that they are Jews and are not,

but are a synagogue of Satan.

Do not fear what you are about to suffer.

Behold, the devil is about to **throw some of you into prison,** that you may be tested,

and **for ten days you will have tribulation.**

Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.

⁸³ See footnote 64

I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is.
Yet you hold fast my name,
and you did not deny my faith even in the days of Antipas my faithful witness,
who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.

But I have this against you, that you tolerate that woman Jezebel,
who calls herself a prophetess
and is teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols.
Behold, I will throw her onto a sickbed,
and those who commit adultery with her I will throw into great tribulation,
unless they repent of her works ...

Because you have kept my word about patient endurance,
I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world,
to try those who dwell on the earth.
(Revelation 2:9-10, 13, 20, 22, 3:10 ESV)

In this world, True Christians are promised suffering,
but the promise of eternal life is held out to those who love God and endure to the end.
The Apostle Paul is a living example for all True Christians.

6. The Suffering of the Apostle Paul

We know more about the Apostle Paul than any of the other Apostles.

Paul's letters contain many details of his life. In the Book of Acts, the Synoptist Luke traced the career of Paul in considerable detail over his three journeys, Paul's arrest, and the final trip to Rome. Through the efforts of the Apostle Paul, God established Christianity in the Roman Empire. This was a "type" of what is to occur in the World Tomorrow when the Gospel will truly go into all the world. It is also through this spread of Christianity that Satan the Devil made his effort to corrupt the Truth and thwart the Plan of God. This is discussed in detail in section 9.3 Corruption of the Visible Church in the paper "The Soon Coming Kingdom of God" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.
There will be no possibility of corruption in the World Tomorrow!

In serving God, the Apostle Paul suffered much.

He suffered mental anguish over his early life as a persecutor of the Church.
Paul experienced blindness after his theophany.
He also had a permanent defect related to his eyes.
During his career, he suffered many physical hardships.
Based on his experience, Paul has a lot to say about the sufferings of the Christian life.

6.1 Paul's Early Life

Paul's father was a Roman Citizen, as such Paul inherited Roman citizenship at birth.
Paul was born in the city of Tarsus, but in his youth spent considerable time in Jerusalem
under the tutelage of Gamaliel:

Paul replied,

"I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no obscure city.
I beg you, permit me to speak to the people."

"I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city,
educated at the feet of Gamaliel according to the strict manner of the [nomos]⁸⁴ of our fathers,
being zealous for God as all of you are this day. ..."

But when they had stretched him out for the whips,
Paul said to the centurion who was standing by,

"Is it lawful for you to flog a man who is a Roman citizen and uncondemned?"

⁸⁴ The Greek word, νόμος – nomos, can be correctly translated as "law"; however, it should NEVER be used in relation to the Writings of Moses, or any part of the Old Testament. The Old Testament comprises *torah*, NOT *nomos*; hence, in this paper, the transliteration, *nomos*, is always used. For further discussions see Excursus 8 - torah and nomos in the paper "True Worship of the True God" and section 11.6 Paul and nomos in the paper "The Writings of Moses"; both papers are located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.
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When the centurion heard this, he went to the tribune and said to him,

“What are you about to do?

For **this man is a Roman citizen.**”

So the tribune came and said to him,

“Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?”

And he said,

“Yes.”

The tribune answered,

“I bought this citizenship for a large sum.”

Paul said,

“But **I am a citizen by birth.**”

(Acts 21:39, 22:3, 25-28 ESV)

Gamaliel was a well respected “Rabbi”, known through several passages in the Mishnah and the Talmud.⁸⁵ Clearly, Paul was talented and well educated, “**according to the strict manner of the nomos of our fathers**”:

And **I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age** among my people,
so **extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers.**

(Galatians 1:14 ESV)

The zeal of Paul, then known as Saul, for Judaism, “**the traditions of my fathers**”,
caused him to become **a principal persecutor of the early Church**:

For you have heard of my former life in Judaism,
how **I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it.**

(Galatians 1:13 ESV)

But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together at him.

Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him.

And **the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul.**

(Acts 7:57-58 ESV)

And **Saul approved of his execution.**

And **there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem,**

and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.
Devout men buried Stephen and made great lamentation over him.

But **Saul was ravaging the church,**

and entering house after house,

he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison.

(Acts 8:1-3 ESV see also 11:19, 26:9-11)

Paul caused great suffering for many of the early Christians, not only in Jerusalem,
but he determined to stamp out Christianity elsewhere:

But Saul, still **breathing threats and murder against the disciples** of the Lord,
went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at **Damascus,**
so that **if he found any belonging to the Way,** men or women,
he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

(Acts 9:1-2 ESV)

It was on the road to Damascus that Jesus had a word with Paul.

6.2 The Conversion of Paul

Paul’s conversion was probably in 33AD or 34AD. Some fifteen years after his conversion,
in writing the Churches of Southern Galatia, Paul reflects back on his life. Paul realizes that God
had a hand in his life’s experiences that prepared him for the work he was given:

But when **he who had set me apart before I was born,**

and who **called me by his grace,**

was pleased to reveal his Son to me,

in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles,

I did not immediately consult with anyone;

⁸⁵ See <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gamaliel>

nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.

Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and remained with him fifteen days. (Galatians 1:15-18 ESV)

As an Apostle, **Paul had to be a witness to the Resurrection of Jesus Christ**. Paul had no contact with Jesus during Jesus' human ministry. **The first three years after Paul's conversion were spent learning the Gospel**. Paul had extensive knowledge of the Old Testament scriptures, but now he had to understand their true light given the facts of the First Advent. How much of the first three years were spent in direct contact with the Risen Jesus Christ, we don't know; but, we do know it started with **a personal theophany from the Risen Jesus Christ**:

Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him. And falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?"

And he said, "Who are you, Lord?"

And he said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do."

(Acts 9:3-6 ESV see also 22:6-8)

In this connection I journeyed to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. At midday, O king, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, that shone around me and those who journeyed with me.

And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.'

And I said, 'Who are you, Lord?'

And the Lord said, 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. But rise and stand upon your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you, delivering you from your people and from the Gentiles —to whom I am sending you to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'

(Acts 26:12-18 ESV)

Paul suffered blindness from this theophany.⁸⁶ He was taken to Damascus by his companions, where Paul was assisted by a certain disciple, Ananias; who, being aware of Paul's mission from the Sanhedrin, was **very reluctant to help Paul**:

Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias."

And he said, "Here I am, Lord."

And the Lord said to him, "Rise and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying, and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so **that he might regain his sight**."

⁸⁶ See Acts 9:7-9

But Ananias answered,
"Lord, I have heard from many about this man,
how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem.
And here **he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name.**"

But the Lord said to him,
"Go, for **he is a chosen instrument of mine**
to carry my name before the **Gentiles**
and **kings**
and the children of **Israel**.
For **I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.**"

(Acts 9:10-16 ESV)

Having been healed of the blindness and being baptized,⁸⁷ **Paul commenced his three years of learning.**
At some point, Paul felt confident to begin to preach the Gospel. He went first to the Jews of Damascus.
This is how his real suffering began:

For some days he was with the disciples at Damascus.
And immediately **he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues,** saying,
"He is the Son of God."
And all who heard him were amazed and said,
"Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem of those who called upon this name?
And has he not come here for this purpose, to bring them bound before the chief priests?"

But **Saul increased all the more** in strength,
and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by **proving that Jesus was the Christ.**
When many days had passed, **the Jews plotted to kill him,** but their plot became known to Saul.
They were watching the gates day and night in order to kill him,
but his disciples took him by night and let him down through an opening in the wall,
lowering him in a basket.
(Acts 9:19b-25 ESV)

At this point, Paul makes his **first visit to Jerusalem.**⁸⁸ At first, Paul is NOT accepted
by the Jerusalem Church, but **Barnabas befriends him.** Then he tries to reason with "Hellenists",
probably Jews of the Diaspora now in Jerusalem, (possibly the same group of whom Stephen fell afoul).⁸⁹
The result is predictable, **a plot is hatched to kill Paul,** so the brethren help him **return to Tarsus.**⁹⁰

6.3 Paul's First Journey

Paul spent some ten years ministering in and around Tarsus. During this time,
the **Church in Syrian Antioch** grew significantly. **Barnabas was sent from Jerusalem to Antioch:**
The report of this came to the ears of the **church in Jerusalem,** and they **sent Barnabas to Antioch.**
When he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad,
and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose,
for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith.
And a great many people were added to the Lord.
So **Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul,** and when he had found him, he **brought him to Antioch.**
For a whole year they met with the church and taught a great many people.
(Acts 11:22-26a ESV)

During this year, Paul made his **second visit to Jerusalem** to arrange famine relief.⁹¹ While in Jerusalem,
Paul described to the Apostles the success he had already had preaching the Gospel among Gentiles.⁹²

After this successful year in Antioch, Paul was ready for his first journey:

Now there were **in the church at Antioch** prophets and teachers, **Barnabas,**
Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch,
and **Saul.**

⁸⁷ See Acts 9:17-19

⁸⁸ See Galatians 1:18-24

⁸⁹ See Acts 6:9

⁹⁰ See Acts 9:26-30

⁹¹ See Acts 11:27-30

⁹² See Galatians 2:1-10

While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting,
the Holy Spirit said,
“**Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.**”
Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.
(Acts 13:1-3 ESV)

Paul’s first journey, likely in 46AD and 47AD, accompanied by Barnabus and John Mark,⁹³ took them from Syrian Antioch down to the port of **Seleucia** and over to the island of **Cyprus**.⁹⁴ From Cyprus, they sailed to the port of **Perga** in Pamphylia,⁹⁵ then they traveled overland into **Pisidian Antioch**.⁹⁶ Luke reports in detail, Paul’s sermon in the synagogue in Pisidian Antioch.⁹⁷ Paul’s message was effective – many people responded positively.⁹⁸ However, **the synagogue establishment reacted predictably:**

But **when the Jews saw the crowds,**
they were filled with jealousy
and began **to contradict what was spoken by Paul, reviling him.**

And **Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly,** saying,
“It was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you.
Since you thrust it aside and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life,
behold, **we are turning to the Gentiles.** ...”

But **the Jews** incited the devout women of high standing and the leading men of the city,
stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their district.
(Acts 13:45-46, 50 ESV)

Paul was beginning to understand “**how much he must suffer for the sake of my name**”.
This pattern is repeated time and again. Many people accepted Paul’s message, but the establishment, his peers, the educated Jews, **those in “leadership” positions, rejected Paul and the message of the Gospel** because it challenged their perceptions and positions.

From Pisidian Antioch, Paul and Barnabus traveled further into the interior of **Southern Galatia** to **Iconium**, where they met with success among many of the people,⁹⁹
but, again, fell afoul of the establishment, so they moved on:

But **the people of the city were divided;**
some sided with the Jews and some with the apostles.
When **an attempt was made** by both Gentiles and Jews, **with their rulers,**
to mistreat them and to stone them,
they learned of it and fled to **Lystra** and **Derbe**, cities of Lycaonia,
and to the **surrounding country,**
and there **they continued to preach the gospel.**
(Acts 14:4-7 ESV)

At Lystra, things got very ugly:

But **Jews came from Antioch and Iconium,** and having persuaded the crowds,
they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead.
But when the disciples gathered about him, he rose up and entered the city,
and on the next day he went on with Barnabas to Derbe.
(Acts 14:19-20 ESV)

In this whole area, **many people were converted** and several **local Churches were established.**¹⁰⁰
From Derbe, Paul and Barnabus retraced their path through Southern Galatia,
went down to the port of Attalia, and sailed back to Syrian Antioch,
where they remained for some time, rejoicing over the **success of the Gospel with the Gentiles.**¹⁰¹

⁹³ See Acts 12:12, 13:5

⁹⁴ See Acts 13:4-12

⁹⁵ John Mark leaves them at this point, see Acts 13:13

⁹⁶ See Acts 13:13-14

⁹⁷ See Acts 13:16-41

⁹⁸ See Acts 13:42-44

⁹⁹ See Acts 14:1-3

¹⁰⁰ See Acts 13:48-49, 14:23

¹⁰¹ See Acts 14:24-28

Luke succinctly summarizes **Paul's departing message to the new converts** in Southern Galatia:

When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, **strengthening the [lives] (psyche)¹⁰² of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.**
(Acts 14:21-22 ESV)

We have no information regarding Paul's work in and around Tarsus. Paul may or may NOT have been prepared for the hostility of the leaders of the Jews in Southern Galatia. **Jesus had warned** the disciples that **the day would come when they would NOT be welcomed in synagogues.**¹⁰³ Paul's troubles were just beginning with those who held rigorously to traditional Jewish beliefs. Jews, claiming to be converted, comprised the "**circumcision party**" – they began to attack Paul in Southern Galatia.

6.3.1 Paul's Letter to the Galatians

The Churches in Southern Galatia were of mixed composition: Jews, God Fearers,¹⁰⁴ and many Gentiles. As subsequent events demonstrate, **Paul and Barnabas did NOT even suggest that Gentile converts needed to be circumcised.** While Paul was in Antioch, **other "missionaries" came to Southern Galatia.** They brought a slightly different message – insisting that circumcision was necessary for Christians. When Paul found out about their visit and their teaching, likely in 48AD, **he wrote the Letter to the Galatians.**¹⁰⁵

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and **are turning to a different gospel**—not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want **to distort the gospel of Christ.**

But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you **a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you,** let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now **I say again:**

If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, **let him be accursed.**

(Galatians 1:6-9 ESV)

O foolish Galatians!

Who has bewitched you?

It was before your eyes that **Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified.**

Let me ask you only this:

Did you receive the Spirit by works of the [nomos]¹⁰⁶ or by hearing with faith?

Are you so foolish?

Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?

Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain?

(Galatians 3:1-4 ESV)

Look:

I, Paul, say to you that **if you accept circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you.**

I testify again to **every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole [nomos].**¹⁰⁷

You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the [nomos]; you have fallen away from grace.

(Galatians 5:2-4 ESV)

It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh who would force you to be circumcised, and **only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ.**

For even those who are circumcised do not themselves keep the [nomos], but **they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh.**

¹⁰² See footnote 1

¹⁰³ See Matthew 10:17, Mark 13:9, Luke 21:12

¹⁰⁴ See Bruce (NT) pages 145-147, 266, 275, 277

¹⁰⁵ See section **11.1 False Teachers in Galatia** in the paper "True Worship of the True God" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

¹⁰⁶ See footnote 84

¹⁰⁷ Here Paul uses *nomos* in its most general sense, but with particular emphasis on the "**Pharisaic interpretations**".

Paul is saying that accepting circumcision make a person a "Jew", which after conversion to Christianity, abrogates one's conversion.

But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,
by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.
For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.
(Galatians 6:12-15 ESV)

A key tenet of these “missionaries” was that **to be a Christian, one had to be a Jew.**
They could not accept the plain fact that God was holding out salvation to the Gentiles.¹⁰⁸
Paul rhetorically asks “**who has bewitched you**”, but he probably had a good idea who they were:
But **some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers,**
“**Unless you are circumcised** according to the custom of Moses,
you cannot be saved.”

And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them,
Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem
to the apostles and the elders about this question.
(Acts 15:1-2 ESV see also Acts 11:2, Galatians 2:12, Titus 1:10)

The Bible is nowhere explicit how Paul knew so adamantly that circumcision was NOT necessary for Gentile converts. Paul may have been told explicitly by Jesus Christ. However, with the early conversion of Gentiles in Syrian Antioch, there is no record that the issue ever came up. During Paul’s ten years in and around Tarsus, presumable many of the people he worked with were Gentiles. There is no record that the issue came up. Paul’s final assessment of the “circumcision party” probably hits the nail on the head: these people were in it for themselves, “**that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ**”, “**that they may boast in your flesh**”. Paul drives home the fact that physical things are irrelevant for conversion, “**neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision**”. Nevertheless, those of the circumcision party continued to make Paul’s life miserable.

It was the visit of Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem over this issue that precipitated the **Jerusalem Conference** of 49AD, reported in Acts chapter 15. The main issue of the conference was “circumcision” – must a person become a “Jew” in order to be a Christian? The conference affirmed, what was already self evident in that salvation had already gone to the Gentiles, that **Gentiles do NOT have to become “Jews”**. For Further discussion of the conference, and the provisions of its concluding letter, see section **4.4.1 Galatians** in the paper “**God of Every Nation**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

Immediately after the conference, in order to reinforce its decision,
Paul commenced his second journey.

6.4 Paul’s Second Journey

This journey was probably of about two and a half years duration, between 49AD and 51AD.
Paul returned to Antioch after the Jerusalem Conference, and from there, along with **Silas,**
went overland through **Cilicia** to **Southern Galatia:**

... but Paul chose **Silas** and departed,
having been commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord
And **he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.**
Paul came also to **Derbe** and to **Lystra.**

As they went on their way through the cities,
they delivered to them for observance the decisions
that had been reached by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem.
So **the churches were strengthened in the faith,**
and **they increased in numbers daily.**
(Acts 15:40-41, 16:1a, 4-5 ESV)

¹⁰⁸ See the discussion of the beginnings of Gentile conversion in section **2.4.3.5 The Universal Saviour**
in the paper “**Third Pillar - The Way of God**”, and in section **4.2 Beginnings of Worldwide Evangelism** in the paper “**God of Every Nation**”;
both papers are located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

From Southern Galatia, Paul took the **northern overland route** to a port city on the Aegean Sea, **Troas**.¹⁰⁹ From there he took a boat to **Neapolis**, the port city of **Philippi** in Macedonia.¹¹⁰ In Philippi, Paul exorcised a demon from a fortune-telling slave girl, raising the ire of her owners,¹¹¹ who took the issue to the magistrates:

But when her owners saw that their hope of gain was gone,
they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers.
And when they had brought them to the magistrates, they said,
“These men are Jews, and they are disturbing our city.
They advocate customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to accept or practice.”
The crowd joined in attacking them,
and **the magistrates tore the garments** off them and **gave orders to beat them** with rods.
And when they had inflicted many blows upon them,
they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely.
(Acts 16:19-23 ESV)

After being miraculously released from their chains,¹¹² they departed the next day from Philippi heading west through **Amphipolis** and **Apollonia** came to **Thessalonica**.¹¹³ There, Paul went to the **synagogue**, presumably with his **standard message**,¹¹⁴ and there was the **standard result**:

But **the Jews were jealous**,
and taking some wicked men of the rabble, **they formed a mob**,
set the city in an uproar, and attacked the house of Jason,
seeking to bring them out to the crowd.
And when they could not find them,
they dragged Jason and some of the brothers before the city authorities, shouting,
“These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also,
and Jason has received them,
and **they are all acting against the decrees of Caesar**,
saying that there is another king, Jesus.”
(Acts 17:5-7 ESV)

Paul and company¹¹⁵ next went to **Berea**, where the “Jews” from Thessalonica continued to dog them.¹¹⁶ Paul went on to **Athens** leaving **Silas** and **Timothy** in Berea.¹¹⁷ Silas and Timothy joined Paul in Athens, then he sent them back to Macedonia.¹¹⁸ From Athens, Paul went to **Corinth** where he met **Aquilla** and **Priscilla**, and Silas and Timothy rejoined him.¹¹⁹ **Paul spent a year and half in Corinth.**¹²⁰ He had the usual problems with the “Jews”:

Paul was occupied with the word,
testifying to the Jews that the Christ was Jesus.
And when **they opposed and reviled him**,
he shook out his garments and said to them,
“Your blood be on your own heads!
I am innocent.
From now on I will go to the Gentiles.”
(Acts 18:5b-6 ESV)

¹⁰⁹ See Acts 16:6-8

¹¹⁰ See Acts 16:11-12

¹¹¹ See Acts 16:16-18

¹¹² See Acts 16:25-26

¹¹³ See Acts 17:1

¹¹⁴ See Acts 17:2-4

¹¹⁵ Timothy had joined Paul and Silas from Lystra, see Acts 16:1-3

¹¹⁶ See Acts 17:10,13

¹¹⁷ See Acts 17:14-15

¹¹⁸ See Acts 17:15b-16a, 18:5a, 1 Thessalonians 3:1-2

¹¹⁹ See Acts 18:1-5

¹²⁰ See Acts 18:11

The rest of Paul's time in Corinth was NOT without incident. Luke reports an attack on Paul.

Paul got off lightly, but **Sosthenes**, apparently a new convert,¹²¹ **took the brunt of it:**

But when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia,¹²²

the **Jews made a united attack on Paul**

and brought him before the tribunal, saying,

"This man is persuading people to worship God contrary to the law."

But when **Paul was about to open his mouth,**

Gallio said to the Jews,

"If it were a matter of wrongdoing or vicious crime, O Jews,

I would have reason to accept your complaint.

But since it is a matter of questions about words and names and your own [nomos],¹²³
see to it yourselves.

I refuse to be a judge of these things."

And he drove them from the tribunal.

And **they all seized Sosthenes**, the ruler of the synagogue,

and **beat him in front of the tribunal.**

But Gallio paid no attention to any of this.

(Acts 18:12–17 ESV)

In Philippi, **Paul experienced his first suffering under a Roman official.** In Corinth, the Roman governor, Gallio demonstrated how Paul's status as a Jew was beneficial in the early days. However, persecution from the Jewish establishment continued unabated. Despite Jewish interference, Paul established several Churches including at Thessalonica. It is NOT stated who was introducing the **heresy** which Paul addressed in the **Second Letter to the Thessalonians** – but it may have been the same "circumcision party".

6.4.1 Paul's Letters to the Thessalonians

While in Corinth, **Paul wrote two letters back to the Church in Thessalonica.**

When Timothy rejoined Paul in Corinth, he brought a good report: the brethren in Thessalonica were doing well despite their afflictions:

But now that **Timothy has come to us from you,**

and has brought us the **good news** of your faith and love

and **reported** that you always remember us kindly and long to see us,

as we long to see you—for this reason, brothers,

in all our distress and affliction we have been comforted about you **through your faith.**

(1 Thessalonians 3:6-7 ESV)

And you became imitators of us and of the Lord,

for **you received the word in much affliction,**¹²⁴

with the joy of the Holy Spirit,

so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia.

But though **we had already suffered** and been shamefully treated at Philippi,

as you know, we had boldness in our God to declare to you the gospel of God

in the midst of much conflict.

For you, brothers, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea.

For **you suffered the same things** from your own countrymen **as they did from the Jews** ...

(1 Thessalonians 1:6-7, 2:2, 14 ESV)

... and **we sent Timothy**, our brother and God's coworker in the gospel of Christ,

to establish and exhort you in your faith, **that no one be moved by these afflictions.**

For you yourselves know that **we are destined for this.**

For when we were with you,

we kept telling you beforehand that **we were to suffer affliction,**

just as it has come to pass, and just as you know.

(1 Thessalonians 3:2-4 ESV)

¹²¹ See 1 Corinthians 1:1

¹²² Gallio was proconsul in 51-52AD, see ESV comment.

¹²³ See footnote **84**

¹²⁴ This appears to allude to the incident report by Luke in Acts 17:5-9; the word "affliction" is from θλίψις - thlipsis, "distress that is brought on by outward circumstances", see **GEL** page 362.

Paul was accustomed to affliction, “**in all our distress and affliction**”, “**we had already suffered**”, “**in the midst of much conflict**”. The Christian life is one of affliction, “**we are destined for this**”, “**we were to suffer affliction**”. The brethren in Thessalonica were suffering affliction, “**you received the word in much affliction**”, “**you suffered the same things**”. The purpose of affliction is to strengthen Christians, “**through your faith**”, “**that no one be moved by these afflictions**”.

Soon after sending his first letter to Thessalonica, Paul became aware that **some problems were developing**. First, there was a heretical notion that “**the day of YHWH**” had already occurred or was currently in progress.¹²⁵ Secondly, some brethren were living in idleness, preferring NOT to work, presumably living off the good graces of others.¹²⁶ Paul wrote his second letter to deal with these issues, but he reiterated his previous **encouragements to overcome afflictions**:

Therefore we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God
for your **steadfastness** and **faith** in all your **persecutions**
and **in the afflictions that you are enduring**.
This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God,
that you may be considered worthy of **the kingdom of God**,
for which you are also suffering—since indeed God considers it just to repay
with affliction those who afflict you,
and to **grant relief to you who are afflicted** as well as to us,
when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels ...
(2 Thessalonians 1:4-7 ESV)

When it was time leave Corinth, Paul, with **Aquila** and **Priscilla**, took a boat from the Corinthian port of Cenchreae to **Ephesus**. Spending a little time in Ephesus, and **leaving Aquila and Priscilla in Ephesus**,¹²⁷ Paul took a boat to **Caesarea**. Paul went briefly to **Jerusalem** and then back to **Antioch**, where he spent a little time before commencing his Third Journey.¹²⁸

6.5 Paul’s Third Journey

Paul’s third journey lasted about five years during the period 52AD to 57AD. Luke starts the description most inauspiciously, then quickly picks it up in Ephesus, where Paul’s preaching in the synagogue has the normal effect:

... he departed and went from one place to the next
through the region of Galatia and Phrygia,
strengthening all the disciples.
Paul passed through the inland country and came to Ephesus.
There he found some disciples.
And **he entered the synagogue** and for three months **spoke boldly**,
reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God.
But when **some became stubborn** and continued in unbelief,
speaking evil of the Way before the congregation,
he withdrew from them and took the disciples with him,
reasoning daily in the hall of Tyrannus.
(Acts 18:23b, 19:1b, 8-9 ESV)

Overall Paul spent three years in Ephesus.¹²⁹ At some point there was **a major outbreak** against Paul and Christianity in Ephesus **instigated by the local manufacturers of idols**:

About that time **there arose no little disturbance concerning the Way**.
For a man named **Demetrius, a silversmith**, who made silver shrines of Artemis,
brought no little business to the craftsmen.
These he gathered together, with the workmen in similar trades, and said,
“Men, you know that from this business we have our wealth.
And you see and hear that not only in Ephesus but in almost all of Asia

¹²⁵ See 2 Thessalonians 2:1-2

¹²⁶ See 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12

¹²⁷ See Acts 18:18-21

¹²⁸ See Acts 18:22-23a

¹²⁹ See Acts 20:31

this **Paul has persuaded and turned away a great many people, saying that gods made with hands are not gods.**

And there is danger not only that this trade of ours may come into disrepute but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis may be counted as nothing, and that she may even be deposed from her magnificence, she whom all Asia and the world worship.”

When they heard this they were enraged and were crying out,
“Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!”

So the city was filled with the confusion,
and **they rushed together into the theater,**
dragging with them **Gaius** and **Aristarchus**, Macedonians
who were **Paul’s companions** in travel.
(Acts 19:23-29 ESV)

Paul’s time in Ephesus was apparently most productive as many strong churches were stated in the area. But **resistance from the pagan population was just beginning.** Paul’s letters to the Corinthian church exhibit considerable pagan influence on the newly converted Christians.

6.5.1 Paul’s Letters to the Corinthians

Towards the end of his time in Ephesus, Paul wrote the letter to the Church in Corinth that we have as **First Corinthians.** Paul had previously written one letter to the Corinthian Church.¹³⁰ In that letter, he had discussed certain moral problems, which had apparently become worse.¹³¹ Also, factions were developing in the Church in Corinth.¹³² The letter of **First Corinthians** also deals with various other problems and issues. Later, Paul would write to the Church in Corinth, two other letters that we know of: a letter causing grief,¹³³ and the letter we have as **Second Corinthians.**

In the first four chapters of First Corinthians, **Paul deals with issue of divisions in the Church.**

Paul identifies the root of the problem as “pride”, “arrogance”:

I have applied all these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, brothers,
that **you may learn by us not to go beyond what is written,**
that **none of you may be puffed up in favor of one against another.**

Already you have all you want!

Already you have become rich!

Without us you have become kings!

And would that you did reign, so that we might share the rule with you!

Some are arrogant, as though I were not coming to you.

(1 Corinthians 4:6, 8, 18 ESV)

Paul contrasts the perceived “status” of those in Corinth who are causing division with the actual status of himself and others of the “apostles”

whom **God has sent into the world to teach:**

For I think that **God has exhibited us apostles as last of all,** like men sentenced to death,
because **we have become a spectacle to the world,** to angels, and to men.

We are fools for Christ’s sake, but you are wise in Christ.

We are weak, but you are strong.

You are held in honor, but we in disrepute.

To the present hour we hunger and thirst,
we are poorly dressed and buffeted and homeless,
and we labor, working with our own hands.

When reviled, we bless;

when persecuted, we endure;

when slandered, we entreat.

We have become, and are still, like the scum of the world, the refuse of all things.

(1 Corinthians 4:9-13 ESV)

¹³⁰ See 1 Corinthians 5:9

¹³¹ See 1 Corinthians 5:10-13

¹³² See 1 Corinthians 1:10-13

¹³³ See 2 Corinthians 2:2-4, 7:8-12

In chapters 5 and 6, Paul deals with moral issues, particularly, sexual immorality. Chapter 7 contrasts sexual immorality with true morality in marriage. A secondary issue addressed in chapter 6 is disputes between brethren. **Paul asserts that a Christian should suffer any loss before allowing a dispute:**

I say this to your shame.

Can it be that there is no one among you wise enough to settle a dispute between the brothers, but brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers?

To have lawsuits at all with one another is already a defeat for you.

Why not rather suffer wrong?

Why not rather be defrauded?

But you yourselves wrong and defraud—even your own brothers!
(1 Corinthians 6:5-8 ESV)

Chapters 8, 9, and 10 deal with **relationships among Christians**. The primary issue that Paul addresses is food offered to idols.¹³⁴ Paul's point is that a Christian should be willing to **relinquish his/her rights** to **benefit others** or to **avoid offending others**:

Now concerning food offered to idols:

we know that “all of us possess knowledge.”

This “knowledge” puffs up, but love builds up.

If anyone imagines that he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know.

However, not all possess this knowledge.

But **some, through former association with idols,**

eat food as really offered to an idol, and their conscience, being weak, is defiled.

For **if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple,**

will he not be encouraged, if his conscience is weak, to eat food offered to idols?

And **so by your knowledge this weak person is destroyed,** the brother for whom Christ died.

Thus, sinning against your brothers and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ.

Therefore, **if food makes my brother stumble,**

I will never eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.

(1 Corinthians 8:1-2, 7, 10-13 ESV)

This is my defense to those who would examine me.

Do we not have the right to eat and drink?

If others share this rightful claim on you, do not we even more?

Nevertheless, **we have not made use of this right,**

but **we endure anything** rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ.

So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or **to the church of God,**

just as I try to please everyone in everything I do,

not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved.

(1 Corinthians 9:3-4, 12, 10:31-33 ESV)

The rest of the letter of **First Corinthians** deals with **Christian living** and behaviour in **Church meetings**. In chapter 12, Paul presents his famous simile between the human body and the Church. In contrast with the divisions in the Corinthian Church, Paul uses this comparison to stress the unity of the Church:

If one member suffers, all suffer together;

if one member is honored, all rejoice together.

Now **you are the body of Christ** and individually members of it.

(1 Corinthians 12:26-27 ESV)

While the heresy, that to be Christian one had to be a Jew, continued to dog Paul, in chapter 15, Paul deals with the beginnings of **an even more dangerous heresy**, regarding the **nature of Jesus Christ**:

Now I would remind you, brothers, of **the gospel I preached to you,** which you received,

in which you stand, and by which you are being saved,

if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.

¹³⁴ For further discussion of this issue, see section **5.4 Meat Offered to Idols** in the paper “**The Human Condition**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca
Sunday, August 30, 2026

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received:
that **Christ died** for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures,
that he **was buried**,
that he **was raised** on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures ...

Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead,
how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?

But if there is no resurrection of the dead,
then not even Christ has been raised.

And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain.
(1 Corinthians 15:1-4, 12-14 ESV)

The **fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ**, as witnessed by the Apostles, was the motivating factor that fuelled the creation of the New Testament Church. Paul recounts that it took a theophany from the Risen Jesus Christ to change him from a persecutor into an Apostle:

... and that **he appeared to Cephas**, then **to the twelve**.

Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time,
most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep.

Then **he appeared to James**, then **to all the apostles**.

Last of all, as to one untimely born, **he appeared also to me**.

For I am the least of the apostles,
unworthy to be called an apostle,
because **I persecuted the church of God.**
(1 Corinthians 15:5-9 ESV)

Paul ends his letter to the Corinthian Church promising to come to visit them,
which Luke reports he did:

I will visit you after passing through Macedonia,

for I intend to pass through Macedonia,
and perhaps I will stay with you or even spend the winter,
so that you may help me on my journey, wherever I go.

For I do not want to see you now just in passing.

I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits.

But I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost ...
(1 Corinthians 16:5-8 ESV)

After the uproar ceased, **Paul** sent for the disciples,
and after encouraging them, he said farewell and **departed for Macedonia.**

When he had gone through those regions
and had given them much encouragement,
he came to Greece.

(Acts 20:1-2 ESV)

Sometime after writing the letter of **First Corinthians**, **Paul made brief visit to Corinth** and returned to Ephesus.¹³⁵ This visit precipitated **Paul's letter causing grief**, and caused Paul to delay his planned visit to Corinth and go north to Macedonia first.¹³⁶ From Ephesus, Paul had sent Timothy to Corinth.¹³⁷ Timothy rejoined Paul in Macedonia.¹³⁸ Titus also had spent time in Corinth, and brought good news to Paul in Macedonia.¹³⁹ **While in Macedonia, Paul wrote the letter we have as Second Corinthians.** Because Paul and the Church of Corinth had had stormy relationship over the previous couple of years, **Paul opens the letter of Second Corinthians with words of encouragement** hoping to help the brethren move-on in their Christian lives:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the Father of mercies and God of all comfort,
who comforts us in all our affliction,
so that we may be able to **comfort** those who are in any **affliction**,
with the **comfort** with which we ourselves are **comforted by God.**

¹³⁵ See 2 Corinthians 12:14, 13:1

¹³⁶ See 2 Corinthians 1:16,23-24, 2:1-4

¹³⁷ See 1 Corinthians 16:10-11

¹³⁸ See 2 Corinthians 1:1

¹³⁹ See 2 Corinthians 7:6,13-14

For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings,
so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too.
If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation;
and if we are comforted, it is for your comfort,
which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer.

Our hope for you is unshaken,
for we know that as you share in our sufferings,
you will also share in our comfort.
(2 Corinthians 1:3-7 ESV see also 7:2-9)

To further encourage the brethren in Corinth,

Paul goes on to articulate some of his recent suffering and how God has comforted him:
For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia.
For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself.
Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death.
But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead.
He delivered us from such a deadly peril,
and he will deliver us.
On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again.
(2 Corinthians 1:8-10 ESV)

With reference to his "painful letter", Paul explains his motivation:

And I wrote as I did,
so that when I came I might not suffer pain from those who should have made me rejoice,
for I felt sure of all of you, that my joy would be the joy of you all.
For I wrote to you out of much affliction and anguish of heart and with many tears,
not to cause you pain but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you.
(2 Corinthians 2:3-4 ESV)

Paul goes on to elucidate the purpose of Christian suffering:

But we have this treasure in jars of clay,
to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.
We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed;
perplexed, but not driven to despair;
persecuted, but not forsaken;
struck down, but not destroyed;
always carrying in the body the death of Jesus,
so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our bodies.
For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake,
so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.
So we do not lose heart.
Though our outer self is wasting away,
our inner self is being renewed day by day.
For this light momentary affliction
is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison ...
(2 Corinthians 4:7-11, 16-17 ESV see also 6:3-10)

At some point the Church in Corinth was troubled by "false apostles",
sounding very similar to the "false teachers" who had troubled the Churches of Southern Galatia:

But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning,
your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.
For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed,
or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received,
or if you accept a different gospel from the one you accepted,
you put up with it readily enough.
For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen,
disguising themselves as apostles of Christ.
And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.
So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness.
Their end will correspond to their deeds.
(2 Corinthians 11:3-4, 13-15 ESV)

The attack by these “**false apostles**” leads Paul to defend his apostleship. In so doing, he provides a list of some of the physical afflictions that he suffered: Indeed, **I consider that I am not in the least inferior to these super-apostles.**

Are they servants of Christ?

I am a better one—I am talking like a madman

—with far greater labors,
far more imprisonments,
with countless beatings,
and often near death.

Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one.

Three times I was beaten with rods.

Once I was stoned.

Three times I was shipwrecked;
a night and a day I was adrift at sea;

on frequent journeys,
in danger from rivers,
danger from robbers,
danger from my own people,
danger from Gentiles,
danger in the city,
danger in the wilderness,
danger at sea,
danger from false brothers;

in toil and hardship,
through many a sleepless night,
in hunger and thirst,
often without food,
in cold and exposure.

And, apart from other things,
there is the **daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches.**

(2 Corinthians 11:5, 23-28 ESV see also 6:4)

The final point of suffering that Paul mentions appears to be some affliction of one or both of his eyes.

He had previously mentioned it to the Galatians:

You know it was because of **a bodily ailment** that I preached the gospel to you at first,
and though my condition was a trial to you,
you did not scorn or despise me, but received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus.

What then has become of your blessedness?

For I testify to you that,
if possible, **you would have gouged out your eyes and given them to me.**
(Galatians 4:13-15 ESV)

So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations,

a thorn was given me in the flesh,
a messenger of Satan to harass me,
to keep me from becoming conceited.

Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me.

But he said to me,

“My grace is sufficient for you,
for **my power is made perfect in weakness.**”

Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses,

so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

For the sake of Christ, then,
I am content with weaknesses,
insults,
hardships,
persecutions,
and calamities.

For **when I am weak, then I am strong.**

(2 Corinthians 12:7-10 ESV)

From Macedonia, Paul travelled overland to Corinth. Paul spent three months in Corinth, during which he wrote his letter to the Church in Rome. After this time in Corinth, Paul decided to retrace his steps going north on the way back to Syrian Antioch.¹⁴⁰

6.5.2 Paul's Letter to the Church in Rome

During his travels, Paul came to know, or at least know of, many people who were now in Rome.¹⁴¹ Knowing all these people, Paul likely had a reasonably accurate reading on the pulse of the Church in Rome. Since the Church in Rome had had no previous apostolic direction, Paul sets out in the Book of Romans a theological treatise outlining the Gospel message, and specifically dealing with certain problems he knows to exist within the Church in Rome. Paul's introductory greeting is almost a "creed":

Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus,
called to be an apostle,
set apart for the gospel of God,
which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures,
concerning his Son,
who was descended from David according to the flesh
and was declared to be the Son of God in power
according to the Spirit of holiness
by his resurrection from the dead,
Jesus Christ our Lord,
through whom we have received grace and apostleship
to bring about the obedience of faith
for the sake of his name among all the nations,
including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ ...
(Romans 1:1-6 ESV)

Paul was clearly aware of certain problems in the understanding of the Christians in Rome.¹⁴² Paul's letter addresses several specific issues, but Paul is very careful to show respect for the Church in Rome so as NOT to cause offense:

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing,
so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers,
that you yourselves are full of goodness,
filled with all knowledge
and able to instruct one another.

But on some points I have written to you very boldly by way of reminder,
because of the grace given me by God to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles
in the priestly service of the gospel of God,
so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.
(Romans 15:13-16 ESV)

It is beyond the scope of this paper to do a complete analysis of the Book of Romans. In keeping with the purpose of this paper, only the theme of "suffering" in the Book of Romans is examined.

For further discussion of the Book of Romans see:

- Section 4.4.4 Romans in the paper "God of Every Nation"
- Section 11.2 Heresy in Rome in the paper "True Worship of the True God"
- Section 11.6.1 The Book of Romans in the paper "The Writings of Moses"
- Appendix 2: Romans 10:1-17 in the paper "The Inner Workings of Faith"
- All papers are located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

¹⁴⁰ See Acts 20:3

¹⁴¹ See Romans 16:3-15

¹⁴² See, for example, 2:1, 6:1,15, 12:1, 13:1

Throughout the **Book of Romans**, **Paul** does not dwell on his own suffering, but rather **deals with suffering from a conceptual perspective**:

- First, Paul considers the **general suffering of humanity** to be inflicted by God as **punishment for sin**:
But because of your hard and impenitent heart **you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed**.
... but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, **there will be wrath and fury**.
There will be **tribulation** and **distress** for **every human being who does evil** ...
(Romans 2:5, 8-9a ESV see also 3:5, 9:22, 12:19)
- Secondly, Paul considers the **beneficial effect of suffering** on Christians in **living the Christian life**:
Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God **through our Lord Jesus Christ**.
Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and **we rejoice in hope of the glory of God**.
Not only that, but **we rejoice in our sufferings**, knowing that **suffering produces endurance**, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts **through the Holy Spirit** [which]¹⁴³ has been given to us.
(Romans 5:1-5 ESV)
- Then, Paul examines **the transformative power of suffering** as Christians strive to **overcome** and **attain Godly character**:
The Spirit [itself] bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, **provided we suffer with him** in order **that we may also be glorified with him**.
For I consider that **the sufferings of this present time** are not worth comparing with **the glory that is to be revealed [in]**¹⁴⁴ us.
(Romans 8:16-18 ESV)
- Finally, Paul looks at practical Christian living and the necessity of suffering:
Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?
Shall **tribulation**, or **distress**, or **persecution**, or **famine**, or **nakedness**, or **danger**, or **sword**?
As it is written,
 “For your sake we are being killed all the day long;
 we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.”
 (citing Psalm 44:22)
No, **in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us**.
For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, **nor anything else** in all creation, **will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord**.
(Romans 8:35-39 ESV)
Rejoice in hope, **be patient in tribulation**, be constant in prayer.
Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them.
(Romans 12:12, 14 ESV)

Paul made it clear that he intended to visit Rome.¹⁴⁵

His desire would be granted, but NOT in the way he anticipated.

Meanwhile he headed back to Jerusalem revisiting various churches along the way.

¹⁴³ See footnote 64

¹⁴⁴ The preposition εἰς – eis, carries a range of meaning including “to”, “into”, “in”, “for”; see www.esv.org lexical form. In this verse “in” is to be preferred based on the previous verse.

¹⁴⁵ See Romans 1:15, 15:22-24

6.5.3 Paul Completes His Third Journey

Paul and his company revisited the churches of Macedonia, then sailed to **Troas in Asia** where they spent a little time.¹⁴⁶ Paul and company traveled down the coast of Asia from Troas to **Miletus near Ephesus**.¹⁴⁷ In Miletus, **Paul met with the elders of the Church of Ephesus**, and recounts his service in Ephesus:

Now from **Miletus** he sent to **Ephesus** and called the elders of the church to come to him.

And when they came to him, he said to them:

“You yourselves know how I lived among you
the whole time from the first day that I set foot in Asia,
serving the Lord with all humility and **with tears** and **with trials**
that happened to me through the **plots of the Jews**;
how I did not shrink from **declaring** to you anything that was profitable,
and **teaching** you in public and from house to house,
testifying both to Jews and to Greeks
of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. ...”

(Acts 20:17-21 ESV)

Paul is aware that there is danger for himself in Jerusalem, but his major concern is for the Church. After his previous experiences with “**the circumcision party**”¹⁴⁸ and with “**false apostles**”,¹⁴⁹

Paul warns the elders of the Church of Ephesus of **the rise of apostates**:

And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit,
not knowing what will happen to me there,
except that **the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me**.

But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself,
if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus,
to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

And now, behold,

I know that **none of you** among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom **will see my face again**.

Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all,
for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God.

Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock,

in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers,
to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.

I know that after my departure **fierce wolves will come in among you**, not sparing the flock;
and **from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things**,
to draw away the disciples after them.

(Acts 20:22-30 ESV)

From Miletus, Paul and company took several ships and eventually made it to **Tyre**,¹⁵⁰ where they stayed for a week with **the brethren**, who **also warned Paul about Jerusalem**:

And having sought out the disciples, we stayed there for seven days.

And **through the Spirit they were telling Paul not to go on to Jerusalem**.

(Acts 21:4 ESV)

Skippping down the coast, Paul and company said hello to the brethren in **Ptolemais**, and then in **Caesarea** visited **Philip**,¹⁵¹ one of the original seven deacons.¹⁵²

At Philip’s house, Paul was again warned by a prophet, **Agabus**:

While we were staying for many days,
a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea.

¹⁴⁶ See Acts 20:4-6

¹⁴⁷ See Acts 20:13-16

¹⁴⁸ See Acts 11:2, Galatians 2:12, Titus 1:10

¹⁴⁹ See 2 Corinthians 11:13

¹⁵⁰ See Acts 21:1-3

¹⁵¹ See Acts 21:7-8

¹⁵² See Acts 6:5, 8:40

And coming to us,
he took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands and said,
"Thus says the Holy Spirit,
'This is how **the Jews at Jerusalem will** bind the man who owns this belt
and **deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.**'"

When we heard this, **we and the people there urged him not to go up to Jerusalem.**
Then **Paul answered,**

"What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart?
For **I am ready not only to be imprisoned but even to die in Jerusalem**
for the name of the Lord Jesus."

And since he would not be persuaded, **we ceased and said,**
"Let the will of the Lord be done."

After these days we got ready and went up to Jerusalem.
(Acts 21:10-15 ESV)

Paul was clearly ready to suffer whatever God put before him. However, he still had significant work to do, as his life became a living witness to the Gospel. **Paul would visit the Church of Rome.**

6.6 The End of Paul's Life

Arriving in Jerusalem, Paul met with James and the elders of the Church,
who were overjoyed at Paul's success among the Gentiles.¹⁵³

However, **there was confusion among Jewish Christians about Paul's teaching:**

And they said to him,
"You see, brother,
how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed.
They are all zealous for the [nomos],¹⁵⁴
and they have been told about you
that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses,
telling them not to circumcise their children or walk according to our customs. ..."

(Acts 21:20b-21 ESV)

Jewish Christians in Jerusalem clearly remained committed to traditional practice: circumcision, animal sacrifices, and the whole **Temple Service.** They had heard that Paul was teaching Jews of the Diaspora to forsake their traditions. Paul was asked to participate in a traditional ritual in the Temple, which he was glad to do:¹⁵⁵

What then is to be done?
They will certainly hear that you have come.

Do therefore what we tell you.

We have four men who are under a vow;

take these men and **purify yourself along with them** and pay their expenses,
so that they may shave their heads.

Thus **all will know that there is nothing in what they have been told about you,**
but that you yourself also live in observance of the [nomos].

(Acts 21:22-24 ESV)

In the Temple, things got ugly.

¹⁵³ See Acts 21:17-20a

¹⁵⁴ See footnote [84](#)

¹⁵⁵ Note that Paul himself had recently been under a Nazarite Vow, see Acts 18:18.

6.6.1 Paul's Arrest

Paul proceeded with the purification ritual with the men in the Temple.¹⁵⁶

In the Temple, some Jews from Asia recognized Paul and stirred up a riot in order to kill Paul.

This brought in the Roman soldiers and **Paul was arrested**:

... the **Jews from Asia**, seeing him in the temple,
stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him, crying out,
"Men of Israel, help!
This is the man who is teaching everyone everywhere
against the people and the [nomos]¹⁵⁷ and this place.
Moreover, he even brought Greeks into the temple¹⁵⁸ and has defiled this holy place."

Then all the city was stirred up, and the people ran together.
They seized Paul and dragged him out of the temple, and at once the gates were shut.

And as **they were seeking to kill him**,
word came to **the tribune** of the cohort that all Jerusalem was in confusion.
He at once **took soldiers and centurions and ran down to them**.

And when they saw the tribune and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul.
Then **the tribune came up and arrested him** and ordered him to be bound with two chains.
He inquired who he was and what he had done.
(Acts 21:27b-28, 30-33 ESV)

The tribune allowed Paul to speak to the crowd.¹⁵⁹

The crowd listened to Paul¹⁶⁰ until **he mentioned his commission to the Gentiles**:

And he said to me,
'Go, for **I will send you far away to the Gentiles**.'

Up to this word they listened to him.
Then **they raised their voices** and said,
"Away with such a fellow from the earth!
For he should not be allowed to live."

And as they were shouting and throwing off their cloaks and flinging dust into the air,
the tribune ordered him to be brought into the barracks,
saying that he should be examined by flogging,
to find out why they were shouting against him like this.

But **when they had stretched him out for the whips**,
Paul said to the centurion who was standing by,
"Is it lawful for you to flog a man who is a Roman citizen and uncondemned?"

When the centurion heard this, he went to the tribune and said to him,
"What are you about to do?
For this man is a Roman citizen."

(Acts 22:21-26 ESV)

The tribune rescinded the flogging but held Paul in custody until the next day, when the tribune took **Paul before the Sanhedrin**. Paul incited division between the Sadducees and Pharisees over the concept of "resurrection". The tribune remained confused and kept Paul in custody.¹⁶¹

In custody it was revealed to Paul what he must do:

The following night **the Lord stood by him and said**,
"Take courage,
for as you have testified to the facts about me in Jerusalem,
so **you must testify also in Rome**."

