

The Spirit of God

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For Nyla and Yana- 2010, and

Sarah and Melody - 2025

The Mountain

SPIRITUAL progression and the challenges associated with living a life aligned with one's values can be compared to climbing a mountain. The analogy of spiritual progression with the ascent of a mountain provides a visual image of a mountain where at the base, many different paths lead in various directions. Case examples from Near Death Experiences (NDEs) explored in this book support the understanding that the mountain of spiritual progression, like an actual mountain, has paths that lead towards higher elevation and others that lead to pitfalls and chasms, that there are risks on this mountain that affect something much greater than the life of the body, risks that affect the eternal welfare of the soul.

On this spiritual ascent, there are many who claim to have knowledge of the nature of the journey, the risks involved, and the precautions that will be necessary

or required in order to reach the summit. The world's religions, spiritual paths and scriptural texts represent would-be "guides" and "guidebooks" on this journey. Nearly all teach that while many paths lead toward some degree of increased elevation toward the summit, other paths lead to decreased elevation from which travelers will have to reverse their course, or that there are roads that are inherently supportive or destructive to the specific goal of summing the peak. Operating from this premise, nearly all teach principles claimed to be those of climbing safety or proper ascent, which rules are taken to be spiritual or religious doctrine. Each guide or trailbook attempts to make the climber aware of all risks they may encounter and teach principles they believe will best protect the climber from such dangers.

The need for the climber to exercise judgment in determining which paths to follow or avoid can easily turn into passing judgments upon other climbers. People can become prideful about the superiority of their paths and choices, whether or not their path will actually take them to higher elevation. It is easy to look at others on different paths and say, "How foolish are they to be traveling in that direction, I would never take such a road!" Because of the tendency to move from judging paths to judging climbers on those paths, some try to prevent this unpleasantness by declaring that all roads on this mountain, no matter what different turns they take, will arrive eventually at the very same place—that God will ultimately never let a soul perish, and there is therefore no difference which spiritual laws one chooses to believe in and live by.

Such a position assumes that on this spiritual journey there are no risks or dangers, no paths that will lead to a loss of the ability of the soul to continue climbing or progressing spiritually. Those in such a position are similar to those beginning an ascent of Mt. Everest proclaiming that no paths are better, safer, or more direct than others, that there are no inherent risks on this journey and therefore no need to exercise any precaution. NDE case examples sharply contradict this belief, and demonstrate that choices made during a person's mortal life will absolutely affect his or her eternal destiny.

People can commonly be heard to say that the fundamental beliefs of all religions are the same, that they all encourage and support development of one's character towards a more kind, humble, and generous disposition. This may be true to some extent, but the reality is that there are some large divides between the various religious and spiritual paths, including whether or not the soul is personal or impersonal, whether or not God interacts with human beings or leaves them alone, whether or not there is an intelligent force of opposition to God, or darkness, and many spiritual concepts which lead towards very different and conflicting approaches toward ascending this mountain.

As the sequel to 'One Great Whole', this book will explore paths on this spiritual mountain building off some of the premises this initial book hoped to establish regarding: 1) The immortality of the human soul - based upon evidence from Near Death Experiences, and the discovery of a measurable energetic body, which has a standard form and has demonstrated conscious

responsiveness before the brain. From these discoveries the books consider the Human Energy Field to be part of, or connected to our spiritual matter, part of the immortal spiritual body NDEs demonstrate all humans possess.

2) That this energetic or spiritual body has inherent capabilities just as a physical body—including capacity for intuitive reception of information and energetic perception. These processes of ‘High Sensory Perception’ have been proven to be as reliable