(Acts 23:11 ESV)

¹⁵⁶ See Acts 21:26

¹⁵⁷ See footnote [84](#)

¹⁵⁸ This charge was a fabrication.

¹⁵⁹ See Acts 21:37-40

¹⁶⁰ See Acts 22:1-20

¹⁶¹ See Acts 22:30, 23:1-10

The Jews plotted to kill Paul,¹⁶² so he was sent to the governor, **Felix in Caesarea**.¹⁶³ Paul remained in custody in Caesarea for two years.¹⁶⁴ The high priest, Ananias, presented charges against him, but Felix kept him in custody hoping for a bribe.¹⁶⁵ The next governor, **Porcius Festus**, also listened to charges, but did nothing,¹⁶⁶ so **Paul exercised his option as a Roman Citizen**:

If then I am a wrongdoer and have committed anything for which I deserve to die,
I do not seek to escape death.

But if there is nothing to their charges against me, no one can give me up to them.

I appeal to Caesar.

Then Festus, when he had conferred with his council, answered,

“To Caesar you have appealed; **to Caesar you shall go.**”

(Acts 25:11-12 ESV)

After this, Paul was further examined by **King Herod Agrippa II and Bernice**.¹⁶⁷

Agrippa’s response was mixed:

And Agrippa said to Paul,

“In a short time **would you persuade me to be a Christian?**”

Then the king rose, and the governor and Bernice and those who were sitting with them.

And when they had withdrawn, they said to one another,

“This man is doing nothing to deserve death or imprisonment.”

And Agrippa said to Festus,

“This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar.”

(Acts 26:28, 30-32ESV)

After this, Paul was sent to Rome, to Caesar.

6.6.2 The Journey to Rome

When the time came, a ship was identified, and **Paul was set under the guard of a centurion.**

Luke and **Aristarchus**¹⁶⁸ were allowed to travel with Paul:

And when it was decided that we should sail for Italy,

they delivered Paul and some other prisoners **to a centurion of the Augustan Cohort named Julius.**

And embarking in a ship of Adramyttium,

which was about to sail to the ports along the coast of Asia,

we put to sea, accompanied by **Aristarchus**, a Macedonian from Thessalonica.

(Acts 27:1-2 ESV)

By the time they got to **Crete**, it was **after the Day of Atonement** – sailing was becoming dangerous.

Paul warned them to winter where they were, but they set out anyway.¹⁶⁹ They were **shipwrecked** on the **Island of Malta**.¹⁷⁰ After three months on Malta, Paul was able to proceed to Rome:

After three months we set sail in a ship that had wintered in the island,
a ship of Alexandria, with the twin gods as a figurehead.

Putting in at Syracuse, we stayed there for three days.

And from there we made a circuit and arrived at Rhegium.

And after one day a south wind sprang up, and on the second day we came to **Puteoli**.

There we found brothers and were invited to stay with them for seven days.

And so we came to Rome.

And **the brothers there**, when they heard about us,

came as far as the Forum of Appius and Three Taverns to meet us.

On seeing them, Paul thanked God and took courage.

¹⁶² See Acts 23:12-22

¹⁶³ See Acts 23:23-35

¹⁶⁴ See Acts 24:27

¹⁶⁵ See Acts 24:1-26

¹⁶⁶ See Acts 25:1-10

¹⁶⁷ See Acts 25:13-27, 26:1-27

¹⁶⁸ Aristarchus may also have been a prisoner; see Colossians 4:10.

¹⁶⁹ See Acts 27:3-12

¹⁷⁰ See Acts 27:13-44, 28:1-10

And when we came into Rome,
Paul was allowed to stay by himself, with the soldier who guarded him.
(Acts 28:11-16 ESV)

After three days he called together the local leaders of the Jews,
and when they had gathered, he said to them,
“Brothers, though I had done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers,
yet I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans. ... ”

And they said to him,
“We have received no letters from Judea about you,
and none of the brothers coming here has reported or spoken any evil about you.
But **we desire to hear from you what your views are**,
for with regard to this sect we know that everywhere it is spoken against.”
(Acts 28:17, 21-22 ESV)

When they had appointed a day for him,
they came to him at his lodging in greater numbers.
From morning till evening he expounded to them,
testifying to the kingdom of God
and **trying to convince them about Jesus both from the [nomos]¹⁷¹ of Moses and from the Prophets**.

And some were convinced by what he said, but others disbelieved.
And disagreeing among themselves,
they departed after Paul had made one statement:

“The Holy Spirit was right in saying to your fathers through Isaiah the prophet:
‘Go to this people, and say,
“You will indeed hear but never understand,
and you will indeed see but never perceive.”

For this people’s heart has grown dull,
and with their ears they can barely hear,
and their eyes they have closed;
lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears
and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them.’
(loosely quoting Isaiah 6:9-10 from LXX)

Therefore let it be known to you
that **this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles**;
they will listen.”

He lived there two whole years at his own expense,
and welcomed all who came to him,
proclaiming the kingdom of God
and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.
(Acts 28:23-31 ESV)

It is a shame that **Luke provides no more information on Paul’s work in Rome**. From Rome Paul wrote the **Prison Epistles** which provide the only information we have on Paul’s work in Rome.

6.6.3 The Prison Epistles

During his first imprisonment in Rome, Paul wrote the letters we have as Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon. All these letters allude to Paul’s status as a prisoner and the adjunct suffering he willingly endured.

Letter to the Ephesians

Like the Book of Romans, the letter to the **Ephesians is more a theological treatise than a letter**. It appears to have been a “circular letter”¹⁷² of which copies were sent to various Churches. The copy from Ephesus is the one that has survived. Paul was very familiar with the Church in Ephesus, but there is a statement in the letter which makes it clear that Paul was addressing people

¹⁷¹ See footnote 84

¹⁷² See Guthrie pages 510-511

that he did NOT know.¹⁷³ Paul explicitly states that he is a prisoner.¹⁷⁴ This is the one point of suffering that Paul makes: he asks the brethren NOT to be concerned over his suffering:

This mystery is that the **Gentiles are fellow heirs,**
members of the same body,

and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord,
in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him.

So I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory.
(Ephesians 3:6, 11-13 ESV)

Paul ends his letter with an appeal for prayers that he may continue effective in God's work:

To that end, keep alert with all perseverance,

making supplication for all the saints,

and also for me,

that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly **to proclaim the mystery of the gospel,**

for which **I am an ambassador in chains,**

that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

(Ephesians 6:18b-20 ESV)

Letter to the Philippians

Paul had a special relationship with the Church of Philippi:

And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel,

when I left Macedonia,

no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only.

Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again.

(Philippians 4:15-16 ESV)

Paul's letter to the Church at Philippi reflects this relationship. It is very personal. As in Ephesians, Paul explicitly identifies himself as a prisoner,¹⁷⁵ and frequently refers to his current sufferings.

Paul regards his sufferings as a means to advance the Gospel, and he is regretful of nothing:

I want you to know, brothers,

that **what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel,**

so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard

and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ.

And **most of the brothers,**

having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment,

are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

(Philippians 1:12-14 ESV)

But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

Indeed, **I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.**

For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish,

in order that I may gain Christ ...

... **that I may know him and the power of his resurrection,**

and may **share his sufferings,**

becoming like him in his death,

that by any means possible **I may attain the resurrection from the dead.**

(Philippians 3:7-8, 10-11 ESV)

Paul encourage the Philippian brethren to also rejoice in suffering for Christ:

For **it has been granted to you** that for the sake of Christ

you should **not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake,**

engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

Even if **I am to be poured out as a drink offering** upon the sacrificial offering of your faith,

I am glad and rejoice with you all.

Likewise **you also should be glad and rejoice with me.**

¹⁷³ See Ephesians 1:15

¹⁷⁴ See Ephesians 3:1, 4:1, 6:20

¹⁷⁵ See Philippians 1:7,14

Brothers, **I do not consider that I have made it** my own.

But one thing I do:

forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead,

I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Let those of us who are mature **think this way**,

and if in anything you think otherwise,

God will reveal that also to you.

(Philippians 1:29-30, 2:17-18, 3:13-15 ESV)

To suffer with Christ is a rare privilege, “share his sufferings”. It implies a deep understanding of how and why Jesus suffered as a human being. Jesus called the Apostles his “friends”, and prayed that all taught by them, i.e., **the New Testament Church, would be the same:**

You are my friends if you do what I command you.

No longer do I call you servants,

for the servant does not know what his master is doing;

but I have called you friends,

for **all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.**

You did not choose me,

but **I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit**

and that your fruit should abide ...

(John 15:14-16a ESV)

And they said to him,

“Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.”

Jesus said to them,

“You do not know what you are asking.

Are you able to drink the cup that I drink,

or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?”

And they said to him,

“We are able.”

And Jesus said to them,

“The cup that I drink **you will drink**,

and with the baptism with which I am baptized, **you will be baptized ...**”

(Mark 10:37-39 ESV)

I have manifested your name to **the people whom you gave me** out of the world.

Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word.

Now **they know that everything that you have given me is from you.**

For I have given them the words that you gave me,

and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you;

and they have believed that you sent me.

All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and **I am glorified in them.**

And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world,

and I am coming to you.

Holy Father, **keep them in your name**,

which you have given me,

that they may be one, even as we are one.

I do not ask for these only,

but also for those who will believe in me through their word,

that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you,

that **they also may be in us,**

so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

(John 17:6-8, 10-11, 20-21 ESV)

Despite Paul’s situation as a prisoner, he appreciated the help of the Philippian church, and expressed his acceptance of whatever God gave him:

I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me.

You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity.

Not that I am speaking of being in need,

for **I have learned, in whatever situation I am, to be content.**

I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound.
In any and every circumstance,
I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need.
I can do all things through him who strengthens me.
(Philippians 4:10-13 ESV)

Letter to the Colossians

Paul apparently had never visited Colossae,¹⁷⁶ although he would have passed right by Colossae in his third journey on the way to Ephesus. Again, Paul explicitly refers to his imprisonment.¹⁷⁷ Paul makes one allusion to his suffering – again **affirming his joy to suffer for the sake of the Gospel and for the Church:**

Now **I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake,**
and in my flesh I am filling up
what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body,
that is, the church, of which I became a minister
according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you,
to make the word of God fully known,
the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints.
(Colossians 1:24-26 ESV)

Paul is aware of potential heresies being put to the Church in Colossae.

Paul asserts his struggle to promote the true knowledge of God:

For I want you to know **how great a struggle I have** for you and for those at Laodicea
and **for all** who have not seen me face to face,
that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love,
to reach all the riches of full assurance of **understanding** and the **knowledge** of God's mystery,
which is **Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.**
I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments.
(Colossians 2:1-4 ESV)

Paul identifies two sources that **"may delude you with plausible arguments"**:

- **Pagan philosophy:**

See to it that no one **takes you captive by philosophy** and empty deceit,
according to **human tradition**,
according to the elementary principles of the world,
and **not according to Christ.**
For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily,¹⁷⁸
and you have been filled in him,
who is the head of all rule and authority.
(Colossians 2:8-10 ESV)

- **Reversion to Judaism:**

In him also **you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands,**
by putting off the body of the flesh,
by the circumcision of Christ,
having been buried with him in baptism,
in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God,
who raised him from the dead.
(Colossians 2:11-12 ESV)

Paul enjoins continued prayer,

and requests prayer that he may continue effective in the Work of God.

Paul may have begun to have an inkling that he might be released from prison,

"God may open to us a door for the word":

Continue steadfastly in prayer,
being watchful in it with thanksgiving.

¹⁷⁶ See Colossians 1:4,7,9, 2:1

¹⁷⁷ See Colossians 4:3,10,18

¹⁷⁸ Paul may be alluding to a "philosophic" challenge to Jesus' divinity.

At the same time, pray also for us,
that God may open to us a door for the word,
to declare the mystery of Christ,
on account of which I am in prison
—that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak.
(Colossians 4:2-4 ESV)

Letter to Philemon

Philemon was a wealthy Christian in Colossae.¹⁷⁹ A slave of his, Onesimus, had run away to Rome and became a friend of Paul. Paul requests Philemon to grant manumission to Onesimus:

I appeal to you for my child, Onesimus,
whose father I became in my imprisonment.

(Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful to you and to me.)

I am sending him back to you, sending my very heart.

I would have been glad to keep him with me,
in order that he might serve me on your behalf during my imprisonment for the gospel,
but I preferred to do nothing without your consent
in order that your goodness might not be by compulsion but of your own accord.
(Philemon 10-14 ESV)

By the time Paul wrote to Philemon, he apparently saw some hope of his release from prison:

Confident of your obedience, I write to you,
knowing that you will do even more than I say.

At the same time, prepare a guest room for me,
for I am hoping that through your prayers I will be graciously given to you.
(Philemon 21-22 ESV)

6.6.4 Paul's Last Days

Presumably, the Jews realized that it was futile to go to Rome to accuse Paul.

He was released after two years and continued the Work of God. He apparently went first to Macedonia. Timothy was working in Ephesus. From Macedonia, Paul wrote to Timothy the letter which we have as First Timothy.¹⁸⁰

At some point, Paul traveled to Create with Titus and left him there to organize the Churches on the Island.¹⁸¹ It is NOT explicit from where he wrote the letter to Titus, but Paul mentions that he plans winter in Nicopolis.¹⁸² Perhaps the letter was written from there or from Phillippi.

It is also possible that Paul got to Spain at some point during this period,¹⁸³
and there are also legends of his travelling as far as Great Britain.¹⁸⁴

At some point and under unknown circumstances, Paul was rearrested.

Paul wrote the letter we have as Second Timothy from Rome in imprisonment.¹⁸⁵

Most historians accept that Paul was executed during the Neronian persecutions in about 66AD.¹⁸⁶

¹⁷⁹ See Colossians 4:9

¹⁸⁰ See 1 Timothy 1:2-3

¹⁸¹ See Titus 1:4-5

¹⁸² See Titus 3:12

¹⁸³ See 1 Clement 5:7, Holmes page 53

¹⁸⁴ St. Paul's Cathedral in London is supposedly a commemoration of his visit.

¹⁸⁵ See 2 Timothy 1:8, 2:9, 4:6,16-17

¹⁸⁶ See Bruce (NT) page 367

6.6.5 The Pastoral Epistles

The letters we have as **First Timothy** and **Titus** have a common purpose: Paul is encouraging two of his trusted assistants to continue strong in the faith with the work which Paul has started.¹⁸⁷

In **First Timothy**, Paul again brings up his past as persecutor of the Church.

Clearly, through his whole life, **Paul was disturbed by the things he had done:**

I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord,
because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service,
though **formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent.**

But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief,
and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me
with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

(1 Timothy 1:12-14 ESV)

Paul had a special relationship with Timothy.¹⁸⁸ The letter we have as **Second Timothy** reads like a “farewell discourse”.¹⁸⁹ **Paul clearly lays out to Timothy the purpose of Christian suffering:**

... for **God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.**
Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of **me his prisoner,**
but **share in suffering for the gospel** by the power of God,
who [is saving]¹⁹⁰ us and called us to a holy calling,
not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace,
which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began,
and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus,
who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light **through the gospel,**
for which I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher,
which is why I suffer as I do.

But **I am not ashamed,** for I know whom I have believed,
and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me.
(2 Timothy 1:7-12 ESV)

You then, my child, **be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus,**
and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men,
who will be able to teach others also.

Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.

You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life,
my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness,
my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra
—**which persecutions I endured;**
yet from them all the Lord rescued me.

Indeed, **all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted ...**

But as for you, **always be sober-minded, endure suffering,**
do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.
(2 Timothy 2:1-3, 3:10-12, 4:5 ESV)

Analysis of Paul’s final word on Christian suffering:

- Through the Holy Spirit, it is possible to endure suffering,
“God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control”
- Paul adjures us, **“share in suffering”**,
alluding back to Philippians 3:10 about Jesus Christ, **“share his sufferings”**
- The objective of suffering is to further the Gospel, **“for the gospel”, “through the gospel”**
- Paul affirms this to be his motivation, **“which is why I suffer as I do”**
- There is no shame in suffering, **“I am not ashamed”**
- Suffering for the Gospel, is manifestation of God’s grace,
“be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus”

¹⁸⁷ See 1 Timothy 2:1, 3:14-15, 4:6, 11-16, 6:20-21, Titus 1:5, 2:1, 15

¹⁸⁸ See section 3.3.2.1 **Paul and Timothy** in the paper “Third Pillar - The Way of God” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

¹⁸⁹ Compare John chapters 14, 15, and 16; see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Farewell_Discourse

¹⁹⁰ Salvation is a process that is entered into by conversion. Salvation, “being saved”, occurs at the First Resurrection
— no one “is saved” as a human being. References to “being saved” should always look to the future. See 1 Corinthians 1:18, 15:2.

- Suffering is frequently in the form of persecution, **“my persecutions and sufferings”, “which persecutions I endured”**
- Persecution is NOT optional, **“all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted”**
- Christians must be ready for when it happens, **“always be sober-minded”, “endure suffering”**

Soon after writing the letter of Second Timothy, Paul was executed. **Paul suffered death for the Gospel**, for doing the Work of God. **Jesus’ words ring home:**

Greater love has no one than this, that someone **lay down his life for his friends**.
(John 15:13 ESV)

This paper now shift focus to the ultimate example of love and suffering: Jesus Christ.

7. The Servant Songs

The **Book of Isaiah** contains five unique poems, **The Servant Songs**: Isaiah 42:1-9, 49:1-13, 50:4-9, 52:13-53:12, and 61:1-4. Most scholars DO NOT accept the **Fifth Servant Song**, but Jesus himself quotes from it in Luke 4:18-19 applying it to himself. There is an enormous literature on these Servant Songs. R.K. Harrison cites C.R. North as containing a comprehensive bibliography up to 1948.¹⁹¹ J.N. Oswalt contains two more recent bibliographic lists.¹⁹² The fundamental question explored in all this literature is the identity of the Servant. **There can be no doubt about the identity of the Servant in the Fourth Servant Song** – the New Testament authors quote from, or allude to, every verse of the Fourth Servant Song and apply it to **Jesus Christ**.¹⁹³

The identity of the Servant in Songs One, Two, and Three is NOT so straight forward.

7.1 Israel as the Servant

The second part of the **Book of Isaiah**, **chapters 40 through 66**, is a unique piece of literature. It was likely assembled by Isaiah and his disciples during the reign of **Manasseh**, when they were more or less forced to operate from the shadows.¹⁹⁴ It is possible that none of the material was ever publicly presented, but as it was revealed by God to Isaiah, he and his disciples made records. These records were later combined into the **Book of Isaiah** as we have it.

The main theme of these chapters is the working out of the Plan of God:¹⁹⁵

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.

Speak tenderly to **Jerusalem**, and cry to her

that **her warfare is ended**,

that **her iniquity is pardoned**,

that she has received from [YHWH’s] hand double for all her sins.

(Isaiah 40:1-2 ESV)

Throughout these chapters the focus shifts, often imperceptibly, between the contemporary situation of Isaiah, the time of the **First Advent**, the time of the **Second Advent**, and the **World Tomorrow**.

References to Jerusalem must be analyzed on multiple levels: the ancient city, the city in the World Tomorrow, and symbolically representing True Worshipers of God at various times.¹⁹⁶ **Sometimes multiple perspectives are included simultaneously.**

For example, in the above passage, which opens these chapters, **“Jerusalem”** is parallel to **“my people”**, True Worshipers of God; but **“Jerusalem”** is also the city, down through history,

¹⁹¹ See Harrison (IOT) page 768 footnote 17

¹⁹² See Oswalt (IS2) pages 113-115, 408-410

¹⁹³ See line items 162-176 in the chart of section **2.4.3 The Centrality of Jesus Christ** in the paper **“Second Pillar - The Plan of God”** located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

¹⁹⁴ See Isaiah 56:9-12, 57:1-13, 59:1-15, 2 Kings 21:1-16;

there is a tradition that Isaiah was killed by Manasseh; see OTP volume 2, pages 143, 149, and 163-164

¹⁹⁵ For a summary of these chapters see **“Isaiah Chapters 40-66 – an Outline”** in section **“Bible Study Notes - Old Testament”**

located at <https://mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca/bible-study-notes>

¹⁹⁶ See Galatians 4:26, Hebrews 12:22

whose **“warfare is ended”** at the Second Advent. **“Jerusalem”** is also the New Testament Church whose **“iniquity is pardoned”**. Looking to the Second Advent, **“Jerusalem”** is **“my people”**, those called to the **New Israel** and to conversion forming the **New Testament Church** in the World Tomorrow.

Similarly, **references to “Israel” must be analyzed on multiple levels.**

The first reference to Israel is:

Why do you say, O **Jacob**, and speak, O **Israel**,

“My way is hidden from [YHWH],

and my right (mish'pat)¹⁹⁷ is disregarded by my God”?

Have you not known?

Have you not heard?

[YHWH] is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth.

He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable.

He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength.

Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted;

but **they who wait for [YHWH]** shall renew their strength;

they shall mount up with wings like eagles;

they shall run and not be weary;

they shall walk and not faint.

(Isaiah 40:27-31 ESV)

The synonymous terms **“Jacob”** and **“Israel”** identify Isaiah's contemporaries, who raise a complaint against YHWH, **“my way is hidden”**. YHWH rhetorically asks them if they do NOT know that **“YHWH is the everlasting God”**, implying the futility of their complaint. Then the focus shifts to True Worshipers, **“they who wait for YHWH”**, to whom YHWH **“gives power”**. The shift in focus is from **“physical Israel”** to **“spiritual Israel”**.

In chapter 41 verses 1-7, God challenges the nations and their idols, if they are able, to do anything.

Then **God make the first reference to Israel as a “servant”**:

But you, **Israel, my servant**, Jacob, whom I have chosen,

the **offspring of Abraham**, my friend;

you **whom I took from the ends of the earth**,

and called **from its farthest corners**, saying to you,

“You are my servant, I have chosen you and not cast you off”;

fear not, for I am with you;

be not dismayed, for I am your God;

I will strengthen you, I will help you,

I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

For I, [YHWH] your God, hold your right hand;

it is I who say to you,

“Fear not, I am the one who helps you.”

Fear not, you worm Jacob, you men of Israel!

I am the one who helps you, declares [YHWH];

your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel.

Behold, I make of you a threshing sledge, new, sharp, and having teeth;

you shall thresh the mountains and crush them,

and you shall make the hills like chaff;

you shall winnow them, and the wind shall carry them away,

and the tempest shall scatter them.

And **you shall rejoice in [YHWH]**;

in the Holy One of Israel you shall glory.

(Isaiah 41:8-10, 13-16 ESV)

The ancient Nation of Israel was indeed **“offspring of Abraham”**, but this prophecy looks to **“spiritual Israel”** for whom Abraham is **“the father of the faithful”**.¹⁹⁸ Abraham as the progenitor of Ancient Israel and as the “father of the faithful”, defines the continuity between Ancient Israel and New Israel. After the Second Advent, **“spiritual Israel”** will be called **“from the ends of the earth”**,

¹⁹⁷ See footnote 37

¹⁹⁸ See Romans 4:16-17, Galatians 3:7-9, Hebrews 2:16, James 2:21

“from its farthest corners”.¹⁹⁹ **“Spiritual Israel”** is enjoined to faith, **“fear not”**.

The **“Redeemer”** passages in Isaiah look to the propitiating sacrifice of Jesus Christ at the First Advent.²⁰⁰ In the World Tomorrow, God will use New Israel as an example nation to promote the spread of the Gospel to the whole world. Verses 15 and 16 use the **“Metaphor of Violence”**²⁰¹ to express the conquest of the world by the Gospel, **“you shall thresh the mountains”**.

The next reference to Israel as the servant, looks specifically to Ancient Israel:

Hear, you deaf, and look, you blind, that you may see!

Who is blind but my servant, or deaf as my messenger whom I send?

Who is blind as my dedicated one, or blind as the servant of [YHWH]?

He sees many things, but **does not observe them;**

his ears are open, but **he does not hear.**

[YHWH] was pleased, for his righteousness' sake, **to magnify his [torah]**²⁰² **and make it glorious.**

But this is a people plundered and looted;

they are all of them trapped in holes and hidden in prisons;

they have become plunder with none to rescue, spoil with none to say,

“Restore!”

Who among you will give ear to this, will attend and listen for the time to come?

Who gave up Jacob to the looter, and Israel to the plunderers?

Was it not [YHWH], against whom we have sinned,

in whose ways they would not walk, and whose [torah] they would not obey?

So **he poured on him the heat of his anger and the might of battle;**

it set him on fire all around, but he did not understand;

it burned him up, but he did not take it to heart.

(Isaiah 42:18-25 ESV)

When Isaiah received this message from YHWH, the Northern Kingdom had already been destroyed, **“he poured on him the heat of his anger and the might of battle”**; and, this fate would soon be applied to the Southern Kingdom. Isaiah's immediate audience was the Southern Kingdom, **“who among you will give ear to this”**. Israel had been taught the **Way of God** since the time of Moses, **“to magnify his torah and make it glorious”**,²⁰³ but Israel refused to internalize the **Way of God**, **“does not observe them”**, **“he does not hear”**. Spiritually, Ancient Israel became blind and deaf, **“look, you blind”**, **“hear, you deaf”**. Ancient Israel failed as the servant of YHWH, **“who is blind but my servant”**.

The next reference to Israel as the servant, looks specifically to **New Israel in the World Tomorrow:**

But now thus says [YHWH],

he who created you, O **Jacob**, he who formed you, O **Israel:**

“Fear not, for I have redeemed you;

I have called you by name, you are mine.

Fear not, for I am with you;

I will bring your offspring **from the east,**

and **from the west** I will gather you.

I will say to **the north**, Give up,

and to **the south**, Do not withhold;

bring my sons from afar and my daughters **from the end of the earth,**

everyone who is called by my name,

whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.”

¹⁹⁹ See Isaiah 11:11-12, 43:5-6, 48:20, 62:10-12, Jeremiah 16:14-15, 31:7-8

²⁰⁰ See Isaiah 41:14, 43:1,14, 44:6,22,23,24, 47:4, 48:17,20, 49:7-26, 54:5,8, 59:20, 60:16, 63:16

²⁰¹ See **Excursus 2 – The Metaphor of Violence** in the paper **“God of Every Nation”** located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

²⁰² The Hebrew word תּוֹרָה - torah, means “teaching”, “instruction”, “direction”. There is almost no overlap of meaning with the English word “law”; hence, in this paper the transliteration is always used. For further discussion, see **Excursus 3 - torah** and **Excursus 5 - torah and nomos** in the paper **“Covenants of Grace”** located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

²⁰³ Note that this is also a prophecy of the work of Jesus Christ; see Matthew 5:17-18, John 1:17.

"You are my witnesses," declares [YHWH],
"and **my servant** whom I have chosen,
that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he.
Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me.
I, I am [YHWH], and **besides me there is no savior.** ..."
(Isaiah 43:1, 5-7, 10-11 ESV)

All those called to the New Israel, **"I have called you"**, **"everyone who is called"**, will be called to conversion, **"I have redeemed you"**. New Israel will be **"my servant"** to take the Gospel to the world, **"you are my witnesses"**, so that all people over the whole world can have the opportunity for salvation, **"besides me there is no savior"**.

In chapter 44, Israel, as the servant, is again looking to the **New Israel**, but God makes an allusion to **Ancient Israel** using a diminutive term introduced at the time of Moses, **"Jeshurun"**.²⁰⁴

But now hear, **O Jacob my servant, Israel whom I have chosen!**

Thus says [YHWH] who made you, who formed you from the womb and will help you:

Fear not, **O Jacob my servant, Jeshurun whom I have chosen.**

For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground;

I will pour my Spirit upon your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants.

Remember these things, O Jacob, [even]²⁰⁵ Israel, for **you are my servant;**

I formed you; **you are my servant;**

O Israel, you will not be forgotten by me.

I have blotted out your transgressions like a cloud and **your sins** like mist;

return to me, for I have redeemed you.

Sing, O heavens, for [YHWH] has done it;²⁰⁶

shout, O depths of the earth;

break forth into singing, O mountains, O forest, and every tree in it!

For **[YHWH] has redeemed Jacob,** and **will be glorified in Israel.**

(Isaiah 44:1-3, 21-23 ESV)

In the World Tomorrow, the Holy Spirit will be made available to all human beings, starting with those called to the New Israel, **"I will pour my Spirit upon your offspring"**.²⁰⁷

Calling requires repentance, **"return to me"**, **"I have blotted out your transgressions"**.

New Israel will fulfill God's purpose, **"YHWH will be glorified in Israel"**.

The next section, comprising Isaiah 44:24-28 and all of chapters 45, 46, 47, and 48, deals with the **transition from the Assyrian period of history to the period of world empires**. This transition is discussed in detail in sections **2.6 Isaiah** and **2.12 Daniel** in the paper **"God of Every Nation"** located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca. **King Cyrus of Persia** is prophesied in verses 44:24-28²⁰⁸ and 45:1-3. Then for clarification, **God emphasizes that purpose of Cyrus is to perform the Plan of God:**

... **that you may know** that it is I, [YHWH], the God of Israel, **who call you by your name.**

For the sake of my servant Jacob, [even] Israel my chosen,

I call you by your name, **I name you,** though **you do not know me.**

I am [YHWH], and there is no other, besides me there is no God;

I equip you, though you do not know me,

that people may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west,

that there is none besides me;

I am [YHWH], and there is no other.

I form light and create darkness;

I make well-being and create calamity;

I am [YHWH], who does all these things.

(Isaiah 45:3b-7 ESV)

²⁰⁴ See Deuteronomy 32:15, 33:5,26

²⁰⁵ The Hebrew particle ׀ - waw, has several meanings. The most common is as a conjunction, "and", "but". Very importantly to be distinguished is when it identifies "apposition" – in these cases, this paper substitutes "even".

²⁰⁶ This is an allusion the First Resurrection; see Psalms 22:31, 52:9, Revelation 16:17, 21:6

²⁰⁷ See Joel 2:28

²⁰⁸ In Isaiah 44:26, "his servant" is specifically the Prophet Isaiah; note it is parallel to "his messengers".

Chapter 48 ends this section with **a call to Ancient Israel**, the captives in Babylon, to **return to the Land of Israel**. This prophecy was, of course, fulfilled in 538BC, as discussed in section **2.3.3 The Purpose of the Restoration** in the paper “**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**” and in section **7.3 Daniel and the Return from Exile** in the paper “**The Soon Coming Kingdom of God**”; both papers are located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca:

Hear this, O house of Jacob, who are called by the name of Israel,
and **who came from the waters of Judah**,
who swear by the name of [YHWH] and confess the God of Israel,
but not in truth or right.

For they call themselves after the holy city,
and stay themselves on the God of Israel; [YHWH] of hosts is his name.

Listen to me, O Jacob, [even]²⁰⁹ Israel, whom I called!
I am he; I am the first, and I am the last.

Oh that you had paid attention to my commandments!

Then your peace would have been like a river,
and your righteousness like the waves of the sea;
your offspring would have been like the sand, and your descendants like its grains;
their name would never be cut off or destroyed from before me.

Go out from Babylon, flee from Chaldea, declare this with a shout of joy, proclaim it,
send it out to the end of the earth; say,

“[YHWH] has redeemed his servant Jacob!”

They did not thirst when he led them through the deserts;
he made water flow for them from the rock; he split the rock and the water gushed out.
(Isaiah 48:1-2, 12, 18-21 ESV)

A large number of the exiles to return from Babylon would have been from the tribe of Judah, **“who came from the waters of Judah”**. The Southern Kingdom was a “melting pot” of Israelites from all tribes.²¹⁰ There would also have been many from the Northern Tribes returning in 538BC. As with the Northern Kingdom, the Southern Kingdom would be destroyed for covenant violation, NOT obeying YHWH, **“oh that you had paid attention to my commandments”**. Officially the Southern Kingdom remained in worship of YHWH, **“who swear by the name of YHWH”**, but it was perfunctory, **“but not in truth or right”**. To emphasize that this prophecy is for Ancient Israel, the restoration of a remnant of the physical nation,²¹¹ God alludes back to the First Exodus, **“he made water flow for them from the rock”**.²¹²

The last few instances of “servants” apply to True Worshipers in general:

Return for the sake of your servants, the tribes of your heritage.
(Isaiah 63:17b ESV)

Thus says [YHWH]:

“As the new wine is found in the cluster, and they say,
‘Do not destroy it, for there is a blessing in it,’

so I will do for my servants’ sake, and not destroy them [at]²¹³ all.

I will bring forth offspring from Jacob, and from Judah possessors of **my mountains**;
my chosen shall possess it, and **my servants shall dwell there**.

(Isaiah 65:8-9 ESV)

Therefore thus says the Lord [YHWH]:

“Behold, **my servants** shall eat, but you shall be hungry;
behold, **my servants** shall drink, but you shall be thirsty;
behold, **my servants** shall rejoice, but you shall be put to shame;
behold, **my servants** shall sing for gladness of heart,
but you shall cry out for pain of heart and shall wail for breaking of spirit.

²⁰⁹ See footnote **205**

²¹⁰ See **Excursus 3 – The Tribal Makeup of the Southern Kingdom** in the paper “**To Be a King**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

²¹¹ The entire prophecy of Chapter 48 is dual looking to Revelation 18:1-8. The return of a “remnant” after the exile was the beginning of the process that will culminate in the Second Advent. See section **7. Preparation for the First Advent** and section **9. Preparation for the Second Advent** in the paper “**The Soon Coming Kingdom of God**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

²¹² See Exodus 17:6, Numbers 20:11

²¹³ The Hebrew is הַכֹּל - hakkol, literally “the all”;

the context does NOT make sense to translate “not destroy them all”, i.e., some will be destroyed.

You shall leave your name to my chosen for a curse,
and the Lord [YHWH] will put you to death,
but **his servants he will call by another name**,
so that he who blesses himself in the land shall bless himself by the God of truth,
and he who takes an oath in the land shall swear by the God of truth;
because the former troubles are forgotten and are hidden from my eyes. ...”

(Isaiah 65:13-16 ESV)

For thus says the [YHWH]:

“Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river,
and the glory of the nations like an overflowing stream;
and you shall nurse, you shall be carried upon her hip, and bounced upon her knees.
As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you;

you shall be comforted in Jerusalem.

You shall see, and **your heart shall rejoice**; your bones shall flourish like the grass;
and **the hand of [YHWH] shall be known to his servants**,
and he shall show his indignation against his enemies.

(Isaiah 66:12-14 ESV)

Isaiah prays for True Worshipers, “**return for the sake of your servants**”. YHWH promises to watch over True Worshipers, “**so I will do for my servants’ sake**”, and bring them to his “**mountains**”, i.e., the Kingdom of God, “**my servants shall dwell there**”. YHWH contrasts True Worshipers, “**my servants**”, with those who forsake the **Way of God**.²¹⁴ True Worshipers will be rewarded, “**his servants he will call by another name**”.²¹⁵ Finally, YHWH summarized both the joy of New Jerusalem, “**you shall be comforted in Jerusalem**”, “**your heart shall rejoice**”, and YHWH’s relationship with True Worshipers in the Kingdom of God, “**the hand of YHWH shall be known to his servants**”.

Clearly, **God considers “Israel”, in all its manifestations, to be his “servant”**. **Ancient Israel** failed in the role of the “servant”. The **New Testament Church**, the “Israel of God”,²¹⁶ has faithfully performed the role of the “servant” since its inception. In the World Tomorrow, **New Israel** will faithfully fulfill the role of “servant” as the example nation to all the world. **Servant Songs One, Two, and Three reflect all these perspectives**. In addition, the Servant Songs clearly identify **the “Servant” as the Messiah**.

7.2 Servant Song One

This Servant Song could be labelled “**The Calling of the Servant**” or “**The Identity of the Servant**”. The Song provides an overview of the identity of the Servant and the purpose of the Servant.

The first Servant Song:

(1) **Behold my servant**, whom I uphold, my chosen,
in whom my [heart] (nephesh)²¹⁷ delights;

I have put my Spirit upon him;

he will bring forth justice (mish’pat)²¹⁸ to the nations.

(2) **He will not cry aloud** or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street;

(3) **a bruised reed he will not break**, and a faintly burning wick he will not quench;
he will faithfully bring forth justice (mish’pat).

(4) **He will not grow faint or be discouraged**

till he has established justice (mish’pat) in the earth;
and **the coastlands wait for his [torah]**.²¹⁹

²¹⁴ See Isaiah 65:11-12

²¹⁵ See Revelation 2:17, 3:12, 14:1, 22:4

²¹⁶ See Galatians 6:16

²¹⁷ See footnote 1

²¹⁸ See footnote 37

²¹⁹ See footnote 202

(5) **Thus says [ha'el YHWH]**,
 who created the heavens and stretched them out,
 who spread out the earth and what comes from it,
 who gives breath to the people on it and spirit to those who walk in it:
 (6) "I am [YHWH];
I have called you in righteousness;
I will take you by the hand and keep you;
 I will give you as a covenant for the people, **a light for the nations**,
 (7) to **open the eyes that are blind**,
 to **bring out the prisoners** from the dungeon,
 from the prison those who sit in darkness.
 (8) **I am [YHWH]; that is my name**;
 my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols.
 (9) Behold, the **former things** have come to pass,
 and **new things** I now declare;
 before they spring forth **I tell you of them.**"
 (Isaiah 42:1-9 ESV)

The Apostle Matthew provides a rendition of the first four verses:

Jesus, aware of this, withdrew from there.
 And many followed him, and he healed them all and ordered them not to make him known.
This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah:
 "Behold, my servant whom I have chosen,
 my beloved with whom my [heart] (psyche)²²⁰ is well pleased.
 I will put my Spirit upon him,
 and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles.
 He will not quarrel or cry aloud, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets;
 a bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not quench,
 until he brings justice to victory;
 and in his name the Gentiles will hope."
 (compare LXX)
 (Matthew 12:15-21 ESV)

Matthew is clearly applying the prophecy to Jesus, i.e., the "servant" is Jesus Christ, the Messiah.
 But the "speaker" in verses 1 through 4 is NOT explicitly stated – **this ambiguity is purposeful**.
 The most recent previous explicit "speaker" is YHWH in verse 41:21. In verses 41:27-28, YHWH continues speaking in the first person, "I was the first to say to Zion ...". So the most natural conclusion is that YHWH is the "speaker" of verses 1-4. **But YHWH and Jesus Christ are the same being**.
 This perceptual shift occurs frequently in Old Testament prophecies. The Being known as YHWH in the Old Testament looks forward to a "role" that will exist in the future, the role of the Messiah, who will be known as Jesus Christ. **When YHWH speaks in these Old Testament prophecies, he is speaking on behalf of the God Family**, specifically on behalf of the Being to be known in the New Testament as God the Father. These prophecies are defined by the **Plan of God**.
 Verses 1 through 4 deal with the role of Jesus Christ in both First Advent and the Second Advent:

- **First Advent:**
 - Jesus baptism, "**I have put my Spirit upon him**"
 - Jesus came in humility, "**he will not cry aloud**", "**a bruised reed he will not break**"
- **Second Advent:**
 - Jesus will be King of kings, "**he will bring forth justice to the nations**"
 - Jesus will accomplish the **Plan of God**, "**he will not grow faint or be discouraged**"
 - Jesus will rule/teach the whole world, "**the coastlands wait for his torah**"

There is more to the ambiguity than just the perceptual shift. In verse 5, YHWH begins to speak, explicitly identifying himself with the God Family, הָאֵל יְהוָה - ha'el YHWH, "**the God YHWH**".
 The role of YHWH as "**Creator**" is elucidated. Then verses 6 and 7 provide more information about the "servant". Verses 6 and 7 define the relationship that YHWH, speaking on behalf of the God Family,

²²⁰ See footnote 1
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will have with the “servant”, “**I have called you**”, “**I will take you by the hand**”. The actions of the “servant” are “signs of the Kingdom”, “**open the eyes that are blind**”, “**bring out the prisoners**”.

This looks to the Messiah, but also to the New Testament Church:

Say to those who have an anxious heart,

“Be strong; fear not!

Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God.

He will come and save you.”

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped;
then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.
(Isaiah 35:4-6a ESV)

In that day the deaf shall hear the words of a book,
and **out of their gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind shall see**.

The meek shall obtain fresh joy in [YHWH],
and **the poor among mankind shall exult in the Holy One of Israel**.

For the ruthless shall come to nothing and the scoffer cease,
and all who watch to do evil shall be cut off ...
(Isaiah 29:18-20 ESV)

In the previous section, **7.1 Israel as the Servant**, it was clear that the “**servant**” comprised the **nation of Israel** and **True Worshippers** of God in all ages. The first Servant Song clearly identifies the “servant” with the Messiah, **Jesus Christ**, as well as identifying the role that YHWH will fulfill, as King of kings, with the “servant” in the World Tomorrow. Clearly the role of the “**servant**” includes **Jesus Christ**, the ancient nation of **Israel**, and in the World Tomorrow, **New Israel**, as well as the **resurrected saints**.

Verse 8 affirms **the divinity of the servant**, the Messiah, Jesus Christ, “**I am YHWH; that is my name**”. Verse 9 then goes on to consider the **Plan of God**, “**former things**”, “**new things**”, “**I tell you of them**”. That is the end of Servant Song One.

Chapter 42 then break out into a New Song with no apparent singer:

Sing to [YHWH] a new song,

his praise from the end of the earth,

you who go down to the sea, and all that fills it, the coastlands and their inhabitants.

Let the desert and its cities lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar inhabits;

let the habitants of Sela sing for joy, let them shout from the top of the mountains.

Let them give glory to [YHWH], and declare his praise in the coastlands.

[YHWH] goes out like a mighty man,

like a man of war he stirs up his zeal;

he cries out, he shouts aloud,

he shows himself mighty against his foes.

(Isaiah 42:10-13 ESV)

The “**new song**” is one of the “**new things**” of which YHWH says, “**I tell you of them**”.

The singer of the song is all people over the whole world in the World Tomorrow, “**praise from the end of the earth**”. Verses 10b through 12 identify remote areas from which people will sing. Verse 13 looks to the Day of YHWH, “**YHWH goes out like a mighty man**”, which will usher in the Kingdom of God and establish the World Tomorrow.

YHWH then speaks to the **accomplishment of the Plan of God**:

For a long time I have held my peace;

I have kept still and restrained myself;

now I will cry out like a woman in labor;

I will gasp and pant.

I will lay waste mountains and hills, and dry up all their vegetation;

I will turn the rivers into islands, and dry up the pools.

And **I will lead the blind** in **a way** that they do not know,

in **paths** that they have not known **I will guide them**.

I will turn the darkness before them into light,
the rough places into level ground.

These are the things I do, and I do not forsake them.
They are turned back and utterly put to shame, who trust in carved idols,
who say to metal images,
“You are our gods.”
(Isaiah 42:14-17 ESV)

God has NOT directly intervened in human affairs since the First Advent, “**for a long time I have held my peace**”. The Second Advent will be dramatic, “**I will lay waste mountains and hills**”. People will be taught the **Way of God**, “**I will lead the blind in a way**”, “**in paths I will guide them**”. YHWH affirms the **Plan of God** will be accomplished, “**these are the things I do**”.

In the First Servant Song, the role of YHWH and the servant is from the perspective of the time of Isaiah. The Messiah was a role that would exist in the future. YHWH speaks on behalf of the God Family to the servant, the Messiah. When YHWH divested himself of his status in eternity and became the Messiah, the man Jesus of Nazareth, **God the Father performed the role of the God Family for the servant**, Jesus Christ. **Jesus is specifically identified as “the servant” in the New Testament:**

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in **Christ Jesus**,
who, though he was in the form of God,
did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,
but emptied himself,
by taking the form of a servant,
being born in the likeness of men.
(Philippians 2:5-7 ESV)

The **God** of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers,
glorified his servant Jesus,
whom you delivered over and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release him.
God, having raised up his servant,
sent him to you first, to bless you by turning every one of you from your wickedness.
(Acts 3:13, 26 ESV see also 4:27, 30)

For I tell you that **Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God’s truthfulness**,
in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs,
and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy.
(Romans 15:8-9a ESV)

When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said,

“**Father**, the hour has come;
glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you,
since you have given him authority over all flesh,
to give eternal life to all whom you have given him.

And **this is eternal life**,
that they know you, the only true God,
and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do.
And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence
with **the glory that I had with you before the world existed.** ...”

(John 17:1-5 ESV)

The First Servant Song establishes that the role of the “servant” applies to the Messiah, Jesus Christ. That the role also applies to the New Testament Church is also implied. In the prophecies of the servant, YHWH speaks on behalf of the God Family. When YHWH assumed the role of the servant, as Jesus Christ, God the Father acted on behalf of the God Family. The Second Servant Song continues to elaborate the various roles.

7.3 Servant Song Two

This Servant Song could be labelled “The Commissioning of the Servant”.
The Song clearly lays out what God expects of the Servant.

The second Servant Song:

- (1) Listen to me, O coastlands, and give attention, you peoples from afar.
[YHWH] called me from the womb, from the body of my mother he named my name.
- (2) He made my mouth like a sharp sword;
in the shadow of his hand he hid me;
he made me a polished arrow; in his quiver he hid me away.
- (3) And he said to me,
“You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified.”
- (4) But I said,
“I have labored in vain;
I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity;
yet surely my right is with [YHWH], and my recompense with my God.”
- (5) And now [YHWH] says,
he who formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob back to him;
and that Israel might be gathered to him—for I am honored in the eyes of [YHWH],
and my God has become my strength—(6) he says:
“It is too light a thing that you should be my servant
to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel;
I will make you as a light for the nations,
that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.”
- (7) Thus says [YHWH],
the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy One,
to one deeply despised, abhorred by the nation, the servant of rulers:
“Kings shall see and arise;
princes, and they shall prostrate themselves;
because of [YHWH], who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you.”
- (8) Thus says [YHWH]:
“In a time of favor I have answered you;
in a day of salvation I have helped you;
I will keep you and give you as a covenant to the people,
to establish the [earth] (‘eretz)”²²¹ to apportion the desolate heritages.
- (9) saying to the prisoners,
‘Come out,’
to those who are in darkness,
‘Appear.’
They shall feed along the ways;
on all bare heights shall be their pasture;
(10) they shall not hunger or thirst, neither scorching wind nor sun shall strike them,
for he who has pity on them will lead them, and by springs of water will guide them.
(11) And I will make all my mountains a road, and my highways shall be raised up.
(12) Behold, these shall come from afar,
and behold, these from the north and from the west,
and these from the land of Syene.”
- (13) Sing for joy, O heavens, and exult, O earth; break forth, O mountains, into singing!
For [YHWH] has comforted his people and will have compassion on his afflicted.
(Isaiah 49:1-13 ESV)

In verse 1, the speaker is ambiguous, “listen to me”. In verse 3, it is explicit that the speaker is the “servant”, “he said to me” “you are my servant”, and that the “servant” is “Israel”. This projects back to verse 1. Clearly, this is NOT the physical nation of Ancient Israel: the antecedent of “he” and “I” in verse 3 is YHWH in verse 1b; YHWH was NOT “glorified” by Ancient Israel. So “Israel” is either “spiritual Israel”, or New Israel, or both.

²²¹ The noun עֶרֶץ - ‘eretz, can be translated “land” or “earth”, depending on the context; see Holladay page 28.
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Verse 1b is mostly metaphoric. It can be applied literally to Jesus being born of Mary, but in chapter 44, the same language is used of Ancient Israel, as the “**servant**”. So, the language is best taken as metaphoric for the “**calling of God**”, “**YHWH called me**”. This is what Paul calls “**predestination**”:

But now hear, O **Jacob my servant, Israel** whom I have chosen!

Thus says [**YHWH**] who made you, who **formed you from the womb** and will help you ...
(Isaiah 44:1-2a ESV)

Therefore, brothers, **be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election**,
for if you practice these qualities you will never fall.
(2 Peter 1:10 ESV)

Therefore, holy brothers, **you who share in a heavenly calling**,
consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession,
who was faithful to him who appointed him, just as Moses also was faithful in all God’s house.
(Hebrews 3:1-2 ESV)

For **those whom he foreknew he also predestined** to be conformed to the image of his Son,
in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

And **those whom he predestined he also called**,
and those whom he called he also justified,
and those whom he justified he also glorified.
(Romans 8:29-30 ESV see also Ephesians 1:5, 11)

Verse 2 comprises three metaphors which relate to God’s use of the “servant”:

- First, the “**word of God**” as a “**sharp sword**”:
For **the word of God** is living and active,
sharper than any two-edged sword,
piercing to the division of [body] (psyche)²²² and of spirit,
of joints and of marrow,
and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.
(Hebrews 4:12 ESV)
And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write:
“**The words of him who has the sharp two-edged sword. ...**”
(Revelation 2:12 ESV)
Let the godly exult in glory; let them sing for joy on their beds.
Let the high praises of God be in their throats
and **two-edged swords in their hands** ...
(Psalm 149:5-6 ESV)
The “servant” will wield the Word of God with precision and accuracy.
- Secondly, hiding in “**the shadow of his hand**”:
Listen to me, **you who pursue righteousness**, you who seek [YHWH]:
And I have put my words in your mouth
and **covered you in the shadow of my hand** ...
(Isaiah 51:1a, 16a ESV)
I will be like the dew to **Israel**;
he shall blossom like the lily;
he shall take root like the trees of Lebanon;
They **shall return and dwell beneath my shadow**;
they shall flourish like the grain;
they shall blossom like the vine;
their fame shall be like the wine of Lebanon.
(Hosea 14:5, 7 ESV)
God will care for and protect the “servant”.
- Thirdly, God’s use of a “**polished arrow**”:
He is a bear lying in wait for me, a lion in hiding;
he turned aside my steps and tore me to pieces;
he has made me desolate;
he bent his bow and set me as **a target for his arrow**.
He drove into my kidneys **the arrows of his quiver**;
(Lamentations 3:10-13 ESV)

²²² See footnote 1

You stripped the sheath from your bow, **calling for many arrows**.
 The sun and moon stood still in their place at **the light of your arrows as they sped**,
 You crushed the head of the house of the wicked, laying him bare from thigh to neck.
You pierced with his own arrows the heads of his warriors,
 who came like a whirlwind to scatter me, rejoicing as if to devour the poor in secret.
 (Habakkuk 3:9a, 11a, 13b-14 ESV)

Behold, children are a heritage from [YHWH], the fruit of the womb a reward.
Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth.
Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them!
 He shall not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies in the gate.
 (Psalm 127:3-5 ESV)

God will accomplish his plan, through the "servant", with deadly effectiveness,

Verse 4 is an apt description of the efforts of the New Testament Church at the end-time.

The Gospel is going out to all the world, but the world is NOT listening. Simply measured by success here and now, the efforts of the New Testament Church at the end-time are a complete failure, **"I have labored in vain"**. But the real measure of success is with God, **"surely my right is with YHWH"**, and it will be made manifest at the First Resurrection, **"my recompense with my God"**.

Verses 5 and 6 consider the relationship of YHWH with the "servant".

The Apostle Paul appeals to the second part of verse 6 to support his taking the Gospel to the Gentiles:

And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying,
 "It was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you.
 Since you thrust it aside and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life,
 behold, **we are turning to the Gentiles**.

For so **the Lord has commanded** us, saying,
 "I have made you a light for the Gentiles,
 that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth."

(Acts 13:46-47 ESV)

Paul's usage must be considered "typical" – the real import of the prophecy is in the World Tomorrow. Those who participate in the First Resurrection will be **"honored in the eyes of YHWH"**; they truly will be able to say, **"my God has become my strength"**. The first task will be to establish the New Israel, **"to raise up the tribes of Jacob"**; then, the Gospel will go into all the world, **"salvation may reach to the end of the earth"**.

Verse 7 deals with the relationship of True Worshipers and the "world". The "servant", True Worshipers of God, in the eyes of the "world" are **"deeply despised"**. After the First Resurrection, when the Kingdom God rules the world, and True Worshipers are "glorified" members of the God Family, then those who were of this "world" will take notice, **"kings shall see and arise"**.

Verse 8 emphasizes the personal commitment YHWH, Jesus Christ, makes to each True Worshiper, **"I have answered you"**, **"I have helped you"**, **"I will keep you"**.²²³ Then it goes on to consider the reward²²⁴ of those to whom God the Father sees fit to grant the gift of eternal life, **"give you as a covenant to the people"**, **"to establish the earth"**, **"to apportion the desolate heritages"**. Those who participate in the First Resurrection will have the privilege of serving under Jesus Christ to establish the Kingdom of God.

Verses 9 through 12 outline the Second Exodus. Those called by God to the New Israel will be miraculously led to the Land of Israel (likely with considerable angelic assistance). The people called to the New Israel will be ordinary people who survive the holocaust, **"prisoners"**, **"those who are in darkness"**. They will have been protected by God until the time comes to go to the Land of Israel, **"these shall come from afar"**:

After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth,
 holding back the four winds of the earth, that no wind might blow on earth or sea or against any tree.
 Then I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun,
with the seal of the living God,

²²³ Paul alludes to this verse in 2 Corinthians 6:2 to emphasize that **"the day of salvation"** is the **"day of calling"** for Christians.

²²⁴ See footnote 78

and he called with a loud voice to the four angels
who had been given power to harm earth and sea, saying,
“Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees,
until we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.”
(Revelation 7:1-3 ESV)

Verse 13 exults in the joy of the Kingdom of God, “sing for joy”. The First Resurrection has occurred, “YHWH has comforted his people”. The New Israel is being established. The people of the New Israel are being taught the Way of God. They will come to repentance and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. They will be started in the process of salvation. YHWH, Jesus Christ, as he has done with all True Worshipers, “will have compassion on his afflicted”.

In Servant Song Two, **the servant comprises True Worshipers** – Israel as representing “spiritual Israel”, the New Testament Church, and those people called to the New Israel in the World Tomorrow.

7.4 Servant Song Three

The third Servant Song could be labelled “Individual Responsibility”. It unequivocally looks to Jesus Christ as an example to encourage True Worshipers to accept individual responsibility to take their calling seriously and trust God to help them succeed.

The third Servant Song:

(4) The Lord [YHWH] has given me the tongue of those who are taught,
that I may know how to sustain with a word him who is weary.
Morning by morning he awakens;
he awakens my ear to hear as those who are taught.

(5) The Lord [YHWH] has opened my ear,
and I was not rebellious;
I turned not backward.

(6) I gave my back to those who strike,
and my cheeks to those who pull out the beard;
I hid not my face from disgrace and spitting.

(7) But the Lord [YHWH] helps me;
therefore I have not been disgraced;
therefore I have set my face like a flint,
and I know that I shall not be put to shame.

(8) He who vindicates me is near.
Who will contend with me?
Let us stand up together.
Who is my adversary?
Let him come near to me.

(9) Behold, the Lord [YHWH] helps me;
who will declare me guilty?
Behold, all of them will wear out like a garment;
the moth will eat them up.
(Isaiah 50:4-9 ESV)

The third Servant Song is very abstract, but **it speaks very personally to individuals who comprise the Servant**. Starting with verse 6, one immediately thinks of the **beating of Jesus** by the Romans and the Sanhedrin, “I gave my back to those who strike”, “my cheeks”, “spitting”:

And they began to salute him,
“Hail, King of the Jews!”

And they were striking his head with a reed and spitting on him
and kneeling down in homage to him.

And some began to spit on him and to cover his face and to strike him, saying to him,
“Prophesy!”

And the guards received him with blows.
(Mark 15:18-19, 14:65 ESV see also Matthew 26:67, 27:30, Luke 22:63-64, John 18:22, 19:1-3)

Jesus perfectly exemplified his teaching from the Sermon on the Mount:

Blessed are those who are **persecuted for righteousness' sake**,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when **others revile you and persecute you**
and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven,
for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil.

But **if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.**

(Matthew 5:10-12, 39 ESV)

Blessed are you when people **hate you** and when they **exclude you**
and **revile you** and **spurn your name** as evil, on account of the Son of Man!

But I say to you who hear,

Love your enemies,
do good to those who hate you,
bless those who curse you,
pray for those who abuse you.

To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also,

and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either.

(Luke 6:22, 27-29 ESV see also 1 Peter 2:21, 23, 3:9)

To do as Jesus taught and did is counter to human nature. **Learning this from Jesus is fundamental to acquiring Godly Character.** This is the key to understanding the third Servant Song.

Verses 4 and 5 deal with the **Christian calling**. God begins by causing a person to begin to understand some aspect of the **Way of God**, **"the Lord YHWH has opened my ear"**. It is critical for the called person to respond positively, **"turned not backward"**, **"not rebellious"**. After conversion, a person proceeds along the path of living by the **Way of God**, **"he awakens my ear to hear"**. Finally, the objective of the Christian life is to teach others, **"given me the tongue of those who are taught"**.

In verse 7, God promises to work with those he calls to bring them to successfully become members of the God Family, **"the Lord YHWH helps me"**:

And I am sure of this,
that **he who began a good work in you**
will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

(Philippians 1:6 ESV)

Therefore, brothers, **be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election,**
for if you practice these qualities you will never fall.

(2 Peter 1:10 ESV)

Keep your life free from love of money,
and be content with what you have,

for **he has said,**

"I will never leave you nor forsake you."

(citing Joshua 1:5)

So we can confidently say,

"The Lord is my helper;

I will not fear;

what can man do to me?"

(citing Psalm 118:6)

(Hebrews 13:5-6 ESV)

No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life.

Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you.

I will not leave you or forsake you.

(Joshua 1:5 ESV)

Verse 7 then picks up the thought from Joshua 1:5, “**no man shall be able to stand before you**”, “**I shall not be put to shame**”. Again this was exemplified by Jesus as he went up to Jerusalem, “**set my face like a flint**”. Jesus knew full well what awaited him in Jerusalem, but **he had no fear of what man could do**:

When the days drew near for him to be taken up,
he set his face to go to Jerusalem.
And he sent messengers ahead of him,
who went and entered a village of the Samaritans,
to make preparations for him.
But the people did not receive him, because **his face was set toward Jerusalem.**
(Luke 9:51-53 ESV)

The prophets **Ezekiel** and **Jeremiah** were specifically promised “**hardening**”:

Behold, **I have made your face as hard as their faces**,
and your forehead as hard as their foreheads.
Like emery **harder than flint** have I made your forehead.
Fear them not, nor be dismayed at their looks, for they are a rebellious house.
(Ezekiel 3:8-9 ESV)

And I, behold, **I make you this day a fortified city**, an **iron pillar**, and **bronze walls**,
against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, its officials, its priests, and the people of the land.
They will fight against you, but they shall not prevail against you,
for **I am with you**, declares [YHWH], to deliver you.
(Jeremiah 1:18-19 ESV)

Verse 8 and 9 transition to a formal “**court**” session where **the “servant” is being accused**.

The “servant” is again promised God’s help, “**he who vindicates me is near**”, “**the Lord YHWH helps me**”.

Any accusation brought forward is futile, “**who will contend with me**”.

The scene is reminiscent of the **Book of Job** in chapter 1:

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before [YHWH],
and Satan also came among them.
[YHWH] said to Satan,
“From where have you come?”
Satan answered [YHWH] and said,
“From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it.”
And [YHWH] said to Satan,
“**Have you considered my servant Job**,
that there is none like him on the earth,
a blameless and upright man,
who fears God and turns away from evil?”
Then Satan answered [YHWH] and said,
“**Does Job fear God for no reason?**
Have you not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has, on every side?
You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land.
But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has,
and **he will curse you to your face.**”
(Job 1:6-11 ESV)

God trusted Job, but **Job did have a serious problem**.²²⁵ Satan could NOT see Job’s real problem,
and Satan could NOT convict Job of his accusation, “**he will curse you to your face**”.

In the end, Satan will suffer the fate of “accusers”, “**the moth will eat them up**”.

Servant Song Three enjoins True Worshipper to look to the example of “The Servant”, Jesus Christ, and emulate his service. The New Testament fully develops the concept of the “servant” through the metaphor of **the Church as the Body of Jesus Christ**.

²²⁵ See section 3. *The Suffering of Job*
Sunday, August 30, 2026

7.5 The Church as the Servant

When YHWH formed the nation of **Ancient Israel**, he became the “King” of Israel. The king of a nation is the “head” of the nation – so the pattern was set. Ancient Israel, the nation, as the “servant” of YHWH, **failed miserably**. From the time of King David until the First Advent, God worked with individuals, True Worshipers, **the remnant**. These True Worshipers comprised the “servant” with YHWH as “head”. The Old Testament prophecies project True Worshipers as the “servant” from the **First Advent** to the **Second Advent** and into the **World Tomorrow**.

This is the period of the New Testament Church.

Jesus’ sacrifice of his physical body is the basis of salvation. Jesus’ sacrifice of his physical body makes it possible for human sin to be forgiven. The sacrifices of the Old Testament provided “atonement”, sin was “pushed aside” so that God could account the nation and individuals as “holy” so that a relationship with God was possible. **Jesus’ sacrifice provides “propitiation”**.²²⁶ the sin is removed, the sinner is in a permanent state of “faith” which God accounts as “righteousness” allowing an ongoing relationship based on **repentance** with **no further need for sacrifice**:

For since the [nomos]²²⁷ has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, **by the same sacrifices** that are continually offered every year, **make perfect those who draw near**.

And by that will **we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ** once for all.

But when **Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins**, he sat down at the right hand of God ...

Therefore, brothers, since **we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus**, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, **through his flesh**, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us **draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith**, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. (Hebrews 10:1, 10, 12, 19-22 ESV)

This is the meaning of the Passover symbol of Christ’s Body:

And **he took bread**, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying,

“This is my body,
which is given for you.

Do this in remembrance of me.”

(Luke 22:19 ESV see also Mark 14:22, Matthew 26:26, 1 Corinthians 10:16-17, 11:23-24)

Having been **begotten by the Holy Spirit**, Jesus, as a human being, had **full imbuement of the Holy Spirit** from birth. Jesus’ body was truly a **“Temple of the Holy Spirit”**:

Jesus answered them,

“Destroy this temple,
and **in three days I will raise it up.”**

The Jews then said,

“It has taken forty-six years to build this temple,
and will you raise it up in three days?”

But **he was speaking about the temple of his body**.

I tell you, something greater than the temple is here.

(John 2:19-21, Matthew 12:6 ESV see also Mark 14:58, 15:29, Matthew 26:61, 27:40)

²²⁶ See Romans 3:25, Hebrews 2:17, 1 John 2:2, 4:10

²²⁷ See footnote 84

Upon repentance, baptism, and laying on of hands, a person called by God also receives imbue ment by the Holy Spirit – in a very limited way at the beginning. This is a spiritual “begettal” which starts the new Christian on the path to salvation. It renders the person also a “Temple of the Holy Spirit”:

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you,
[which]²²⁸ you have from God?

You are not your own, for you were bought with a price.

So glorify God in your body.

(1 Corinthians 6:19-20 ESV see also 3:16-17, Romans 12:1)

Jesus Christ inherently has always been and will always be the “Head”. The **“body”** has been built over the centuries one person at a time through the calling of God and begettal of the Holy Spirit.

7.5.1 The Metaphor

In the letter that we have as “The Letter to the Ephesians”, the Apostle Paul summarizes the Christian calling. He emphasizes that God the Father, “the Father of glory”, is the operative force behind the Plan of God. God the Father is working his Plan, “he worked in Christ”, the pivotal event of the Plan of God is the resurrection of Jesus Christ, “when he raised him from the dead”.

The effect of that resurrection is the New Testament Church, of which Jesus Christ is the “Head”, “gave him as head over all things to the church”, and those called are the “body”, “which is his body”:

For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.

And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

(Ephesians 1:15-23 ESV see also Colossians 1:17-18, 2:9-10, 19, 3:15)

Later in that same letter, the Apostle Paul use the relationship of a man and woman in a holy marriage to help Christians understand the relationship of Jesus Christ with the Church:

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.

Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies.

He who loves his wife loves himself.

For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body.

“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother
and hold fast to his wife,
and the two shall become one flesh.”

(citing Genesis 2:24)

This mystery is profound,

and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.

²²⁸ See footnote 64

However, let each one of you love his wife as himself,
and let the wife see that she respects her husband.
(Ephesians 5:22-33 ESV see also 1 Corinthians 11:3)

In the letter we have as **First Corinthians**, the **Apostle Paul** gives an extended analogy comparing the Church to the human body. His purpose is to show how **unnatural are divisions in the Church**:

For just as **the body is one and has many members**,
and all the members of the body, though many, are one body,
so it is with Christ.

For in one Spirit **we were all baptized into one body**

—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free

—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

For **the body does not consist of one member but of many**.

But as it is, **God arranged the members in the body**,

each one of them, as he chose.

If all were a single member, where would the body be?

As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.

But **God has so composed the body**,

giving greater honor to the part that lacked it,

that there may be no division in the body,

but that the members may have the same care for one another.

If one member suffers, all suffer together;

if one member is honored, all rejoice together.

Now **you are the body of Christ** and **individually members of it**.

(1 Corinthians 12:12-14, 18-20, 24b-27 ESV see also Romans 12:4-5, Ephesians 4:4, 12, 15-16)

The metaphor is the clearest expression of the meaning of the “servant”. The purpose of the “servant” is to perform the will of God – to execute the **Plan of God**. **Jesus Christ** as the **“Head”**, in perfect unity with God the Father, leads and directs the **Church**, the **“body”**, to perform the will of God. As a unified entity, the “Head” plus the “body” work together perfectly as the **“servant of God”**.

7.5.2 Jesus as a Servant

In reflecting back over his life to his young assistant, **Timothy**, the **Apostle Paul** expresses his gratefulness for **the example of patience set by Jesus Christ**:

I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord,

because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service,
though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent.

But I received mercy for this reason,

that in me, as the foremost, **Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience**
as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life.

(1 Timothy 1:12-13a, 16 ESV)

In establishing the **Christian Passover**, Jesus performed another example to demonstrate **the attitude of a servant**. The whole purpose of the **“foot washing ceremony”** is to instill **an attitude of service**:

Now **before the Feast of the Passover**,

when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father,
having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands,
and that he had come from God and was going back to God, rose from supper.

He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist.

Then he poured water into a basin and **began to wash the disciples’ feet**
and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

Jesus answered him,

“What I am doing you do not understand now,
but **afterward you will understand.”**

When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place,
he said to them,

“Do you understand what I have done to you?

You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am.

If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet,
you also ought to wash one another's feet.

For **I have given you an example**, that **you also should do just as I have done** to you.

Truly, truly, I say to you, **a servant is not greater than his master**,
nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him.

If you know these things, **blessed are you if you do them.** ..."

(John 13:1, 3-5, 7, 12-17 ESV)

Without the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the disciples were NOT ready to understand Jesus' action of humility, **"afterward you will understand"**. Jesus is clear and specific that the "foot washing ceremony" should be performed as part of the Christian Passover, **"you also ought to wash one another's feet"**, **"blessed are you if you do them"**.

But the significance of Jesus' action goes beyond just the one ceremony, Jesus' whole life is an example that Christians must emulate, **"I have given you an example"**, **"you also should do just as I have done"**. Jesus is the "Master" the "Head" of the Church; his human life was a clinic on living by the **Way of God**, as an example for the "body", True Christians, **"a servant is not greater than his master"**.

Jesus was always aware who was his Master:

But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ,
the head of a wife is her husband,
and **the head of Christ is God.**

(1 Corinthians 11:3 ESV)

My Father, who has given them to me, **is greater than all**,
and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.

You heard me say to you,
'I am going away,
and I will come to you.'

If you loved me, you would have rejoiced,
because **I am going to the Father**, for **the Father is greater than I.**
(John 10:29, 14:28 ESV)

The **Apostle Paul** confirms **Jesus motivation in becoming a human**
was to **serve** and by his **service** teach the attitude of a **"servant"**:

Have this mind among yourselves,
which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God,
did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,
but emptied himself, by **taking the form of a servant**,
being born in the likeness of men.

And being found in human form,
he humbled himself by becoming obedient **to the point of death**, even death on a cross.
(Philippians 2:5-8 ESV)

For I tell you that **Christ became a servant**
to the circumcised **to show God's truthfulness**,
in order **to confirm the promises** given to the patriarchs,
and in order that the Gentiles might **glorify God for his mercy**.
As it is written,

"Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles,
and sing to your name."
(citing 2 Samuel 22:50 // Psalm 18:49)

(Romans 15:8-9 ESV)

The **Synoptist Luke** on two different occasions affirms **Jesus' role as the "servant" of God**:

- In Solomon's Portico of the Temple,
the **Apostle Peter**, after healing a lame man,²²⁹ addresses the crowd:
And when **Peter** saw it he **addressed the people**:
"Men of Israel, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us,
as though by our own power or piety we have made him walk?"

²²⁹ See Acts 3:1-11

The **God of Abraham**, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, **glorified his servant Jesus**, whom you delivered over and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release him.

And now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. But what **God foretold** by the mouth of all the prophets, that his **Christ would suffer**, he thus fulfilled.

Moses said,

'The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers. You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you. And it shall be that every [person] (psyche)²³⁰ who does not listen to that prophet shall be destroyed from the people.'
(alluding to Deuteronomy 18:15, 18-19)

And all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and those who came after him, also proclaimed these days.

You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham,

'And in your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed.'
(citing Genesis 22:18a)

God, having **raised up his servant**, sent him to you first, **to bless you** by turning every one of you from your wickedness."

(Acts 3:12-13, 17-18, 22-26 ESV)

- Later, after Peter and John had been arrested and released, in a public prayer,²³¹ the **disciples extol Jesus for his example as a "servant"**:
When they were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them. And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said,
"Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, who through the mouth of our father **David, your servant**, said by the Holy Spirit, 'Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed'
(citing Psalm 2:1-2)²³²
—for **truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed**, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.
And now, Lord, look upon their threats and **grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness**, while you stretch out your hand to heal, and **signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus.**"
(Acts 4:23-30 ESV)

In Jesus' role as a "servant", he set an example of **humility** and **concern for those being served**. Jesus' example forms the basis of his teaching on servitude.

²³⁰ See footnote 1

²³¹ See Acts 4:1-22

²³² Note that the Masoretic Text does NOT identify Psalm 2 as "Davidic".

7.5.3 Jesus' Teaching on Servitude

Jesus Christ is the Creator of the universe. By his own words, only the Being whom Jesus had revealed as God the Father is greater. Jesus Christ and God the Father created a Plan²³³ to allow created human beings to attain salvation, to enter the God Family, and to share eternity with themselves. The dominant character trait of Jesus Christ and God the Father is "love".²³⁴ **Jesus' teaching on servitude is predicated on love.**²³⁵ **Jesus' teaching on servitude** is specifically in contrast with the way human beings in positions of privilege normally act:

And Jesus called them to him and said to them,
"You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them,
and their **great ones exercise authority** over them.
But **it shall not be so among you.**
But whoever would be great among you **must be your servant**,²³⁶
and whoever would be first among you **must be slave**²³⁷ **of all.**
For even **the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve,**
and to give his life as a ransom for many."
(Mark 10:42-45 ESV // Matthew 20:25-28, see also Luke 22:24-27)

Jesus had previously used the example of **the natural humility of little children** to make the same point:

And they came to Capernaum.
And when he was in the house he asked them,
"What were you discussing on the way?"
But they kept silent,
for on the way **they had argued with one another about who was the greatest.**
And he sat down and called the twelve.
And he said to them,
"If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all."
And he took a child and put him in the midst of them,
and taking him in his arms, he said to them,
"Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me,
and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me."
(Mark 9:33-37 ESV see also Matthew 18:1-5, Luke 9:46-48)
And they were bringing children to him that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them.
But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them,
"Let the **children** come to me; do not hinder them,
for **to such belongs the kingdom of God.**
Truly, I say to you,
whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it."
(Mark 10:13-15 ESV // Luke 18:15-17 see also Matthew 19:13-14)

Jesus explicitly taught his disciples to emulate his example of servitude:

A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master.
It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master.
(Matthew 10:24-25a ESV see also Luke 6:40, John 13:16)
If anyone serves me, he must follow me;²³⁸
and where I am, there will my servant be also.
If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.
Remember the word that I said to you:
'A servant is not greater than his master.'²³⁹
If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you.
If they kept my word, they will also keep yours.
(John 12:26, 15:20 ESV)

²³³ See the paper "Pillar Two - The Plan of God" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

²³⁴ See John 3:16-17, 1 John 4:7-21, 1 Corinthians chapter 13

²³⁵ See *Excursus 1 – The Necessity of Love*

²³⁶ "servant": δῆκονος - diakonos, "servant", "minister", "deacon", (one entrusted to serve the needs of others); www.esv.org "lexical form"

²³⁷ "slave": δούλος - doulos, "slave", "servant"; www.esv.org "lexical form"

²³⁸ The New Testament reports Jesus' saying "follow me" 21 times.

The meaning is always the same "respond to the calling of God, become a True Worshipper".

²³⁹ See Matthew 10:24, John 13:16

Jesus requires total commitment of his servants:

No servant can serve two masters,
for either he will hate the one and love the other,
or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other.
You cannot serve God and money.
(Luke 16:13 ESV)

When questioned by Pilate, **Jesus again emphasized the commitment required of his servants:**

So Pilate entered his headquarters again and called Jesus and said to him,
“Are you the King of the Jews?”

Jesus answered,
“Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?”

Pilate answered,
“Am I a Jew?
Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you over to me.
What have you done?”

Jesus answered,
“**My kingdom is not of this world.**
If my kingdom were of this world, **my servants would have been fighting**,²⁴⁰
that I might not be delivered over to the Jews.
But my kingdom is not from the world.”
(John 18:33-36 ESV)

Some of Jesus’ last words to the Apostles came back to “servitude” and “love”.
Jesus assures the Apostles, and through them, that **all who truly serve Jesus**
by learning the Way of God, the Way of Love, **will be considered Jesus’ “friends”**:

This is my commandment,
that you love one another as I have loved you.
Greater love has no one than this, that someone **lay down his life for his friends**.
You are my friends if you do what I command you.
No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing;
but I have called you friends, for **all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you**.
You did not choose me,
but I chose you and appointed you that **you should go and bear fruit** and that your fruit should abide,
so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.
These things I command you, so that you will love one another.
(John 15:12-17 ESV)

To literally, “**lay down his life for his friends**”, is what Jesus did. Jesus requires his “servants”,
his “friends”, to “**lay down their lives**” by being living sacrifices²⁴¹ in committing their lives
to be “servants” of God and in so doing serve all of humanity in love according to the **Plan of God**.
Jesus direct teaching on being a “servant” is brief and straight forward.
Jesus did, however, greatly elaborate his teaching on servitude through many parables.

7.5.4 Jesus’ Parables on Servitude

The **Parable of the Weeds** is in Matthew 13:24-30 and the explanation is in Matthew 13:36-43.
In this parable, in the explicit references to “servants”, they are simply doing the will of the Master
who **sows the seed**. This relates this parable to the **Parable of the Sower**.²⁴² The sown seed is
the **Word of God** representing the calling of God. Many, for various reasons, do NOT respond
to the calling of God. **Those who do respond become “servants”**. The **Parable of the Great Banquet**²⁴³
and the **Parable of the Wedding Feast**²⁴⁴ are similar to the **Parable of the Weeds** in that in the explicit
references to “servants”, they are simply doing as they are told. In both parables, those guests

²⁴⁰ See *Excursus 2 – The Christian Fight*

²⁴¹ See Romans 12:1; see also the discussion in sections **10.3 Christian Sacrifices** and **11.4 Christian Rewards**
in the paper “**True Worship of the True God**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

²⁴² See Mark 4:3-20, Matthew 13:3-23, Luke 8:5-18

²⁴³ See Luke 14:16-24

²⁴⁴ See Matthew 22:1-10

first invited represent the Jews, who refuse to come. Those guests secondarily invited represent the Gentiles, who readily came. As in the **Parable of the Weeds**, those who respond to calling become “servants”. Similarly, in the **Parable of the Tenants**,²⁴⁵ the “servants” do the will of the vineyard owner. The tenants beat and kill the “servants” and eventually kill the son of the owner. The vineyard owner destroys the original tenants and gives the vineyard to new tenants. The original tenants represent the Jews, and the new tenants represent the Gentiles. Of the new tenants, **those who respond to calling become “servants”**.

The **Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard**²⁴⁶ and the **Parable of the Prodigal Son**²⁴⁷ do NOT explicitly mention True Worshipers as “servants”, but each parable carries a significant message regarding attitude for True Worshipers as “servants”. In the **Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard**, the vineyard owner hires labourers progressively through the day as he can find them. At the end of the day, all are paid the same. Some workers who had worked the longest hours expected greater pay.

The vineyard owner has a final word to them:

But he replied to one of them,

‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong.

Did you not agree with me for a denarius?

Take what belongs to you and go.

I choose to give to this last worker as I give to you.

Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me?

Or do you begrudge my generosity?’

So the last will be first, and **the first last**.

(Matthew 20:13-16 ESV)

The poor attitude of these workers disqualified them from being “servants”, True Worshipers. Similarly, in the **Parable of the Prodigal Son**, the **brother who faithfully serves his father**, secretly bears a grudge against the brother who goes away. **His “service” is NOT from the heart**. When the prodigal son returns, **his bad attitude comes into the open**.

Stay Awake

The **Synoptist Mark** ends his account of the **Olivet Prophecy** with the **Parable of the Doorkeeper**:

But concerning that day or that hour,

no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son,

but only the Father.

Be on guard, **keep awake**.

For you do not know when the time will come.

It is like a man going on a journey,

when he leaves home and **puts his servants in charge**, each with his work,

and **commands the doorkeeper to stay awake**.

Therefore **stay awake**

—for you do not know when the master of the house will come,

in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning

—lest he come suddenly and find you asleep.

And **what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake**.

(Mark 13:32-37 ESV)

Both **Synoptists Matthew and Luke** report slightly different versions of this parable:

Therefore, **stay awake**, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.

But know this, that **if the master of the house**

had known in what part of the night the thief was coming,

he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into.

Therefore **you also must be ready**,

for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

(Matthew 24:42-44 ESV)

²⁴⁵ See Mark 12:1-11, Matthew 21:33-45, Luke 20:9-18

²⁴⁶ See Matthew 20:1-16

²⁴⁷ See Luke 15:11-32

But watch yourselves
lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life,
and that day come upon you suddenly like a trap.
For it will come upon all who dwell on the face of the whole earth.
But **stay awake at all times**,
praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place,
and to stand before the Son of Man.
(Luke 21:34-36 ESV)

The accounts of all three Synoptists beg the question: **what does it mean to “stay awake”**?
At the Ascension, **Jesus went back to eternity** to sit at the right hand of God the Father,
“it is like a man going on a journey”. True Worshipers are Jesus’ servants,
“puts his servants in charge”. The **New Testament Church** was commissioned to take the Gospel
into all the world.²⁴⁸ The knowledge of the Gospel is the **“key to the Kingdom of God”**.²⁴⁹
The **“doorkeeper”** controls the keys, **“commands the doorkeeper to stay awake”**.
It is the collective responsibility of all True Worshipers, who comprise the New Testament Church,
to **“stay awake”**. Jesus enjoins this upon all “servants”, **“what I say to you I say to all: stay awake”**.
Matthew states that to **“stay awake”** implies “readiness”, **“you also must be ready”**.
Luke adds the necessity of prayer, **“praying that you may have strength to escape all these things”**.
But, there remains ambiguity, how does one **“stay awake”**?

Matthew’s account of the Olivet Prophecy then contains
a statement from Jesus to explain what it means to stay awake:

Who then is **the faithful and wise servant**,
whom his master has set over his household,
to give them their food at the proper time?
Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes.
Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions.
But if that wicked servant says to himself,
‘My master is delayed,’
and begins to beat his fellow servants and eats and drinks with drunkards,
the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him
and at an hour he does not know and will cut him in pieces and **put him with the hypocrites**.
In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.
(Matthew 24:45-51 ESV)

Luke reports a similar statement of Jesus which had been given earlier:

And **the Lord said**,
“Who then is **the faithful and wise manager**,
whom his master will set over his household,
to give them their portion of food at the proper time?
Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes.
Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions.
But if that servant says to himself,
‘My master is delayed in coming,’
and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and get drunk,
the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him
and at an hour he does not know, and will cut him in pieces and **put him with the unfaithful**. ...”
(Luke 12:42-46 ESV)

²⁴⁸ See Mark 16:14-18, Matthew 28:16-20

²⁴⁹ See Matthew 16:19

The provision of food is a common metaphor for **teaching the Way of God**, **“to give them their food at the proper time”**. That is the commission given to the New Testament Church, **“the faithful and wise servant”**. True Christians **“stay awake”** by **doing the Work of God**, preaching the Gospel, **“blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes”**. But Jesus adds the warning against slackness, **“my master is delayed”**, and getting tangled up in the ways of the world, **“put him with the hypocrites”**, **“put him with the unfaithful”**.

Just prior to the statement about the **“faithful and wise manager”**, Luke reports another statement of Jesus alluding to a **master returning from a wedding feast**. After his account of the Olivet Prophecy, Matthew includes the similar account of the **Parable of the Ten Virgins**:

Stay dressed for action and **keep your lamps burning**,
and be like men who are **waiting for their master to come home from the wedding feast**,
so that they may open the door to him at once when he comes and knocks.

Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes.

Truly, I say to you,
he will dress himself for service and have them recline at table,
and **he will come and serve them**.
If he comes in the second watch, or in the third, and **finds them awake**, blessed are those servants!
(Luke 12:35-38 ESV)

Then the kingdom of heaven will be like **ten virgins**
who took their lamps and **went to meet the bridegroom**.

Five of them were foolish, and five were wise.
For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them,
but **the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps**.

As **the bridegroom was delayed**, they all became drowsy and slept.
But at midnight there was a cry,

‘Here is the bridegroom!
Come out to meet him.’

Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps.
And the foolish said to the wise,
‘Give us some of your oil, for **our lamps are going out**.’

But the wise answered, saying,
‘Since there will not be enough for us and for you,
go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.’

And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came,
and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast,
and the door was shut.

Afterward the other virgins came also, saying,
‘Lord, lord, open to us.’

But he answered,
‘Truly, I say to you, **I do not know you**.’

Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.
(Matthew 25:1-13 ESV)

The burning lamps represent **living by the Way of God**, **“keep your lamps burning”**. This is why Luke enjoins prayer, **“praying that you may have strength”**. Oil represents the Holy Spirit, **“the wise took flasks of oil”**. The “foolish” were low on the Holy Spirit, **“our lamps are going out”**. The “foolish” had NOT maintained a relationship with the “bridegroom”, the Master, Jesus Christ, **“I do not know you”**. To **“stay awake”** is to keep on **doing the work of God**, maintain the **attitude of a servant**, and maintain a personal **relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ** through the **Holy Spirit**.

Minimal is NOT Good Enough

Luke reports the **Parable of Ten Minas**²⁵⁰ and Matthew reports the **Parable of the Talents**.²⁵¹

The parables were given under very different circumstances, but from the perspective of Jesus' teaching on servitude, they have the same message. In each parable, Jesus is represented as going on a journey and leaving a sum of money with various of his "servants":

Calling **ten of his servants**, he gave them **ten minas**, and said to them,

'Engage in business until I come.'

(Luke 19:13 ESV)

For it will be like **a man going on a journey**,
who **called his servants and entrusted to them his property**.

To one he gave **five talents**, to another **two**, to another **one**,
to each according to his ability.

Then he went away.

(Matthew 25:14-15 ESV)

When the journey is over, **Jesus calls his "servants" to account**. The servants who did well, used what Jesus had given them and increased it, were commended.

But in each case, **one servant attempted to do little or nothing** and is **roundly condemned**:

Then **another came, saying**,

'Lord, here is your mina,
which I kept laid away in a handkerchief;

for I was afraid of you, because you are a severe man.

You take what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.'

He said to him,

'I will condemn you with your own words, you wicked servant!

You knew that I was a severe man,
taking what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow?
Why then did you not put my money in the bank,
and at my coming I might have collected it with interest?'

And he said to those who stood by,

'Take the mina from him, and give it to the one who has the ten minas.'

(Luke 19:20-24 ESV)

He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying,

'Master, I knew you to be a hard man,
reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed,
so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground.
Here, you have what is yours.'

But his master answered him,

'You wicked and slothful servant!

You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed?
Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers,
and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest.'

So **take the talent from him** and give it to him who has the ten talents.

(Matthew 25:24-28 ESV)

The message of these parables is summarized in the short **Parable of the Unworthy Servants**:

Will any one of you who has **a servant** plowing or keeping sheep
say to him when he has come in from the field,

'Come at once and recline at table?'

Will he not rather say to him,

'Prepare supper for me, and dress properly,
and serve me while I eat and drink,
and afterward you will eat and drink?'

Does he thank the servant because he did what was commanded?

²⁵⁰ See Luke 19:11-27

²⁵¹ See Matthew 25:14-30

So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say,
'We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.'
(Luke 17:7-10 ESV)

The Christian life is one of full commitment. To attempt to get by doing as little as possible is to fail.
Any bad attitude NOT dealt with can fester to the point of leading a once converted person back into sin.
It is hypocrisy to put on a show of living by the Way of God but not backing it up with actions.

This is exemplified by the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant:

Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king
who wished to settle accounts with his servants.

When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents.
And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold,
with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made.

So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him,

'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.'

And out of pity for him,

the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt.

But when that same servant went out,
he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii,
and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying,

'Pay what you owe.'

So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him,

'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.'

He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt.

When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed,
and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place.

Then his master summoned him and said to him,

'You wicked servant!

I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me.

And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant,
as I had mercy on you?'

And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt.

So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you,
if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.

(Matthew 18:23-35 ESV)

The Christian life requires transparency. Actions must be consistent with words.

7.5.5 True Worshippers as Servants

The Apostles Paul and Peter identified themselves as "servants":

Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus ...

(Romans 1:1a ESV)

Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus ...

(Philippians 1:1a ESV)

Paul, a servant of God ...

(Titus 1:1a ESV)

Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ ...

(2 Peter 1:1 ESV)

Jesus' mother, Mary, and his brothers, James and Jude, identified themselves as "servants":

And Mary said,

"Behold, I am the servant of the Lord;

let it be to me according to your word."

And Mary said,

"My [heart] (psyche)²⁵² magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

²⁵² See footnote 1

for **he has looked on the humble estate of his servant.**

For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed; ...”

(Luke 1:38a, 46-48 ESV)

James, **a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ** ...

(James 1:1a ESV)

Jude, **a servant of Jesus Christ** and brother of James ...

(Jude 1a ESV)

Devout Simeon regarded himself as a “**servant**”, and Paul affirms **several others** to be “**servants**”:

Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was **Simeon**,

and **this man was righteous and devout**,

waiting for the consolation of Israel, and **the Holy Spirit was upon him**.

And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit

that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

And he came in the Spirit into the temple,

and when the parents brought in the child Jesus,

to do for him according to the custom of the [nomos],²⁵³

he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said,

“Lord, **now you are letting your servant depart in peace**, according to your word;

for my eyes have seen your salvation ...”

(Luke 2:25-30 ESV)

What then is **Apollos**?

What is Paul?

Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each.

(1 Corinthians 3:5 ESV)

Tychicus will tell you all about my activities.

He is a beloved brother and faithful minister and **fellow servant in the Lord**.

Epaphras, who is one of you, **a servant of Christ Jesus**, greets you,

always struggling on your behalf in his prayers,

that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God.

(Colossians 4:7, 12 ESV see also 1:7)

All persons called to be True Worshipers, True Christians, are required to **learn the attitude of a servant**. **This was one of the most important points of Jesus' teaching to the Twelve**,

and through them to all True Christians:

For even **the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve**,

and to give his life as a ransom for many.

(Mark 10:45 ESV // Matthew 20:28)

Jesus answered him,

“What I am doing you do not understand now,

but **afterward you will understand**.

You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am.

If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet,

you also ought to wash one another's feet.

For **I have given you an example**,

that **you also should do just as I have done to you**. ...”

(John 13:7, 13-15 ESV see also 1 Peter 2:16)

Paul affirmed that he was a “**servant to all**” in doing the Work of God,

and he commended Timothy to faithfully teach the **Way of God** as a “**good servant**”:

For if I preach the gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting.

For necessity is laid upon me.

Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!

For though I am free from all,

I have made myself a servant to all,

that I might win more of them.

(1 Corinthians 9:16, 19 ESV see also 2 Corinthians 4:5)

²⁵³ See footnote 84

If you **put these things before the brothers,**
you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus,
being trained in the **words of the faith** and of the **good doctrine** that you have followed.
(1 Timothy 4:6 ESV see also Galatians 1:10)

In one of his last parables to the disciples, **Jesus makes the point of “service” unequivocal.**

The **Parable of the Sheep and the Goats** is framed in in the World Tomorrow,
but the point of the parable is equally applicable to **all True Christians at all times:**

When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him,
then he will sit on his glorious throne.
Before him will be gathered all the nations,
and **he will separate people** one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.
And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left.

Then the King will say to **those on his right,**
‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father,
inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.
For I was hungry and **you gave me food,**
I was thirsty and **you gave me drink,**
I was a stranger and **you welcomed me,**
I was naked and **you clothed me,**
I was sick and **you visited me,**
I was in prison and **you came to me.**’

Then the righteous will answer him, saying,
‘Lord, **when did we** see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink?
And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you?
And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’

And the King will answer them,
‘Truly, I say to you, **as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers,**
you did it to me.’

Then he will say to **those on his left,**
‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.
For I was hungry and **you gave me no food,** I was thirsty and **you gave me no drink,**
I was a stranger and **you did not welcome me,** naked and **you did not clothe me,**
sick and in prison and **you did not visit me.**’

Then they also will answer, saying,
‘Lord, **when did we** see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison,
and did **not minister to you?**’

Then he will answer them, saying,
‘Truly, I say to you, **as you did not do it to one of the least of these,**
you did not do it to me.’

And these will go away into eternal punishment,
but the righteous into eternal life.
(Matthew 25:31-46 ESV)

The Christian life, **living by the Way of God,** is to learn to be a **“servant”**.
To be a **“servant”** requires “doing”; **“those on his right”** lived a life of service, quietly doing things for other people. Jesus accounts that as personal service to himself,
“as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers.” **“Those on his left”** chose NOT to serve,
but to live a life centered on themselves, NOT “doing” for others,
“as you did not do it to one of the least of these”.

Jesus’ last revealed words to the Church, his body, True Christians, are contained
in the **Book of Revelation**. Jesus opens the **Book of Revelation** addressing his **“servants”**,
but quickly reminds the **“servants”** that with **commitment and service** comes **“suffering”**:

The revelation of Jesus Christ,
which God gave him **to show to his servants** the things that must soon take place.
He made it known by sending his angel to **his servant John** ...

When **he opened the fifth seal,**
 I saw under the altar the **[persons] (psyche)²⁵⁴ who had been slain**
 for the word of God and for the witness they had borne.
 They cried out with a loud voice,
 “O Sovereign Lord, holy and true,
how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?”
 Then they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer,
until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete,
who were to be killed as they themselves had been.
 (Revelation 1:1, 6:9-11 ESV)

Service to God is best expressed as service to fellow man. Service is the objective of the Christian life. The reward of those to whom God the Father grants the gift of eternal is the opportunity for greater service in the Kingdom of God. This gets us to the **Fourth Servant Song**
 – **the prophecy of the greatest service ever performed.**

7.6 The Suffering Servant

The Fourth Servant Song is the most famous of the Servant Songs.

The New Testament Authors quote from it and allude to it dozens of times. For a summary of these references see line items 162 through 176 in the table in section **2.4.3 The Centrality of Jesus Christ** in the paper “**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

Early in the Great Galilean Ministry, **Jesus used the Fifth Servant Song to establish his identity** as the Messiah; but, to presage Jesus’ later sufferings, **he was NOT well received:**

And **he came to Nazareth,** where he had been brought up.
 And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read.
 And **the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him.**
 He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written,
“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor.
 He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind,
 to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.”
 (see both MT and LXX of Isaiah 61:1-2a)

And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down.
 And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him.
 And he began to say to them,
“Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

When they heard these things, **all in the synagogue were filled with wrath.**
 And they rose up and drove him out of the town
 and brought him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built,
 so that they could throw him down the cliff.
 (Luke 4:16-21, 28-29 ESV)

The most important purpose of the life of Jesus Christ was to perform the service of his sacrifice so that human sin could be forgiven. Jesus summarized this in one succinct sentence:

For even **the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve,**
 and **to give his life as a ransom for many.**
 (Mark 10:45 ESV // Matthew 20:28)

The Fourth Servant Song is a detailed prophecy of the life and death of the Messiah.

²⁵⁴ See footnote 1
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7.6.1 The Life of the Messiah

The first part of the Fourth Servant Song is **a summary of the life and work of Jesus Christ**:

(13) Behold, **my servant shall act wisely**;

he shall be **high** and **lifted up**, and shall be **exalted**.

(14) As **many were astonished at you**

—his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance,
and his form beyond that of the children of mankind

(15) —**so shall he sprinkle many nations**.

Kings shall shut their mouths because of him,
for that which has not been told them **they see**,
and that which they have not heard **they understand**.

(1) **Who has believed what he has heard from us?**

And **to whom has the arm of [YHWH] been revealed?**

(2) For **he grew up before him** like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground;
he had no form or majesty that **we** should look at him, and **no beauty** that **we** should desire him.

(3) He was **despised and rejected** by men,
a man of **sorrows** and acquainted with **grief**;
and as one from whom **men hide their faces** he was despised,
and we **esteemed him not**.

(Isaiah 52:13-15, 53:1-3 ESV)

Verse 13 first establishes that **Jesus Christ and God the Father inherently possess “wisdom”**,

“my servant shall act wisely”, so naturally even as a child, Jesus displayed “wisdom”;

and, as an adult, **Jesus’ wisdom surpassed all others**:

[YHWH] possessed [wisdom] at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of old.

Ages ago I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the earth.

When there were no depths I was brought forth,
when there were no springs abounding with water.

Before the mountains had been shaped, before the hills, I was brought forth,
before he had made the earth with its fields, or the first of the dust of the world.

When he established the heavens, I was there;

(Proverbs 8:22-27a ESV)

After three days they found him in the temple,

sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.

And **all who heard him were amazed** at his understanding and his answers.

And **Jesus increased in wisdom** and in stature and in favor with God and man.

(Luke 2:46-47, 52 ESV)

And on the Sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue,

and **many who heard him were astonished**, saying,

“Where did this man get these things?

What is **the wisdom given to him?**

How are such mighty works done by his hands? ...”

(Mark 6:2 ESV see also Matthew 13:54, John 7:15-16)

The second part of **verse 13** goes directly to Jesus purpose – his sacrifice.

The prophecy that the servant would be **“lifted up”** is a double entendre: by **Jesus’ death on the cross**,

he was physically **“lifted up”**; but, far importantly, by **Jesus’ resurrection from the dead**,

he was **“lifted up”** spiritually and **exalted** to eternity at the right hand of God the Father:

And I, **when I am lifted up from the earth**, will draw all people to myself.

He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die.

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness,
so must the Son of Man be lifted up,

that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

So Jesus said to them,

“When you have lifted up the Son of Man,

then you will know that I am he,

and that I do nothing on my own authority,
but speak just as the Father taught me. ...”

(John 12:32-33, 3:14-15, 8:28 ESV)

And when he had said these things, as they were looking on,
he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight.
And while they were gazing into heaven as he went,
behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said,
“Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven?
This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven,
will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

(Acts 1:9-11 ESV)

... and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe,
according to the working of his great might
that **he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead**
and **seated him at his right hand** in the heavenly places,
far above all rule and authority and power and dominion,
and **above every** name that is named,
not only in this age but also in the one to come.
(Ephesians 1:19-21 ESV)

Therefore **God has highly exalted him**
and bestowed on him the name that is **above every name**,
so that at the name of Jesus **every** knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and **every** tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
(Philippians 2:9-11 ESV)

Verse 14 skips right to the end when Jesus is rejected, beaten, and crucified,

“many were astonished at you”:

And he began to teach them
that the **Son of Man must suffer many things**
and **be rejected** by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes
and **be killed**, and after three days rise again.
(Mark 8:31 ESV // Matthew 16:21, Luke 9:22)

So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released for them Barabbas,
and **having scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.**
(Mark 15:15 ESV // Matthew 27:26)

Then **Pilate took Jesus and flogged him.**
And the soldiers twisted together a **crown of thorns** and put it on his head
and arrayed him in a purple robe.
They came up to him, saying,
“Hail, King of the Jews!”

and **struck him** with their hands.

They cried out,
“Away with him, away with him, crucify him!”

Pilate said to them,
“Shall I crucify your King?”

The chief priests answered,
“We have no king but Caesar.”²⁵⁵

So **he delivered him over to them to be crucified.**
(John 19:1-3, 15-16a ESV)

Verse 15 first summarizes the purpose of Jesus’ sacrifice. God’s purpose is that all human beings
be given the opportunity for salvation. This is only possible through Jesus’ sacrifice,
“so shall he sprinkle many nations”. The **sprinkling of the blood of the sacrifice** under the Old Covenant
was **symbolic** of the **blood of Jesus Christ** applied to those who repent under the New Covenant:

And Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins,
and **half of the blood he threw against the altar.**

Then he took the **Book of the Covenant** and read it in the hearing of the people.
And they said,

“All that [YHWH] has spoken we will do,
and we will be obedient.”

²⁵⁵ By their own words the leaders of the Jews, rejected God and repudiated all true worship. They condemned themselves.
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And **Moses took the blood and threw it on the people** and said,
“Behold **the blood of the covenant** that [YHWH] has made with you
in accordance with all these words.”

(Exodus 24:6-8 ESV see also Leviticus 8:30, 16:14-19)

But **when Christ** appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come,
then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation)
he **entered once for all into the holy places**,
not by means of the blood of goats and calves but **by means of his own blood**,
thus securing an eternal redemption.

For if the **blood of goats and bulls**, and the **sprinkling of defiled persons** with the ashes of a heifer,
sanctify for the purification of the flesh,
how much more will the blood of Christ,
who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God,
purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

(Hebrews 9:11-14 ESV see also 9:19-22, 10:19-22, 11:28, 12:22-24, 1 Peter 1:2)

The second part of **verse 15**, looks to **the purpose of the New Testament Church**: to prepare people
for the **First Resurrection** so that the Gospel, the **Way of God**, can be taken to all the world
in the World Tomorrow. The people of the world have been duped by bad leaders into believing
that human beings can “**create a better world**”. In the World Tomorrow, there will be no human leaders
to do that, “**kings shall shut their mouths**”. In the world today, **people have no way to understand
the Way of God**. In the **World Tomorrow**, under the government of the **Kingdom of God**,
those persons who participate in the First Resurrection, will **teach all humanity the Way of God**.
God will open-up calling to all human beings, and upon repentance, baptism,
and receipt of the **Holy Spirit**, **all will be able to learn the Way of God**, “**they see**”, “**they understand**”.

The speaker in **verses 1 to 3** is “abstract”, a voice out of nowhere; but, it reflects **the perspective of
persons who may have known Jesus as a child and later became disciples**. In **verse 1**, the question
is rhetorical, “**who has believed what he has heard from us**”, it goes out to all persons at all times who
hear the Word of God. The answer is given, **only those to whom God gives understanding can respond**
to the teaching of God, those “**to whom has the arm of YHWH been revealed**”.

The “**arm of YHWH**” represents the teaching of God, the strength of God, **the Way of God**:

Give attention to me, my people, and give ear to me, my nation;
for **[torah]**²⁵⁶ will go out from me, and I will set my justice (mish'pat)²⁵⁷ for a light to the peoples.

My **righteousness** draws near, my **salvation** has gone out,
and **my arms will judge the peoples**;
the coastlands hope for me, and **for my arm they wait**.
(Isaiah 51:4-5 ESV see also 33:2, 40:10, 51:9, 52:10, 59:16, 63:5)

The **Apostle John** quotes verse 1 to summarize **Jesus' teaching to the crowd**²⁵⁸
just days before the crucifixion:

When Jesus had said these things, he departed and hid himself from them.
Though he had done so many signs before them,
they still did not believe in him,
so that the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:
“Lord, **who has believed what he heard from us**,
and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?”
(John 12:36b-38 ESV)

John goes on to comment that **the crowd could NOT understand**,
because understanding had NOT been given to them:

Therefore **they could not believe**.
For again Isaiah said,
“He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart,
lest they see with their eyes, and understand with their heart,

²⁵⁶ See footnote **202**

²⁵⁷ See footnote **37**

²⁵⁸ See John 12:27-36;

see also the chronological chart, “Jesus Last Ten Days” located at <https://mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca/chronological-charts>
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and turn, and I would heal them.”
(alluding to Isaiah 6:10 see **MT** and **LXX**)
(John 12:39-40 ESV)

The **Apostle Paul** appeals to verse 1 to support **the necessity of faith to understand**:

How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed?

And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard?

And how are they to hear without someone preaching?

And how are they to preach unless they are sent?

As it is written,

“How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!”

(citing Isaiah 52:7 see also Nahum 1:15)

But **they have not all obeyed the gospel**.

For Isaiah says,

“Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?”

(citing Isaiah 53:1a)

So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

(Romans 10:14-17 ESV)

Verse 2 establishes the fact that, as a human being, **Jesus had no extraordinary physical characteristics**, **“he grew up before him”**; the identity of “him” is obscure, but it most likely alludes to God the Father. Jesus was physically an ordinary person, **“no form or majesty”**, **“no beauty”**. Again **“we”** is obscure, but taken from perspective of later disciples, it makes sense. Note that Judas had to specifically identify Jesus for the mob from the chief priests:

And immediately, while he was still speaking, **Judas came**, one of the twelve, and **with him a crowd** with swords and clubs, **from the chief priests** and the scribes and the elders.

Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying,

“The one I will kiss is the man.

Seize him and lead him away under guard.”

And when he came, he went up to him at once and said,

“Rabbi!”

And **he kissed him**.

(Mark 14:43-45 ESV // Matthew 26:47-49, see also Luke 22:47)

Verse 3 summarizes **Jesus life as a human being**.

The New Testament Authors allude to the terms in the verse:

- **“despised and rejected”**

And how is it written of the Son of Man that he should **suffer many things** and be treated **with contempt**?

(Mark 9:12b ESV // Matthew 17:12b)

And they cried out again,

“Crucify him.”

And Pilate said to them,

“Why?”

What evil has he done?”

But they shouted all the more,

“Crucify him.”

(Mark 15:13-14 ESV // Matthew 27:22b-23, see also Luke 23:21-23)

- **“sorrows” and “grief”**

And he took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be **greatly distressed** and **troubled**.

And he said to them,

“My [heart] (psyche)²⁵⁹ is **very sorrowful**, even to death.

Remain here and watch.”

(Mark 14:33-34 ESV // Matthew 26:37-38)

And when he drew near and saw the city, **he wept over it** ...

(Luke 19:41 ESV)

²⁵⁹ See footnote 1

- **“men hide their faces”**

At that hour Jesus said to the crowds,

“Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me?

Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me.

But **all this has taken place that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.**”

Then **all the disciples left him and fled.**

(Matthew 26:55-56 ESV // Mark 14:48-50)

So when **Pilate** saw that he was gaining nothing,

but rather that a riot was beginning,

he took water and **washed his hands** before the crowd, saying,

“I am innocent of this man’s blood; see to it yourselves.”

(Matthew 27:24 ESV)

- **“esteemed him not”**

He was in the world, and the world was made through him,

yet **the world did not know him.**

He came to his own,

and **his own people did not receive him.**

(John 1:10-11 ESV)

Despite his divinity, Jesus lived a normal life as a human being until it was time to commence his ministry. Jesus lived his life always well aware of the purpose of his life.

Jesus sacrifice has made the accomplishment of the Plan of God possible.

7.6.2 The Substitutive Nature of the Sacrifice

The second part of the Fourth Servant Song focuses on **the purpose of Jesus’ sacrifice**

– to pay the penalty of sin for all human beings. As in verse 1, the speaker is technically obscure, but it is very clear that the **“speaker”** represents all **those who repent and accept Jesus’ sacrifice:**

(4) Surely **he has borne** our griefs and carried our sorrows;

yet **we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.**

(5) But he was **pierced (halal) for our transgressions (pesha’)**;

he was **crushed (daka’) for our iniquities (’awon)**;

upon him was the **chastisement (musar) that brought us peace,**

and with his **wounds (habburah) we are healed.**

(6) All we like sheep have gone astray;

we have turned—every one—to his own way;

and [YHWH] has **laid on him the iniquity (’awon) of us all.**

(Isaiah 53:4-6 ESV)

The first part of **verse 4** introduces the concept of **vicarious suffering**. All the suffering of humanity brought on by sin, was laid onto Jesus Christ, that it might be taken away, **“he has borne”**.

The **Apostle Matthew** alludes to this verse in regard to an instance of Jesus’ healing:

That evening they brought to him **many who were oppressed** by demons,

and he cast out the spirits with a word and **healed all who were sick.**

This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah:

“He took our illnesses and bore our diseases.”

(this matches neither **MT** nor **LXX**)

(Matthew 8:16-17 ESV see also Mark 1:32-34, Luke 4:40-41)

The **Apostle Paul** also alludes to Jesus’ vicarious suffering and its objective:

It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead **Jesus our Lord,**

who **was delivered up for our trespasses** and **raised for our justification.**

(Romans 4:24b-25 ESV)

The second part of **verse 1** is the observance of a person in repentance, **“we esteemed him stricken,”** **“and afflicted”**. That Jesus’ suffering is according to the **Plan of God**, is affirmed, **“smitten by God”**.

At the scene of the crucifixion, many observed Jesus **“stricken and afflicted”**,

and **derided Jesus over his trust in God:**

And they brought him to the place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull).

And they crucified him ...

And the inscription of the charge against him read,
 “The King of the Jews.”

And with him they crucified two robbers, one on his right and one on his left.
 And **those who passed by derided him**, wagging their heads and saying,
 “Aha!
 You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days,
save yourself, and come down from the cross!”

So also the chief priests with the scribes **mocked him** to one another, saying,
 “He saved others; **he cannot save himself**.
 Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross
 that we may see and believe.”

Those who were crucified with him also **reviled him**.
 (Mark 15:22, 24a, 26-32 ESV see also Matthew 27:33-44, Luke 23:32-39)

Verse 5 intensifies the understanding of Jesus’ suffering and introduces the result of repentance.

The word “**transgressions**” is from the masculine noun עֲשָׂוֹן - *pesha`*,
 derived from the root עָשָׂה - *pasha`*, “rebel”, “transgress”, “revolt”.

G.H. Livingston states:

The fundamental idea of the root is a **breach of relationships**,
 civil or religious, between two parties.
 This masculine noun designates **those who reject God’s authority**.²⁶⁰

The word “**iniquities**” is from the masculine noun עָוֹן - *`awon*, “iniquity”, “guilt”, “punishment”.
 The noun is derived from the root עָוָה - *`awah*, “bend”, “twist”, “distort”.
 The verb occurs only 17 times; whereas, the noun occurs 231 times.

C. Shultz states of the noun:

... it denotes both the **deed** and its **consequences**, the **misdeed** and the **punishment**.
 Both notions are present, but sometime the focus is on the deed (“**sin**”),
 and at other time on the outcome of the deed (“**punishment**”),
 and sometimes on the situation between the deed and its consequences (“**guilt**”).²⁶¹

The verb “**pierced**” is from הָלַל - *halal*, “wound fatally”, “bore through”, “pierce”.²⁶²

The verb “**crushed**” is from דָּכָא - *daka`*, “be crushed”, “broken”.

H. Wolf states:

Verse 5 indicates that he “was crushed for our iniquities”
 This emphasizes the **emotional and spiritual suffering** of the Saviour as he became sin for us.²⁶³

The two verbs, *halal* and *daka`*, emphasize that **Jesus’ suffering was both physical and mental, emotional, and spiritual**. The most common words for sin in the Old Testament are derived from the root חָטָא - *hata`*, “**miss the mark**”, “**miss the way**”.²⁶⁴ Sin is the violation of God’s teaching, most simply summarized in the Ten Commandments. The words *pesha`* and *`awon*, used in verse 5, get behind the actual commission of a sin, *hata`*. **Verse 5 is considering the repentance of a person who has been called by God**. The notion of “**breach of relationship**”, in *pesha`*, is critical in repentance. The person called must come to recognize the lack of relationship in his/her former life with Jesus Christ and God the Father. Repentance opens the door to heal the breach through baptism and begettal by the Holy Spirit. Understanding the comprehensive nature of *`awon* is critical in repentance. A True Worshipper must come to understand the depth of his/her “**sin**”, properly bear the “**guilt**” of that sin, and eagerly accept Jesus’ sacrifice to remove the sin, but understand that removal of sin does NOT always avoid “**punishment**” resulting from the sin.²⁶⁵

²⁶⁰ See TWOT article 1846 pages 741-742

²⁶¹ See TWOT article 1577 pages 650-652

²⁶² See TWOT article 660 pages 288-289

²⁶³ See TWOT article 427 pages 188-189

²⁶⁴ See TWOT article 638 pages 277-279

²⁶⁵ See the discussion in section 2. *The Suffering of King David*

The word “**chastisement**” is from the masculine noun מוֹסֵר - musar, “discipline”, derived from the root יָסַר - yasar, “discipline”, “chasten”, “instruct”.

P.R. Gilchrist states:

From the usage and parallels in the Old Testament, one must conclude that *yasar* and *musar* denote correction which results in education.²⁶⁶

The word “**wounds**” is from the feminine noun חַבּוּרָה - ḥabburah, which occurs only six times:

- Genesis 4:23b
I have killed a man for wounding (petza`) me,
a young man for striking (ḥabburah) me. (ESV)
- Exodus 21:25
... burn for burn,
wound (petza`) for wound (petza`),
stripe (ḥabburah) for stripe (ḥabburah). (ESV)
- Psalm 38:5
My wounds (ḥabburah) stink and fester because of my foolishness ... (ESV)
- Proverbs 20:30
Blows (ḥabburah) that wound (petza`) cleanse away evil;
strokes make clean the innermost parts. (ESV)
- Isaiah 1:6
From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it,
but bruises (petza`) and sores (ḥabburah) and raw wounds;
they are not pressed out or bound up or softened with oil. (ESV)

Note that in four of the above verses, *ḥabburah* is used in conjunction with the masculine noun

פָּצַע - petza`, “bruise”, “wound”, derived from the root פָּצַע - patza`, “wound by bruising”.²⁶⁷
The words *ḥabburah* and *petza`* are apparently more or less synonymous. If there is a distinction, *ḥabburah* is the cause of the wound, while *petza`* is the result, the wound itself.

In **verse 5**, the *ḥabburah* is the result of the *ḥalal* of the Servant, Jesus Christ, the physical beating.

The *ḥalal* is fatal, the *ḥabburah* is the multitude of painful items associated with the *ḥalal*.

From Proverbs 20:30, there is a sense of the *ḥabburah* performing a “purifying” function.

Jesus Christ required NO purifying, but vicariously, Jesus’ suffering, ḥabburah, provides purifying for repentant human beings. That is the relationship between *musar* and *ḥabburah*.

Indeed Jesus did learn from what he suffered:

For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering.

Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered.
(Hebrews 2:10, 5:8 ESV)

Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect,
so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God,
to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

For because he himself has suffered when tempted,
he is able to help those who are being tempted.
(Hebrews 2:17-18 ESV)

But far more importantly, those persons called to conversion must learn from Jesus’ suffering the meaning of “love”.²⁶⁸ Jesus is the Creator of human beings. Jesus loves each and every human being. Jesus Christ and God the Father desire each and every human being to attain salvation.

Jesus willingly suffered and died so that human sins could be forgiven:

This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.
Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.
(John 15:12-13 ESV)

²⁶⁶ See **TWOT** article 877 pages 386-387

²⁶⁷ See **BDB** page 822

²⁶⁸ See *Excursus 1 – The Necessity of Love*

Those who accept the sacrifice of Jesus Christ are forgiven, **“we are healed”**. Matthew’s application of this verse to the healing activities of Jesus make it clear that **“physical healing is implied”**; but far more importantly, **“spiritual healing”** from the scars of sin is implied. With healing comes the ongoing Christian life, **“brought us peace”**.

Verse 6 is a summary of the Christian life. The Christian life starts with repentance, baptism, and begetting by the Holy Spirit. Past sins have been forgiven, but no one is perfect: all will fall into sin, **“we have turned”**, **“every one”**, **“to his own way”**. The Christian life requires ongoing daily repentance to maintain the relationship with Jesus Christ and God the Father, **“laid on him the iniquity of us all”**:

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

If we confess our sins,

he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

(1 John 1:8-10 ESV)

So we do not lose heart.

Though our outer self is wasting away,

our inner self is being renewed day by day.

(2 Corinthians 4:16 ESV)

Jesus’ sacrifice was on behalf of all human beings. Jesus’ sacrifice provides propitiation of sin which allows a called and repentant person to participate in personal relationship with Jesus Christ and God the Father. **The basis of these relationships is ongoing repentance to overcome sin**. The next section considers the details of Jesus sacrifice.

7.6.3 Suffering and Death

This section of the Fourth Servant Song deals specifically with the **“trial”**, **death**, and **burial** of Jesus Christ:

(7) He was **oppressed**, and he was **afflicted**, yet **he opened not his mouth**; **like a lamb** that is led to the slaughter, and **like a sheep** that before its shearers is silent, so **he opened not his mouth**.

(8) **By oppression and judgment [without justice]** he was taken away; and as for **his generation**, who considered that he was **cut off out of the land of the living**, stricken **for the transgression (pesha’) of my people?**

(9) And **they made his grave** with **the wicked** and with **a rich man** in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. (Isaiah 53:7-9 ESV)

Verse 7 looks to Jesus’ arrest. When Judas came with the mob from the high priests, Peter impulsively pulled out his sword and took off the ear of Malchus a slave of the High Priest.

Jesus made it clear that such action was unnecessary:

Then Jesus said to him,

“Put your sword back into its place.

For all who take the sword will perish by the sword.

Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father,

and he will at once send me more than **twelve legions of angels?**

But **how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled**, that it must be so?”

(Matthew 26:52-54 ESV see also Luke 22:51, John 18:10-11)

Jesus’ whole purpose was to accomplish the **Plan of God**, **“how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled”**. Jesus knew what was coming, but went along with it, **“like a lamb”**, **“like a sheep”**.

The mob and the subsequent persons who dealt with Jesus had good reason to be thankful that **“he opened not his mouth”**. If Jesus had seen fit to **“appeal to my Father”**, the arrival of **“twelve legions of angels”** would have been staggering.

Instead, Jesus submitted to be “**oppressed**” and “**afflicted**” by the mob, who took him to trial first before the High Priest and the Sanhedrin,²⁶⁹ then before Pilate.²⁷⁰

The whole procedure was complete mockery of justice.

This is prophesized in the first line of verse 8:

לָקָח	וּמִמִּשְׁפָּט	מֵעֶזֶר
luqqah	umimmish ^e pat	ma'otzer
he was taken away	and away from justice	by oppression

Literally: by oppression, and away from justice, he was taken away

The word מִשְׁפָּט - mish^epat should NOT be translated “judgement”. Its most important meanings are “justness” and “justice”.²⁷¹ Here “justice” is most applicable. Jesus’ trial was indeed “**by oppression**”, but the next phrase is poorly translated in the ESV. The preposition מִן - min, is best taken here in the “partitive” sense, “away from”, “without”: Jesus’ trial was “**without justice**”.

Verse 8 continues, Jesus was NOT recognized by his contemporaries, “**his generation**”:

He came to his own,
and his own people did not receive him.
(John 1:11 ESV)

But first he must suffer many things
and **be rejected by this generation.**
(Luke 17:25 ESV)

Jesus’ sacrifice, “**cut off out of the land of the living**”, was “**for the transgression of my people**”, specifically, those called to conversion; but eventually calling will extend to each and every human being:

For **God so loved the world**, that he gave his only Son,
that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world,
but in order that **the world might be saved through him.**
(John 3:16-17 ESV)

Verse 9 prophesizes **the two thieves**, “**the wicked**”, beside Jesus,
and his interment in the tomb of **Jospeh of Arimathea**, “**a rich man**”:

And **with him they crucified two robbers**, one on his right and one on his left.
(Mark 15:27 ESV // Matthew 27:38)

Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council,
who was also himself looking for the kingdom of God,
took courage and **went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.**

And Joseph bought a linen shroud, and taking him down,
wrapped him in the linen shroud and **laid him in a tomb** that had been cut out of the rock.
And **he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb.**
(Mark 15:43, 46 ESV)

Jesus trial and execution were a “type” of everything wrong in this world of Satan the Devil.

There was no justice, no compassion, no love. Jesus sacrifice makes possible the accomplishment of the **Plan of God** which will bring justice, compassion, and love to all humanity.

²⁶⁹ See John 18:12-14,19-24, Mark 14:53,55-65, Matthew 26:57,59-68, 27:1, Luke 22:54,63-71

²⁷⁰ See John 18:28-40, 19:1-16, Mark15:1-15, Matthew 27:2, 11-26, Luke 23:1-5,13-25;

only Luke mentions the interrogation by Herod Antipas, see Luke 23:6-12.

²⁷¹ For a full discussion of *mish^epat*, see the paper “**Godly Character**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

7.6.4 Success of the Servant

The last section of the Fourth Servant Song looks to the success of the **Plan of God**. The Servant, **Jesus Christ, will be resurrected and through the living Christ many will be brought to salvation:**

(10) Yet **it was the will of [YHWH]** to **crush** (daka') him;
he has put him to **grief**;
when his [life] (nephesh)²⁷² makes **an offering for guilt ('asham)**,

he shall see his offspring;
he shall **prolong his days**;
the will of [YHWH] shall prosper in his hand.

(11) Out of the anguish of his [life] (nephesh) **he shall see and be satisfied**;
by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant,
make many to be accounted righteous,
and he shall bear their iniquities ('awon).

(12) Therefore **I will divide him a portion with the many**,
and **he shall divide the spoil with the strong**,
because he poured out his [life] (nephesh) to death
and was numbered with the transgressors (pasha');
yet **he bore the sin (het')** of many,
and **makes intercession for the transgressors (pasha')**.
(Isaiah 53:10-12 ESV)

Verse 10 starts off by emphasizing all is done according to the **Plan of God**, **"it was the will of YHWH"**; **"crush"** looks back to verse 5; **"grief"** looks back to verse 3. The phrase **"an offering for guilt"** is from the masculine noun אֲשָׁם - 'asham, "guiltiness", derived from the root אָשָׁם - 'asham, "be guilty", "to trespass". **Jesus' sacrifice is all encompassing – it covers all "guilt"**.

G.H. Livingstone states:

The primary meaning of the word 'asham seems to center on guilt,
but moves from the **act which brings guilt** to the **condition of guilt** to the **act of punishment**.
In any particular passage, it is difficult to determine which thrust the word has.²⁷³

The word 'asham is like 'awon, it carries a range of meaning which is difficult to partition into English words. In Leviticus chapters 4 and 5, **'asham is used of the realization of a sin**, leading to guilt, which is atoned by a sin offering.²⁷⁴

Then it is used as **technical term for the "guilt offering"**:

If anyone sins (hata'),
doing any of the things that by [YHWH's] commandments ought not to be done,
though he did not know it,
then **realizes his guilt** ('asham), he shall bear his iniquity ('awon).
He shall bring to the priest a ram without blemish out of the flock, or its equivalent,
for a **guilt offering ('asham)**,
and the priest shall make atonement for him for the mistake that he made unintentionally,
and he shall be forgiven.

It is a **guilt offering ('asham)**; he has indeed incurred guilt ('asham) before [YHWH].
(Leviticus 5:17-19 ESV see also 5:15,16, 6:17, 7:1,2,5,7,37, 14:12,13,14,17,21,24,25,28, 19:21,22)

It is NOT entirely clear under what circumstances a "sin offering" would be appropriate as opposed to a "guilt offering". The "sin offering" seems to be more general and more public. The "guilt offering" seems more private, **"realizes his guilt"**. Verse 5 is clear that **Jesus' sacrifice is efficacious for all sin**. The emphasis in **verse 10** on "guilt", may point to **"private sins"**.

The second part of verse 10 looks to Jesus' resurrection, "he shall see his offspring".

The **"offspring"** of Jesus are the children of God brought into the God Family by begetting of the Holy Spirit – True Christians made possible by the New Testament Church.
Once resurrected, Jesus could no longer face death, indeed, he did **"prolong his days"**.

²⁷² See footnote 1

²⁷³ See TWOT article 180 pages 78-80

²⁷⁴ See Leviticus 4:13,22,27, 5:2,3,4,5,6,7

As King of kings, **“the will of YHWH shall prosper in his hand”**

– Jesus’ ancient role as YHWH projects the will of the God Family, as defined by the **Plan of God**, to be carried out by Jesus in his new role as King of kings:

There shall come forth **a shoot** from the stump of Jesse,
and **a branch** from his roots shall bear fruit.

And the Spirit of [YHWH] shall rest upon him,
the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and might,
the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of [YHWH].

And his delight shall be in the fear of [YHWH].
He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear,
but **with righteousness he shall judge the poor**,
and **decide with equity for the meek of the earth**;
and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.

Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist,
and **faithfulness the belt of his loins**.
(Isaiah 11:1-5 ESV)

The first line of **verse 11**, considers the fact of the satisfaction of Jesus when it was all over – Jesus knew he had accomplished his purpose, **“he shall see and be satisfied”**. The second part of the verse looks to the **ongoing work of the New Testament Church** to bring people to the Family of God. Only by Jesus Christ can anyone attain salvation, **“by his knowledge”**, **“make many to be accounted righteous”**:

This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone.

And **there is salvation in no one else**,
for **there is no other name** under heaven given among men **by which we must be saved**.

And **he commanded us to preach** to the people and to testify
that **he is the one appointed by God** to be judge of the living and the dead.

To him all the prophets bear witness
that everyone who believes in him receives **forgiveness of sins through his name**.
(Acts 4:11-12, 10:42-43 ESV)

Then he said to them,

“These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you,
that **everything written about me**
in the [nomos]²⁷⁵ of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms **must be fulfilled**.”

Then **he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures**, and said to them,

“Thus it is written, that the **Christ should suffer** and on the third day rise from the dead,
and that **repentance** for the **forgiveness** of sins
should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

You are witnesses of these things. ...”

(Luke 24:44-48 ESV)

This is good, and **it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior**,
who desires all people to be saved and to come to the **knowledge of the truth**.

For there is one God,
and there is **one mediator between God and men**, the man **Christ Jesus**,
who gave himself as a ransom for all,
which is the testimony given at the proper time.
(1 Timothy 2:3-6 ESV)

Verse 12 wraps it all up looking to the World Tomorrow, **“I will divide him a portion with the many”**.

There is no obvious antecedent for **“I”**, but it is probably best taken as a comment from God the Father. Those who participate in the First Resurrection, **“he shall divide the spoil with the strong”**, are there only because of Jesus’ sacrifice, **“because he poured out his life to death”**. Jesus sacrifice will come to be accepted by all humanity, **“he bore the sin of many”**. But it is through Jesus life, in his role as High Priest, that salvation is possible, **“makes intercession for the transgressors”**.

For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son,
in order that **he might be the firstborn among many brothers**.

²⁷⁵ See footnote 84

For if while we were enemies **we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son,**
much more, now that we are reconciled, **shall we be saved by his life.**
(Romans 8:29, 5:10 ESV)

Jesus said to her,

“I am the resurrection and the life.

Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live,

and **everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die.**

Do you believe this?”

(John 11:25-26 ESV)

The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness,
but is patient toward you,

not wishing that any should perish,

but that **all should reach repentance.**

(2 Peter 3:9 ESV)

... so **Christ,** having been **offered once to bear the sins of many,**

will appear a second time,

not to deal with sin but to **save those who are eagerly waiting for him.**

Consequently, **he is able to save** to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him,
since **he always lives to make intercession for them.**

(Hebrews 9:28, 7:25 ESV)

The Fourth Servant Song is one of the most detailed prophecies in the Bible.

The fulfillment of much of the Fourth Servant Song is reported in detail in the Gospel accounts of Jesus' life and death in the crucifixion.

8 The Suffering of Jesus Christ

After Jesus commenced his public ministry, **the great tension in Jesus' life was with the Jewish establishment.** Both the **Pharisees** and the **Sadducees** opposed Jesus because they **perceived him as threat their privileged positions.** These were the very people who should have had understanding of the Bible, of the prophecies of the Messiah, and of the **Plan of God.** Jesus acknowledged their official position, but **decried their hypocrisy:**

Then **Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples,**

“The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat,

so do and observe whatever they tell you,

but not the works they do.

For **they preach, but do not practice.**

They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders,
but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger.

They do all their deeds to be seen by others.

For they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long,

and they love the place of honor at feasts

and the best seats in the synagogues

and greetings in the marketplaces

and being called rabbi by others. ...”

(Matthew 23:1-7 ESV)

It, of course, all came to a head with **their plot to kill Jesus:**

So the **chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council and said,**

“What are we to do?

For this man performs many signs.

If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him,

and **the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.**”

But one of them, **Caiaphas,** who was **high priest** that year, **said** to them,

“You know nothing at all.

Nor do you understand that **it is better for you that one man should die** for the people,
not that the whole nation should perish.”

(John 11:47-50 ESV)

Jesus' public ministry was NOT long – probably a something over four years starting in winter of 26-27AD and ending at Passover of 31AD.²⁷⁶ Certainly Jesus birth was heralded as a great event,²⁷⁷ but after that, Jesus' early life is largely undocumented.

8.1 Jesus' Early Life

Satan the Devil was ready, as soon as Jesus was born to Mary, Satan took steps to destroy Jesus:

And **the dragon** stood before the woman who was about to give birth,
so that **when she bore her child he might devour it**.

She gave birth to a male child,

one who is to shepherd all the nations with a rod of iron ...
(Revelation 12:4b-5a ESV)

Now after **Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king**,

behold, **wise men from the east** came to Jerusalem, saying,

"Where is he who has been born king of the Jews?

For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."

When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him,²⁷⁸
and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people,
he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.

Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly
and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared.

And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying,

"Go and search diligently for the child,
and **when you have found him, bring me word**,
that I too may come and worship him."

Then **Herod**, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious,
and he **sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem** and in all that region
who were two years old or under,
according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men.
(Matthew 2:1-4, 7-8, 16 ESV)

Meanwhile, **as a young infant, Jesus had been taken on the arduous journey** from Bethlehem to Egypt:

Now when they had departed, behold,

an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said,

"Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt,
and remain there until I tell you,
for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him."

And **he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt**
and remained there until the death of Herod.

(Matthew 2:13-15a ESV)

After Herod died, **Joseph** was told to return, but **he wisely avoided the son of Herod, Archelaus**:

But **when Herod died**, behold,

an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying,

"Rise, take the child and his mother and **go to the land of Israel**,
for those who sought the child's life are dead."

And he rose and took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel.

But when he heard that **Archelaus was reigning over Judea** in place of his father Herod,

he was afraid to go there,

and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee.

And **he went and lived in a city called Nazareth** ...

(Matthew 2:19-23a ESV)

There is very little information on Jesus' life as a boy growing up in Nazareth.²⁷⁹

Mary and Joseph had several more children. Luke summarizes Jesus' childhood very simply:

Is not this the carpenter's son?

Is not his mother called Mary?

²⁷⁶ See the chronological chart "Life and Times of John the Baptist" located at <https://mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca/chronological-charts>

²⁷⁷ See Matthew 1:18-23, Luke 1:26-56, 2:1-21

²⁷⁸ The people were troubled because they knew that when Herod became troubled, he started killing people.

²⁷⁹ For general discussion of the time and circumstances, see Edersheim book 2 chapter IX "The Child-Life in Nazareth"

And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas?
And are not all his sisters with us?
(Matthew 13:55-56a ESV)

And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom.
And the favor of God was upon him.
(Luke 2:40 ESV)

Being fully aware of who he was, at age twelve,

Jesus felt it necessary to engage the teachers in the Temple in Jerusalem:

Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover.
And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom.

And when the feast was ended, as they were returning,
the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem.

His parents did not know it,
but supposing him to be in the group they went a day's journey,
but then they began to search for him among their relatives and acquaintances,
and when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, searching for him.

After three days they found him in the temple,
sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.
And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.
(Luke 2:41-47 ESV)

Jesus expressed some surprise that his parents had NOT anticipated his actions. Nevertheless,
Jesus remained an integral part of the family until it was time for him to commence his ministry.

Mark notes that Jesus followed in the footsteps of Joseph, his legal father, as a carpenter:

And when his parents saw him, they were astonished.

And his mother said to him,

“Son, why have you treated us so?

Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress.”

And he said to them,

“Why were you looking for me?

Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?”²⁸⁰

And they did not understand the saying that he spoke to them.

And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them.

And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart.

And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.

(Luke 2:48-52 ESV)

Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary ...

(Mark 6:3a ESV)

No doubt, **Jesus suffered considerable anguish over the years**,

as his family did NOT readily accept who he was:

Then he went home, and the crowd gathered again, so that they could not even eat.

And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying,

“He is out of his mind.”

(Mark 3:20-21 ESV)

And his mother and his brothers came,

and standing outside they sent to him and called him.

And a crowd was sitting around him, and they said to him,

“Your mother and your brothers are outside, seeking you.”

And he answered them,

“Who are my mother and my brothers?”

(Mark 3:31-33 ESV // Matthew 12:46-48)

Now the Jews' Feast of Booths was at hand.

So his brothers said to him,

“Leave here and go to Judea,

that your disciples also may see the works you are doing.

²⁸⁰ Or “about my Father's business” (ESV footnote); the Greek is obscure: οὐκ ᾔδειτε ὅτι ἐν τοῖς τοῦ πατρὸς μου δεῖ εἶναί με;
literally: “not did you know that in the the Father's my must be I”.

For no one works in secret if he seeks to be known openly.
If you do these things, show yourself to the world.”

For **not even his brothers believed in him**.
(John 7:2-5 ESV)

After the Resurrection, Jesus’ brothers believed:

All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer,
together with the women and **Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers**.
(Acts 1:14 ESV)

James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ ...
(James 1:1a ESV)

Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James ...
(Jude 1a ESV)

If Jesus was born in 5BC or 6BC, he would have been 30 or 31 in the fall of 26AD
– he was **“about thirty years of age”**²⁸¹ and it was time to commence his public ministry.

8.2 Jesus’ Early Ministry

Immediately following Jesus’ baptism by John in the River Jordan,²⁸² **Jesus went into the Judean wilderness to face Satan the Devil**.²⁸³ As the all-powerful Creator, Jesus would have had no trepidation to face Satan, but Jesus was also fully human. To demonstrate the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus further weakened his physical body by fasting.²⁸⁴ **It was to Jesus’ human side that Satan directed his attack:**

- Satan tried to make Jesus doubt his Divinity:
And the tempter came and said to him,
“If you are the Son of God ...”
(Matthew 4:3a ESV // Luke 4:3a)
- Satan appealed to Jesus human suffering:
“... command these stones to become loaves of bread.”
(Matthew 4:3b ESV // Luke 4:3b)
- Jesus responded with the power of the Written Word:
But he answered,
“It is written,
‘Man shall not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”
(citing Deuteronomy 8:3)
(Matthew 4:4 ESV see also Luke 4:4)
- Satan attempted to confuse Jesus by quoting scripture:
Then the devil took him to the holy city
and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him,
“If you are the Son of God,
throw yourself down,
for **it is written,**
‘He will command his angels concerning you,’
and
‘On their hands they will bear you up,
lest you strike your foot against a stone.’”
(citing Psalm 91:11-12)
(Matthew 4:5-6 ESV // Luke 4:9-11)
- Again, Jesus responded with the power of the Written Word:
Jesus said to him,
“Again it is written,
‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’”
(citing Deuteronomy 6:16)
(Matthew 4:7 ESV // Luke 4:12)

²⁸¹ See Luke 3:23

²⁸² See Mark 1:9-11, Matthew 3:13-17, Luke 3:21-22

²⁸³ See Mark 1:12-13, Matthew 4:1, Luke 4:1-2a

²⁸⁴ See Matthew 4:2, Luke 4:2b

- In his weakened physical state, Satan tried to convince Jesus he could take a short cut to his position as King of kings:
 Again, **the devil** took him to a very high mountain and **showed him all the kingdoms of the world** and their glory.
 And he said to him,
 "All these I will give you,"²⁸⁵
 if you will fall down and worship me."
 (Matthew 4:8-9 ESV see also Luke 4:5-7)
- Jesus commanded Satan to leave according to the power of the Written Word:
 Then Jesus said to him,
 "Be gone, Satan!
 For it is written,
 'You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.'"
 (alluding to Deuteronomy 6:13)
 Then the devil left him,
 and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.
 (Matthew 4:10-11 ESV see also Luke 4:8, 13)

Even in great human weakness, **Jesus**, through the power of the Holy Spirit, retained his Divinity and **conquered Satan the Devil**:

Now is the judgment of this world;
now will the ruler of this world be cast out.
 (John 12:31 ESV)

Soon after this, Jesus recruits his first disciples, John, Andrew, Peter, James, Philip and Nathanael.²⁸⁶
 Then, accompanied by some or all of the disciples, **Jesus is invited to a wedding in Cana of Galilee.**²⁸⁷
 At the wedding, **Jesus is pressed by Mary**, his mother, **into performing a miracle**:

When the wine ran out, **the mother of Jesus said to him**,
"They have no wine."

And **Jesus said to her**,
"Woman, what does this have to do with me?
 My hour has not yet come."

His mother said to the servants,
"Do whatever he tells you."
 (John 2:3-5 ESV)

Jesus was NOT quite ready to publicly reveal his Messiahship, but for the sake of his mother, he created the wine,²⁸⁸ and the miracle had a positive impact:

This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory.
 And **his disciples believed in him.**
 (John 2:11 ESV)

Soon after this, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for the Passover.

In Jerusalem, **Jesus had his first encounter** with the Temple establishment, which set the pattern for the rest of his ministry in dealing with the **Pharisees** and **Sadducees**:

The **Passover** of the Jews was at hand, and **Jesus went up to Jerusalem.**

In the temple he found **those who were selling** oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the **money-changers** sitting there.

And making a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and oxen. And he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. And he told those who sold the pigeons,

"Take these things away;
 do not make my Father's house a house of trade."

So the Jews said to him,
"What sign do you show us for doing these things?"
 (John 2:13-16, 18 ESV)

²⁸⁵ Of course, Jesus knew this to be a lie; see John 8:44.

²⁸⁶ See John 1:35-49

²⁸⁷ See John 2:1-2

²⁸⁸ See John 2:6-10

Jesus and his disciples remained in Judea for a period of time **teaching and baptizing**. John the Baptist also continued his work.²⁸⁹ **These efforts attracted the attention of the Pharisees and Herod Antipas:**

But **Herod the tetrarch**, who had been reproved by him for Herodias, his brother's wife, and for all the evil things that Herod had done, added this to them all, that he **locked up John in prison**.
(Luke 3:19-20 ESV)

Now when **Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard** that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John (although Jesus himself did not baptize, but only his disciples), **he left Judea and departed again for Galilee**.
(John 4:1-3 ESV)

At first Jesus was well received in his home territory, but before long people began to discredit him:

So when he came to Galilee, **the Galileans welcomed him**, having seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the feast. For they too had gone to the feast.
(John 4:45 ESV)

And **Jesus said** to them,
 "A prophet is not without honor,
 except in his hometown
 and among his relatives and in his own household."

And he could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them.

And **he marveled because of their unbelief**. And he went about among the villages teaching.
(Mark 6:4-6 ESV see also Matthew 13:57b-58)

The bulk of Jesus' ministry was spent in and around Galilee – probably about two and a half years.²⁹⁰ Most of this time, Jesus operated out of Capernaum. **Jesus' primary objective was the training of the Twelve**, but he quickly ran afoul of the Jewish establishment.

8.3 The Great Galilean Ministry

The **Synoptist Mark**, only very briefly, summarizes Jesus early ministry; then he goes quickly to **the Great Galilean Ministry**:

Now after John was arrested, **Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God**, and saying,
 "The time is fulfilled,
 and **the kingdom of God is at hand**;
 repent and believe in the gospel."
(Mark 1:14-15 ESV see also Matthew 4:17, Luke 4:14-15)

Luke reports, in detail, Jesus' peaching in the synagogue in Nazareth.²⁹¹ This incident is discussed in section **7.6 The Suffering Servant**. Following this incident, Jesus moved from Nazareth to Capernaum.²⁹² All the Gospel authors report many healings of illness, deformity, and exorcism, performed by Jesus in Galilee – they are discussed in section **5.1 Healing the Sick**. One of the excuses that the Pharisees used to attack Jesus was over "healing". The **Pharisaic prescriptions** specified that healing was NOT to be done on the Sabbath; furthermore, when **Jesus healed by forgiving sin**, they ascribed it to be blasphemy.²⁹³

Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was there with a withered hand. And **they watched Jesus, to see whether he would heal him on the Sabbath**, so that they might accuse him.
And he said to the man with the withered hand,
 "Come here."

²⁸⁹ See John 3:22-30

²⁹⁰ See the chronological chart "**Framework of the Gospel of John**" located at <https://mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca/chronological-charts>

²⁹¹ See Luke 4:16-30

²⁹² See Matthew 4:13-16

²⁹³ Note that it was the Pharisees who were in a state of "blasphemy" by asserting that Jesus was "demon possessed"; see Mark 3:22, Matthew 12:24, John 7:20, 8:48,52, 10:20

And he said to them,
 "Is it lawful on the Sabbath
 to do good or to do harm,
 to save life or to kill?"

But they were silent.

And he looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart,
and said to the man,

 "Stretch out your hand."

He stretched it out, and his hand was restored.

The Pharisees went out and immediately held counsel with the Herodians against him,
how to destroy him.

(Mark 3:1-6 ESV see also Matthew 12:9-14, Luke 6:6-11)

And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic,

 "Son, your sins are forgiven."

Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts,

 "Why does this man speak like that?

He is blaspheming!

 Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

(Mark 2:5-7 ESV see also Matthew 9:2-3, Luke 5:20-21)

The Pharisees looked for every excuse they could find to attack Jesus,

and Jesus deliberately shoved the truth of God in their faces to expose them.

As an example, all three Synoptists report Jesus' recruiting Levi, better known as Matthew:

And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth,
and he said to him,

 "Follow me."²⁹⁴

And he rose and followed him.

And as he reclined at table in his house,

many tax collectors and sinners were reclining with Jesus and his disciples,
for there were many who followed him.

And the scribes of the Pharisees,

when they saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors,
said to his disciples,

 "Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

And when Jesus heard it, he said to them,

 "Those who are well have no need of a physician,
 but those who are sick.

I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."

(Mark 2:14-17 ESV // Matthew 9:9-12, Luke 5:27-32)

Analysis of Matthew's recruitment:

- Matthew was a "publican", a τελώνης - telōnēs, "tax collector"
- The word "publican" is from Latin "*publicanai*",
 "... a class of men who undertook state contracts of various kinds.
 ... their work included the collection of tithes and various indirect taxes.
 The system was very open to abuse,
 and the *publicani* seem to have been prone to extortion and malpractice ...
 ... the Rabbi's teaching ... not to eat with such person's, account for the attitude evidenced
 by the expressions publicans and sinners and publicans and harlots ...
 (J.H. Harrop, **NBD** article PUBLICAN pages 1064-1065)
- Being wealthy, Matthew was able to put on a dinner with many guests
 including Jesus and some of the disciples, various "tax collectors" and "sinners",
 and apparently "scribes" and "Pharisees" were at least able to observe the goings-on
- According to their teaching,
 the Pharisees condemned Jesus for his association with "tax collectors" and "sinners"

²⁹⁴ See footnote 238

- Jesus, sarcastically, turned their corrupt teaching on themselves,

“I came not to call the righteous, but sinners”

He also told this parable
to **some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous,**
and treated others with contempt:

“Two men went up into the temple to pray,
one **a Pharisee** and the other **a tax collector**.

The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus:

‘God, I thank you that **I am not like other men,**
extortioners, unjust, adulterers, **or even like this tax collector**.
I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.’

But **the tax collector**, standing far off,
would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying,
‘God, **be merciful to me, a sinner!**’”

I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other.
For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled,
but **the one who humbles himself will be exalted**.

(Luke 18:9-14 ESV)

Go and learn what this means:

‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.’
(alluding to Hosea 6:6)

For **I came not to call the righteous, but sinners**.
(Matthew 9:13 ESV)

Therefore I have hewn them by the prophets;
I have slain them by the words of my mouth,
and my [mish^epatim]²⁹⁵ goes forth as the light.

For I desire [hesed]²⁹⁶ and not sacrifice,
the **knowledge of God** rather than burnt offerings.
(Hosea 6:5-6 ESV)

- By Jesus’ dismissal of **the Pharisees** and their teaching, he made it clear to them
that their **“righteousness” was phoney, “self righteousness”**²⁹⁷

The **Gospels** report **two more specific teachings of the Pharisees which Jesus deliberately attacked**.

The Pharisees had come up with strict rules about what one could and could NOT carry on the Sabbath.
In addition, they had determined that picking a few heads of grain to eat
should NOT be allowed on the Sabbath:

Jesus said to him,

“Get up, take up your bed, and walk.”

And at once **the man was healed**, and he took up his bed and walked.

Now that day was the Sabbath.

So **the Jews said to the man who had been healed,**

“It is the Sabbath, and it is not lawful for you to take up your bed.”

But he answered them,

“The man who healed me, that man said to me,

‘Take up your bed, and walk.’”

They asked him,

“Who is the man who said to you,

‘Take up your bed and walk?’”

²⁹⁵ The word מִשְׁפָּטִים - mish^epatim is the plural of the singular noun מִשְׁפָּט - mish^epat, but it carries a completely different range of meaning.
There is no English word into which *mish^epatim* can be translated.

The simplest description of its meaning is **“the understanding, wisdom, and discernment that come from a life lived by the Way of God”**.

The meaning of *mish^epatim* is thoroughly explored in the paper **“Godly Character”** located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

²⁹⁶ See footnote 21

²⁹⁷ See also Jesus’ general condemnation of the Pharisee’s hypocritical “traditions” in Mark 7:1-13, Matthew 15:1-9.

Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was,
for Jesus had withdrawn, as there was a crowd in the place.
Afterward Jesus found him in the temple and said to him,

“See, you are well!

Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you.”

The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him.

And this was why **the Jews were persecuting Jesus,**
because he was doing these things on the Sabbath.

But Jesus answered them,

“My Father is working until now, and I am working.”

(John 5:8-17 ESV)

One Sabbath he was going through the grainfields,
and as they made their way, his disciples began to pluck heads of grain.

And the Pharisees were saying to him,

“Look, **why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?**”

And he said to them,

“Have you never read what David did,

when he was in need and was hungry,

he and those who were with him:

how he entered the house of God,

in the time of Abiathar the high priest,

and **ate the bread of the Presence,**²⁹⁸

which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat,

and also gave it to those who were with him?”

And he said to them,

“The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.

So the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath.”

(Mark 2:23-28 ESV see also Matthew 12:1-8, Luke 6:1-5)

Analysis of Jesus’ attack on the teaching of the Pharisees:

- Jesus, knowing the Pharisee’s teaching, deliberately told the healed man,
“take up your bed, and walk”
- In their arrogance, the Pharisee had the gall to believe that their corrupt teachings
had the force of law, **“it is not lawful for you to take up your bed”**
- Jesus further rubbed it in the face of the Pharisees, that his healing was equivalent
to forgiveness of sin, **“sin no more”**
- Jesus applies the coup-de-grace, doing the Work of God on the Sabbath,
is the purpose of the Sabbath, **“my Father is working”, “I am working”**
- In the grain field, the Pharisees again assume their corrupt teaching has the force of law,
“why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath”
- Jesus digs deep into an example from the life of **King David**; David was fleeing from Saul
with a small band of men; they were short of food, so David obtained the old show bread
from the priest in the Tabernacle at Nob,²⁹⁹ they **“ate the bread of the Presence”**
- Jesus makes three definitive points demonstrating
the defectiveness of the Pharisee’s understanding:
 - **“the Sabbath was made for man”**
Six days you shall labor, and do all your work,
but **the seventh day is a Sabbath** to [YHWH] your God (Jesus Christ).
On it **you shall not do any work**, you, or your son, or your daughter,
your male servant, or your female servant,
or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates.
(Exodus 20:9-10 ESV)

²⁹⁸ The prescription regarding the show bread was that the priests should eat it; see Leviticus 24:8-9;
but, there is no proscription against anyone else eating it.

²⁹⁹ See 1 Samuel 21:1-6

You shall remember that **you were a slave** in the land of Egypt,³⁰⁰
and [YHWH] your God
brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm.
Therefore [YHWH] your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.
(Deuteronomy 5:15 ESV)

➤ **“not man for the Sabbath”**

And there was evening and there was morning, **the sixth day.**

Then **God said,**

“Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.
And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea
and over the birds of the heavens
and over the livestock and over all the earth
and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

So God created man in his own image,
in the image of God he created him;
male and female he created them.
(Genesis 1:31b, 26-27 ESV)

And **on the seventh day** God finished his work that he had done,
and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done.

So **God blessed the seventh day and made it holy,**
because on it **God rested** from all his work that he had done in creation.
(Genesis 2:2-3 ESV)

➤ **“the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath”**: as the Creator of the Universe,
the Creator of human beings, the Creator of the Sabbath, the sustainer of all things,
the Saviour of all humanity, and the Head of the Church,
it is the prerogative of Jesus Christ to prescribe how the Sabbath is to be kept:

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

For **by him all things were created,** in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible,
whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities
—all things were created through him and for him.

And he is before all things, and **in him all things hold together.**

And **he is the head of the body, the church.**

He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead,
that in everything he might be preeminent.
For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,
and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven,
making peace by the blood of his cross.
(Colossians 1:15-20 ESV)

The **Pharisees** and **Sadducees** feared Jesus because of the popular **“Messianic expectation”**.
There was a general belief among the people that the Messiah was due, but they expected
a military leader who would free them from the Romans and establish Israel (i.e. themselves, the “Jews”)
as the leading nation. This is discussed in detail in section **3.4.3.4 The Messianic Hope**
in the paper **“Third Pillar - The Way of God”** located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

Jesus steadfastly resisted any association of himself with the popular expectation, for example:

After this Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias.
And **a large crowd was following him,** because they saw the signs that he was doing on the sick.
Lifting up his eyes, then, and seeing that a large crowd was coming toward him,
Jesus said to Philip,

“Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?”

One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to him,
“There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish,
but what are they for so many?”

Jesus then took the loaves, and when he had given thanks,
he distributed them to those who were seated.
So **also the fish, as much as they wanted.**

³⁰⁰ True Christians are delivered from the “Egypt” of “sin” by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.
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When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said,
“This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!”

Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king,
Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself.
(John 6:1-2, 5, 8-9, 11, 14-15 ESV)

The next day, many who had been feed followed Jesus to Capernaum,³⁰¹
where the crowd turned on Jesus over his teaching. Even some disciples turned away:

When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him,
“Rabbi, when did you come here?”

Jesus answered them,
“Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me,
not because you saw signs,
but because you ate your fill of the loaves.

Do not work for the food that perishes,
but for the food that endures to eternal life,
which the Son of Man will give to you.
For on him God the Father has set his seal.”

Jesus said to them,
“I am the bread of life;
whoever comes to me shall not hunger,
and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.
But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe.
I am the living bread that came down from heaven.
If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever.
And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.”
(John 6:25-27, 35-36, 51 ESV)

So the Jews grumbled about him, because he said,
“I am the bread that came down from heaven.”

The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying,
“How can this man give us his flesh to eat?”
(John 6:41, 52 ESV)

When many of his disciples heard it, they said,
“This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?”

But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this,
said to them,
“Do you take offense at this?”

After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him.
(John 6:60-61, 66 ESV)

Jesus’ antagonists repeatedly tried to goad him into exhibiting some “sign”³⁰²
which they could use against him presumably by association with the popular expectation.

Jesus was grieved by their treachery:

The Pharisees came and began to argue with him,
seeking from him a sign from heaven to test him.
And he sighed deeply in his spirit and said,
“Why does this generation seek a sign?
Truly, I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation.”

And he left them, got into the boat again, and went to the other side.
(Mark 8:11-13 ESV see also Matthew 16:1, Luke 11:15-16, John 4:48, 6:30)

Knowing what was to come, Jesus began to tell his disciples explicitly that he would be tortured
and killed in Jerusalem, and that he would be resurrected after three days.

He repeated the warning twice in Galilee and once more in Perea as the time drew closer:

And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things
and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes

³⁰¹ See John 6:22-24

³⁰² The one sign Jesus did give was that he would three days and three nights in the grave; see Matthew 12:38-40, 16:4, Luke 11:29-30, John 2:18-19. See the discussion of this sign in section [6.4 The Early Writing Prophets \(Amos, Hosea, and Jonah\)](#) in the paper “[The Soon Coming Kingdom of God](#)” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

and **be killed**,
and **after three days rise again**.
(Mark 8:31 ESV // Matthew 16:21, Luke 9:21-22)
They went on from there and passed through Galilee.
And he did not want anyone to know,
for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them,
“The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men,
and **they will kill him**.
And when he is killed, **after three days he will rise**.”

(Mark 9:30-31 ESV // Matthew 17:22-23, Luke 9:44)
And **they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem**,
and Jesus was walking ahead of them.
And they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid.
And taking the twelve again,
he began to tell them what was to happen to him, saying,

“See, we are going up to Jerusalem,
and **the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes**,
and **they will condemn him to death**
and deliver him over to the Gentiles.
And they will mock him and spit on him,
and flog him and kill him.
And **after three days he will rise**.”

(Mark 10:32-34 ESV // Matthew 20:17-19, Luke 18:31-33)

For the last part of his ministry, Jesus switched his center of operation to Judea and Perea.

He likely stayed in the home of John Mark’s parents in Jerusalem and in the home of Lazarus, Mary, and Martha, in Bethany. **Tension with the Sanhedrin increased continuously.**

8.4 Jesus’ Later Ministry

During Jesus’ later ministry in **Judea** and **Perea**, the hostility of the **Pharisees** and **Sadducees** increased to a new level being driven by the governing authority, the **Sanhedrin**:

Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him.

And the **Pharisees and the scribes grumbled**, saying,
“This man receives sinners and eats with them.”

The **Pharisees**, who were lovers of money, heard all these things, and they **ridiculed him**.
(Luke 15:1-2, 16:14 ESV)

And behold, **a lawyer stood up to put him to the test**, saying,
“Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”

One of the lawyers answered him,
“Teacher, in saying these things **you insult us also**.”

And he said,
“**Woe to you lawyers** also!
For you load people with burdens hard to bear,
and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers. ...”
(Luke 10:25, 11:45-46 ESV see also Matthew 23:13-29)

As he went away from there,
the **scribes** and the **Pharisees** began to press him hard and to **provoke him**
to speak about many things,
lying in wait for him,
to catch him in something he might say.
(Luke 11:53-54 ESV)

The Apostle John repeatedly alludes to the plot to kill Jesus:

Has not Moses given you the [nomos]?³⁰³

Yet none of you keeps the [nomos].

Why do you seek to kill me?

Some of the people of Jerusalem therefore said,
“Is not this **the man whom they seek to kill**?”

³⁰³ See footnote 84
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The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering these things about him,
and the **chief priests** and **Pharisees sent officers to arrest him**.
(John 7:19, 25, 32 ESV)

Even the crowd in the Temple was turned against Jesus by the Pharisees and Sadducees:

I know that you are offspring of Abraham;
yet **you seek to kill me** because my word finds no place in you.

They answered him,
"Abraham is our father."

Jesus said to them,
"If you were Abraham's children,
you would be doing the works Abraham did,
but now **you seek to kill me**,
a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God.
This is not what Abraham did. ..."

Jesus said to them,
"Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, **I am**."

So **they picked up stones** to throw at him,
but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.
(John 8:37, 39-40, 58-59 ESV)

The Jews picked up stones again to stone him.

Jesus answered them,
"I have shown you many good works from the Father;
for which of them are you going to stone me?"

The Jews answered him,
"It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you
but **for blasphemy**, because **you**, being a man, **make yourself God**."
(John 10:31-33 ESV)

As the crucifixion was approaching, **the hatred of Jesus by the Pharisees and Sadducees intensified**.

On the Sabbath, Jesus found a veritable bazar in the Temple.

Knowing he still had a few days, **Jesus once again demonstrated his authority:**

Now the **chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders**
that if anyone knew where he was,
he should let them know, so **that they might arrest him**.
(John 11:57 ESV)

And they came to Jerusalem.

And **he entered the temple**
and **began to drive out those who sold and those who bought in the temple,**
and he overturned the tables of the money-changers
and the seats of those who sold pigeons.

And he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple.

And he was teaching them and saying to them,
"Is it not written,
'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations?'
(citing Isaiah 56:7b)

But **you have made it a den of robbers**."
(alluding to Jeremiah 7:11)

And the **chief priests and the scribes heard it and were seeking a way to destroy him**,
for they feared him, because all the crowd was astonished at his teaching.
(Mark 11:15-18 ESV see also Matthew 21:12-13, Luke 19:45-48)

Jesus acknowledged his great distress over what was going to happen to him
and the results it would have. Also, **Jesus was deeply grieved** over the impending fate of Jerusalem:

I came to cast fire on the earth,
and would that it were already kindled!

I have a baptism to be baptized with,
and **how great is my distress** until it is accomplished!

Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth?
No, I tell you, but rather division.
(Luke 12:49-51 ESV)

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem,

the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it!

How often would I have gathered your children together

as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and **you were not willing!**

Behold, **your house is forsaken.**

And I tell you, you will not see me until you say,

‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!’

(citing Psalm 118:26a)

(Luke 13:34-35 ESV)

When the time came, **Jesus was ready to accomplish to primary purpose of his life**
– **to suffer** a horrible death as an all-encompassing sacrifice for the sins of humanity.

8.5 Jesus’ Trial and Crucifixion

As prophesized in Zechariah 3:9, Jesus’ final suffering occurred on a single day,
the 14th Day of Nisan, a Tuesday evening and a Wednesday, by modern reckoning.³⁰⁴

אֶחָד	בַּיּוֹם	הַזֶּה	הָאָרֶץ	אֲוֹן	אֶת־	אֶת־
’eḥad	bēyom	hahî	ha’arets	’awon	’eth	umash’eti
single	in day	the this	the earth	iniquity of	and I will	remove

Literally: and I will remove iniquity of the earth the this in day single

Better: And I will remove [the] iniquity of the earth in this single day.

The “singularity” of Jesus’ sacrifice is alluded to by the author of the **Book of Hebrews**:

And every priest stands daily at his service,
offering repeatedly the same sacrifices,
which can never take away sins.

But when Christ had offered **for all time a single sacrifice for sins**,
he sat down at the right hand of God,
waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet.

For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.
(Hebrews 10:11-14 ESV see also 2:9, 9:25-26)

On the evening before his crucifixion, after instituting the foot-washing ceremony,
and before establishing the symbols of the New Testament Passover, **Jesus began to be sorrowful**:

After saying these things,

Jesus was troubled in his spirit, and testified,

“Truly, truly, I say to you, **one of you will betray me.**”

So that disciple, leaning back against Jesus, said to him,

“Lord, who is it?”

Jesus answered,

“It is he to whom I will give this morsel of bread when I have dipped it.”

So when he had dipped the morsel, he gave it to **Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot.**

Then after he had taken the morsel, **Satan entered into him.**

Jesus said to him,

“**What you are going to do, do quickly.**”

(John 13:21, 25-27 ESV see also Mark 14:18, Matthew 26:21, Luke 22:15, 21-22)

Jesus was further grieved by the knowledge that all the Apostles would abandon him:

And Jesus said to them,

“**You will all fall away**, for it is written,

‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.’

(citing Zechariah 13:7bα)

(Mark 14:27 ESV // Matthew 26:31 see also John 16:32)

³⁰⁴ See the chronological chart “**Jesus Last Ten Days**” located at <https://mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca/chronological-charts>
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A little later, Jesus and the eleven Apostle went out of the city to the **Garden of Gethsemane** on the **Mount of Olives**³⁰⁵ where they were joined by other disciples.³⁰⁶

In the Garden, **Jesus went to pray privately**, but he enjoined the disciples also to pray:

And when he came to the place, he said to them,

“Pray that you may not enter into temptation.”

And **he** withdrew from them about a stone’s throw,

and **knelt down and prayed**,³⁰⁷ saying,

“Father, **if you are willing, remove this cup from me.**

Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.”

And there appeared to him **an angel** from heaven, **strengthening him**.

And **being in agony he prayed more earnestly**;

and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

And when he rose from prayer,

he came to **the disciples** and found them **sleeping** for sorrow, and he said to them,

“Why are you sleeping?

Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation.”

(Luke 22:40-46 ESV see also Mark 14:33-41 // Matthew 26:37-45)

Jesus prayer lays bare both Jesus humanity and his divinity. By his divinity, Jesus knew exactly what was about to happen. By his humanity, he dreaded it, **“if you are willing”**, **“remove this cup from me”**. Jesus, as a human being, was in agony over what he was about to face, **“being in agony he prayed more earnestly”**. God the Father sent **“an angel”** **“strengthening him”**. The weakness of the disciples was manifest, **“the disciples”**, **“sleeping”**. Jesus divinity gave him the strength to keep going. Before too long the **mob from the Sanhedrin** arrived and **Jesus was arrested**.³⁰⁸

The trial of Jesus by the Sanhedrin was a complete mockery of justice.³⁰⁹

From the start, and throughout the process, Jesus was mistreated:

The high priest then questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching.

Jesus answered him,

“I have spoken openly to the world.

I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple,

where all Jews come together.

I have said nothing in secret.

Why do you ask me?

Ask those who have heard me what I said to them;

they know what I said.”

When he had said these things,

one of the officers standing by struck Jesus with his hand, saying,

“Is that how you answer the high priest?”

Jesus answered him,

“If what I said is wrong, **bear witness about the wrong**;

but if what I said is right, **why do you strike me?**”

(John 18:19-23 ESV)

And **some began to spit on him** and to **cover his face** and to **strike him**, saying to him,

“Prophesy!”

And **the guards received him with blows**.

(Mark 14:65 ESV see also Matthew 26:67-68, Luke 22:63-65)

The Sanhedrin could assemble no witnesses against Jesus.

They condemned Jesus based solely on their own definition of “blasphemy”:

Now the **chief priests** and **the whole council**

were **seeking testimony against Jesus** to put him to death,

but they found none.

³⁰⁵ See Mark 14:26,32 // Matthew 26:30,36

³⁰⁶ See Mark 14:51-52

³⁰⁷ See John chapter 17

³⁰⁸ See Mark 14:43-50, Matthew 26:47-56, Luke 22:47-53, John 18:2-12

³⁰⁹ See Mark 14:53,55-65, 15:1a, Matthew 26:57,59-68, 27:1, Luke 22:54a,63-71, John 18:12-14,19-24

For **many bore false witness** against him, but **their testimony did not agree.**
(Mark 14:55-56 ESV // Matthew 26:59-60a)

But he remained silent and made no answer.
Again the high priest asked him,

"Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?"

And **Jesus said,**

"I am,

and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power,
and coming with the clouds of heaven."

And the high priest tore his garments and said,

"What further witnesses do we need?

You have heard his blasphemy.

What is your decision?"

And **they all condemned him as deserving death.**

(Mark 14:61-64 ESV // Matthew 26:63-66)

Early in the morning, **Jesus was delivered to the Roman Governor, Pilate.** Pilate was a weak man,
and he was manipulated by the Jews for political reason. **Pilate had been warned by his wife**
to avoid condemning Jesus.³¹⁰ Pilate knew the Jews had no real case against Jesus,³¹¹
so he tried to have him released.³¹² Throughout the time that Jesus was under the control of Pilate,
the Jews vehemently continued to attack Jesus:

Then the whole company of them arose and brought him before Pilate.

And **they began to accuse him,** saying,

"We found this man misleading our nation
and **forbidding us to give tribute to Caesar,**³¹³
and saying that he himself is Christ, a king."

But **they were urgent,** saying,

"He stirs up the people,
teaching throughout all Judea,
from Galilee even to this place."

(Luke 23:1-2, 5 ESV)

So Pilate went outside to them and said,

"What accusation do you bring against this man?"

They answered him,

"If this man were not doing evil,
we would not have delivered him over to you."³¹⁴

Pilate said to them,

"Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law."

The Jews said to him,

"It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death."

(John 18:29-31 ESV)

Now **the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus.**

The governor again said to them,

"Which of the two do you want me to release for you?"

And they said,

"Barabbas."

Pilate said to them,

"Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?"

They all said,

"Let him be crucified!"

And he said,

"Why?

What evil has he done?"

³¹⁰ See Matthew 27:19

³¹¹ See Mark 15:10 // Matthew 27:18

³¹² See Luke 23:4 // John 18:38b, Mark 15:9 // John 18:39b, Matthew 27:17, Luke 23:14,16,20,22, John 19:4,6b

³¹³ This, of course is a lie; see Mark 12:14-17 // Matthew 22:16-22 // Luke 20:21-26

³¹⁴ This is a completely illogical statement.

But **they shouted all the more,**
"Let him be crucified!"

(Matthew 27:20-23 ESV see also Mark 15:11-15, Luke 23:20-23)

In the end Pilate succumbed to the political pressure applied by the Jews,

and condemned Jesus to be crucified. He tried to absolve his guilt by publicly washing his hands:

When the **chief priests** and the **officers** saw him, they cried out,
"Crucify him, crucify him!"

Pilate said to them,
"Take him yourselves and crucify him,
for I find no guilt in him."

The Jews answered him,
"We have a law,
and according to that law he ought to die
because he has made himself the Son of God."

From then on Pilate sought to release him,
but the Jews cried out,
"If you release this man, **you are not Caesar's friend.**
Everyone who makes himself a king opposes Caesar."

So **when Pilate heard these words,** he brought Jesus out
and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called The Stone Pavement, and in Aramaic Gabbatha.
He said to **the Jews,**
"Behold your King!"

They **cried out,**
"Away with him, away with him, crucify him!"

Pilate said to them,
"Shall I crucify your King?"

The **chief priests** answered,
"We have no king but Caesar."³¹⁵

So he delivered him over to them to be crucified.
(John 19:6-7, 12-13, 14b-16a ESV)

So **when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing,**
but rather that a riot was beginning,
he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying,
"I am innocent of this man's blood;
see to it yourselves."

(Matthew 27:24 ESV)

Jesus was scourged by the soldiers.³¹⁶ The crown of thrones was applied to Jesus' head.³¹⁷
Jesus was paraded through the streets to Golgotha.³¹⁸ Jesus was nailed to the cross³¹⁹
where he suffered derision³²⁰ and eventually died a horrible death.³²¹ **The pinnacle of Jesus suffering**
came just before his death. On the cross Jesus became the sins of all humanity,

God the Father had to look away as Jesus died:

And at **the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice,**
"Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?"

which means,
"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"
(citing Psalm 22:1a)

(Mark 15:34 ESV)

³¹⁵ By their own words, the Jews rejected God in favour of Caesar.

³¹⁶ See John 19:1

³¹⁷ See John 19:2, Mark 15:17 // Matthew 27:29

³¹⁸ See Mark 15:21-22 // Matthew 27:32-33 // Luke 23:26,33a, John 19:17

³¹⁹ See Mark 15:24a // Matthew 27:35a // Luke 23:33aβ // John 19:18a

³²⁰ See Mark 15:24-32, Matthew 27:39-44, Luke 23:35-39

³²¹ See Luke 23:46, Mark 15:37 // Matthew 27:50 // John 19:30b

After the Resurrection, Luke reports two occasions upon which **Jesus commented on the necessity of his suffering**, and at the Ascension Luke summarizes:

That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem ...
And he said to them,

“O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!

Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?”

(Luke 24:13, 25-26 ESV)

And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem.

And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together ...

As they were talking about these things,

Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them,

“Peace to you!”

Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,

and said to them,

“Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead ...”

(Luke 24:33, 36, 45-46 ESV)

He presented himself alive to them **after his suffering** by many proofs,

appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

(Acts 1:3 ESV)

The work of Jesus Christ on earth, as a human being, was finished. The **Plan of God** could now proceed. **The Suffering of Jesus Christ has paved the way for the suffering of humanity to greatly diminish and eventually be no more.**

9. The End of the Suffering of Humanity

The suffering of humanity began when Adam and Eve sinned and were ejected from the Garden of Eden. Since then, **human sin**, aided and abetted by Satan the Devil, **has brought untold suffering to humanity:**

For we have already charged that **all ... are under sin**,
as it is written:

“**None is righteous**, no, not one;

no one understands;

no one seeks for God. ...”

(alluding to Psalm 14:3)

... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God ...

(Romans 3:9b-11, 23 ESV)

King David indelibly wrote the lesson that while repentance brings forgiveness of sin, it does NOT always remove the penalty of sin. The **Patriarch Job** suffered untold misery under the hand of Satan the Devil to bring him to a point where he could recognize his sin. The **Prophets of God** suffered persecution as they carried God’s message to Israel.

At the time of the **First Advent**, Jesus found multitudes of people suffering illness, deformity, and demon possession. **Jesus healed untold numbers**. **Today** the world is plagued by these same afflictions, but human sin has added a whole raft of **degenerative diseases**.

True Worshippers of God, True Christians, are NOT immune to the general suffering.

In fact, in this world, **True Christians are promised “tribulation”, “suffering”, and “affliction”:**

I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace.

In the world you will have tribulation.

But take heart; I have overcome the world.

(John 16:33 ESV)

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?

Rejoice in hope, **be patient in tribulation**, be constant in prayer.

(Romans 8:35, 12:12 ESV)

... through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.

(Acts 14:22b ESV)

The Spirit [itself]³²² bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, **provided we suffer with him** in order that we may also be glorified with him. (Romans 8:16-17 ESV)

... that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may **share his sufferings**, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead. (Philippians 3:10-11 ESV)

So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. **For this light momentary affliction** is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison ... (2 Corinthians 4:16-17 ESV)

The suffering of humanity that has occurred down through history will end, but there remains lessons to be learned from **suffering in just measure** as allowed by God.

9.1 The Purpose of Human Suffering

God allows human suffering for a reason. Human life is very short:

The years of our life are seventy, or even by reason of strength eighty; yet their span is but toil and trouble; they **are soon gone**, and we fly away. (Psalm 90:10 ESV)

Come now, you who say,
“Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town
and spend a year there and trade and make a profit”
—yet **you do not know what tomorrow will bring**.

What is your life?
For **you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes**. (James 4:13-14 ESV)

The purpose of this short human life is for each person to come to an informed decision as to whether or NOT they desire to be part of the God Family and participate in eternity with God the Father and Jesus Christ. This is the whole message of the **Plan of God**.³²³
Human suffering brings home to each person that this life is finite. This focuses a person’s attention on the purpose of life. **God’s desire is that each and every person will choose life:**

See, **I have set before you today life and good**, death and evil.

If you obey the commandments of [YHWH] your God that I command you today,
by loving [YHWH] your God,
by **walking in his ways**,
and by keeping his commandments and his statutes and his [mish^epatim],³²⁴
then you shall live and multiply,
and [YHWH] your God will bless you ...

I call heaven and earth to witness against you today,
that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse.

Therefore **choose life** ...
(Deuteronomy 30:15-16a, 19 ESV)

Say to them,
As I live, declares the Lord [YHWH],
I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked,
but that the wicked **turn from his way and live**;
turn back, turn back from your evil ways,
for **why will you die** ... ?
(Ezekiel 33:11 ESV)

³²² See footnote 64

³²³ See the paper “Pillar Two - The Plan of God” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

³²⁴ See footnote 295

However, **the suffering of humanity** that has been inflicted by Satan the Devil through human sin **is far in excess of what God intended** when Adam and Eve were ejected from the Garden of Eden. When Satan is out of the way and all humanity is learning the **Way of God**, the cause of the suffering of humanity will be removed; but also, **God promises healing for humanity** in the World Tomorrow:

And he will give rain for the seed with which you sow the ground,
and bread, the produce of the ground, which will be rich and plenteous.

In that day your livestock will graze in large pastures,
and the oxen and the donkeys that work the ground will eat seasoned fodder,
which has been winnowed with shovel and fork.

And on every lofty mountain and every high hill there will be brooks running with water ...

Moreover, the light of the moon will be as the light of the sun,
and the light of the sun will be sevenfold, as the light of seven days,

in the day when [YHWH] binds up the brokenness of his people,
and heals the wounds inflicted by his blow.

(Isaiah 30:23-26 ESV)

And it shall be said,

“Build up, build up, **prepare the way,**
remove every obstruction from my people’s way.”

I have seen his ways, but **I will heal him;**

I will lead him and restore comfort to him and his mourners, creating the fruit of the lips.

Peace, peace, to the far and to the near says [YHWH], and **I will heal him.**

(Isaiah 57:14, 18-19 ESV)

For **I will restore health to you,** and **your wounds I will heal,** declares [YHWH],
because they have called you an outcast:

‘It is Zion, for whom no one cares!’

Behold, **I will bring to it health and healing,**

and **I will heal them**

and reveal to them abundance of prosperity and security.

(Jeremiah 30:17, 33:6 ESV)

And on the banks, on both sides of the river, **there will grow all kinds of trees** for food.

Their leaves will not wither, nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every month,
because the water for them flows from the sanctuary.

Their fruit will be for food, and **their leaves for healing.**

(Ezekiel 47:12 ESV)

I will heal their apostasy;

I will love them freely, for my anger has turned from them.

(Hosea 14:4 ESV)

But for you who fear my name,

the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings.

You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall.

(Malachi 4:2 ESV)

Today we live in a world of sin and death, Satan’s world, which is the cause of the enormous suffering of humanity. In the World Tomorrow, **there will remain only measured suffering** so that people can continue to learn the lessons intended by God.

The **Way of Salvation** will be opened to all people. All humanity will have opportunity to learn to live by the **Way of God** and make the choice to “choose life”, or not.

9.2 The Joy of Salvation

When all humanity is learning to live by the **Way of God**, **joy** and **rejoicing** will replace the grief caused by **the suffering of humanity** experienced throughout history. Starting with the **Second Exodus:** the **Song of the Returness** is a song of **joy** and **thanksgiving:**

You will say **in that day:**

“I will give thanks to you, [YHWH], for though you were angry with me,
your anger turned away, that **you might comfort me.**

Behold, **God is my salvation;**

I will trust, and will not be afraid;

for [Yah, YHWH,] is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation.”

With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.

And you will say in that day:

“Give thanks to [YHWH], call upon his name,
make known his deeds among the peoples,
proclaim that his name is exalted.

Sing praises to [YHWH], for he has done gloriously;
let this be made known in all the earth.

Shout, and sing for joy, O inhabitant of Zion,
for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.”

(Isaiah 12:1-6 ESV)

Those called to the Second Exodus will begin to understand the significance of their calling:

They lift up their voices, they **sing for joy;**
over the majesty of [YHWH] they shout from the west.

Therefore in the east give glory to [YHWH];

in the coastlands of the sea, give glory to the name of [YHWH], the God of Israel.

From the ends of the earth we hear songs of praise, of glory to the Righteous One.

[YHWH], you are my God;

I will exalt you; I will praise your name,

for **you have done wonderful things,**

plans formed of old, faithful and sure.

It will be said on that day,

“Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us.

This is [YHWH]; we have waited for him;

let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”

(Isaiah 24:14-16a, 25:1, 9 ESV)

And **a highway shall be there,** and it shall be called **the Way of Holiness;**
the unclean shall not pass over it.

It shall belong to **those who walk on the way;**

even if they are fools, they shall not go astray.

No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;

they shall not be found there, but **the redeemed shall walk there.**

And **the ransomed of [YHWH] shall return** and come to Zion with singing;

everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;

they shall obtain **gladness** and **joy,** and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

(Isaiah 35:8-10 ESV)

The nation of **New Israel** will experience **the beneficence of God,**

and will be **eager to share it** with the rest of humanity:

For **[YHWH] comforts Zion;**

he comforts all her waste places and makes her wilderness like Eden,

her desert like the garden of [YHWH];

joy and **gladness** will be found in her, **thanksgiving** and the **voice of song.**

And **the ransomed of [YHWH]** shall return and come to Zion **with singing;**

everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;

they shall obtain **gladness** and **joy,** and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

(Isaiah 51:3, 11 ESV)

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of **him who brings good news,**

who **publishes peace,** who brings good news of happiness,

who **publishes salvation,**

who says to Zion,

“Your God reigns.”

The voice of your **watchmen**—they lift up their voice;

together they **sing for joy;**

for eye to eye they see the return of [YHWH] to Zion.

Break forth together into singing, you waste places of **Jerusalem,**

for [YHWH] has comforted his people; he has redeemed Jerusalem.

[YHWH] has bared his holy arm before **the eyes of all the nations,**

and **all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.**

(Isaiah 52:7-10 ESV)

Arise, shine, for **your light has come**,³²⁵ and the glory of [YHWH] has risen upon you.
 For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples;
 but [YHWH] will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you.
 And **nations shall come to your light**, and kings to the brightness of your rising.
 Your gates shall be open continually;
 day and night they shall not be shut,
 that **people may bring to you the wealth of the nations**,
 with their **kings led in procession**.
 Whereas you have been forsaken and hated, with no one passing through,
 I will make you majestic forever, **a joy from age to age**.
 (Isaiah 60:1-3, 11, 15 ESV)

As the Gospel spreads to the whole world and all humanity begins to live by the Way of God,
 there will be universal **peace, prosperity, abundance, and freedom**:

On this mountain [YHWH] of hosts will make **for all peoples**
a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine,³²⁶
 of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined.

And **he will swallow up** on this mountain
the covering that is cast over all peoples,
the veil that is spread over all nations.³²⁷

He will swallow up death forever;
 and the Lord [YHWH] will wipe away tears from all faces,
 and the reproach of his people
 he will take away from all the earth, for [YHWH] has spoken.

It will be said on that day,
 "Behold, **this is our God**;
 we have waited for him, that **he might save us**.
 This is [YHWH]; we have waited for him;
 let us **be glad and rejoice in his salvation**."
 (Isaiah 25:6-9 ESV)

Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters;
 and he who has no money, come, **buy and eat!**
 Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread,
 and your labor for that which does not satisfy?

Listen diligently to me, and **eat what is good**, and **delight yourselves in rich food**.
Incline your ear, and **come to me; hear**, that your [being] (nephesh)³²⁸ may live;
Seek [YHWH] while he may be found; call upon him while he is near;

For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven
 and do not return there but water the earth,
 making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,

so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;
 it shall not return to me empty,
 but **it shall accomplish that which I purpose**,
 and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

For you shall go out in **joy** and be led forth in **peace**;
 the mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into **singing**,
 and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.
 (Isaiah 55:1-3a, 6, 10-12 ESV)

Instead of your shame there shall be a double portion;
instead of dishonor they shall **rejoice** in their lot;
 therefore in their land they shall possess a double portion;
 they shall have **everlasting joy**.

I will greatly rejoice in [YHWH];
 my [being] (nephesh) shall exult in my God,
 for he has clothed me with the **garments of salvation**;

³²⁵ See the description of Jerusalem in the World Tomorrow in Ezekiel chapters 40 through 48.

³²⁶ This "rich feast" is a metaphor from the Truth of the Bible.

³²⁷ This "veil" is what prevents people from understanding the Bible.

³²⁸ See footnote 1

he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

For as the earth brings forth its sprouts,
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to sprout up,
so the Lord [YHWH] will cause righteousness and praise to sprout up before all the nations.
(Isaiah 61:7, 10-11 ESV)

So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him,
“If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples,
and you will know the truth,
and the truth will set you free.
So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. ...”
(John 8:31-32, 36 ESV)

Those who “choose life” will experience the joy of salvation, they will become members of the God Family along with those who participated in the First Resurrection. To be transformed from a mortal physical body to an immortal spiritual body is the definition of “salvation”.
In the God Family, there will be no more physical suffering.

9.3 The Final Enemy

God is love.³²⁹ In the end, **no one will have any suffering:**

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth,
for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.
And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem,
coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.
And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,
“Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man.
He will dwell with them, and they will be his people,
and God himself will be with them as their God.
He will wipe away every tear from their eyes,
and death shall be no more,
neither shall there be mourning,
nor crying,
nor pain anymore,
for the former things have passed away.”
(Revelation 21:1-4 ESV)

The **Prophet Isaiah** was given a glimpse of this time:
For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth,
and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind.
But be glad and rejoice forever in that which I create;
for behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy, and her people to be a gladness.
I will rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in my people;
no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping and the cry of distress.
(Isaiah 65:17-19 ESV)

The Apostle Paul explains the final enemy:

Then comes the end,
when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father
after destroying every rule and every authority and power.
For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.
The last enemy to be destroyed is death.
For this perishable body must put on the imperishable,
and this mortal body must put on immortality.
When the perishable puts on the imperishable,
and the mortal puts on immortality,

³²⁹ See 1 John 4:7-21
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then shall come to pass the saying that is written:

"Death is swallowed up in victory."

(alluding to Isaiah 25:8a)

"O death, where is your victory?

O death, where is your sting?"

(alluding to Hosea 13:14bα)

(1 Corinthians 15:24-26, 53-55 ESV)

During the build-up to the Transfiguration,³³⁰

Jesus had defined **the objective of the New Testament Church**

to be **an unrelenting attack on death** until the victory is achieved:

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi,

he asked his disciples,

"Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"

And they said,

"Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah,

and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

He said to them,

"But who do you say that I am?"

Simon Peter replied,

"You are the Christ,

the Son of the living God."

And Jesus answered him,

"Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah!

For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.

And I tell you, you are Peter ,

and **on this Rock³³¹ (Jesus Christ)³³² I will build my church,**

and the gates of [death] (hadēs) shall not prevail against it.

I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven,³³³

and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven,

and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

(Matthew 16:13-19 ESV)

At the First Advent, **Jesus came into the earth and suffered a horrible death** so that human sin can be propitiated. Jesus sacrifice was a singularity – no other sacrifice for sin will ever be needed.

Jesus death was both necessary and sufficient to pay for the sins of all humanity.

The suffering of humanity has been brought on by Satan the Devil through human sin.

This will NOT occur in the World Tomorrow.

9.4 The Last Word on Suffering

In speaking with the disciples **before he suffered,**

Jesus makes sure they understand the purpose of his suffering:

"Let not your hearts be troubled.

Believe in God;

believe also in me.

In my Father's house are many rooms.

If it were not so, would I have told you that **I go to prepare a place for you?**³³⁴

And if I go and prepare a place for you,

I will come again and will take you to myself,

that where I am you may be also.

And **you know the way to where I am going."**

³³⁰ See Mark 9:2-8, Matthew 17:1-8, Luke 9:28-36

³³¹ See Ephesians 2:19-21

³³² See 1 Corinthians 10:4

³³³ **"The Keys"** are the understanding of the Bible made available by the Holy Spirit;

see the discussion of **The Parable of the Doorkeeper** in section **7.5.4 Jesus' Parables on Servitude**

³³⁴ See John 8:21-22, 13:33,36, 16:7

Jesus said to him,

"I am the way,
and **the truth,**
and **the life.**

No one comes to the Father except through me.

If you love me, you will **keep my commandments.**

Whoever has my commandments and keeps them,
he it is who loves me.

And **he who loves me will be loved by my Father,**
and I will love him and manifest myself to him.

Peace I leave with you;
my **peace** I give to you.
Not as the world gives do I give to you.

Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. ..."

(John 14:1-4, 6, 15, 21, 27 ESV)

Jesus had to go through with his sacrifice so that he could return to eternity with God the Father
and assume his role as High Priest for those persons who would be called to conversion,

"I go to prepare a place for you". The foundation of the Gospel is the Ten Commandments,
"keep my commandments", which define "love", **"if you love me"**.

Jesus' sacrifice makes all this possible, **"I am the way"**.

In his final prayer,

Jesus is specific that his words are not only for the disciples, but also for the **New Testament Church:**

For **I have given them the words** that you gave me,
and they have received them
and have come **to know in truth** that I came from you;
and **they have believed** that you sent me.

I do not ask for these only,
but also for those who will believe in me through their word ...

(John 17:8, 20 ESV)

When Jesus returns, **"I will come again and will take you to myself"**, the First Resurrection will occur,
and all the prophecies of the World Tomorrow will begin to be fulfilled:

It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of [YHWH]
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,
and shall be lifted up above the hills;
and all the nations shall flow to it,
and many peoples shall come, and say:

"Come, let us go up to the mountain of [YHWH],
to the house of the God of Jacob,
that **he may teach us his ways** and that **we may walk in his paths.**"

For out of Zion shall go forth [**torah**]³³⁵ [even]³³⁶ **the word** of [YHWH] from Jerusalem.
(Isaiah 2:2-3 ESV // Micah 4:1-2)

The **Prophet Isaiah** was given an oracle describing the **First Resurrection**
and **the inception of the Kingdom of God – all made possible by the suffering of Jesus Christ:**

In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah:

"We have a strong city; he sets up **salvation** as walls and bulwarks.
Open the gates, that **the righteous nation that keeps faith may enter in.**

You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you,
because he trusts in you.

Trust in [YHWH] forever, for the [Yah, YHWH,] is **an everlasting rock.**

The path of the righteous is level;
you make level the way of the righteous.
In the path of your [mish'patim],³³⁷ [YHWH], we wait for you;
your name and remembrance are the desire of our [heart] (nephesh).³³⁸

³³⁵ See footnote [202](#)

³³⁶ See footnote [205](#)

³³⁷ See footnote [295](#)

³³⁸ See footnote [1](#)

My [mind] (nephesh) yearns for you in the night;
my spirit within me earnestly seeks you.

For when your [mish'patim] are in the earth,
the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness.

[YHWH], **you will ordain peace** for us,
for you have indeed done for us all our works.

Your dead shall live; their bodies shall rise.

You who dwell in the dust, **awake and sing for joy!**

For your dew is a dew of light, and the earth will give birth to the dead.

(Isaiah 26:1-4, 7-9, 12, 19 ESV)

Only through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ is forgiveness of human sin possible. That forgiveness is the basis of salvation by which God will admit human beings into the Family of God:

Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression
for the remnant of his inheritance?

He does not retain his anger forever, because **he delights in [hesed].**³³⁹

He will again have **compassion** on us;

he will tread our **iniquities underfoot.**

You will cast all our **sins into the depths of the sea.**

(Micah 7:18-19 ESV)

In the following oracle given to Ezekiel, the "**covenant of peace**" is with all humanity.

The term, "**the house of Israel**", is best taken as "**spiritual Israel**", which in the World Tomorrow will come to include all humanity – "**I am your God**", "**my sheep**", "**my people**":

I will make with them a covenant of peace and banish wild beasts from the [earth] ('eret),³⁴⁰
so that they may dwell securely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods.

And I will make them and the places all around my hill a blessing,

and I will send down the showers in their season; they shall be showers of blessing.

And the trees of the field shall yield their fruit, and the earth ('eret) shall yield its increase,

and they shall be secure in their land.

And **they shall know that I am [YHWH],**

when I break the bars of their yoke,³⁴¹

and **deliver them from the hand of those who enslaved them.**

They shall no more be a prey to the nations,

nor shall the beasts of the [earth] ('eret) devour them.

They shall **dwell securely**, and **none shall make them afraid.**

And I will provide for them a renowned place for planting

so that they shall no more be consumed with hunger in the [earth] ('eret),

and no longer suffer the reproach of the nations.

And they shall know that I am [YHWH] their God with them,

and that they, **the house of Israel**, are **my people**, declares the Lord [YHWH].

And you are **my sheep**, human sheep of my pasture,

and **I am your God**, declares the Lord [YHWH].

(Ezekiel 34:25-31 ESV)

In the World Tomorrow, **the suffering of humanity will end** – the grievous sins of humanity caused by Satan the Devil will stop. During the Millenium, there will remain measured suffering of a gentle nature so that human beings can learn the lessons God intends. Finally, when all who "**choose life**" are admitted to the Family of God, **there will be no further suffering.**

I hope you have enjoyed reading this paper!

³³⁹ See footnote 21

³⁴⁰ See footnote 221

³⁴¹ This "yoke" is enslavement to sin – the breakage is the "freedom" promised by Jesus, "you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John 8:32).

Excursus 1 – The Necessity of Love

The most important words for “love” in the Bible are:

- אָהַב - ‘ahav: a verb with the following derivative nouns: אַהַב - ‘ahav, אֹהֶב - ‘ohav, אַהָבָה - ‘ahavah; see **TWOT** article 29 pages 14-15
- אָהָבָה - hesed: a noun with no extant verbal root; see **TWOT** article 698a, pages 305-307
- ἀγαπάω - agapaō: a verb; see **GEL** pages 4-5
- ἀγάπη - agapē: a noun; see **GEL** pages 5-6
- φιλέω - phileō: a verb; see **GEL** pages 866-867
- φίλος - philos: a noun; see **GEL** page 868

The verb, ‘ahav, and its derivative nouns have a range of meaning more or less equivalent to the English word, “love”. The noun, **hesed**, **cannot be directly translated into English** – there is NO equivalent word in English; the closest phrase to express its meaning is “**covenant love**”. This is discussed in detail in **Excursus 2 – hesed** in the paper “**Covenants of Grace**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

In non-biblical Greek, the verbs agapaō and phileō and the nouns agapē and philos are more or less synonymous. The New Testament authors, however, have made agapē almost a technical term for the love of God. The Greek words for physical love *εραω* and *ερως* are NEVER used by the New Testament authors.

No Greek words have a connotation of “covenant love” comparable to hesed.

The Apostle John uses agapē and agapaō to express “God is love”

– **John’s definition of “God is love” is, perhaps, the best definition of hesed in the Bible:**

Beloved, **let us love (agapaō) one another, for love (agapē) is from God,** and **whoever loves (agapaō) has been [begotten] (gennaō)³⁴² of God and knows God.**

Anyone who does not love (agapaō) does not know God, because God is love (agapē).

In this the **love (agapē) of God was made manifest** among us, that **God sent his only Son into the world**, so that we might live through him.

In this is love (agapē), **not that we have loved (agapaō) God but that he loved (agapaō) us** and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Beloved, if God so loved (agapaō) us, **we also ought to love (agapaō) one another.**

No one has ever seen God;

if we love (agapaō) one another,

God abides in us and his love (agapē) is perfected in us.

By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.

And we have seen and testify that **the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.**

Whoever **confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him**, and he in God.

So **we have come to know and to believe the love (agapē) that God has for us.**

God is love (agapē), and **whoever abides in love (agapē) abides in God**, and God abides in him.

By this is love (agapē) perfected with us, so that **we may have confidence for the day of judgment**, because as he is so also are we in this world.

There is no fear in love (agapē), but perfect love (agapē) casts out fear.

For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love (agapē).

We love (agapaō) because he first loved (agapaō) us.

(1 John 4:7-19 ESV)

The most important aspect of **hesed** is **covenant commitment**. The best analogy, in human terms, is the commitment in a godly marriage. **When God enters into a covenant, he will under no circumstances break the commitment. God requires human beings with whom he enters into a covenant to learn hesed.** The Sinai Covenant, by which God created the nation of Ancient Israel, was a failure because Israel as a nation failed to learn **hesed**; and, very few individuals in the nation, learned **hesed**. Israel repeatedly broke the Sinai Covenant, and the nation was terminated as prescribed by the covenant curses.

³⁴² The verb, γεννάω - gennaō, covers the entire process from begetting through birth; see **GEL** pages 154-155.

To terminate the covenant was much more difficult

– it required **the death of the covenanter: YHWH, Jesus Christ:**

In speaking of a **new covenant**,³⁴³ he **makes the first one obsolete**.

For where **a will** (diathēkē)³⁴⁴ is involved,
the death of the one who **made it** (diatithēmai) must be established.

For **a will** (diathēkē) takes effect only at death,
since it is not in force as long as the one who **made it** (diatithēmai) is alive.
(Hebrews 8:13a, 9:16-17 ESV)

The “**new covenant**” is, of course, the covenant of “**baptism**”, whereby a person becomes a Christian.
Baptism is a personal, one-to-one, commitment between God the Father and each Christian.

The most important outcome of becoming a Christian, is to learn *hesed*. There is no turning back
from the New Covenant – God will never break his commitment to the covenant. If a Christian breaks
his/her commitment to the New Covenant, it will result in the termination of the covenant with a death
– the eternal death of the person who broke the covenant:

No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life.
Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you.

I will not leave you or forsake you.
(Joshua 1:5 ESV)

Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have,
for **he has said**,

“I will never leave you nor forsake you.”
(citing Joshua 1:5)

So we can confidently say,
“The Lord is my helper;

I will not fear;
what can man do to me?”

(Hebrews 13:5-6 ESV)

And we know that **for those who love (agapaō) God all things work together for good,**
for those who are called according to his purpose.
(Romans 8:28 ESV)

And I am sure of this,
that **he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion** at the day of Jesus Christ.
(Philippians 1:6 ESV)

Afterward the other virgins came also, saying,
‘Lord, lord, open to us.’

But he answered,
‘Truly, I say to you, **I do not know you.**’

And **cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness.**
In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’
(Matthew 25:11-12, 30 ESV)

But when **the king came in to look at the guests,**
he saw there a man who had no wedding garment.
And he said to him,

‘Friend, **how did you get in here without a wedding garment?**’

And he was speechless.

Then the king said to the attendants,
‘Bind him hand and foot and **cast him into the outer darkness.**
In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’
(Matthew 22:11-13 ESV)

Moses comes closest to defining *hesed* in chapter 7 of Deuteronomy:

For **you are a people holy to [YHWH] your God.**
[YHWH] **your God has chosen you** to be a people for **his treasured possession,**
out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.

³⁴³ This instance of “covenant” is supplied by the translator; its antecedent is Hebrews 8:8.

³⁴⁴ The Greek word, διαθήκη - diathēkē, means both “covenant” and “last will and testament”;
the related verb, διατίθεμαι - diatithēmai, means to “make a covenant”, “ ”; see www.esv.org “Lexical Form”
Sunday, August 30, 2026 The Suffering of Humanity

It was **not because you were [greater]**³⁴⁵ than any other people that [YHWH] set his love (hashaq)³⁴⁶ on you and chose you, for you were the [least]³⁴⁷ of all peoples, but **it is because [YHWH] loves (‘ahavah) you** and is **keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers**, that [YHWH] has **brought you out** with a mighty hand and **redeemed you** from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

Know therefore that [YHWH] your God is God,

the **faithful** God who **keeps covenant** and **[hesed]**

with **those who love (‘ahav) him** and **keep his commandments**, to a thousand generations, and repays to their face those who hate him, by destroying them.

He will not be slack with one who hates him.

He will repay him to his face.

You shall therefore be careful to **do the commandment** and the **statutes** and the **[mish‘patim]**³⁴⁸ that I command you today.

And because you **listen to these [mish‘patim]** and **keep and do them**,

[YHWH] your God will keep with you the covenant and the [hesed] that he swore to your fathers.

He will love (‘ahav) you, bless you, and multiply you.

(Deuteronomy 7:6-13a ESV)

The definition of hesed:

- A covenantal relationship with God is an expression of God’s grace,³⁴⁹
“you are a people holy to YHWH your God”, “his treasured possession”
“love (agapē) is from God”
- God extends his grace according to his prerogative of “election”,³⁵⁰
“your God has chosen you”, “not because you were greater”
“not that we have loved (agapaō) God but that he loved (agapaō) us”
- “Election” is based on God’s love, **“it is because YHWH, Jesus Christ, loves you”**
“God sent his only Son into the world”
- God performs “election” according to the **Plan of God**
“keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers”, “love (agapē) of God was made manifest”
“the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world”
- The “calling of God” is the only path to salvation, **“brought you out”, “redeemed you”**
“whoever loves (agapaō) has been begotten of God and knows God”
- The only valid response to God’s calling is repentance,³⁵¹
“know therefore that YHWH your God is God”, “there is no fear in love (agapē)”
- Repentance requires establishing a relationship with God, knowing that he is **“faithful”,**
“keeps covenant”, “confesses that Jesus is the Son of God”
- Having a relationship with God implies learning to love God, **“those who love him”,**
“we love (agapaō) because he first loved (agapaō) us”, “perfect love (agapē) casts out fear”
- Love of God is expressed by living by the **Way of God**, **“keep his commandments”,**
“do the commandment and the statutes”, “whoever abides in love (agapē) abides in God”
“God abides in us and his love (agapē) is perfected in us”
- Living by the **Way of God** results in attaining Godly understanding, wisdom, and discernment,
“listen to these mish‘patim”, “keep and do them”, “by this is love (agapē) perfected with us”
- God will never break his side of the covenant,
“YHWH your God will keep with you the covenant”, “he will love you”,
“we may have confidence for the day of judgment”, “there is no fear in love (agapē)”

³⁴⁵ The verb רָבַב ravav, is best taken in qualitative sense, “great”, rather than quantitative, “many”; see TWOT article 2099 pages 826-827

³⁴⁶ The verb הִשָּׂא hashaq, is a lesser used synonym of ‘ahav; hashaq occurs 14 times, ‘ahav and derivatives occur over 200 times.

³⁴⁷ The adjective, קָטָן - mē‘at, is best taken in a qualitative sense, “least”, rather than a quantitative sense, “fewest”; see Holladay page 206

³⁴⁸ See footnote 295

³⁴⁹ For a discussion of God’s grace, see the paper “**Covenants of Grace**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

³⁵⁰ For a discussion of “election”, see section 2.3.1 Election in the paper “**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**”

located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

³⁵¹ For a discussion of “repentance”, see section 11.2 Christian Repentance in the paper “**The Soon Coming Kingdom of God**”

located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

- John emphasizes an outcome of *hesed* being brotherly love, “let us love (agapaō) one another”, “we also ought to love (agapaō) one another”

Given that “**God is Love**”, it is axiomatic that God’s love extends to each and every human being – dead or alive. **The Plan of God includes all humanity.**

God’s Love of All Humanity

God created human beings to have the potential to become spirit beings as part of the God Family. This is discussed in detail in section **2.1 The Family of God** in the paper “**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

Corollarial to this, **God loves each and every human being:**

For **God so loved (agapaō) the world**, that **he gave his only Son**, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

For **God did not send his Son into the world** to condemn the world, but in order **that the world might be saved through him.**

(John 3:16-17 ESV)

My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin.

But if anyone does sin, **we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ** the righteous.

He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also **for the sins of the whole world.**

And we have seen and testify that **the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.**

(1 John 2:1-2, 4:14 ESV)

The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said,

“Behold, **the Lamb of God**, who **takes away the sin of the world!**

And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, **will draw all people to myself.**

(John 1:29, 12:32 ESV see also 4:42, 11:51-52)

When God provided Moses with a personal theophany, he made a statement about his nature which became a standard way of describing God’s love for all humanity:

[YHWH] descended in the cloud and stood with him there,

and **proclaimed the name of [YHWH].**

[YHWH] passed before him and proclaimed,

“[YHWH], [YHWH ‘el], merciful and gracious, **slow to anger**,

and **abounding in [hesed]** and faithfulness,

keeping [hesed] for thousands,

forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin,

but who will by no means clear the guilty,

visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children’s children,

to the third and the fourth generation.”

And Moses quickly bowed his head toward the earth and worshiped.

(Exodus 34:5-8 ESV)

The refrain alludes back to the Ten Commandments:

I am [YHWH] your God,

who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.³⁵²

You shall have no other gods before me.

You shall not make for yourself a carved image,

or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above,

or that is in the earth beneath,

or that is in the water under the earth.

You shall not bow down to them or serve them,

for I [YHWH] your God am a jealous God,

visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me,

but **showing [hesed] to thousands of those who love me [even those keeping]³⁵³ my commandments.**

(Exodus 20:2-6 ESV see also Deuteronomy 5:6-10)

³⁵² All human beings are in slavery to sin, until called by God to repentance and baptism.

³⁵³ The phrase is: **וְלִשְׁמִי מִצְוֹתַי** - *l’ohavay ul’shom’re mitzwothay*, both verbs are participles;

literally: of those loving me “waw” of those keeping my commandments;

the phrases are in apposition: loving God is the same as keep his commandments; the “waw” shows apposition, “even”.

When the spies bring back an evil report on the land of Canaan, YHWH threatens to destroy the nation of Israel, but Moses intercedes using YHWH's own words:

And now, **please let the power of the Lord be great as you have promised**, saying,
'[YHWH] is slow to anger and abounding in [hesed],
forgiving iniquity and transgression,
but he will by no means clear the guilty,
visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, to the third and the fourth generation.'

Please pardon the iniquity of this people,
according to the greatness of your [hesed],
just as you have forgiven this people, from Egypt until now.
(Numbers 14:17-19 ESV)

The refrain is alluded to again in:

2 Chronicles 30:9,
Nehemiah 9:17,
Psalms 86:15, 103:8, 111:4, 112:4, 116:5, 145:8,
Jeremiah 32:18-19
Joel 2:13, and
Jonah 4:2.

Immediately after this expression of his nature,
YHWH committed himself to the **"Covenant of Performance"**:³⁵⁴

And he said,
"Behold, I am [cutting] (karath)³⁵⁵ a covenant.
Before all your people I will do marvels,
such as have not been created in all the earth or in any nation.
And **all the people** among whom you are **shall see the work of [YHWH],**
for it is an awesome thing that **I will do with you.**"
(Exodus 34:10 ESV)

The Covenant of Performance demonstrates God's love on multiple levels:

- The Nation of Israel had just broken the Sinai Covenant; God was well within his rights to destroy the nation; instead, due to Moses' intercession, **God, demonstrating hesed, forgave the nation**
- Despite Israel's sin, God promised to use Israel, **"all your people", "I will do with you"** to accomplish the **Plan of God, "I will do marvels"**
- The **Plan of God** extends to all humanity, **"all the people"**
- Each and every person who has ever lived, will be given the opportunity to attain salvation, **"shall see the work of YHWH"**

Again, just before Israel entered the Promised Land, **God cut another covenant,**
"The Covenant of Life".³⁵⁶ The immediate beneficiaries of the covenant were the people of Israel, but the full intent of **the covenant extends to all humanity:**

These are the words of the covenant that [YHWH] commanded Moses to [cut] (karath) with the people of Israel in the land of Moab, besides the covenant that he had [cut] (karath) with them at Horeb.

It is not with you alone that I am [cutting] (karath) this sworn covenant, but with whoever is standing here with us today before [YHWH] our God, and **with whoever is not here with us today.**

The secret things belong to [YHWH] our God,
but **the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever,**
that we may do all the words of this [torah].³⁵⁷

³⁵⁴ For further discussion, see section **9.3 The Covenant of Performance** in the paper "True Worship of the True God" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

³⁵⁵ The verb is כָּרַת - karath, "to cut", the technical term for the creation of a new covenant.

³⁵⁶ For further discussion, see section **5. The Covenant of Life** in the paper "Covenants of Grace" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

³⁵⁷ See footnote 202

See, **I have set before you today life and good, death and evil.**

If you obey the commandments of [YHWH] your God that I command you today,
by loving ('ahev) [YHWH] your God, by walking in his ways,
and by keeping his commandments and his statutes and his [mish^epatim],³⁵⁸
then you shall live ...

I call heaven and earth to witness against you today,
that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse.

Therefore **choose life**, that you and your offspring may live,
loving ('ahev) [YHWH] your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for **he is your life ...**
(Deuteronomy 29:1, 14-15, 29, 30:15-16a, 19-20a ESV)

The **Apostle Paul** appeals to the **Covenant of Life** to demonstrate
the universality of God's love in the offer of salvation to all humanity.³⁵⁹

But the righteousness based on faith says,

“Do not say in your heart,
‘Who will ascend into heaven?’”
(alluding to Deuteronomy 30:12)
(that is, to bring Christ down) “

or

‘Who will descend into the abyss?’”
(alluding to Deuteronomy 30:13)
(that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).

But what does it say?

“The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart”
(alluding to Deuteronomy 30:14)
(that is, the word of faith that we proclaim);

because, **if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord**
and **believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.**

For with the heart one believes and is justified,
and with the mouth one confesses and is [being]³⁶⁰ saved.

For the Scripture says,

“Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.”
(alluding to Romans 9:33)³⁶¹

(Romans 10:6-11 ESV)

Just before the Ascension, **Jesus gave the Apostles the “Great Commission”**
emphasizing the **universality of God's love in the offer of salvation to all humanity:**

Afterward **he appeared to the eleven** themselves as they were reclining at table,
and he rebuked them for their unbelief and hardness of heart,
because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen.
And he said to them,

“Go into all the world and **proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.**
Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved,
but whoever does not believe will be condemned.

(Mark 16:14-16 ESV)

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them.
And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted.

And Jesus came and said to them,

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.
Go therefore and **make disciples of all nations,**
baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.
And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

(Matthew 28:16-20 ESV)

³⁵⁸ See footnote **295**

³⁵⁹ For further discussion, see **Appendix 2: Romans 10:1-17** in the paper “The Inner Workings of Faith”
located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

³⁶⁰ See footnote **190**

³⁶¹ Romans 9:33 is based on Isaiah 8:14, 28:16, 49:23b, Psalm 118:22, Joel 2:26b-27
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Then he said to them,

“These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you,
that everything written about me in the [nomos]³⁶² of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms
must be fulfilled.”

Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them,

“Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead,
and that **repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations**,
beginning from Jerusalem.

You are witnesses of these things. ...”

(Luke 24:44-48 ESV)

Throughout the Bible, the message is the same:

the universality of God’s love is manifest **in the offer of salvation to all humanity**.

Christian Love

Corollary to God’s love of all humanity, True Worshipers of God are required to learn
to reflect God’s love. First and foremost, True Worshipers must learn **hesed towards God**.

Secondly, **love of the “brethren”**, other True Worshipers, is paramount.

Finally, **love of all humanity** is also required.

Loving God

As human beings, **Godly Love is a gift from God**. All human beings are capable of human love,
but God requires more of True Worshipers:

.... **God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit** [which]³⁶³ has been given to us.
(Romans 5:5b ESV)

For **if you love those who love you**, what reward do you have?

Do not even the tax collectors do the same?

And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others?

Do not even the Gentiles do the same?

And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you?

For even sinners do the same.

(Matthew 5:46-47, Luke 6:33 ESV)

True Worshipers must learn “Godly Love”, which is only possible through the indwelling
of the Holy Spirit. Most importantly, **True Worshipers must come to understand hesed**
and reciprocate God’s *hesed* back to him **making the covenant of “baptism” inviolable**.

King David frequently expresses his learning hesed:

For the king trusts in [YHWH],
and through the [**hesed**] of the Most High he shall not be moved.
(Psalm 21:7 ESV)

Good and upright is [YHWH];
therefore he instructs sinners in the way.
He leads the humble in what is right (mish^{pat}),³⁶⁴ and teaches the humble his way.
All the paths of [YHWH] are [hesed] and faithfulness,
for those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.
(Psalm 25:8-10 ESV)

Vindicate me, [YHWH], for I have walked in my integrity,
and I have trusted in [YHWH] without wavering.
Prove me, [YHWH], and try me; test my heart and my mind.
For **your [hesed] is before my eyes**, and I walk in your faithfulness.
(Psalm 26:1-3 ESV)

³⁶² See footnote [84](#)

³⁶³ See footnote [64](#)

³⁶⁴ See footnote [37](#)

Many are the sorrows of the wicked,
but **[hesed] surrounds the one who trusts in [YHWH]**.
Be glad in [YHWH], and rejoice, O righteous,
and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!
(Psalm 32:10-11 ESV)

But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God.
I trust in the [hesed] of God forever and ever.
I will thank you forever, because you have done it.³⁶⁵
I will wait for your name, for it is good, in the presence of the godly.
(Psalm 52:8-9 ESV)

I cry out to God Most High, to God who fulfills his purpose for me.
He will send from heaven and save me;
he will put to shame him who tramples on me.
God will send out his [hesed] and his faithfulness!
(Psalm 57:2-3 ESV)

But I will sing of your strength;
I will sing aloud of your [hesed] in the morning.
For you have been to me a fortress and a refuge in the day of my distress.
O my Strength, I will sing praises to you, for you, O God, are my fortress,
the God who shows me [hesed].
(Psalm 59:16-17 ESV)

Bless [YHWH], O my [being] (nephesh),³⁶⁶ and all that is within me, bless his holy name!
Bless [YHWH], O my [being] (nephesh), and forget not all his benefits,
who forgives all your iniquity,
who heals all your diseases,
who redeems your life from the pit,
who crowns you with [hesed] and mercy,
who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.
(Psalm 103:1-5 ESV)

I remember the days of old;
I meditate on all that you have done;
I ponder the work of your hands.
I stretch out my hands to you;
my [being] (nephesh) thirsts for you like a parched land.
Answer me quickly, [YHWH]!
My spirit fails!
Hide not your face from me, lest I be like those who go down to the pit.
Let me hear in the morning of your [hesed], for in you I trust.
Make me know the way I should go, for to you I lift up my [being] (nephesh).
(Psalm 143:5-8 ESV)

Blessed be [YHWH], my rock, who trains my hands for war, and my fingers for battle;³⁶⁷
he is my [hesed] and my fortress,
my stronghold and my deliverer,
my shield and he in whom I take refuge, who subdues peoples under me.
(Psalm 144:1-2 ESV)

Later Psalmists echo the words of David:

Behold, the eye of [YHWH] is on those who [reverence] (yare')³⁶⁸ him,
on **those who hope in his [hesed]**,
that he may deliver their [life] (nephesh) from death and keep them alive in famine.
Our [being] (nephesh) waits for [YHWH]; he is our help and our shield.
For our heart is glad in him, because we trust in his holy name.
Let your [hesed], [YHWH], be upon us, even as we hope in you.
(Psalm 33:18-22 ESV)

³⁶⁵ The phrase, "you have done it", looks to the Second Advent and the First Resurrection; see Psalm 22:31, Isaiah 44:23, Revelation 16:17, 21:6.

³⁶⁶ See footnote 1

³⁶⁷ See *Excursus 2 – The Christian Fight*

³⁶⁸ "Fear" is a valid translation of *yare'* and *yir'ah*, but a True Worshipper should never be afraid of God; hence, "reverence" is the preferred translation. See *Excursus 5 – Reverence* נִרְאָה in the paper "True Worship of the True God" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca
Sunday, August 30, 2026

We have thought on your [hesed], O God, in the midst of your temple.
As your name, O God, so your praise reaches to the ends of the earth.
Your right hand is filled with righteousness.
(Psalm 48:9-10 ESV)

Restore us again, O God of our salvation, and put away your indignation toward us!
Will you be angry with us forever?
Will you prolong your anger to all generations?
Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you?
Show us your [hesed], [YHWH], and grant us your salvation.
(Psalm 85:4-7 ESV)

Let your [hesed] come to me, [YHWH], your salvation according to your promise;
In your [hesed] give me life, that I may keep the testimonies of your mouth.

Consider how I love ('ahev) your precepts!
Give me life, [YHWH], **according to your [hesed]**.
(Psalm 119:41, 88, 159 ESV)

O Israel,³⁶⁹ hope in [YHWH]!
For with [YHWH] there is [hesed], and with him is plentiful redemption.
And he will redeem Israel from all his iniquities.
(Psalm 130:7-8 ESV)

... [YHWH] takes pleasure in those who [reverence] (yare')³⁷⁰ him,
in those who hope in his [hesed].
(Psalm 147:11 ESV)

The **Prophet Hosea** reports God's specification of what is **required of True Worshippers**:

And **I will betroth you to me forever**.
I will betroth you to me in **righteousness** and in **[justness]** (mish'pat),³⁷¹
in **[hesed]** and in **mercy**.
I will betroth you to me in **faithfulness**.
And **you shall know [YHWH]**.
For **I desire [hesed] and not sacrifice**,
the **knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings**.
Sow for yourselves righteousness; reap [hesed];
break up your fallow ground,
for it is the time to seek [YHWH],
that he may come and rain righteousness upon you.
So you, by the help of your God, return,
hold fast to [hesed] and [justness] (mish'pat),
and **wait continually for your God**.
(Hosea 2:19-20, 6:6, 10:12, 12:6 ESV)

The Prophet Micah echoes Hosea:

He has told you, O man, what is good;
and **what does [YHWH] require of you**
but to **do [justness] (mish'pat)**, and to love ('ahev) **[hesed]**,
and to **walk humbly with your God**?
(Micah 6:8 ESV)

On the night of the first Christian Passover, Jesus spent considerable time
teaching the Apostles about **loving God** – pointing the Apostles to **God the Father**:

Let not your hearts be troubled.
Believe in God; believe also in me.
In my Father's house are many rooms.
If it were not so, would I have told you that **I go to prepare a place for you**?³⁷²
And if I go and prepare a place for you,
I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.
Philip said to him,
"Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us."

³⁶⁹ "Spiritual Israel", True Worshippers, see Galatians 6:16, 3:9,29, Romans 2:29, 4:12,22-25, 9:6-8, Philippians 3:3

³⁷⁰ See footnote [368](#)

³⁷¹ See footnote [37](#)

³⁷² See John 13:33-36

Jesus said to him,

“Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip?
Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.
How can you say,
‘Show us the Father’?

Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?
The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority,
but the Father who dwells in me does his works.
Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me,
or else believe on account of the works themselves.

(John 14:1-3, 8-11 ESV)

If you love (agapaō) me, you will keep my commandments.

In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.

Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves (agapaō) me.

And he who loves (agapaō) me will be loved (agapaō) by my Father,

and I will love (agapaō) him and manifest myself to him.

Judas (not Iscariot) said to him,

“Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?”

Jesus answered him,

“If anyone loves (agapaō) me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love (agapaō) him,
and we will come to him and make our home with him.

Whoever does not love (agapaō) me does not keep my words.

And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father’s who sent me.”

You heard me say to you,

‘I am going away, and I will come to you.’

If you loved (agapaō) me, you would have rejoiced, because I am going to the Father,
for the Father is greater than I

... but I do as the Father has commanded me,

so that the world may know that I love (agapaō) the Father.

(John 14:15, 20-24, 28, 31a ESV)

I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser.

Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away,

and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit.

I am the vine; you are the branches.

Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit,

for apart from me you can do nothing.

By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.

As the Father has loved (agapaō) me, so have I loved (agapaō) you.

Abide in my love (agapē).

If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love (agapē),

just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love (agapē).

... for the Father himself loves (phileō) you, because you have loved (phileō) me
and have believed that I came from God.

I came from the Father and have come into the world,
and now I am leaving the world and going to the Father.

(John 15:1-2, 5, 8-10, 16:27-28 ESV)

I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word,
that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you,
that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one,

so that the world may know that you sent me

and loved (agapaō) them even as you loved (agapaō) me.

O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you,
and these know that you have sent me.

I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known,

that the love (agapē) with which you have loved (agapaō) me may be in them, and I in them.”

(John 17:20-21, 23, 25-26 ESV)

Analysis of Jesus' teaching on "loving God":

- Jesus starts with a metaphor: there are many opportunities to serve in the Kingdom of God, **"in my Father's house are many rooms"**
- Jesus alludes to the Ascension, **"I go to prepare a place for you"**, and the Second Advent, **"I will come again and will take you to myself"**
- Jesus stresses the "unity" between himself and God the Father, **"I am in the Father and the Father is in me"**
- Jesus is emphatic that all is being accomplished according to the **Plan of God**, **"I do not speak on my own authority"**, **"the Father who dwells in me does his works"**
- Jesus reiterates³⁷³ the definition of love, **"if you love me, you will keep my commandments"**
- The Ten Commandments succinctly define the **Way of God**; only by living by the **Way of God**, can any person have a relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ, **"you will know that I am in my Father"**, **"you in me"**, **"I in you"**
- Only by having a relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ, can a person learn "Godly love", **"he it is who loves me"**, **"he who loves me will be loved by my Father"**
- Jesus uses another metaphor to define the relationship, **"dwelling together"**, **"we will come to him and make our home with him"**, **"whoever abides in me and I in him"**
- The end result of the relationship will be the accomplishment of the **Plan of God**, **"the world may know that I love the Father"**
- Jesus uses the metaphor of the **"true vine"** to characterise the Christian life, **"I am the true vine"**, **"you are the branches"**, **"bear more fruit"**
- Jesus asserts that love is expressed in unity, and is reciprocal, **"abide in my love"**, **"as the Father has loved me"**, **"so have I loved you"**, **"the Father himself loves you"**, **"because you have loved me"**
- Jesus reiterates the relationship between "unity" and "love", **"those who will believe may all be one"**, **"you sent me and loved them even as you loved me"**, **"that the love with which you have loved me may be in them"**

Having a living relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ is the only way to know and be known by them. Through a living relationship, a Christian comes to understand the vast gulf that exists between God and man – this what Job had to learn.³⁷⁴

Understanding this gulf is the basis for "reverence" towards God.

Moses defines "reverence" as follows:

Now this is the commandment—the statutes and the [mish^epatim]³⁷⁵—that **[YHWH] your God commanded me to teach you**, that you may do them in the land to which you are going over, to possess it, **that you may [reverence] (yare³⁷⁶) [YHWH] your God**, you and your son and your son's son, by keeping all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you, **all the days of your life**, and that your days may be long. Hear, O Israel: [YHWH] is our God, [YHWH] alone. **You shall love ('^{ahev}) [YHWH] your God** with all your heart and with all your [mind] (nephesh)³⁷⁷ and with all your might. And **these words that I command you today shall be on your heart**. (Deuteronomy 6:1-2, 4-6 ESV see also 10:12-16)

During the **Later Perean Ministry**, Jesus was accosted by **a rich young man enquiring about eternal life**:

And as he was setting out on his journey,
a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him,
"Good Teacher, **what must I do to inherit eternal life?**"

³⁷³ See the discussion of Exodus 20:6 in section [God's Love of All Humanity](#)

³⁷⁴ See the discussion in section [3. The Suffering of Job](#)

³⁷⁵ See footnote [295](#)

³⁷⁶ See footnote [368](#)

³⁷⁷ See footnote [1](#)

And Jesus said to him,
“Why do you call me good?
No one is good except God alone.
You know the commandments:
‘Do not murder,
Do not commit adultery,
Do not steal,
Do not bear false witness,
Do not defraud,
Honor your father and mother.’”

And he said to him,
“Teacher, **all these I have kept from my youth.**”

And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him,
“**You lack one thing:**
go, **sell all that you have** and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven;
and **come, follow me.**”³⁷⁸

(Mark 10:17-21 ESV // Matthew 19:16-21 // Luke 18:18-22)

The rich young man had the same problem as Job. He trusted in his righteous life, “**all these I have kept from my youth**”, but he did NOT understand the vast gulf between God and man – he could NOT develop true reverence for God, “**you lack one thing**”. To have a living relationship with Jesus, “**come, follow me**”, it was necessary to give up his former life, “**sell all that you have**”.

Soon after this, in Jerusalem, **a scribe asks Jesus a related question:**

And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another,
and seeing that he answered them well, asked him,

“Which commandment is the most important of all?”

Jesus answered,

“The most important is,

‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.

And **you shall love (agapaō) the Lord your God with all your heart**

and with all your [being] (psyche)³⁷⁹ and with all your mind and with all your strength.’

(alluding to Deuteronomy 6:4-5)

The second is this:

‘You shall love (agapaō) your neighbor as yourself.’

There is no other commandment greater than these.”

And the scribe said to him,

“You are right, Teacher.

You have truly said that he is one, and there is no other besides him.

And **to love (agapaō) him with all the heart**

and with **all the understanding** and with **all the strength,**

and to love (agapaō) one’s neighbor as oneself,

is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.”

(alluding to Hosea 6:6)

And when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him,

“You are not far from the kingdom of God.”

(Mark 12:28-34a ESV see also Matthew 22:34-40)

The scribe understood Jesus words, “**you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart**”:

perfunctory worship of God is worthless, “**whole burnt offerings and sacrifices**”.

God requires *hesed* of True Worshipers, “**love him with all the heart**”, “**all the understanding**”,

“**all the strength**”. Jesus acknowledged the scribe’s understanding, “**you are not far**

from the kingdom of God”. Corollary to love of God, is love of neighbour,

“you shall love your neighbor as yourself”

³⁷⁸ See footnote [238](#)

³⁷⁹ See footnote [1](#)

Loving Brethren

On the night of the First Christian Passover, after washing the disciples' feet,

Jesus took pains to teach them about "brotherly love":

A new commandment I give to you, that you love (agapaō) one another:

just as I have loved (agapaō) you, you also are to love (agapaō) one another.

By this all people will know that you are my disciples,
if you have love (agapē) for one another.

This is my commandment, that you love (agapaō) one another **as I have loved (agapaō) you.**

Greater love (agapē) has no one than this, that someone **lay down his life for his friends.**

You are my friends if you do what I command you.

No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing;
but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.
You did not choose me, but I chose you

and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide,
so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.

These things I command you, so that you will love (agapaō) one another.
(John 13:34-35, 15:12-17 ESV)

Later, in writing the **Book of First John**, the Apostle **John alludes to and explains Jesus' teaching:**

Beloved, I am writing you no new commandment,

but an old commandment that you had from the beginning.

The old commandment is the word that you have heard.

At the same time, **it is a new commandment** that I am writing to you,

which is true in him and in you,

because the darkness is passing away and **the true light is already shining.**

Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness.

Whoever loves (agapaō) his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling.

But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness,
and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

(1 John 2:7-11 ESV see also 2 John 5)

For **this is the message that you have heard from the beginning,**

that **we should love (agapaō) one another.**

We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother.

And why did he murder him?

Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous.

Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you.

We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love (agapaō) the brothers.

Whoever does not love (agapaō) abides in death.

Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer,
and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

(1 John 3:11-15 ESV)

By this we know love (agapē), that he laid down his life for us,

and **we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.**

But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need,
yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love (agapē) abide in him?

Little children, **let us not love (agapaō) in word or talk but in deed and in truth.**

And **this is his commandment,**

that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love (agapaō) one another,
just as he has commanded us.

Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him.

And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit [which]³⁸⁰ he has given us.

(1 John 3:16-18, 23-24 ESV)

If anyone says,

"I love (agapaō) God,"

and hates his brother, he is a liar;

for he who does not love (agapaō) his brother whom he has seen
cannot love (agapaō) God whom he has not seen.

³⁸⁰ See footnote 64

And **this commandment we have from him:**

whoever loves (agapaō) God must also love (agapaō) his brother.

(1 John 4:20-21 ESV)

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been [begotten] (gennaō)³⁸¹ of God, and **everyone who loves (agapaō) the Father loves (agapaō) whoever has been [begotten] (gennaō) of him.**

By this we know that we **love (agapaō) the children of God, when we love (agapaō) God and obey his commandments.**

For **this is the love (agapē) of God**, that we keep his commandments.

And his commandments are not burdensome.

(1 John 5:1-3 ESV see also 2 John 6, Jude 20-21)

Analysis of Jesus' teaching on "brotherly love":

- Jesus is explicit that he is requiring something new, **"a new commandment I give to you"**
- Jesus requires of True Worshipers the same level of love that he has shown, **"just as I have loved you", "love one another"**
- Jesus enjoins True Worshipers as "friends" to have "brotherly love", **"you are my friends if you do what I command you", "these things I command you", "so that you will love one another"**
- Jesus defines the epitome of "love", **"greater love has no one than this", "lay down his life for his friends"**
- John elaborates on Jesus meaning, **"we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers", "let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth"**

The Christian life is a life of service – **one lays down one's life by serving others:**

But **be doers of the word**, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him?

If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them,

"Go in peace, be warmed and filled,"

without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that?

So also **faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.**

(James 1:22, 2:14-17 ESV)

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to **present your bodies as a living sacrifice**, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

(Romans 12:1 ESV)

And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the **knowledge** of his will in all spiritual **wisdom** and **understanding**,

so as to **walk in a manner worthy of the Lord**, fully pleasing to him:

bearing fruit in every good work

and increasing in the knowledge of God;

(Colossians 1:9-10 ESV)

Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works,

and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us.

Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, **to be ready for every good work** ...

The saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on these things, so that **those who have believed in God** may be careful to **devote themselves to good works.**

And **let our people learn to devote themselves to good works,**

so as to help cases of urgent need, and not be unfruitful.

(Titus 2:7-8, 3:1, 8a, 14 ESV)

³⁸¹ See footnote 342

- John explains that “brotherly love” is NOT new, **“I am writing you no new commandment”, “an old commandment that you had from the beginning”**
Love of Brethren is NOT new – the Old Testament enjoins love of neighbours:
 You shall not hate your brother in your heart,
 but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him.
 You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people,
but you shall love (’ahav) your neighbor as yourself: I am [YHWH].
 When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong.
You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love (’ahav) him as yourself,
 for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am [YHWH] your God.
 (Leviticus 19:17-18, 33-34 ESV)
 He executes justice (mishpat)³⁸² for the fatherless and the widow,
 and **loves (’ahav) the sojourner**, giving him food and clothing.
Love (’ahav) the sojourner, therefore, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt.
 (Deuteronomy 10:18-19 ESV)
- John, however, reiterates that **“it is a new commandment”**
 because of the life and death of Jesus Christ, **“the true light is already shining”**
Christian love is a new commandment because it is based on the sacrifice of Jesus Christ:
 John to the seven churches that are in Asia:
Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come,
 and from the seven spirits who are before his throne,
 and from **Jesus Christ the faithful witness**,
 the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth.
 To him **who loves (agapaō) us and has freed us from our sins by his blood**
 and made us a kingdom,
 priests to his God and Father,
 to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.
 (Revelation 1:4–6 ESV)
See what kind of love (agapē) the Father has given to us,
 that we should be called children of God; and so we are.
 Whoever says
 “I know him”
 but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him,
 but **whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love (agapē) of God is perfected.**
 By this we may know that we are in him:
whoever says he abides in him
ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.
 (1 John 3:1a, 2:4-6 ESV see also 1 Corinthians 8:3)
 Finally, all of you, have **unity of mind**,
 sympathy,
brotherly love,³⁸³
 a tender heart, and
 a humble mind.
Let brotherly love³⁸⁴ **continue.**
 (1 Peter 3:8, Hebrews 13:1 ESV)
- Christian unity is only possible through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit,
“whoever loves his brother abides in the light”
- One CANNOT be a Christian without “brotherly love”, **“whoever does not love abides in death”,**
“whoever keeps his commandments abides in God”,
“whoever loves God must also love his brother”

³⁸² See footnote 37

³⁸³ This is the only occurrence of the masculine noun, φιλάδελφος - philadelphos, “loving one’s brother”; see www.esv.org, “Lexical form”

³⁸⁴ The feminine noun, φιλαδελφία - philadelphia, occurs 6 times;

see Romans 12:10, 1 Thessalonians 4:9, 1 Peter 1:22, 2 Peter 1:7, (Revelation 1:11, 3:7, as a proper noun)

Brotherly love naturally extends to all human beings.

The **Plan of God** extends salvation to all humanity.

Those who teach the **Way of God** must have love for those being taught.

Loving Humanity

As God loves each and every person who has ever lived; corollarily, **True Worshipers are required to learn to love all humanity**. The purpose of the Christian calling is to prepare to teach humanity the **Way of God** when the Kingdom of God is established. To teach people the **Way of God**, those persons, to whom the gift of eternal life is granted at the First Resurrection, must have learned love for all humanity.

The **Prophet Isaiah** reports **a promise from God to the people of the world**:

Thus says [YHWH]:

“Keep **[justness]** (mish^epat),³⁸⁵ and do **righteousness**, for **soon my salvation will come**, and **my righteousness be revealed**.

Blessed is the man who does this, and the son of man who holds it fast, who **keeps the Sabbath**, not profaning it, and keeps his hand from doing any evil.”

Let not the **foreigner** who has joined himself to [YHWH] say,

“[YHWH] will surely separate me from his people”;

and let not the **eunuch** say,

“Behold, I am a dry tree.”

For thus says [YHWH]:

“To the **eunuchs** who **keep my Sabbaths**,
who choose the things that please me and hold fast my covenant,
I will give in my house and within my walls a monument
and **a name better than sons and daughters**;
I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off.

And the **foreigners** who join themselves to [YHWH],
to minister to him, **to love the name of [YHWH]**, and to be his servants,
everyone who **keeps the Sabbath** and does not profane it, and **holds fast my covenant**
—these **I will bring to my holy mountain**, and make them joyful in my house of prayer;
their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar;
for **my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.**”

The Lord [YHWH], who **gathers the outcasts of Israel**, declares,

“**I will gather yet others** to him besides those already gathered.”

(Isaiah 56:1-8 ESV)

Analysis of God’s promise:

- The promise is general – for all humanity, “**blessed is the man who does this**”
- At the Second Advent, the King of kings will be revealed, “**my righteousness be revealed**”, the First Resurrection will occur, and salvation will be rolled out to all humanity, “**soon my salvation will come**”
- Humanity will be taught the **Way of God**, “**justness**”, “**righteousness**”
- The cornerstone of the **Way of God** is the Sabbath, “**keeps the Sabbath**”
- The promise then uses an extended metaphor alluding to two classes of people who were explicitly excluded from “Israel” under the Old Covenant, “**foreigner**”, “**eunuch**”

No Ammonite or Moabite may enter the assembly of [YHWH].

Even to the tenth generation, none of them may enter the assembly of [YHWH] forever ...

You shall not abhor an Edomite, for he is your brother.

You shall not abhor an Egyptian, because you were a sojourner in his land.

Children born to them in **the third generation may enter the assembly of [YHWH]**.

(Deuteronomy 23:3, 7-8 ESV)

No one whose **testicles are crushed** or whose male organ is cut off
shall enter the assembly of [YHWH].

(Deuteronomy 23:1 ESV)

³⁸⁵ See footnote 37

For no one who has a blemish shall draw near,
 a man blind or lame,
 or one who has a mutilated face or a limb too long,
 or a man who has an injured foot or an injured hand,
 or a hunchback or a dwarf
 or a man with a defect in his sight
 or an itching disease
 or scabs
 or crushed testicles.
 (Leviticus 21:18-20 ESV)

- Using “eunuchs” to represent people of the world who have been cut off from God, God requires them to learn the Way of God, “keep my Sabbaths”,³⁸⁶ “choose the things that please me”, and commit to the New Covenant, baptism, “hold fast my covenant”
- The people of the world who do what God requires will be given access to the Kingdom of God, “I will give in my house”
- If “eunuchs” are granted the gift of eternal life, they will be given “a name better than sons and daughters”, “I will give them an everlasting name”
- The metaphor continues, “foreigners” again represent people of the world who have had no access to God – they are given the opportunity to learn the Way of God, “to love the name of YHWH”, “keeps the Sabbath”
- Those who commit to the New Covenant, baptism, “holds fast my covenant”, will be given access to the Kingdom of God, “I will bring to my holy mountain”
- The promise returns to a general statement, specifically looking to the New Temple in the World Tomorrow, “my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples”; the statement can also be taken metaphorically for the Church to which all people will be called in the World Tomorrow
- The last statement alludes to the Second Exodus and the New Israel, “gathers the outcasts of Israel”
- God is emphatic that he will deal with the rest of humanity, “I will gather yet others”

The objective of the Christian calling is to accomplish this purpose of God:

to have Godly Love for all humanity and be able to teach them and bring them to salvation.

To have this Godly Love is to internalize Paul’s exposition of “love”:

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels,
but have not love (agapē), I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.
 And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge,
 and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love (agapē),
I am nothing.
 If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love (agapē),
I gain nothing.
 Love (agapē) is patient and kind;
 love (agapē) does not envy or boast;
 it is not arrogant or rude.
 It does not insist on its own way;
 it is not irritable or resentful;
 it does not rejoice at wrongdoing,
 but rejoices with the truth.
 Love³⁸⁷ bears all things,
 believes all things,
 hopes all things,
 endures all things.

³⁸⁶ Note, “Sabbaths” is explicitly plural to denote all Holy Days, not just weekly Sabbath.

³⁸⁷ This word is provided by the translator.

Love (agapē) never ends.

As for prophecies, they will pass away;
as for tongues, they will cease;
as for knowledge, it will pass away.

For we know in part and we prophesy in part,
but **when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away.**

When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child.
When I became a man, I gave up childish ways.

For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face.

Now I know in part;

then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.

So now **faith,**

hope, and

love (**agapē**) abide, these three;

but the greatest of these is love (agapē).

(1 Corinthians 13:1-13 ESV)

When **Jesus** appeared to the disciples in Galilee before the Ascension,
he **had a special conversation with Simon Peter:**

When they had finished breakfast, **Jesus said to Simon Peter,**

“Simon, son of John, **do you love (agapaō) me** more than these?”

He said to him,

“Yes, Lord; you know that **I love (phileō) you.**”

He said to him,

“**Feed (boskō) my lambs (arnion).**”

He said to him a second time,

“Simon, son of John, **do you love (agapaō) me?**”

He said to him,

“Yes, Lord; you know that **I love (phileō) you.**”

He said to him,

“**Tend (poimainō) my sheep (probaton).**”

He said to him the third time,

“Simon, son of John, **do you love (phileō) me?**”

Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time,

“**Do you love (phileō) me?**”

and he said to him,

“Lord, you know everything; you know that **I love (phileō) you.**”

Jesus said to him,

“**Feed (boskō) my sheep (probaton).**

Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young,
you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted,
but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands,
and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go.”

(This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.)

And after saying this he said to him,

“**Follow me.**”³⁸⁸

(John 21:15-19 ESV)

The more or less equivalence of *agapaō* and *phileō* is demonstrated: Jesus uses *agapaō* twice and *phileō* once. Peter always responds with *phileō*. The metaphor of “sheep” as True Worshipers is common in the New Testament. Jesus uses it without an explanation. **The significance is in the progression of the words Jesus uses to enjoin Peter to care for the “sheep”.**

The verbs, βόσκω - *boskō*, and ποιμαίνω - *poimainō*, are more or less synonymous – both mean literally to “care for”, “tend”, “provide food for”, “feed”, animals, particularly sheep.³⁸⁹

³⁸⁸ See footnote 238

³⁸⁹ See GEL pages 144, 690

Only in this passage is *boskō* used metaphorically.³⁹⁰

In addition to this passage, ***poimainō* is used metaphorically as follows.**³⁹¹

And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler who **will shepherd (*poimainō*)** my people Israel.
(alluding to Micah 5:2)
(Matthew 2:6 ESV)

Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock,
in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers,
to care for (*poimainō*) the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.
(Acts 20:28 ESV)

... **shepherd (*poimainō*)** the flock of God that is among you,
exercising oversight, not under compulsion,
but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly;
(1 Peter 5:2 ESV)

These are hidden reefs at your love feasts, as they feast with you without fear,
shepherds feeding (*poimainō*) themselves;
waterless clouds, swept along by winds; fruitless trees in late autumn, twice dead, uprooted;
(Jude 12 ESV)

... and **he will rule (*poimainō*)** them with a rod of iron,
as when earthen pots are broken in pieces,
even as I myself have received authority from my Father.
(Revelation 2:27 ESV)

For the Lamb in the midst of the throne **will be** their **shepherd (*poimainō*)**,
and he will guide them to springs of living water,
and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.
(Revelation 7:17 ESV)

She gave birth to a male child,
one who is **to rule (*poimainō*)** all the nations with a rod of iron,
but her child was caught up to God and to his throne ...
(Revelation 12:5 ESV)

From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations,
and he **will rule (*poimainō*)** them with a rod of iron.
(Revelation 19:15a ESV)

Again, the literal meaning of the nouns ἀρνίον - arnion and πρόβατον - probaton is more or less the same: "lambs", "sheep".³⁹² However, ***arnion* is used only in this passage** and in the Book of Revelation. In the Book of Revelation *arnion* is used to refer to Jesus Christ, "**The Lamb**", in the following verses: 5:6, 8, 12, 13, 6:1, 16, 7:9, 10, 14, 17, 12:11, 13:8, 14:1, 4, 10, 15:3, 17:14, 19:7, 9, 21:9, 14, 22, 27, 22:1, 3.

Only in one place is *arnion* used in a literal sense:

Then I saw another beast rising out of the earth.
It had two horns like **a lamb (*arnion*)** and it spoke like a dragon.
(Revelation 13:11 ESV)

The use of *arnion* in John chapter 21, clearly foreshadows its use in the Book of Revelation.

The use of *boskō* with *arnion* would seem to be for emphasis: the usage of both is unique within this passage. A possible implication is that **as people are called** to the Church, when they are **new in learning the Way of God, they need special care and attention.**

³⁹⁰ For literal usage see Matthew 8:30,33, Mark 5:11,14, Luke 8:32,34, 15:15

³⁹¹ For literal usage see Luke 17:7, 1 Corinthians 9:7

³⁹² See GEL pages 107, 709-710

The usage of *probaton* is more complicated:

- Literal:

He said to them,

“Which one of you who has a sheep (probaton),
if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not take hold of it and lift it out
Of how much more value is a man than a sheep (probaton)!
So it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.”

(Matthew 12:11-12 ESV)

What do you think?

If a man has a hundred sheep (probaton), and one of them has gone astray,
does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray?
(Matthew 18:12 ESV)

What man of you, having a hundred sheep (probaton), if he has lost one of them,
does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country,
and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it?
(Luke 15:4 ESV)

And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them,
‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep (probaton) that was lost.’
(Luke 15:6 ESV)

In the temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep (probaton) and pigeons,
and the money-changers sitting there.

And making a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the temple,
with the sheep (probaton) and oxen.
(John 2:14-15a ESV)

... cinnamon, spice, incense, myrrh, frankincense, wine, oil, fine flour, wheat,
cattle and sheep (probaton), horses and chariots,
and slaves, that is, human [beings] (psyche).³⁹³
(Revelation 18:13 ESV)

- Old Testament quotation:

Then Jesus said to them,

“You will all fall away because of me this night.
For it is written,
‘I will strike the shepherd,
and the sheep (probaton) of the flock will be scattered.’ ...”
(alluding to Zechariah 13:7)

(Matthew 26:31 // Mark 14:27 ESV)

Now the passage of the Scripture that he was reading was this:

“Like a sheep (probaton) he was led to the slaughter
and like a lamb (amnos)³⁹⁴ before its shearer is silent, so he opens not his mouth. ...”
(citing Isaiah 53:7b)

(Acts 8:32 ESV)

As it is written,

“For your sake we are being killed all the day long;
we are regarded as sheep (probaton) to be slaughtered.”
(citing Psalm 44:22)

(Romans 8:36 ESV)

- Comparative:

Beware of false prophets,
who come to you in sheep’s (probaton) clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves.
(Matthew 7:15 ESV)

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them,
because they were harassed and helpless,
like sheep (probaton) without a shepherd.
(Matthew 9:36 ESV)

Behold, I am sending you out as sheep (probaton) in the midst of wolves,
so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.
(Matthew 10:16 ESV)

³⁹³ See footnote 1

³⁹⁴ The noun, ἄμνος, - amnos, “lamb”, occurs in John 1:29,36, Acts 8:32, 1 Peter 1:19; always referring to Jesus Christ.

Before him will be gathered all the nations,
and he will separate people one from another
as a shepherd separates the sheep (probaton) from the goats.
And he will place the sheep (probaton) on his right, but the goats on the left.
(Matthew 25:32-33 ESV)

When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them,
because they were like sheep (probaton) without a shepherd.
(Mark 6:34a ESV)

Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold (probaton) by the door
but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber.
But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep (probaton).
To him the gatekeeper opens.

The sheep (probaton) hear his voice,
and he calls his own sheep (probaton) by name and leads them out.
When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them,
and the sheep (probaton) follow him, for they know his voice.
(John 10:1-4 ESV)

For you were straying like sheep (probaton),
but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your [lives] (psyche).³⁹⁵
(1 Peter 2:25 ESV)

- Metaphoric:

... but go rather to the lost sheep (probaton) of the house of Israel.
(Matthew 10:6 ESV)

He answered,

“I was sent only to the lost sheep (probaton) of the house of Israel.”

(Matthew 15:24 ESV)

So Jesus again said to them,

“Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep (probaton).

All who came before me are thieves and robbers,
but the sheep (probaton) did not listen to them.

I am the good shepherd.

The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep (probaton).

He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep (probaton),
sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep (probaton) and flees,
and the wolf snatches them and scatters them.

He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep (probaton).

I am the good shepherd.

I know my own and my own know me,
just as the Father knows me and I know the Father;
and I lay down my life for the sheep (probaton).

And I have other sheep (probaton) that are not of this fold.

I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice.

So there will be one flock, one shepherd. ...”

(John 10:7-8, 11-16 ESV)

... but you do not believe because you are not among my sheep (probaton).

My sheep (probaton) hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.³⁹⁶

(John 10:26-27 ESV)

Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus,
the great shepherd of the sheep (probaton), by the blood of the eternal covenant ...
(Hebrews 13:20 ESV)

The usage of *probaton* most often tends to the metaphoric – the sheep represent people, usually True Worshipers. Some commentators emphasize Jesus’ threefold questioning of Peter being a counterbalance to Peter’s threefold denial of Jesus. There may be some validity to that, but Jesus’ meaning goes much deeper. **Jesus speaks to Peter as the leader of the Apostles**. Jesus’ teaching is first for the Apostles as they create the New Testament Church.

³⁹⁵ See footnote 1

³⁹⁶ See footnote 238

The people called to the Church, “**the sheep**”, require continuous care and attention from the leaders, **the Apostles**, “**the shepherds**”; hence, the threefold invocation to “**feed and tend**” the lambs/sheep. The giving of care requires “**Godly Love**”; hence, the threefold questioning of “love”.

The purpose of the New Testament Church is to prepare people to take the Way of God to all humanity. Jesus real purpose in this dialogue is to emphasize to all Christians **the necessity of Godly Love**. Those persons called to the New Testament Church to whom God the Father sees fit to grant the gift of eternal life, must learn “Godly Love” by living by the **Way of God**. Only by persons, who have attained “Godly Love”, can the **Way of God** be taught to all humanity in the World Tomorrow. Jesus ends the conversation with the simple injunction, “**follow me**”. This speaks to every person called to the New Testament Church. Jesus is the “head”; the Church is the “body”; only by following Jesus can a person remain in true relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ, hence, be considered a candidate for the gift of eternal life.

Excursus 2 – The Christian Fight

A fundamental rule of warfare is “to know your enemy”.³⁹⁷ The Christian life is a daily battle against sin. Satan the Devil has the world locked into sin, and the influence from the world can drag a Christian into sin. However, the greater danger is “**human nature**” – **the innate propensity within each person to be drawn into sin**. It is this weakness that Satan expends most effort to exploit. So our enemy is sin, but the power of sin is Satan the Devil – our adversary.

The Apostle Paul summarized “The Christian Fight”:

For **we do not wrestle against flesh and blood**,
but against the rulers, against the authorities,
against the cosmic powers over this present darkness,
against the **spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places**.
(Ephesians 6:12 ESV)

For I do not understand my own actions.

For I do not do what I want, but **I do the very thing I hate**.

So now it is no longer I who do it, but **sin that dwells within me**.

For I delight in the [nomos]³⁹⁸ of God, in my inner being,
but I see in my members **another [nomos] waging war against the [nomos] of my mind**
and making me captive to **the [nomos] of sin that dwells in my members**.
(Romans 7:15, 17, 22-23 ESV)

The objective of war is to eradicate the enemy. Until the Kingdom of God is established, we cannot eradicate sin in the world. A Christian must daily resist the influence of the world and develop an intense hatred of sin:

Do not love the world or the things in the world.

If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

For all that is in the world

—the **desires of the flesh** and

the **desires of the eyes** and

pride of life

—is not from the Father but is from the world.

(1 John 2:15-16 ESV)

Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil,

for the devil has been sinning from the beginning.

The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.

(1 John 3:8 ESV)

³⁹⁷ This topic is also covered in the two presentations “*Christian Soldiers - the Enemy*” and “*Christian Soldiers - the Commitment*” located at <https://mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca/presentations>

³⁹⁸ See footnote 84; Paul uses “*nomos*” here with four distinct meanings: “*nomos of God*” is the teaching of God; “*another nomos*” is an abstract force in Paul’s mind; “*the nomos of my mind*” is Paul’s will, his desire; “*the nomos of sin*” is human nature.

The **author of Hebrews** notes **Jesus' hatred of sin** and **a Proverb articulates:**

But **of the Son he says,**

"Your throne, O God, is forever and ever,
the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom.

You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; ..."
(citing Psalm 45:6-7a)

Hebrews 1:8-9a ESV)

There are six **things that [YHWH] hates**,
seven that are an abomination to him:

haughty eyes,
a lying tongue,
and hands that shed innocent blood,
a heart that devises wicked plans,
feet that make haste to run to evil,
a false witness who breathes out lies,
and one who sows discord among brothers.

(Proverbs 6:16-19 ESV)

God's hatred of sin is manifest in the many prophecies which contain the **"Metaphor of Violence"**.

This is discussed in detail in **Excursus 2 – The Metaphor of Violence** in the paper **"God of Every Nation"** located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca. In these prophecies, God depicts violence against various nations after the establishment of the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God will bring peace to the world. **The "violence" represents God's hatred of sin**. The application of "violence" represents **the "conquest" of all nations in the World Tomorrow by the Gospel**. The objective of the metaphor is to teach "violent hatred" toward all sin. True Worshipers must attain God's hatred of sin so that it can be eradicated from each person's character. **True Worshipers must be ready to eradicate sin from the world after the establishment of the Kingdom of God.**

The External War

This is Satan's world. **Everything in the world is geared to sin**. We cannot change the world now; however, True Worshipers must remain in it and resist the temptations of the world:

If the world hates you, know that **it has hated me before it hated you**.

If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own;

but because you are not of the world,

but **I chose you out of the world**,

therefore the world hates you.

(John 15:18-19 ESV see also 1 John 3:13)

And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you.

I have given them your word,

and **the world has hated them because they are not of the world**,

just as I am not of the world.

I do not ask that you take them out of the world,

but that you **keep them from the evil one**.

(John 17:11a, 14-15 ESV)

I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace.

In the world you will have tribulation.

But take heart; **I have overcome the world**.

(John 16:33 ESV)

The **Apostle Paul** characterizes the relationship of God with "the world":

Where is the one who is wise?

Where is the scribe?

Where is the debater of this age?

Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?

For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God ...

For the **foolishness of God is wiser than men**,

and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

For consider your calling, brothers:
not many of you were wise according to worldly standards,
not many were powerful,
not many were of noble birth.

But God chose what is **foolish in the world** to shame the wise;
God chose what is **weak in the world** to shame the strong;
God chose what is **low and despised in the world**,
even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are,
so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.

And because of him you are in **Christ Jesus**,
who became to us **wisdom from God**,
righteousness and sanctification and redemption,
so that, as it is written,
“Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.
(alluding to Jeremiah 9:23-24)

(1 Corinthians 1:20-21a, 25-31ESV)

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven
against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men,
who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

Claiming to be wise, they became fools ...

And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God,
God gave them up to a debased mind ...
(Romans 1:18, 22, 28a ESV)

James articulates the response required of a True Worshipper:

Do you not know that **friendship with the world is enmity with God?**
Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this:
to visit orphans and widows in their affliction,
and to **keep oneself unstained from the world.**
(James 4:4b, 1:27 ESV)

Matthew reports a saying of Jesus regarding the relationship of a True Worshipper with the world:

Woe to the world for temptations to sin!
For it is necessary that temptations come,
but woe to the one by whom the temptation comes!
(Matthew 18:7 ESV see also Luke 17:1)

John similarly reports a saying of Jesus:

Whoever loves his life loses it,
and whoever **hates his life in this world** will keep it for eternal life.
(John 12:25 ESV)

Again, **Paul** summarizes:

Do not be conformed to this world,
but be transformed by the renewal of your mind,
that by testing you may discern what is the will of God,
what is good and acceptable and perfect.
(Romans 12:2 ESV)
See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit,
according to human tradition,
according to the elemental spirits of the world,
and not according to Christ.
(Colossians 2:8 ESV)

Peter articulates the desired outcome of success – **winning the war:**

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness,
through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence,
by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises,
so that through them you may **become partakers of the divine nature,**
having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.
(2 Peter 1:3-4 ESV)

Satan's world is locked into sin. True Worshipers of God must remain in the world but not be overcome by sin. The key is to recognize the power of sin – the Adversary.

The Adversary

This is the world of Satan the Devil.³⁹⁹ **The agenda of Satan the Devil is death for all human beings:**

I will no longer talk much with you, for **the ruler of this world is coming**.
(John 14:30a ESV)

And even if **our gospel is veiled**, it is veiled **to those who are perishing**.
In their case **the god of this world** has **blinded the minds** of the unbelievers,
to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.
(2 Corinthians 4:3-4 ESV)

And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent,
who is called **the devil and Satan**,
the deceiver of the whole world
—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.
(Revelation 12:9 ESV)

And **you were dead in the trespasses and sins** in which you once walked,
following the course of this world,
following the prince of the power of the air,
the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience
—among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh,
carrying out the desires of the flesh and the mind,
and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.
(Ephesians 2:1-3 ESV)

We know that everyone who has been [begotten] (gennaō)⁴⁰⁰ of God does not keep on sinning,
but he⁴⁰¹ who was born (gennaō) of God protects him,⁴⁰²
and **the evil one does not touch him**.

We know that we are from God,
and **the whole world lies in the power of the evil one**.
(1 John 5:18-19 ESV)

Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood,
he himself likewise partook of the same things,
that **through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death**, that is, **the devil**,
and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.
(Hebrews 2:14-15 ESV)

Satan is the author of sin in the world:

You are of your father **the devil**, and your will is to do your father's desires.
He **was a murderer from the beginning**,
and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him.
When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for **he is a liar and the father of lies**.
(John 8:44 ESV)

And when [Aaron] has made an end of atoning for the Holy Place and the tent of meeting and the altar,
he shall present the live goat.
And Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat,
and confess over it all the iniquities of the people of Israel, and **all their transgressions, all their sins**.
(Leviticus 16:20-21a ESV)

³⁹⁹ The provenance of Satan the Devil is discussed in section **1. The Foundation of the World** in the paper "The Human Condition" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

⁴⁰⁰ See footnote **342**

⁴⁰¹ This alludes to Jesus Christ – currently, the only being "**born of God**" through the transformation of a resurrection.

⁴⁰² True Worshipers are "protected" by Jesus Christ in his role as **High Priest**, "intercessor and advocate".

Satan's strategy is to draw people into lives of sin so that they will reject the Way of God and, in so doing, will choose death.

Jesus alludes to this in his explanation of the Parable of the Sower:⁴⁰³

The sower sows the word.

And these are the ones along the path, where the word is sown:

when they hear,

Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them.

(Mark 4:14-15 ESV)

Other New Testament authors make plain the agency of Satan in drawing people into sin:

During supper,

when **the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot**, Simon's son, **to betray him** ...
(John 13:2 ESV)

But a man named **Ananias**, with his wife **Sapphira**, sold a piece of property, and with his wife's knowledge he kept back for himself some of the proceeds and brought only a part of it and laid it at the apostles' feet.

But Peter said,

"Ananias, **why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit** and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? ..."

(Acts 5:1-3 ESV)

But Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him and said,

"You son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, full of all deceit and villainy, will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord?

(Acts 13:9-10 ESV)

Anyone whom you forgive, I also forgive.

Indeed, what I have forgiven,

if I have forgiven anything, has been for your sake in the presence of Christ,

so that we would not be outwitted by Satan;

for **we are not ignorant of his designs.**

(2 Corinthians 2:10-11 ESV)

Be angry and do not sin;

do not let the sun go down on your anger,

and **give no opportunity to the devil.**

(Ephesians 4:26-27 ESV)

The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan

with all power and false signs and wonders,

and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing,

because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.

(2 Thessalonians 2:9-10 ESV)

He must not be a recent convert,

or **he may become puffed up** with conceit

and **fall into the condemnation of the devil.**

Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders,

so that he may not fall into disgrace, into **a snare of the devil.**

(1 Timothy 3:6-7 ESV)

For **some have already strayed after Satan.**

(1 Timothy 5:15 ESV)

And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone,

able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness.

God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth,

and **they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil,**

after being captured by him to do his will.

(2 Timothy 2:24-26 ESV)

Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil,

for **the devil has been sinning from the beginning.**

The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.

⁴⁰³ See Mark 4:3-20, Matthew 13:3-23, Luke 8:5-15
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No one [begotten] (gennaō)⁴⁰⁴ of God makes a practice of sinning,
for God's seed abides in him;
and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been [begotten] (gennaō) of God.
By this it is evident who are the children of God,
and **who are the children of the devil:**
 whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God,
 nor is the one who does not love his brother.
(1 John 3:8-10 ESV)

The primary weapon of Satan the Devil is "temptation".

Two of the most egregious sins documented in the Bible are a direct response to "temptation"

– Eve's eating of the forbidden tree, and David's adultery with Bathsheba:

But the serpent said to the woman,
 "You will not surely die.
 For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened,
 and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

So when **the woman saw that the tree was good for food,**
and that it was **a delight to the eyes,**
and that **the tree was to be desired to make one wise,**
she took of its fruit and ate ...
(Genesis 3:4-6a ESV)

It happened, late one afternoon,
when **David arose from his couch** and was walking on the roof of the king's house,
that **he saw from the roof a woman bathing;**
and **the woman was very beautiful.**
And **David sent and inquired about the woman.**
(2 Samuel 11:2-3a ESV)

Satan actually believed he could trap Jesus Christ with temptation:

Then **Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.**

And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.

And **the tempter came and said to him,**

"If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread."

But he answered,

 "It is written,

 'Man shall not live by bread alone,
 but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"
 (alluding to Deuteronomy 8:3b)

Then the devil took him to the holy city
and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him,

"If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written,

'He will command his angels concerning you,'

 (citing Psalm 91:11a)

 and

'On their hands they will bear you up,

 lest you strike your foot against a stone.'"
 (citing Psalm 91:12)

Jesus said to him,

 "Again it is written,

 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'"
 (citing Deuteronomy 6:16a)

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain
and showed him **all the kingdoms of the world** and their glory.

And he said to him,

"All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me."

⁴⁰⁴ See footnote 342

Then Jesus said to him,
"Be gone, Satan!"

For it is written,

'You shall worship the Lord your God
and him only shall you serve.'
(alluding to Deuteronomy 6:13)

Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.
(Matthew 4:1-11 ESV see also Luke 4:1-13, Mark 1:12-13)

Jesus was physically weakened by forty days of fasting. **Satan's first attack was at Jesus' humanity.** Attempting to introduce some doubt in Jesus' mind, **"if you are the Son of God"**, Satan presented a very reasonable human option: satisfy your hunger, **"command these stones to become loaves of bread"**. Jesus, being fully Divine, recognized Satan's ploy, and refused to obey him. In every response of Jesus, **"the living Word of God"**, he appealed to **"the written word of God"**,⁴⁰⁵ which he had inspired through the Holy Spirit. **The "living Word of God" is the power behind the "written word of God"**.⁴⁰⁵ In every case, the power of the "written word of God" was sufficient to defeat Satan. Satan again tried to introduce some doubt into Jesus' mind, **"if you are the Son of God"**, but this time **Satan attempted to appeal to Jesus' Divinity, "he will command his angels concerning you", "on their hands they will bear you up"**. Jesus' appeal to the "written word of God" was again successful. Finally, **Satan tried to trap Jesus over the Plan of God**. In Jesus' weakened human state, Satan tried to get Jesus to take a short cut to his future position as King of kings, **"all the kingdoms of the world"**, **"all these I will give you"**. Luke makes note that, in fact, **all the nations of the world were Satan's to give:**

And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time,
and said to him,

"To you I will give all this authority and their glory,
for **it has been delivered to me**, and **I give it to whom I will**. ..."

(Luke 4:5-6 ESV)

Jesus, **knowing Satan to be a liar**, again defeated him, and commanded his withdrawal:

"Be gone, Satan!"

For it is written,

'You shall worship the Lord your God
and him only shall you serve.'
(alluding to Deuteronomy 6:13)

Then the devil left him ...
(Matthew 4:10b-11a ESV)

This battle officially gave Jesus the right to assume control of planet earth which had been consigned to Satan. Jesus defeated Satan and thus earned the right to take his property.⁴⁰⁶ Jesus will exercise this right at the Second Advent. Satan's attempts at tempting Jesus have also provided a benefit to Christians. As our High Priest, **because Jesus was human and was subjected to temptation, he can have perfect empathy for the trials of human beings:**

Therefore **he had to be made like his brothers in every respect**,
so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God,
to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

For because **he himself has suffered when tempted**,
he is able to help those who are being tempted.

Since then **we have a great high priest**
who has passed through the heavens, **Jesus**, the Son of God,
let us hold fast our confession.

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses,
but one **who in every respect has been tempted as we are,**
yet without sin.

⁴⁰⁵ See **Excursus 3 – The Covenant Blessings and Curses** in the paper "Third Pillar - The Way of God"
located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

⁴⁰⁶ See Exodus 6:6-7, 19:3-6

Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace,
that **we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.**
(Hebrews 2:17-18, 4:14-16 ESV)

It is through temptation that Satan appeals to the human nature of each person.

Satan can see the weakest point of each person, and this is the focus of his attack:
Be sober-minded; be watchful.

**Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion,
seeking someone to devour.**
(1 Peter 5:8 ESV)

The enemy is sin – the objective of the war is to eradicate sin; but, the Adversary, Satan the Devil, is the **author of sin**. Everything in this world is geared to draw human beings to **death through sin**. Satan's primary weapon is **"temptation"**, which he uses to appeal to the innate propensity of human beings to sin – **human nature**: this is the "internal war".

The Internal War

For human beings the real battleground is in the mind. Everything about Satan's world is designed to draw people into sin and ultimately death. **James**, the brother of Jesus, puts it very succinctly:

Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial,
for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life,
which God has promised to those who love him.

Let no one say when he is tempted,
"I am being tempted by God,"

for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one.

But **each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.**
Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin,
and **sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.**
(James 1:12-15 ESV)

The **Apostle Paul** asserts that God will provide strength to escape "temptation".
Years before, Jesus had told the disciples **"to pray"**, to **maintain a close relationship with God in order to endure "temptation"**:

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

And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do,
for they think that they will be heard for their many words.
Do not be like them, for **your Father knows what you need before you ask him.**
Pray then like this:

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.
And **lead us not into temptation,** but deliver us from evil."
(Matthew 6:7-9, 13 ESV see also Luke 11:2-4)

Watch and **pray that you may not enter into temptation.**
The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.
(Mark 14:38 ESV // Matthew 26:41, Luke 22:40, 46)

The **Apostle Peter** gives assurance that God will provide the help required to overcome and NOT be overcome by the temptations of Satan the Devil and his world:

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness,
through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence,
by which he has granted to us **his precious and very great promises,**
so that through them you may **become partakers of the divine nature,**
having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.
(2 Peter 1:3-4 ESV)

As human beings, every person is susceptible to Satan's influence through the world's appealing to human nature and enticing the person to sin. The **Apostle John** asserts that even after conversion **all persons will continue to sin**, but to be a True Worshipper, a person cannot willfully sin, CANNOT live in a sinful manner – **all sin must be repented-of on a daily basis**:

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

If we confess our sins,

he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

(1 John 1:8-10 ESV)

Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness.

You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin.

No one who abides in him keeps on sinning;

no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him.

Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil,

for the devil has been sinning from the beginning.

The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.

No one [begotten] (gennaō)⁴⁰⁷ of God makes a practice of sinning,

for God's seed abides in him;

and he cannot keep on sinning,

because he has been [begotten] (gennaō) of God.

(1 John 3:4-6, 8-9 ESV)

All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin that does not lead to death.⁴⁰⁸

We know that everyone who has been [begotten] (gennaō) of God does not keep on sinning,

but he⁴⁰⁹ who was born (gennaō) of God protects him,⁴¹⁰

and the evil one does not touch him.

We know that we are from God,

and **the whole world lies in the power of the evil one**.

(1 John 5:17-19 ESV)

The True Worshipper lives in a constant state of tension with the innate propensity of human nature to sin. **When sin does occur, repentance is required**:

We know that our old self was crucified with him

in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing,

so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.

Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body,

to **make you obey its passions**.

(Romans 6:6, 12ESV)

What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you?

Is it not this, that **your passions are at war within you**?

(James 4:1 ESV)

Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from **the passions of the flesh**,

which **wage war against your [life] (psyche)**.⁴¹¹

(1 Peter 2:11 ESV)

So we do not lose heart.

Though our outer self is wasting away, **our inner self is being renewed day by day**.

(2 Corinthians 4:16 ESV)

The outcome of repentance is utter rejection of everything one was prior to repentance

– NOT just past actions and deeds, but also one's whole prior existence:

And there **you shall remember** your ways

and all your deeds with which you have defiled yourselves,

and **you shall loathe yourselves** for all the evils that you have committed.

⁴⁰⁷ See footnote 342

⁴⁰⁸ All sin can be repented-of, except apostasy – willfully rejecting the covenant of baptism; see Hebrews 6:4-6. For further discussion, see section 11.2 *Christian Repentance* in the paper “*The Soon Coming Kingdom of God*” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

⁴⁰⁹ This alludes to Jesus Christ – currently, the only being “*born of God*” through the transformation of a resurrection.

⁴¹⁰ True Worshipers are “protected” by Jesus Christ is his role as *High Priest*, “intercessor and advocate”.

⁴¹¹ See footnote 1

Then **you will remember** your evil ways,
and your deeds that were not good,
and **you will loathe yourselves** for your iniquities and your abominations.
(Ezekiel 20:43, 36:31 ESV)

This is the attitude of “hatred of sin” which is required of True Worshipers.

Jesus graphically uses the Metaphor of Violence to depict the “hatred of sin”
required of those whom God considers to be candidates for the gift of eternal life:

And **if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off.**

It is better for you to enter life crippled
than with two hands to go to [geenna],⁴¹² to **the unquenchable fire.**

And **if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off.**

It is better for you to enter life lame than with two feet to be thrown into [geenna].

And **if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out.**

It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye
than with two eyes to be thrown into [geenna] ...

(Mark 9:43, 45, 47 ESV see also Matthew 5:29-30, 18:8-9)

The objective of repentance is that through the Holy Spirit a person’s innermost being, the heart and the mind, can become acceptable to God

so that he is willing to grant the gift of eternal life:

Wash yourselves;
make yourselves clean;
remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes;
Come now, let us reason together, says [YHWH]:
though **your sins** are like scarlet,
they **shall be as white as snow**;
though they are red like crimson,
they shall become like wool.

(Isaiah 1:16a, 18 ESV)

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your [hesed],⁴¹³
according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.

Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and **cleanse me** from my sin!

For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.

Behold, **you delight in truth in the inward being,**
and **you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.**

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;

wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

(Psalm 51:1-3, 6-7ESV)

Idolatry is the mother of all sin. In modern Western Civilization few people actually worship physical images; however, **idolatry is actually a function of the mind.** There are **many idols** alive and well in the man-made notions that drive modern Western Civilization:

“evolution”,
“climate change”,
“socialism”,
“inclusivity”,
“feminism”, etc.

People worship the concepts their minds have conjured up.

⁴¹² The word, γέεννα - geenna, alludes to the lake of fire, “**the unquenchable fire**”; see Revelation 14:10, 19:20, 20:10,14,15, 21:8.

⁴¹³ See footnote 21

Twice, the Apostle Paul, identifies “covetousness” as idolatry

– “covetousness” is a function of the mind. In the idols of the modern world, “covetousness”, “greed”, is generally a motivating factor behind the concept:

For you may be sure of this,
that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure,
or **who is covetous** (that is, **an idolater**),
has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.
(Ephesians 5:5 ESV)

Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire,
and **covetousness, which is idolatry**.
(Colossians 3:5 ESV)

When God spoke to Israel at Mount Sinai, he was very careful
that there could be **no discernible form** from which the people could conjure an image:

... on the day that you stood before [YHWH] your God at Horeb,
[YHWH] said to me,
“Gather the people to me, that I may let them hear my words,
so that they may learn to [reverence] (yare’)⁴¹⁴ me all the days that they live on the earth ...”,

Then [YHWH] spoke to you out of the midst of the fire.

You heard the sound of words, but **saw no form**; there was only a voice.
And he declared to you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform,
that is, the Ten Commandments, and he wrote them on two tablets of stone.

Therefore watch yourselves very carefully.

Since you saw no form on the day that [YHWH] spoke to you at Horeb ...
beware lest you act corruptly by making a carved image for yourselves,
in the form of any figure ...

And beware lest you raise your eyes to heaven,
and when you see the sun and the moon and the stars, all the host of heaven,
you be drawn away and bow down to them and serve them ...
(Deuteronomy 4:10, 12-13, 15a, 16a, 19a ESV)

Being satisfied with oneself or one’s accomplishments tends toward arrogance.

Then, in the mind, one can develop **a perception, an image**, of oneself or one’s accomplishments,
and **it becomes an idol**. This is how the idols of the modern world have been created:

Take care lest you forget [YHWH] your God by not keeping his commandments ...
lest, **when you have eaten and are full** and have built good houses and live in them,
and when your herds and flocks multiply
and **your silver and gold is multiplied**
and **all that you have is multiplied**,
then **your heart be lifted up**, and you forget [YHWH] your God ...

Beware **lest you say in your heart**,
‘My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.’
(Deuteronomy 8:11a, 12-14a, 17 ESV)

Once a person sets up an idol, all manner of sin can proceed, because **the person assumes the right to make his/her own determination of what is right and what is wrong**.

This is the reason Adam and Eve had to be expelled from the Garden of Eden:

And out of the ground [YHWH ‘elohim]
made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food.
The tree of life was in the midst of the garden,
and **the tree of the knowledge of good and evil**.

Then [YHWH ‘elohim] said,

“Behold, **the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil**.

Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever —”

therefore [YHWH ‘elohim] sent him out from the garden of Eden
to work the ground from which he was taken.
(Genesis 2:9, 3:22-23 ESV)

⁴¹⁴ See footnote 368

The New Testament authors are emphatic to avoid idols and idolatry

– always remembering what constitutes the idols of the modern world:

Or do you not know that **the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?**

Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor **idolaters** ...

(1 Corinthians 6:9a ESV)

Do not be idolaters as some of them were; as it is written,

“The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.”

(1 Corinthians 10:7 ESV)

Therefore, my beloved, **flee from idolatry.**

(1 Corinthians 10:14 ESV)

You know that **when you were pagans you were led astray to mute idols,** however you were led.

(1 Corinthians 12:2 ESV)

What agreement has the temple of God with idols?

For we are the temple of the living God; as God said,

“I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them,

and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

(alluding to Leviticus 26:12. Exodus 29:45)

(2 Corinthians 6:16 ESV)

Little children, **keep yourselves from idols.**

(1 John 5:21 ESV)

But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, **idolaters**, and all liars,

their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.

(Revelation 21:8 ESV)

Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and **idolaters**,

and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

(Revelation 22:15 ESV)

Since idolatry occurs in the heart and the mind, **God is very careful to know the innermost being, the heart and the mind,** of any person to whom he is considering to grant the gift of eternal life:

But [YHWH] said to Samuel,

“Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature,
because I have rejected him.

For **[YHWH] sees not as man sees:**

man looks on the outward appearance,

but **[YHWH] looks on the heart.**”

(1 Samuel 16:7 ESV)

And when he had removed him, he raised up David to be their king,
of whom he testified and said,

‘I have found in **David the son of Jesse a man after my heart,**
who will do all my will.’

(Acts 13:22 ESV)

You have tried my heart, you have visited me by night,

you have tested me, and you will find nothing;

I have purposed that my mouth will not transgress.

(Psalm 17:3 ESV)

Let your heart therefore be wholly true to [YHWH] our God,

walking in his statutes and keeping his commandments, as at this day.

(1 Kings 8:61 ESV see also 1 Chronicles 28:9)

And **I will give you shepherds after my own heart,**

who will feed you with knowledge and understanding.

(Jeremiah 3:15 ESV)

God searches the heart and tests the mind. The Christian life is one of trial and testing⁴¹⁵

– **God has to know the true nature of the innermost being:**

Count it all joy, my brothers, **when you meet trials** of various kinds,
for you know that the **testing of your faith** produces steadfastness.

And let steadfastness have its full effect,

that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

(James 1:2-4 ESV)

Know then in your heart that,

as a man disciplines his son,

[YHWH] your God disciplines you.

(Deuteronomy 8:5 ESV)

Prove me, [YHWH], and **try me**;

test my heart and my mind.

Search me, O God, and **know my heart!**

Try me and **know my thoughts!**

(Psalms 26:2, 139:23 ESV)

It is for discipline that you have to endure.

God is treating you as sons.

If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated,

then you are illegitimate children and not sons.

For the moment all **discipline** seems painful rather than pleasant,

but later it **yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness** to those who have been trained by it.

(Hebrews 12:7a, 8, 11 ESV)

When **God commanded Abraham to sacrifice Isaac**, Abraham was around 120 years old,

God had been working with Abraham for about 45 years.

Abraham's actions are **an object lesson on the heart** for all True Worshipers:

After these things **God tested Abraham** and said to him,

"Abraham!"

And he said,

"Here I am."

He said,

"Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah,

and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."

(Genesis 22:1-2 ESV)

Abraham did NOT understand how God would do it, but he proceeded in faith:

Abraham said,

"God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son."

So they went both of them together.

(Genesis 22:8 ESV)

In Abraham's mind, Issac was already dead:

Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son.

But the angel of [YHWH] called to him from heaven and said,

"Abraham, Abraham!"

And he said,

"Here I am."

He said,

"Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him,

for **now I know that you [reverence] (yare')**⁴¹⁶ **God,**

seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me."

(Genesis 22:10-12 ESV)

Abraham had to pass the test before God knew his heart.

⁴¹⁵ See section [5.3 Suffering of Christians](#)

⁴¹⁶ See footnote [368](#)

Human nature inherently drags all persons into sin. For True Worshipers **all sin must be repented of** so that an ongoing relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ remains possible.

By Jesus' propitiating sacrifice, accepted through repentance, **the innermost being can be purified** by the Holy Spirit. **Idolatry is the mother of all sin**

– the idols of Modern Western Civilization are alive and dangerous.

God tests each person's innermost being to know his/her **commitment** to the **Way of God.**

The Commitment

The Cristian Life is the life of a soldier.

Jesus' expectation is that his servants should be willing and able to fight:

So Pilate entered his headquarters again and called Jesus and said to him,
"Are you the King of the Jews?"

Jesus answered,

"Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?"

Pilate answered,

"Am I a Jew?"

Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you over to me.

What have you done?"

Jesus answered,

"My kingdom is not of this world.

If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting,

that I might not be delivered over to the Jews.

But my kingdom is not from the world."

(John 18:33-36 ESV)

Jesus uses the **example of a Roman soldier** as an object lesson in "faith":

Now **a centurion had a servant** who was sick and at the point of death ...

When the centurion heard about Jesus, he sent to him elders of the Jews, asking him to come and heal his servant.

And when they came to Jesus, they pleaded with him earnestly, saying,

"He is worthy to have you do this for him, for he loves our nation, and he is the one who built us our synagogue."

And Jesus went with them.

When he was not far from the house, **the centurion sent friends,** saying to him,

"Lord, do not trouble yourself, for **I am not worthy to have you come under my roof.**

But **say the word,** and let my servant be healed.

For **I too am a man set under authority,** with soldiers under me:

and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes;

and to another, 'Come,' and he comes;

and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

When Jesus heard these things, he marveled at him,

and turning to the crowd that followed him, said,

"I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith."

(Luke 7:2a, 3-6, 7b-9 ESV see also Matthew 8:5-10)

During the tour of duty, **a soldier is required to be fully committed.**

Paul explicitly compared the Christian life to soldiering:

You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.

Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.

No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits,

since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him.

(2 Timothy 2:1-4 ESV)

Who serves as a soldier at his own expense?

(1 Corinthians 9:7a ESV)

I have thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus my brother
and fellow worker and fellow soldier,
and your messenger and minister to my need ...
(Philippians 2:25 ESV)

... and Apphia our sister and Archippus our fellow soldier, and the church in your house ...
(Philemon 2 ESV)

John the Baptist⁴¹⁷ is an example of a “**fully committed soldier**”.

John the Baptist was committed by God from his birth for his tour of duty:

Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty ...

And **there appeared to him an angel** of the Lord ...

And **Zechariah** was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him.

But the angel said to him,

“Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard,
and **your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son**, and you shall **call his name John**.
... for he will be great before the Lord.

And he must not drink wine or strong drink,

and **he will be filled with the Holy Spirit**, even **from his mother’s womb**.

And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God,

and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah,

to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,

and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just,

to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.”

(Luke 1:8, 11a, 12-13, 15-17 ESV)

The work of **John the Baptist** was “**to make ready for the Lord a people prepared**”.

Probably at about age 18, John commenced his preaching in the wilderness.

During his time in the wilderness, John secured a large following of disciples.

John was working for perhaps 12 years before Jesus commenced his ministry:

And the child grew and became strong in spirit,

and **he was in the wilderness until the day of his public appearance** to Israel.

(Luke 1:80 ESV)

As **the people were in expectation**,

and all were questioning in their hearts **concerning John**,

whether he might be the Christ,

John answered them all, saying,

“I baptize you with water,

but **he who is mightier than I is coming**,

the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.

He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

(Luke 3:15-16 ESV)

John the Baptist was instrumental in the early ministry of Jesus. Jesus commenced his ministry with his baptism by John, probably in the winter of 26-27AD.⁴¹⁸ **John then witnessed to the divinity of Jesus:**

In those days **Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee**

and was **baptized by John in the Jordan**.

And when he came up out of the water,

immediately he saw the heavens being torn open

and **the Spirit descending on him like a dove**.

And a voice came from heaven,

“**You are my beloved Son;**

with you I am well pleased.”

(Mark 1:9-11 ESV see also Matthew 3:13-17, Luke 3:21-22)

⁴¹⁷ See the paper “**John the Baptist – More Than a Prophet**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

⁴¹⁸ See the chronological chart “**Life and Times of John the Baptist**” located at <https://mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca/chronological-charts>

And **John bore witness:**

"I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove,
and it remained on him.
I myself did not know him,
but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me,
'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain,
this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'

And **I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God."**

(John 1:32-34 ESV)

John immediately began to point his disciples to Jesus,
and **John personally affirmed his loyalty to Jesus:**

The next day again **John was standing with two of his disciples,**
and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said,
"Behold, the Lamb of God!"

The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus.

(John 1:35-37 ESV)

After this **Jesus and his disciples went into the Judean countryside,**
and he remained there with them and was baptizing.

John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because water was plentiful there,
and people were coming and being baptized (for John had not yet been put in prison).

Now a discussion arose between some of **John's disciples** and a Jew over purification.
And they **came to John and said to him,**

"Rabbi, **he** who was with you across the Jordan,
to whom you bore witness—look, he is baptizing, and **all are going to him."**

John answered,

"A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven.

You yourselves bear me witness, that I said,

'I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him.'

The one who has the bride is the bridegroom.

The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him,
rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice.

Therefore **this joy of mine is now complete.**

He must increase, but I must decrease."

(John 3:22-30 ESV)

Before long, **John the Baptist was arrested by Herod Antipas and imprisoned at Machaerus.**⁴¹⁹

When this occurred, Jesus returned to Galilee and commenced the Galilean Ministry:

But **Herod the tetrarch,**

who had been reproved by him for Herodias, his brother's wife,
and for all the evil things that Herod had done,
added this to them all, that **he locked up John in prison.**

(Luke 3:19-20 ESV see also Matthew 14:3-4)

Now **after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee,**

proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying,

"The time is fulfilled,
and the kingdom of God is at hand;
repent and believe in the gospel."

(Mark 1:14-15 ESV see also Matthew 4:12)

While he was in prison, **John the Baptist again pointed his disciples to Jesus:**

And **John, calling two of his disciples** to him, **sent them to the Lord,** saying,

"Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?"

And **when the men had come to him,** they said,

"John the Baptist has sent us to you, saying,

'Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?'"

⁴¹⁹ See Josephus Antiquities 18,5,2
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In that hour he healed many people of diseases and plagues and evil spirits,
and on many who were blind he bestowed sight.
And **he answered** them,

“Go and tell John what you have seen and heard:

the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed,
and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up,
the poor have good news preached to them.

And **“blessed is the one who is not offended by me.”**

Luke 7:18b-23 ESV see also Matthew 11:2-6)

Analysis of John’s question and Jesus’ response:

- **“Are you the one who is to come”** – this alludes to Deuteronomy 18:15, a prophecy, which at that time, was generally understood to be Messianic
- **“Go and tell John what you have seen and heard”** – Jesus alluded to the Signs of the Kingdom, for example, Isaiah 29:18-19, 35:5-6, 61:1
- **“blessed is the one who is not offended by me”** – Jesus’ dialogue is for the benefit of the disciples so that they are able to leave John and come to Jesus

After the discussion with John’s disciples, **Jesus addressed the crowd**

pointing out **the unique role of John the Baptist** – he was the **“last prophet”** and the **“first Christian”**:

As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds **concerning John**:

“What did you go out into the wilderness to see?”

A reed shaken by the wind?

What then did you go out to see?

A man dressed in soft clothing?

Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in kings’ houses.

What then did you go out to see?

A prophet?

Yes, I tell you, and **more than a prophet**.

This is he of whom it is written,

‘Behold, I send my messenger before your face,
who will prepare your way before you.’

(citing Malachi 3:1a)

Truly, I say to you, among those born of women

there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. ...”

(Matthew 11:7-11a ESV // Luke 7:24-28a)

Jesus ends his speech by alluding to the Metaphor of Violence:

From the days of John the Baptist until now

the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence,

and **the violent take it by force**.

For **all the Prophets and the [nomos]⁴²⁰ prophesied until John**,

and if you are willing to accept it, **he is Elijah who is to come**.

He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

(Matthew 11:12-15 ESV)

Analysis of Jesus use of the Metaphor of Violence:

- **“From the days of John the Baptist”**: when John went out into the wilderness and began to **“prepare the way”** for the Messiah, it was the beginning of **a new era in the fulfillment of the Plan of God**
- The First Advent opened up access to the **Kingdom of God** for those called to the New Testament Church
- The work of John the Baptist prepared the way for the New Testament Church
- **“the violent take it by force”**: to be considered a candidate for admittance to the Kingdom of God, a person must learn to **violently hate sin**
- **“all the Prophets and the nomos prophesied until John”**: the message of the Old Testament is realized in the First Advent – including the message of the “Metaphor of Violence”

⁴²⁰ See footnote 84

- **“he is Elijah who is to come”**: the work of John was a type of the end-time work preparing for the Second Advent
- **“He who has ears to hear, let him hear”**: this is Jesus’ catch phrase for those who have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit – this object lesson is for True Christians
- **John the Baptist exemplifies the commitment required of True Christians**

The Christian Fight is long and hard. Once called, a person must make a lifelong commitment to live by the **Way of God**. Living by the **Way of God** requires the attainment of **Godly Character**⁴²¹ through **overcoming sin – conquering** the influence of the world, and **conquering** the innate human propensity to sin:

So now it is no longer I who do it, but **sin that dwells within me**.
 For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh.
 For **I have the desire to do what is right**, but **not the ability to carry it out**.
 For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.
 Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.
 So **I find it to be a [nomos]**⁴²² that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand.
 For **I delight in the [nomos] of God, in my inner being**,
 but I see in my members another [nomos] waging war against the [nomos] of my mind
 and making me captive to the [nomos] of sin that dwells in my members.

Wretched man that I am!

Who will deliver me from this body of death?

Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

So then, I myself serve the [nomos] of God with my mind,
 but with my flesh I serve the [nomos] of sin.
 (Romans 7:17-25 ESV)

**The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick;
 who can understand it?**

I [YHWH] search the heart and test the mind,

to give every man according to his ways,
 according to the fruit of his deeds.
 (Jeremiah 17:9-10 ESV see also 11:20a)

So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.
 For **if you live according to the flesh you will die**,
 but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.
 (Romans 8:12-13 ESV)

Of and by oneself, there is no way to succeed, “who will deliver me from this body of death”.

The end result of living a natural life in the world is death – the agenda of Satan the Devil.

Only through the calling of God and receipt of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit can a person break away from Satan’s world and conquer the innate pull of human nature to sin:

But I say, **walk by the Spirit**, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.
 For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit,
 and **the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh**,
 for these are opposed to each other,
 to keep you from doing the things you want to do.
 (Galatians 5:16-17 ESV)

For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God,
 which is in you through the laying on of my hands,
for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.
 (2 Timothy 1:6-7 ESV see also Acts 1:8a)

But **if Christ is in you**, although the body is dead because of sin,
the Spirit is life because of righteousness.
 If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you,
 he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead
will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit [which]⁴²³ **dwells in you**.

⁴²¹ See the paper “**Godly Character**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

⁴²² Paul uses “**nomos**” here with four distinct meanings: “**nomos of God**” is the teaching of God; “**another nomos**” is an abstract force in Paul’s mind; “**the nomos of my mind**” is Paul’s will, his desire; “**the nomos of sin**” is human nature.

⁴²³ See footnote 64

Likewise **the Spirit helps us in our weakness.**
For we do not know what to pray for as we ought,
but **the Spirit [itself] intercedes for us** with groanings too deep for words.
And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit,
because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.
(Romans 8:10-11, 26-27 ESV)

Through the Holy Spirit we human beings can conquer. The world of Satan can be overcome.
The innate pull of human nature can be mastered. Christians are called to a life of soldiering – **it is a war,**
but **the war can be won.** God has given us the weapons we require to win the war:

For though we walk in the flesh, **we are not waging war according to the flesh.**
For **the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh**
but have divine power to destroy strongholds.

We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God,
and take every thought captive to obey Christ,
being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete.
(2 Corinthians 10:3-6 ESV)

The night is far gone;
the day is at hand.
So then let us cast off the works of darkness and **put on the armor of light.**
(Romans 13:12 ESV)

The True Worshipper of God is committed to a life of soldiering – he/she must be fully committed.
Jesus holds **John the Baptist** out to be the quintessential example of a fully committed Christian Soldier.
The objective of the Christian life is **to overcome sin, to conquer,** and in so doing attain **Godly Character.**
This can only be accomplished **through the power of the Holy Spirit.** The Bible uses
the **“metaphor of armour”** to describe how Christians are to utilize the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Armour of God

The metaphor of “armour” was initiated by God when he first cut a covenant with Abram:

After these things the word of [YHWH] came to Abram in a vision:
“Fear not, Abram, **I am your shield;** your reward shall be very great.”
On that day [YHWH] [cut] (karath)⁴²⁴ a covenant with Abram, saying,
“To your offspring I give this land ...”
(Genesis 15:1, 18a ESV)

In his final blessing of Israel just before his death,
Moses extended the metaphor to include both the **“shield”** and the **“sword”**:
Happy are you, O Israel!
Who is like you, a people saved by [YHWH],
the shield of your help, and **the sword of your triumph!**
(Deuteronomy 33:29a ESV)

King David uses the metaphor several times,
including “the bow” as a weapon and **“preparation of the feet”**:

[YHWH], how many are my foes!
Many are rising against me;
many are saying of my [life] (nephesh),⁴²⁵
“There is no salvation for him in God.”

But **you, [YHWH], are a shield about me,**
my glory, and the lifter of my head.
(Psalm 3:1-3 ESV)

⁴²⁴ See footnote [355](#)

⁴²⁵ See footnote [1](#)

But let all who take refuge in you rejoice;
let them ever sing for joy, and spread your protection over them,
that those who love your name may exult in you.

For you bless the righteous, [YHWH];
you cover him with favor as with a shield.

(Psalm 5:11-12 ESV)

Oh, let the evil of the wicked come to an end,
and may you establish the righteous—you who test the minds and hearts,
O righteous God!

My shield is with God, who saves the upright in heart.

God is a righteous judge, and a God who feels indignation every day.

If a man does not repent, **God will whet his sword**;

he has bent and readied his bow;

he has prepared for him his deadly weapons, **making his arrows fiery shafts.**

(Psalm 7:9-13 ESV)

[YHWH] is my rock and **my fortress** and my deliverer,

my God, my rock, **in whom I take refuge**,

my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

I call upon [YHWH], who is worthy to be praised, and I am saved from my enemies.

This God—his way is perfect;

the word of [YHWH] proves true;

he is a shield for all those who take refuge in him.

You have given me the shield of your salvation,

and your right hand supported me, and your gentleness made me great.

You gave a wide place for my steps under me, and **my feet did not slip.**

(Psalm 18:2-3, 30, 35-36 ESV // 2 Samuel 22:2-3, 31, 36-37)

Blessed be [YHWH]!

For he has heard the voice of my pleas for mercy.

[YHWH] is my strength and my shield;

in him my heart trusts, and I am helped;

my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him.

(Psalm 28:6-7 ESV)

Blessed be [YHWH], my rock,

who trains my hands for war, and my fingers for battle;

he is my [hesed]⁴²⁶ and **my fortress**,

my stronghold and my deliverer,

my shield and he in whom I take refuge, who subdues peoples under me.

(Psalm 144:1-2 ESV)

Later Psalmists continue to use the metaphor, identifying the “**sword**” as “**two-edged**”:

Our [being] (nephesh) waits for [YHWH];

he is our help and our shield.

For our heart is glad in him, because we trust in his holy name.

Let your [hesed], [YHWH], be upon us, even as we hope in you.

(Psalm 33:20-22 ESV)

[YHWH] God of hosts, hear my prayer; give ear, O God of Jacob!

Behold our shield, O God; look on the face of your anointed!

For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere.

I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God

than dwell in the tents of wickedness.

For **[YHWH ’elohim] is a sun and shield**;

[YHWH] bestows favor and honor.

No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly.

[YHWH] of hosts, blessed is the one who trusts in you!

(Psalm 84:8-12 ESV)

⁴²⁶ See footnote 21

O Israel, trust in [YHWH]!
He is their help and their shield.
O house of Aaron, trust in [YHWH]!
He is their help and their shield.
You who [reverence] (yare’)⁴²⁷ [YHWH], trust in [YHWH]!
He is their help and their shield.
(Psalm 115:9-11 ESV)

I hate the double-minded, but I love your [torah]⁴²⁸
You are my hiding place and my shield; I hope in your word.
(Psalm 119:113-114 ESV)

For [YHWH] takes pleasure in his people;
he adorns the humble with salvation.
Let the godly exult in glory;
let them sing for joy on their beds.
Let the high praises of God be in their throats and two-edged swords in their hands,
to execute vengeance on the nations and punishments⁴²⁹ on the peoples ...
(Psalm 149:4-7 ESV)

The **Prophet Isaiah** uses the “metaphor of armour” frequently, first mentioning “the belt”, “the breastplate”, and “the helmet”; also, using “the rod of my mouth”, “a polished arrow”:

There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.
And the Spirit of [YHWH] shall rest upon him,
the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and might,
the Spirit of knowledge and the [reverence] (yir’e’ah) of [YHWH].

And his delight shall be in the [reverence] (yir’e’ah) of [YHWH].
He shall not judge by what his eyes see,
or decide disputes by what his ears hear,
but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;
and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.

Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist,
and faithfulness the belt of his loins.
(Isaiah 11:1-5 ESV)

Listen to me, O coastlands, and give attention, you peoples from afar.
[YHWH] called me from the womb, from the body of my mother he named my name.

He made my mouth like a sharp sword;
in the shadow of his hand he hid me;
he made me a polished arrow; in his quiver he hid me away.
(Isaiah 49:1-2 ESV)⁴³⁰

Therefore my people shall know my name.
Therefore in that day they shall know that it is I who speak; here I am.

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news,
who publishes peace,
who brings good news of happiness,
who publishes salvation,
who says to Zion,
“Your God reigns.”

The voice of your watchmen—they lift up their voice; together they sing for joy;
for eye to eye they see the return of [YHWH] to Zion.
(Isaiah 52:6-8 ESV see also Nahum 1:15a)

⁴²⁷ See footnote [368](#)

⁴²⁸ See footnote [202](#)

⁴²⁹ This is an allusion to the “metaphor of violence”; see [Excursus 2 – The Metaphor of Violence](#) in the paper “[God of Every Nation](#)” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

⁴³⁰ See the discussion of these verses in section [7.3 Servant Song Two](#).

Truth is lacking, and he who departs from evil makes himself a prey.
[YHWH] saw it, and it displeased him that there was no justice (mish^epat).⁴³¹
He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no one to intercede;
then **his own arm brought him salvation**, and his righteousness upheld him.

He put on righteousness as a breastplate,
and **a helmet of salvation on his head**;

he put on garments of vengeance for clothing,
and wrapped himself in zeal as a cloak.

According to their deeds, so will he repay,
wrath to his adversaries, repayment to his enemies;
to the coastlands he will render repayment.

So they shall [reverence] (yare')⁴³² the name of [YHWH] from the west,
and his glory from the rising of the sun;
for he will come like a rushing stream, which the wind of [YHWH] drives.
(Isaiah 59:15-19 ESV)

The **Prophet Hosea** uses “metaphor of armour” once alluding to slaying by “**the words of my mouth**”:

What shall I do with you, O Ephraim?

What shall I do with you, O Judah?

Your [hesed]⁴³³ is like a morning cloud, like the dew that goes early away.

Therefore I have hewn them by the prophets;

I have slain them by the words of my mouth,⁴³⁴

and my (mish^epatim)⁴³⁵ goes forth as the light.

For I desire [hesed] and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.

(Hosea 6:4-6 ESV)

The metaphor is continued throughout the New Testament:

Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth.

I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.⁴³⁶

(Matthew 10:34 ESV)

And how are they to preach unless they are sent?

As it is written,

“How beautiful are **the feet of those who preach the good news!**”

(citing Isaiah 52:7a)

(Romans 10:15 ESV)

The night is far gone; the day is at hand.

So then let us cast off the works of darkness and **put on the armor of light**.

(Romans 13:12 ESV)

We put no obstacle in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry,
but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way:

by great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors,
sleepless nights, hunger; by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness,

the Holy Spirit, genuine love; **by truthful speech**, and the power of God;

with **the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left**;

(2 Corinthians 6:3-7 ESV)

But since we belong to the day, let us be sober,

having put on **the breastplate of faith and love**,

and for **a helmet the hope of salvation**.

(alluding to Isaiah 59:17a)

(1 Thessalonians 5:8 ESV)

⁴³¹ See footnote [37](#)

⁴³² See footnote [368](#)

⁴³³ See footnote [21](#)

⁴³⁴ The “sharp, two edged, sword”, Hebrews 4:12, Revelation 1:16

⁴³⁵ See footnote [295](#)

⁴³⁶ Jesus uses **double entendre**: indeed **the First Advent was NOT to bring peace**; those called to the New Testament Church have suffered “**the sword**” of **persecution** down through the centuries; but, the **New Testament Documents**, the Word of God, **the Sword of the Spirit**, have made possible proper understanding of the entire Bible.

For **the word of God** is living and active,
sharper than any two-edged sword,
piercing to the division of [body] (psyche)⁴³⁷ and of spirit, of joints and of marrow,
and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.
(Hebrews 4:12 ESV)

Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh,
arm yourselves with the same way of thinking,
for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin ...
(1 Peter 4:1 ESV)

For everyone who has been [begotten] (gennaō)⁴³⁸ of God **overcomes the world**.
And this is **the victory** that has overcome the world—our **faith**.
(1 John 5:4 ESV)

... and in the midst of the lampstands **one like a son of man**,
clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest.

In his right hand he held seven stars,
from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword,
and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.
(Revelation 1:13, 16 ESV see also 2:12, 16, 19:15, 21)

The most developed expression of the metaphor comes from the Apostle Paul:

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.
Put on the whole armor of God,
that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.
For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood,
but against the rulers, against the authorities,
against the cosmic powers over this present darkness,
against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.
Therefore take up the whole armor of God,
that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.
Stand therefore, having fastened on the **belt of truth**,
and having put on the **breastplate of righteousness**,
and, as **shoes** for your feet, having put on the readiness given by **the gospel of peace**.
In all circumstances take up the **shield of faith**,
with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one;
and take the **helmet of salvation**,
and the **sword of the Spirit**, which is **the word of God**,
praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication.
(Ephesians 6:10-18a ESV)

The “**metaphor of armour**” is used throughout the Bible
to demonstrate the power of the Holy Spirit in **enabling True Worshipper to conquer**.
The **Apostle Paul** provides the **definitive expression** of the “metaphor of armour”.

Belt of Truth

The “truth” is the written Word of God, the Bible, and the living Word, Jesus Christ.

The Bible must be taken at face value – all speculation and human tradition must be avoided:

And the woman said to Elijah,⁴³⁹
“**Now I know** that you are a man of God,
and that **the word of [YHWH] in your mouth is truth**.”

(1 Kings 17:24 ESV)

Behold, **you delight in truth in the inward being**,
and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.
(Psalm 51:6 ESV)

I [YHWH] speak the truth;
I declare what is right.
(Isaiah 45:19b ESV)

⁴³⁷ See footnote [1](#)

⁴³⁸ See footnote [342](#)

⁴³⁹ Elijah has just healed the woman’s dead son; see 1 Kings 17:17-23.

And **the Word became flesh** and dwelt among us,
and we have seen his glory,
glory as of the only Son from the Father,
full of grace and truth.
(John 1:14 ESV)

If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples,
and **you will know the truth,**
and **the truth will set you free.**

Sanctify them in the truth;
your word is truth.
(John 8:31b-32, 17:17 ESV)

The Bible identifies two divergences from the “truth” in New Testament times:

- **Pharisaic interpretations:**

And the **Pharisees** and the scribes asked him,
“Why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders,
but eat with defiled hands?”

And he said to them,
“Well did Isaiah prophesy of **you hypocrites**, as it is written,
‘This people honors me with their lips,
but their heart is far from me;
in vain do they worship me,
teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’
(alluding to Isaiah 29:13)

You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men.”

And he said to them,
“You have a fine way of **rejecting the commandment of God**
in order to establish your tradition! ...”
(Mark 7:5-9 ESV see also Matthew 15:1-9)

- **Jewish myths:**

As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia,
remain at Ephesus so that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine,
nor to devote themselves to **myths** and **endless genealogies**,
which promote **speculations** rather than the stewardship from God that is by faith.

Have nothing to do with irreverent, **silly myths**.

If anyone teaches a different doctrine
and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ
and the teaching that accords with godliness,
he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing.
He has an unhealthy craving for **controversy** and for **quarrels about words**,
which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions ...
(1 Timothy 1:3-4, 4:7a, 6:3-4 ESV)

Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant **controversies**; you know that they breed quarrels.

For the time is coming when **people will not endure sound teaching**,
but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions,
and will **turn away from listening to the truth** and wander off into **myths**.
(2 Timothy 2:23, 4:3-4 ESV)

This testimony is true.

Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith,
not devoting themselves to **Jewish myths**
and the commands of **people who turn away from the truth**.

But avoid foolish **controversies**, **genealogies**, **dissensions**, and **quarrels about the law**,⁴⁴⁰
for they are unprofitable and worthless.
(Titus 1:13-14, 3:9 ESV)

⁴⁴⁰ The word, νομικός - nomikos, refers specifically to “lawyers of the Pharisees”; see www.esv.org “Lexical Form”.

In the modern world, there are many sources of “untruth”. The most damaging lie foisted off on humanity has been **Darwin’s theory of evolution**, which attempts to explain how there can be a creation without a Creator. Next is the “**documentary hypothesis**”,⁴⁴¹ which has crippled the minds of generations of Bible scholars and Bible students. By casting doubt on the integrity of the Bible, Satan has used these lies to undermine the whole basis of the Judeo-Christian Ethic upon which Western Civilization was based. Today, **artificial intelligence** is being used to generate lies of every sort at such an unprecedented rate that there is no hope of sorting it all out – it simply has to be stopped.

The “belt of truth” is the first item of armour because truth is the foundation of everything else. The Bible is God’s revelation of himself to human beings. Without an understanding of the Bible it is NOT possible know **who and what God is**, “**The Nature of God**”.⁴⁴² Only the Bible reveals **God’s purpose** in creating human beings, “**The Plan of God**”.⁴⁴³ Without the Bible, there would be no way to understand **what God requires** of human beings, “**The Way of God**”.⁴⁴⁴

Breastplate of Righteousness

To be truly righteous is to be “holy”, which, as human beings, we CANNOT be – **only God is Holy**.⁴⁴⁵ As human beings, we strive to attain “righteousness”; but only at the First Resurrection can any human being be “holy”, truly righteous:

Therefore, **preparing your minds for action**, and being sober-minded,
set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you **at the revelation of Jesus Christ**.
As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance,
but **as he who called you is holy**,
you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written,
“**You shall be holy, for I am holy.**”
(alluding to Leviticus 11:44-45, 19:2, 20:7, 26, 21:8)
(1 Peter 1:13-16 ESV)

Through faith, a True Worshipper accepts Jesus’ propitiating sacrifice which allows God to account the person as “holy”, “righteous”, which allows the person to maintain a relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ:

And **he believed** [YHWH],⁴⁴⁶
and **he counted it to him as righteousness**.
(Genesis 15:6 ESV)

For what does the Scripture say?
“**Abraham believed God,**
and **it was counted to him as righteousness.**”

just as David also speaks of the blessing
of **the one to whom God counts righteousness** apart from works:
“Blessed are those whose lawless⁴⁴⁷ deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered;
blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin.”
(alluding to Psalm 32:1-2a)⁴⁴⁸

Is this blessing then only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised?
For we say that **faith was counted to Abraham as righteousness**.

⁴⁴¹ See section **1. The Documentary Hypothesis** in the paper “**The Writings of Moses**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

⁴⁴² See the paper “**First Pillar - The Nature of God**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

⁴⁴³ See the paper “**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

⁴⁴⁴ See the paper “**Third Pillar - The Way of God**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

⁴⁴⁵ See section **1.4.1 God is Holy** in the paper “**First Pillar - The Nature of God**” and section **6. Holiness** in the paper “**To Be a Priest**”; both papers are located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

⁴⁴⁶ YHWH has just promised Abram descendants as the “stars of heaven”; see Genesis 15:1-5.

⁴⁴⁷ The Greek word is: ἀνομία - anomia, “lawlessness”, “wickedness”; see www.esv.org “Lexical form”

⁴⁴⁸ Psalm 32:1-2a uses all three Hebrew words for sin: pesha’, ‘awon, and hata’;

see the discussion of these words in section **7.6.2 The Substitutive Nature of the Sacrifice**.

That is why **his faith** was “**counted to him as righteousness**.”
But **the words** “it was counted to him” **were not written for his sake alone**, but **for ours also**.
It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord,
who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.
(Romans 4:3, 6-9, 22-25 ESV see also Galatians 3:6, James 2:23)

To be given the gift of “faith” from God,⁴⁴⁹ requires living by the **Way of God**.

The **Way of God** is summarized by the **Ten Commandments**, which **define “righteousness”**:

And **it will be righteousness for us**,
if we are careful to do all this commandment (mitz^ewah) before [YHWH] our God,
as he has commanded us.⁴⁵⁰
(Deuteronomy 6:25 ESV)

Righteous are you, [YHWH], and right are your [mish^epatim].⁴⁵⁰
You have appointed your testimonies (‘eduth) in **righteousness** and in all **faithfulness**.
(Psalm 119:137-138 ESV)

The word, מִצְוָה - mitz^ewah, is more or less a technical term for the Ten Commandments.⁴⁵¹

The word, עֵדוּת - ‘eduth, is frequently synonymous with *mitz^ewah*, although it can be used with a broader range of meaning.⁴⁵²

In the Beatitudes, Jesus makes clear **the necessity to strive for righteousness**:

Blessed are those who **hunger and thirst for righteousness**,
for they shall be satisfied.

But **seek first the kingdom of God** and **his righteousness**,
and all these things will be added to you.
(Matthew 5:6, 6:33 ESV)

The **Apostle Paul** emphasizes **the relationship between “faith” and “righteousness”**:

For in it **the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith**,
as it is written,

“The righteous shall live by faith.”
(alluding to Habakkuk 2:4b)

(Romans 1:17 ESV see also Galatians 3:11, Hebrews 10:38)

The “breastplate” covers the heart. God looks on the “heart”.

The objective of the Christian life is, through repentance, to have a pure heart,
allowing God the Father to grant the gift of eternal life, to be made righteous at the First Resurrection.
A person learns righteousness by living by the Way of God. **The Gospel defines the Way of God.**

Shoes – the Gospel of Peace

There is considerable confusion in the world as to exactly what is the “Gospel”? Some would limit it to the four New Testament books, Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John. Others would argue that it means the life and work of Jesus Christ. Some suggest that it means the message of the New Testament, to the exclusion of the Old Testament. All these notions are very limiting. **What does the Bible say?**

The word “**gospel**” is generally translated from εὐαγγέλιον - euangelion,⁴⁵³ literally “**good news**”.

In the vast majority of the occurrences of the word “Gospel” it is unqualified – it is just “**the Gospel**”.⁴⁵⁴
The New Testament authors clearly believed their readers would understand the term.

⁴⁴⁹ See section **2.1 Faith is a Gift from God** in the paper “**The Inner Workings of Faith**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

⁴⁵⁰ See footnote **295**

⁴⁵¹ See **TWOT** article 1887b pages 757-758

⁴⁵² See **TWOT** article 1576f pages 649-648

⁴⁵³ The related verb, εὐαγγελίζω - euangelizō, means “preach the gospel”, “proclaim good news”; see **GEL** pages 317-318.

⁴⁵⁴ Six times Paul personalizes it with “my/our Gospel”;

Paul uses “a gospel” and “different gospel” to refer to false teaching in 2 Corinthians 11:4 and Galatians 1:6,8,9.

The term **“Gospel of God”** occurs five times, **“God’s Gospel”** occurs once – these most likely are intended to imply ownership of the Gospel to God the Father. The term **“Gospel of Christ”** occurs eleven times. Variants, **“Gospel of Jesus Christ”**, **“Gospel of our lord Jesus”**, and **“Gospel of his Son”** occur once each. These could be intended to imply ownership of the Gospel by Jesus Christ; or they could imply that the Gospel is about Jesus Christ.

The more revealing terms are the odd ones each of which occurs rarely:

- **“Gospel of the kingdom”** – this occurs three times:
And he went throughout all Galilee,
teaching in their synagogues and **proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom**
and healing every disease and every affliction among the people.
(Matthew 4:23 ESV)
And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages,
teaching in their synagogues
and **proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom**
and healing every disease and every affliction.
(Matthew 9:35 ESV)
And this **gospel of the kingdom** will be proclaimed throughout the whole world
as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.
(Matthew 24:14 ESV)
The Kingdom of God is the Family of God at the First Advent, including all those to whom
God the Father grants the gift of eternal life in the First Resurrection,
established as the world ruling government of planet earth.⁴⁵⁵
The Kingdom of God is a principal objective of the Plan of God.
- **“Gospel of the grace of God”** – this occurs once:
But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself,
if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus,
to testify to **the gospel of the grace of God.**
(Acts 20:24 ESV)
Paul is speaking to the leaders of the Church in Ephesus.⁴⁵⁶ He is going to Jerusalem,
where he anticipates trouble. This is Paul’s farewell speech to close friends and associates.
Paul emphasizes that **the Gospel is about “grace”** because the promise of God,
eternal life, is only accessible through the grace of God:
Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day
to admonish every one with tears.
And now I commend you to God and to **the word of his grace,**
which is able to build you up
and to **give you the inheritance** among all those who are sanctified.
(Acts 20:31-32 ESV)
- **“Gospel of your salvation”** – this occurs once:
In him you also,
when you heard **the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation,**
and believed in him,
were sealed with the promised **Holy Spirit,**
[which]⁴⁵⁷ is **the guarantee of our inheritance** until we acquire possession of it,
to the praise of his glory.
(Ephesians 1:13-14 ESV)
The letter we have as “Ephesians” was one of the last letters written by Paul.⁴⁵⁸
Paul is aware that his teaching is of vital importance – he wants to be sure he has clearly stated
his teaching. Paul uses the word “*euangelion*” four times in the letter.
Paul explains that **the Gospel** is about
the extension of salvation to all humanity through Jesus Christ:
When you read this, you can perceive **my insight into the mystery of Christ,**
which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations
as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.

⁴⁵⁵ See section 2.3.5 *What is “The Kingdom of God”?* in the paper “Second Pillar - The Plan of God”
located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

⁴⁵⁶ See section 6.5.3 *Paul Completes His Third Journey*

⁴⁵⁷ See footnote 64

⁴⁵⁸ See section 6.6.3 *The Prison Epistles (Letter to the Ephesians)*

This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.
(Ephesians 3:4-6 ESV)

- **“Gospel of the glory of Christ”** – this occurs once:

In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.
(2 Corinthians 4:4 ESV)

Paul leads up to this statement by explaining that the Gospel is the teaching of God which can only be understood through God’s revelation:

Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart.

But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways.

We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God’s word, but by the open statement of the truth

we would commend ourselves to everyone’s conscience in the sight of God.

And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing.

(2 Corinthians 4:1-3 ESV)

The phrase, “those who are perishing”, is explained in verse 4 as those taken in by Satan. Those who overcome the world, do so by revelation of the truth from God:

For God, who said,

“Let light shine out of darkness,”

(alluding to Genesis 1:3)

has shone in our hearts

to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

(2 Corinthians 4:6 ESV)

The truth from God is “the knowledge” given by God, the Gospel.

- **“Gospel of the glory of the blessed God”** – this occurs once:

Now we know that the [nomos]⁴⁵⁹ is good, if one uses it lawfully (nomimōs),⁴⁶⁰

understanding this, that the [nomos] is not laid down for the just

but for the lawless and disobedient,

for the ungodly and sinners,

for the unholy and profane,

for those who strike their fathers and mothers,

for murderers, the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality,

enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine,

in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted.

(1 Timothy 1:8-11 ESV)

Paul has just been released from prison.⁴⁶¹ Paul is aware of “false teachers” in Ephesus, so instructs Timothy to deal with them:

As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus

so that you may charge certain persons

not <to teach any different doctrine>, (heterodidaskaleō)

nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies,

which promote speculations rather than the stewardship from God that is by faith.

The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart

and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

Certain persons, by swerving from these, have wandered away into vain discussion,

desiring to be <teachers of the law>, (nomodidaskalos)

without understanding either what they are saying

or the things about which they make confident assertions.

(1 Timothy 1:3-7 ESV)

⁴⁵⁹ See footnote 84

⁴⁶⁰ The word is, νομίμως - nomimōs, adverb, “lawfully”, “in accordance with the rules”; two occurrences 1 Timothy 1:8, 2 Timothy 2:5; see www.esv.org. “Lexical Form”

⁴⁶¹ See section 6.6.4 Paul’s Last Days

These “**certain persons**” sound very much like those of the “**circumcision party**” with whom Paul had had trouble since his first activities in Southern Galatia.⁴⁶² Paul uses two very specific technical terms to describe the “false teaching”:

- ἑτεροδιδασκαλέω - heterodidaskaleō, verb, only exists in Christian writings, “**teach a different doctrine**”, i.e. a heretical doctrine; Paul uses it elsewhere in 1 Timothy 6:3; Ignatius uses the word in his Letter to Polycarp 3:1;⁴⁶³ see GEL page 314.
- νομοδιδάσκαλος - nomodidaskalos, masculine noun, only exists in Christian writings, “**teacher of the law**”; the word occurs elsewhere in Luke 5:17, Acts 5:34; see GEL page 543.

The other occurrences of *nomodidaskalos* are instructive:

On one of those days, as [Jesus] was teaching,
Pharisees and **<teachers of the law> (nomodidaskalos)** were sitting there,
who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem.
(Luke 5:17a ESV)

But a Pharisee in the council named Gamaliel,
<a teacher of the law> (nomodidaskalos)
held in honor by all the people,
stood up and gave orders to put the men outside for a little while.
(Acts 5:34 ESV)

In both cases, the word *nomodidaskalos* is used to describe “Pharisees”, or perhaps the “elite” of the Pharisees. The Pharisees, like modern Judaism and mainstream Christianity, paid lip service to the Bible and based their teaching on their traditions.⁴⁶⁴ The whole focus of the Pharisees was to retain control over the people through their endless interpretations.

Paul asserts that “**the *nomos* is good, if one uses it lawfully**”. Having been a Pharisee,⁴⁶⁵ Paul was very aware of the corruption due to their traditions.

These “teachers”, “**certain persons**”, were clearly trying to spread Pharisaic corruption.

Paul asserts “**the *nomos* is good**” provided “**one uses it *nomimōs***”.

He is clearly referring to the proper understanding of the **teaching of God, *torah***, in contrast to the false teaching, the corruption of the Pharisees.

The true teaching of the Bible comes from God the Father through Jesus Christ.

The understanding of the Bible comes from God the Father

through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

This is “**in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God**”.

The whole teaching of God, *torah*, is the Gospel, the Word of God.⁴⁶⁶

Mainstream Christianity remains confused as to what actually is the “**Gospel**”.

The term is more or less synonymous with “***torah***”, the teaching of God.

The **Way of God** is defined by the teaching of God, **the Bible**. The understanding of the Bible comes only through the Holy Spirit and living by the **Way of God**.

The Holy Spirit is gift from God upon conversion, along with it comes the gift of “faith”.

Shield of Faith

How is “faith” a shield? Why does Paul associate the “shield” with faith?

In Old Testament instances of the metaphor, the “shield” is the most often cited item of armour.

The **Apostle John** also associated “faith” with “victory”:

For everyone who has been [begotten] (*gennaō*)⁴⁶⁷ of God **overcomes the world**.

And this is **the victory** that has overcome the world—our **faith**.

(1 John 5:4 ESV)

⁴⁶² See sections **6.3 Paul's First Journey** and **6.3.1 Paul's Letter to the Galatians**

⁴⁶³ See Holmes pages 264-265, first sentence, “strange doctrines”.

⁴⁶⁴ See Mark 7:1-13, Matthew 15:1-9

⁴⁶⁵ See Galatians 1:14, Philippians 3:5

⁴⁶⁶ See the discussion of “The Word of God” in section **Sword of the Spirit**.

⁴⁶⁷ See footnote **342**

Paul succinctly explains why “faith” is a “shield”:

Therefore, **since we have been justified by faith**,
we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.
Through him **we have also obtained access by faith into this grace** in which we stand,
and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.
(Romans 5:1-2 ESV)

To be “**justified**” is to be accounted “**blameless**” by God, “**we have been justified by faith**”,
to be accounted “**righteous**”. This allows a human being to be in a relationship with God the Father
and Jesus Christ, “**we have also obtained access by faith into this grace**”. To be accounted “blameless”,
a person must be called by God, repent, and accept the propitiating sacrifice of Jesus Christ
to remove sin. Then God can grant **the gift of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit** and **the gift of faith**.⁴⁶⁸
This renders the person a candidate for the gift of eternal life.
Through “**faith**” and the “**indwelling of the Holy Spirit**” a person can learn to live by the **Way of God**
and remain a candidate for the gift of eternal life. “Faith” is the “shield” that allows a Christian
to “**overcomes the world**” and gain “**the victory**”.

The process of “justification” is discussed in *Excursus 2 – Justification in the New Testament*
in the paper “**To Be a King**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

What exactly is “faith”? The author of the Book of Hebrews provides the answer:

Now **faith is the assurance of things hoped for**,
the conviction of things not seen.
By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God,
so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.
And **without faith it is impossible to please him**,
for **whoever would draw near to God must believe**
that he exists and **that he rewards those who seek him**.
(Hebrews 11:1, 3, 6 ESV)

The Apostles Paul and Peter elaborate:

For the creation waits with eager longing for **the revealing of the sons of God**.
And not only the creation, but **we ourselves**, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit,
groan inwardly as we **wait eagerly for [full sonship] (huiiothesia)**,⁴⁶⁹ the redemption of our bodies.
For in this hope we [are being]⁴⁷⁰ saved.
Now **hope that is seen is not hope**.
For who hopes for what he sees?
But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.
(Romans 8:19, 23-25 ESV)
So **we do not lose heart**.
Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day.
For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison,
as **we look not to the things that are seen**
but to the things that are unseen.
For the things that are seen are transient,
but **the things that are unseen are eternal**.
So we are always of good courage.
We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord,
for **we walk by faith**, not by sight.
(2 Corinthians 4:16-18, 5:6-7 ESV)

⁴⁶⁸ See Acts 5:31-32, 11:17-18, 1 Corinthians 12:8-9, Ephesians 2:8, 2 Timothy 1:5-7; see also section **2.1 Faith is a Gift From God**
in the paper “**The Inner Workings of Faith**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

⁴⁶⁹ The phrase “**adoption as sons**” is a difficult translation. The term, υιοθεσία – huiiothesia, is used in non-biblical Greek for “adoption”;
see GEL page 841. Only Paul use the term; see Romans 8:15,23, 9:4, Galatians 4:5, and Ephesians 1:5.

The process by which God is bringing human beings into the Family of God is “**new birth**”, by transformation, “**full sonship**”, NOT adoption.

⁴⁷⁰ See footnote **190**

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!
 According to his great mercy, <he has caused us to be begotten again>⁴⁷¹ (anagennaō)
to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,
 to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,
 who by God's power are being guarded through faith
 for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.
 In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials,
 so that the tested genuineness of your faith
 —more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire
 —may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.
 Though you have not seen him, you love him.
 Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible
 and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your [lives] (psyche).⁴⁷²
 (1 Peter 1:3-9 ESV)

Analysis of the definition of “faith”:

- With the gift of faith, a person can comprehend the Plan of God, “by faith we understand”
- The objective of the Plan of God is that human beings will be transformed into eternal members of the God Family, “the revealing of the sons of God”, “wait eagerly for full sonship”
- This is the hope of eternal life, “faith is the assurance of things hoped for”, “a living hope”
- There is nothing in the physical realm that provides this understanding, “hope that is seen is not hope”, “the things that are unseen are eternal”
- Faith allows a person to know that God exists and to trust the Word of God, “without faith it is impossible to please him”
- Through faith a person is able to live by the Way of God, “we do not lose heart”, “we walk by faith”
- A person who has been granted the gift of faith and is living by the Way of God is a candidate for the gift of eternal life, “an inheritance that is imperishable”, “guarded through faith” (faith is a “shield”)
- In the Book of life,⁴⁷³ God retains the identities of those persons who are candidates for the gift of eternal life, “kept in heaven”
- The trials of the Christian life are designed to test faith, “the tested genuineness of your faith”
- Those to whom God the Father sees fit to grant the gift of eternal life, will receive “praise and glory and honor” at the Second Advent, “the revelation of Jesus Christ”
- Only by faith, “the outcome of your faith”, can a person know God, “you have not seen him”, “you believe in him”, and be known by God, in order to be granted the hope of eternal life, “the outcome of your faith”, “salvation”

The previous section, *Excursus 1 – The Necessity of Love*, identifies *hesed* as the most important word in the Bible for “Godly Love”. Many scriptures associate *hesed* with “faith”. God is the author of *hesed* – he inherently possesses *hesed*, and he requires True Worshipers to learn *hesed*. God is also inherently “faithful”, which is integral to *hesed*. As “covenant love” it is God’s “faithfulness” which makes it impossible for God to break a covenant. This also applies to “faith” as a shield. As a person exercises and grows in faith, he/she learns to have the “covenant love” expressed by *hesed*. This leads to the inviolability of the “covenant of baptism” – neither God nor the Christian will break it.

Some scriptures regarding *hesed* and faith:

- God possesses *hesed* and faith:
 Your [hesed], [YHWH], extends to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds.
 (Psalm 36:5 ESV)
 I have not hidden your deliverance within my heart;
 I have spoken of your faithfulness and your salvation;
 I have not concealed your [hesed] and your faithfulness from the great congregation.

⁴⁷¹ See footnote 342; ἀναγεννάω - anagennaō, “beget again”, see GEL page 51

⁴⁷² See footnote 1

⁴⁷³ See section 9.5 *The Book of Life* in the paper “The Writings of Moses” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

As for you, [YHWH], you will not restrain your mercy from me;
your **[hesed]** and your **faithfulness** will ever preserve me!
(Psalm 40:10-11 ESV)

But as for me, my prayer is to you, [YHWH].
At an acceptable time, O God,
in the abundance of your **[hesed]** answer me in your saving **faithfulness**.
(Psalm 69:13 ESV)

I will sing of the **[hesed]** of [YHWH], forever;
with my mouth I will make known your **faithfulness** to all generations.
Righteousness and [justness] (mish'pat)⁴⁷⁴ are the foundation of your throne;
[hesed] and **faithfulness** go before you.

My **faithfulness** and my **[hesed]** shall be with him, and in my name shall his horn be exalted.
... but I will not remove from him my **[hesed]** or be false to my **faithfulness**.

Lord, where is your **[hesed]** of old, which by your **faithfulness** you swore to David?
(Psalm 89:1, 14, 24, 33, 49 ESV)

It is good to give thanks to [YHWH], to sing praises to your name, O Most High;
to declare your **[hesed]** in the morning, and your **faithfulness** by night ...
(Psalm 92:1-2 ESV)

He has remembered his **[hesed]** and **faithfulness** to the house of Israel.
All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.
(Psalm 98:3 ESV)

For [YHWH] is good;
his **[hesed]** endures forever, and his **faithfulness** to all generations.
(Psalm 100:5 ESV)

For your **[hesed]** is great above the heavens; your **faithfulness** reaches to the clouds.
(Psalm 108:4 ESV)

For great is his **[hesed]** toward us, and **the faithfulness** of [YHWH] endures forever.
Praise [YHWH]!
(Psalm 117:2 ESV)

- True Worshipers require *hesed* and faith:

All the paths of [YHWH] are **[hesed]** and **faithfulness**,
for those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.
(Psalm 25:10 ESV)

Prolong the life of the king; may his years endure to all generations!
May he be enthroned forever before God;
appoint [hesed] and faithfulness to watch over him!
(Psalm 61:6-7 ESV)

Let not **[hesed]** and **faithfulness** forsake you;
bind them around your neck;
write them on the tablet of your heart.
(Proverbs 3:3 ESV)

By [hesed] and faithfulness iniquity is atoned for,
and by the [reverence] (yir'ah)⁴⁷⁵ of [YHWH] one turns away from evil.
(Proverbs 16:6 ESV)

- Abstract connotations of *hesed* and faith:

[hesed] and **faithfulness** meet; righteousness and peace kiss each other.
(Psalm 85:10 ESV)

For I said,
 "**[hesed]** will be built up forever;
 in the heavens you will establish your **faithfulness**."
(Psalm 89:2 ESV)

[hesed] and **faithfulness** preserve the king,
and by **[hesed]** his throne is upheld.
(Proverbs 20:28 ESV)

⁴⁷⁴ See footnote 37

⁴⁷⁵ See footnote 368

Faith is a gift of God through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. As such, **before conversion it is NOT possible for a person to have Godly Faith.** In **dealing with the disciples,** prior to the first Christian Pentecost, when they were given the gift of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, **Jesus frequently commented on the disciples' lack of faith:**

On that day, when evening had come, he said to them,
"Let us go across to the other side."

And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was.
And other boats were with him.

And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat,
so that the boat was already filling.

But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion.

And they woke him and said to him,

"Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?"

And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea,

"Peace!

Be still!"

And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

He said to them,

"Why are you so afraid?

Have you still no faith?"

(Mark 4:35-40 ESV // Luke 8:22-25)

And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea.

But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said,

"It is a ghost!"

and they cried out in fear.

But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying,

"Take heart;

it is I.

Do not be afraid."

And Peter answered him,

"Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water."

He said,

"Come."

So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus.

But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out,

"Lord, save me."

Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him,

O you of little faith, why did you doubt?"

(Matthew 14:25-31 ESV)

When the disciples reached the other side, they had forgotten to bring any bread.

Jesus said to them,

"Watch and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

And they began discussing it among themselves, saying,

"We brought no bread."

But Jesus, aware of this, said,

O you of little faith,

why are you discussing among yourselves the fact that you have no bread? ..."

(Matthew 16:5-8 ESV)

And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him, and the boy was healed instantly.

Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said,

"Why could we not cast it out?"

He said to them,

Because of your little faith. ..."

(Matthew 17:18-20a ESV)

Consider the lilies, how they grow:
they neither toil nor spin,
yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

But if God so clothes the grass,
which is alive in the field today, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven,
how much more will he clothe you,
O you of little faith!
(Luke 12:27-28 ESV)

Clearly **the Apostles came to understand the need for faith through the Holy Spirit,**
and **they received Jesus' promise of the "Helper",** the Holy Spirit"

The apostles said to the Lord,
"Increase our faith!"

(Luke 17:5 ESV)

if you love me, you will keep my commandments.

And I will ask **the Father,**

and he **will give you another Helper,** to be with you forever,

even **the Spirit of truth,**

[which]⁴⁷⁶ the world cannot receive, because it neither sees [it] nor knows [it].

You know [it], for [it] dwells with you and **will be in you.**

These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you.

But **the Helper, the Holy Spirit,**

[which] the Father will send in my name,

[it] **will teach you all things** and **bring to your remembrance all** that I have said to you.

But when the Helper comes,

[which] I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth,

[which] proceeds from the Father, **[it] will bear witness about me.**

Nevertheless, I tell you the truth:

it is to your advantage that I go away,

for **if I do not go away,**

the Helper will not come to you.

But if I go, I will send [it] to you.

(John 14:15-17, 25-26, 15:26, 16:7 ESV)

Godly Faith is only available through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Faith, as a shield,
protects a Christian from Satan and his world. By faith, a Christian understands the things of God.
By faith, a Christian looks to **the promises of God,** which **culminate in salvation.**

Helmet of Salvation

For detailed discussion of the concept of "salvation", see section **1.2.3 God is the Source of Salvation**
in the paper "**First Pillar - The Nature of God**" and section **2.2 Salvation** in the paper
"**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**"; both papers are located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

Briefly, **spiritual salvation**, which is a primary theme of the New Testament, implies the granting
of **the gift of eternal life** to human beings. Those persons who receive this gift, are, through it,
admitted to **full membership in the Family of God.** This will first occur at the **Second Advent**
with the **First Resurrection.** Then throughout the World Tomorrow, **all persons** on planet earth
will be **taught the Way of God** and be given the opportunity for spiritual salvation.

Finally, at the Great White Throne Judgement, **all human beings who have lived and died**
will be resurrected to physical life; they will be taught the **Way of God;**
and they will be given the opportunity for spiritual salvation.

For True Worshippers of God, this is the objective of this human life. Spiritual salvation is
the **"hope of eternal life"**⁴⁷⁷ that God promises in the New Testament. "Hope" is a function
of the "mind". A True Worshipper must come to an **intellectual understanding of the Plan of God,**
and through the truth of the Bible, retain a clear perception the objective – spiritual salvation.
The "helmet" protects the "head". Knowledge of salvation resides in the mind.

⁴⁷⁶ See footnote 64

⁴⁷⁷ See section **2.2.4 Eternal Life** in the paper "**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca
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The “helmet of salvation” is knowledge of the hope of eternal life by which a True Worshipper must live.

King David expresses the hope of salvation:

Praise is due to you, O God, in Zion, and to you shall vows be performed.
O you who hear prayer, **to you shall all flesh come.**
When iniquities prevail against me, **you atone for our transgressions.**
Blessed is **the one you choose and bring near**, to dwell in your courts!
We shall be satisfied with the goodness of your house, the holiness of your temple!
By awesome deeds you answer us with righteousness,
O God of our salvation, the hope of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas;
(Psalm 65:1-5 ESV)

The Sons of Korah echo David:

As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my [being] (nephesh)⁴⁷⁸ for you, O God.
My [being] (nephesh) thirsts for God, for the living God.
When shall I come and appear before God?
Why are you cast down, O my [mind] (nephesh),
and why are you in turmoil within me?
Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, **my salvation** and my God.
(Psalm 42:1-2, 5-6a ESV)

The Psalmist of the 119th Psalm concurs:

My [being] (nephesh) longs for your salvation;
I hope in your word.
My eyes long for your promise; I ask,
“**When will you comfort me?**”
Great peace have those who love your [torah];⁴⁷⁹ nothing can make them stumble.
I hope for your salvation, [YHWH], and I do your commandments.
My [mind] (nephesh) keeps your testimonies; I love them exceedingly.
I keep your precepts and testimonies, for **all my ways are before you.**
(Psalm 119:81-82, 165-168 ESV)

The **Prophet Isaiah** reports the words of YHWH looking to the time when **salvation will be made available throughout the world:**

Give attention to me, my people,
and give ear to me, my nation;
for [torah] will go out from me,
and I will set my [justness] (mish^epat)⁴⁸⁰ for **a light to the peoples.**
My righteousness draws near, **my salvation has gone out**,
and my arms will judge the peoples;
the coastlands hope for me, and for my arm they wait.
Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look at the earth beneath;
for the heavens vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment,
and they who dwell in it will die in like manner;
but **my salvation will be forever**, and my righteousness will never be dismayed.
(Isaiah 51:4-6 ESV)

The **Apostle Paul** provides encouraging words to **the Church in Thessalonica** and personally to his assistant, **Titus**:

But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord,
because **God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved**,
through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.
To this **he called you** through our gospel,
so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.
So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the traditions that you were taught by us,
either by our spoken word or by our letter.

⁴⁷⁸ See footnote [1](#)

⁴⁷⁹ See footnote [202](#)

⁴⁸⁰ See footnote [37](#)

Now may our Lord **Jesus Christ** himself, and **God our Father**, who loved us and **gave us eternal comfort** and good **hope** through grace, comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word. (2Thessalonians 2:13-17 ESV)

Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of God's elect and their **knowledge of the truth**, which accords with godliness, **in hope of eternal life**, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began and at the proper time manifested in his word through the preaching with which I have been entrusted by the command of **God our Savior**; **To Titus**, my true child in a common faith:

Grace and peace from **God the Father** and **Christ Jesus our Savior**. (Titus 1:1-4 ESV)

But when the goodness and loving kindness⁴⁸¹ of **God our Savior** appeared, **he [is saving]⁴⁸² us**, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and **renewal of the Holy Spirit**, [which]⁴⁸³ he poured out on us richly through **Jesus Christ our Savior**, so that being justified by his grace **we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life**. (Titus 3:4-7 ESV)

The “hope of eternal life” is based on the promise of God:

Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you too will abide in the Son and in the Father. And **this is the promise that he made to us—eternal life**. (1 John 2:24-25 ESV)

And we know that **the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true**; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. **He is the true God and eternal life**. (1 John 5:20 ESV)

And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. For **this is the will of my Father**, that **everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life**, and I will raise him up on the last day. Truly, truly, I say to you, **whoever believes has eternal life**. (John 6:39-40, 47 ESV)

Therefore **he is the mediator of a new covenant**, so that those who are called may receive the **promised eternal inheritance**. **This makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant**. But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, **since it is enacted on better promises**. (Hebrews 9:15a, 7:22, 8:6 ESV)

Once converted, in order to remain a candidate for the gift of eternal life, a Christian must learn to live by the **Way of God**. The knowledge of the **Plan of God**, which defines the objective of the Christian life, “**the helmet of salvation**”, is of no value unless the Christian also does the will of God – lives by the **Way of God**:

And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, “Good Teacher, **what must I do to inherit eternal life?**”

⁴⁸¹ The Greek word, φιλανθρωπία - philanthrōpia, “loving kindness”, occurs only here and in Acts 28:2; see www.esv.org Lexical Form.

⁴⁸² See footnote 190

⁴⁸³ See footnote 64

And **Jesus said** to him,

“Why do you call me good?
No one is good except God alone.

You know the commandments:

‘Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness,
Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.’”

And he said to him,

“Teacher, **all these I have kept from my youth.**”

And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him,

“You lack one thing:

go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven;
and **come, follow me.**”⁴⁸⁴

Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.
(Mark 10:17-22 ESV // Matthew 19:16-22, Luke 18:18-24)

The “man” was NOT willing to go all the way to obey Jesus, **“come, follow me.”**

He trusted in his own righteousness, **“all these I have kept from my youth,”**

rather than **fully committing to serve God,** to live by the **Way of God:**

And Peter said,

“See, we have left our homes and followed you.”

And he said to them,

“Truly, I say to you, there is **no one who has left** house or wife or brothers or parents or children,
for the sake of the kingdom of God,

who will not receive many times more in this time, and **in the age to come eternal life.**”

(Luke 18:28-30 ESV // Mark 10:29-30, see also Matthew 19:29-30, Galatians 6:7-8, Hebrews 5:9)

Whoever loves his life loses it,

and **whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.**

If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also.

If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.

And Jesus cried out and said,

“Whoever believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me.

And whoever sees me sees him who sent me.

I have come into the world as light,

so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness.

If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him;
for **I did not come to judge the world but to save the world.**

The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge;
the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day.

For I have not spoken on my own authority,

but **the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment**

—what to say and what to speak.

And I know that **his commandment is eternal life.**

What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told me.”

(John 12:25-26, 44-50 ESV see also 17:1-3)

God’s desire is that each and every human being who has ever lived can be granted

the gift of eternal life, but his desire is contingent on each and every person choosing

to learn the **Way of God** and fully committing to **follow Jesus Christ:**

For when **you were slaves of sin,** you were free in regard to righteousness.

But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed?

For **the end of those things is death.**

But now that **you have been set free** from sin and have become slaves of God,

the fruit you get **leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life.**

For the wages of sin is death, but **the free gift of God is eternal life** in Christ Jesus our Lord.

(Romans 6:20-23 ESV see also 2:6-8, 5:18-21)

If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe,

how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things?

No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.

⁴⁸⁴ See footnote 238

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness,
so must the Son of Man be lifted up,⁴⁸⁵

that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son,
that **whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.**

For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world,
but in order that **the world might be saved through him.**

Whoever believes in him is not condemned,
but **whoever does not believe is condemned already,**
because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand.

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life;

whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

(John 3:12-18, 35-36 ESV see also 2 Peter 1:10-11, 1 John 1:1-2, 5:11-13)

The “helmet” protects the head, the seat of knowledge and cognition. The gift of eternal life
is contingent upon learning to live by the **Way of God**, fully committing to **“follow Jesus Christ”**.

To live by the **Way of God** requires **knowledge of the Plan of God** as revealed in the Bible.

Using this knowledge, **a Christian must determine in the mind to NOT waver** from the understanding
made available through the Holy Spirit.

Sword of the Spirit

The **Apostle Paul** clearly states that by the “sword of the spirit”, he means the Word of God:

... and **the sword of the Spirit**, which is **the word of God** ...
(Ephesians 6:17b ESV)

The most obvious connotation of this is **the Bible, the written Word of God.**

For a detailed discussion of the Bible as the written Word of God, see section **3.3 Special Revelation**
in the paper **“Third Pillar - The Way of God”** located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

However, **Jesus Christ is identified as the Living Word of God:**

That which was from the beginning,
which we have heard,
which we have seen with our eyes,
which we looked upon and have touched with our hands,
concerning the **Word of life—the life was made manifest,**
and we have seen it,
and testify to it and proclaim to you **the eternal life,**
which was with the Father and was made manifest to us
—that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you,
so that you too may have fellowship with us;
and indeed **our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.**
(1 John 1:1-3 ESV)

In the beginning was **the Word**,
and the Word was with God,
and **the Word was God.**

He was in the beginning with God.
All things were made through him,
and without him was not any thing made that was made.

In him was life, and the life was the light of men.
(John 1:1-4 ESV)

As **the Living Word of God**, it was **Jesus Christ**, as **YHWH**, that dealt with Ancient Israel
and inspired, through the Holy Spirit, the legacy of Ancient Israel, the Old Testament:

... **the Jews were entrusted with the oracles of God.**
(Romans 3:2b ESV)

⁴⁸⁵ See Numbers 21:6-9; as the Israelites looked on Moses’ serpent and “lived”, so those who look to the Risen Jesus Christ will live.

In patriarchal times, **Jesus spoke directly** to certain individuals:

Now **[YHWH] said to Abram,**

“Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house
to the land that I will show you. ...”

(Genesis 12:1 ESV)

And **Isaac** went to Gerar to Abimelech king of the Philistines.

And **[YHWH] appeared to him and said,**

“Do not go down to Egypt;
dwell in the land of which I shall tell you. ...”

(Genesis 26:1b-2 ESV)

And **[YHWH] said to Moses,**

“When you go back to Egypt,
see that you do before Pharaoh all the miracles that I have put in your power.
But I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go. ...”

(Exodus 4:21 ESV)

After the death of Moses the servant of [YHWH],

[YHWH] said to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses’ assistant,

“Moses my servant is dead.
Now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people,
into the land that I am giving to them, to the people of Israel. ...”

(Joshua 1:1-2 ESV) ...

The Prophets heard the Word of God:

[YHWH] of hosts has sworn in my hearing:

“Surely many houses shall be desolate,
large and beautiful houses, without inhabitant. ...”

(Isaiah 5:9 ESV)

Now **the word of [YHWH] came to me, saying,**

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,
and before you were born I consecrated you;
I appointed you a prophet to the nations.”

(Jeremiah 1:4-5 ESV)

Such was the appearance of the likeness of **the glory of [YHWH]**.

And when I saw it, I fell on my face, and **I heard the voice of one speaking.**

And he said to me,

“Son of man, stand on your feet, and I will speak with you.”

(Ezekiel 1:28b, 2:1 ESV)

When [YHWH] first spoke through Hosea, **[YHWH] said to Hosea,**

“Go, take to yourself a wife of whoredom and have children of whoredom,
for the land commits great whoredom by forsaking [YHWH].”

(Hosea 1:2 ESV)

And **[YHWH] said to me,**

“**Amos**, what do you see?”

And I said,

“A plumb line.”

Then the Lord said,

“Behold, I am setting a plumb line in the midst of my people Israel;
I will never again pass by them; ...”

(Amos 7:8 ESV)

Hear what [YHWH] says:

Arise, plead your case before the mountains, and let the hills hear your voice.
Hear, you mountains, the indictment of [YHWH],
and you enduring foundations of the earth,
for [YHWH] has an indictment against his people, and he will contend with Israel.

(Micah 6:1-2 ESV)

And **[YHWH] answered me:**

“Write the vision;
make it plain on tablets, so he may run who reads it.
For still the vision awaits its appointed time;
it hastens to the end—it will not lie.
If it seems slow, wait for it;
it will surely come; it will not delay. ...”

(Habakkuk 2:2-3 ESV)

In the eighth month, in the second year of Darius,

the word of [YHWH] came to the prophet Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, son of Iddo, **saying**,

“[YHWH] was very angry with your fathers.

Therefore say to them,

Thus declares [YHWH] of hosts:

Return to me, says [YHWH] of hosts,
and I will return to you, says [YHWH] of hosts. ...”

(Zechariah 1:1-3 ESV)

As the Living Word of God, **Jesus Christ is**, through the Holy Spirit, **the power behind the Written Word of God**. This is discussed in detail in *Excursus 3 – The Covenant Blessings and Curses* in the paper “**The Soon Coming Kingdom of God**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

The power of Jesus Christ, the Word of God, is expressed by the author of the **Book of Hebrews**:

For **the word of God is living and active**,
sharper than any two-edged sword,
piercing to the division of [body] (psyche)⁴⁸⁶ and of spirit,
of joints and of marrow,
and **discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart**.
(Hebrews 4:12 ESV)

The “**sword of the spirit**” is the sharpest instrument in existence. Through the Word of God those persons called by God to be True Worshipers learn the **Way of God**, “**discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart**”. This is discussed in detail in section *The Internal War*.

There is one further meaning of the “**word of God**” – **a conceptual meaning**: the teaching of the **Way of God**, the **preaching of the Gospel**.⁴⁸⁷ The **Prophet Isaiah** first prophesized the preaching of the Gospel. The **Prophet Nahum** and the **Apostle Paul** allude to Isaiah’s prophecy:

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news,
who publishes peace,
who brings **good news** of happiness,
who publishes salvation,
who says to Zion,

“**Your God reigns.**”

(Isaiah 52:7 ESV)

Behold, upon the mountains, **the feet of him who brings good news**, who publishes peace!

Keep your feasts, O Judah; fulfill your vows,
for never again shall the worthless pass through you; he is utterly cut off.
(Nahum 1:15 ESV)

How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed?
And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard?
And **how are they to hear without someone preaching?**
And how are they to preach unless they are sent?
As it is written,

“**How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news (euangelizō)!**”⁴⁸⁸

But they have not all obeyed the gospel (euangelion) .

For Isaiah says,

“Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?”
(citing Isaiah 53:1a)

⁴⁸⁶ See footnote 1

⁴⁸⁷ See section *Shoes – the Gospel of Peace*

⁴⁸⁸ See footnote 453

So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.
(Romans 10:14-17 ESV)

The Synoptist Luke specifically calls Jesus' oral teaching the "word of God":

On one occasion,
while the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God,
he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret ...
(Luke 5:1 ESV)

In the Book of Acts, the preaching of the Apostles is repeatedly called the "word of God":

And when they had prayed,
the place in which they were gathered together was shaken,
and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit
and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.
(Acts 4:31 ESV)

And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said,
"It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. ..."
(Acts 6:2 ESV)

But when they believed Philip as he preached good news (euangelizō)⁴⁸⁹
about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ,
they were baptized, both men and women.

Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God,
they sent to them Peter and John ...
(Acts 8:12, 14 ESV)

When they arrived at Salamis,
they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews.

He was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of intelligence,
who summoned Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God.
(Acts 13:5a, 7 ESV)

The next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord.
But when the Jews saw the crowds,
they were filled with jealousy and began to contradict what was spoken by Paul, reviling him.
And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying,
"It was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you.
Since you thrust it aside and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life,
behold, we are turning to the Gentiles. ..."
(Acts 13:44-46 ESV)

But when the Jews from Thessalonica learned
that the word of God was proclaimed by Paul at Berea also,
they came there too, agitating and stirring up the crowds.
(Acts 17:13 ESV)

And the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision,
"Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent,
for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you,
for I have many in this city who are my people."

And he stayed a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.
(Acts 18:9-11 ESV)

The Apostle Paul specifically calls his teaching "the word of God":

And we also thank God constantly for this,
that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us,
you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is,
the word of God, which is at work in you believers.
(1 Thessalonians 2:13 ESV)

The author of the Book of Hebrews refers to "leaders" speaking "the word of God":

Remember your leaders,
those who spoke to you the word of God.
Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith.
(Hebrews 13:7 ESV)

⁴⁸⁹ See footnote 453

It is noted by many commentators that **“the sword” is the only offensive weapon identified by Paul.** This is consistent with the **“Metaphor of Violence”**. Through all the meanings of the “Word of God”, the objective of defeating sin is paramount – this is **“The Christian Fight”**. The Book of Revelation ends the Bible with several images of **Jesus Christ**, the Living Word of God, wielding **“The Sword of the Spirit”**, the **Word of God** to usher in the Kingdom of God:

Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me,
and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands,
and in the midst of the lampstands one like a **son of man**,
clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest.
In his right hand he held seven stars,
from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword,
and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.
(Revelation 1:12-13, 16 ESV)

And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write:

‘The words of him who has the sharp two-edged sword.

Therefore repent.

If not, I will come to you soon and war against them with **the sword of my mouth**.

(Revelation 2:12, 16 ESV)

Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, **a white horse!**

The **one sitting on it is** called Faithful and True,

and in righteousness he judges and makes war.

He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood,

and the name by which he is called is **The Word of God**.

From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations,
and he will shepherd them with a rod of iron.

(Revelation 19:11, 13, 15a ESV)

And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered
to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army.

And the beast was captured,

and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs

by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast

and those who worshiped its image.

These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur.

And **the rest were slain by the sword**

that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse,

and all the birds were gorged with their flesh.

(Revelation 19:19-21 ESV)

Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying,

**“The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ,
and he shall reign forever and ever.”**

(Revelation 11:15 ESV)

The gift of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is something fantastic beyond words!

Through the Holy Spirit a human being can be “begotten” as a child of God.

This opens up candidacy for the gift of eternal life. **God the Father and Jesus Christ**

inherently have eternal life, and by the **Plan of God**, **they are willing to share it with human beings**.

The metaphor of the **“armour of God”** is developed throughout the Bible.

The **Apostle Paul** gives it its definitive expression.

Each item of the armour provides vital information on how

the Holy Spirit gives a Christian the opportunity to conquer, to overcome,

to succeed in the Christian Fight and, ultimately, **be granted the gift of eternal life!**

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List of Referenced Footnotes

- 1 The Hebrew word, נֶפֶשׁ - nephesh, and the Greek word, ψυχή - psyche, are both correctly translated by the English word “soul”. However, the English word “soul” has been rendered an unusable word due to the implication of the pagan concept of the “immortal soul”. Hence, in this paper, a more meaningful word is substituted. The most general word is “being”, but more specific words such as “mind”, “heart”, “life” are also used. For further discussion, see [Excursus 2 - נֶפֶשׁ and ψυχή](#) in the paper “[The Transfiguration and the Tabernacle](#)” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.
- 21 The most important word for understanding the Nature of God is *hesed*. Briefly, *hesed* is the expression of God’s covenantal commitment to fulfill his side of a covenant agreement. See section [1.4.3 Attributes of God’s Character](#) in the paper “[First Pillar - The Nature of God](#)” and [Excursus 2 - hesed](#) in the paper “[Covenants of Grace](#)”; both papers are located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

- 37** The most important meaning of the noun מִשְׁפָּט - mish^epat, is the character attribute of “justness”, but it also frequently is used to mean the abstract concept of “justice”; other nuances also exist. The meaning of *mish^epat* is thoroughly explored in the paper “**Godly Character**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.
- 64** The Holy Spirit is the power of God. It is NOT sentient being; therefore, it should always be referenced with neuter pronouns. See section **1.5 The Holy Spirit** in the paper “**First Pillar - The Nature of God**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca
- 84** The Greek word, νόμος – nomos, can be correctly translated as “law”; however, “law” should NEVER be used in relation to the Writings of Moses, or any part of the Old Testament. The Old Testament comprises *torah*, NOT *nomos*; hence, in this paper, the transliteration, *nomos*, is always used. For further discussions see **Excursus 8 - torah and nomos** in the paper “**True Worship of the True God**” and section **11.6 Paul and nomos** in the paper “**The Writings of Moses**”; both papers are located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.
- 190** Salvation is a process that is entered into by conversion. Salvation, “being saved”, occurs at the First Resurrection – no one “is saved” as a human being. References to “being saved” should always look to the future. See 1 Corinthians 1:18, 15:2.
- 202** The Hebrew word תּוֹרָה - torah, means “teaching”, “instruction”, “direction”. There is almost no overlap of meaning with the English word “law”; hence, in this paper the transliteration is always used. For further discussion, see **Excursus 3 - torah** and **Excursus 5 - torah and nomos** in the paper “**Covenants of Grace**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.
- 205** The Hebrew particle ו - waw, has several meanings. The most common is as a conjunction, “and”, “but”. Very importantly to be distinguished is when it identifies “apposition” – in these cases, this paper substitutes “even”.
- 221** The noun אֶרֶץ - ‘eret, can be translated “land” or “earth”, depending on the context; see Holladay page 28.
- 238** The New Testament reports Jesus’ saying “follow me” 21 times. The meaning is always the same “respond to the calling of God, become a True Worshipper”.
- 295** The word מִשְׁפָּטִים - mish^epatim is the plural of the singular noun מִשְׁפָּט - mish^epat, but it carries a completely different range of meaning. There is no English word into which *mish^epatim* can be translated. The simplest description of its meaning is “**the understanding, wisdom, and discernment that come from a life lived by the Way of God**”. The meaning of *mish^epatim* is thoroughly explored in the paper “**Godly Character**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.
- 342** The verb, γεννάω - gennaō, covers the entire process from begetting through birth; see GEL pages 154-155.
- 355** The verb is כָּרַת - karath, “to cut”, the technical term for the creation of a new covenant.
- 368** “Fear” is a valid translation of *yare’* and *yir^e’ah*, but a True Worshipper should never be afraid of God; hence; “reverence” is the preferred translation. See **Excursus 5 – Reverence יָרָא** in the paper “True Worship of the True God” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca
- 453** The related verb, εὐαγγελίζω - euangelizō, means “preach the gospel”, “proclaim good news”; see GEL pages 317-318.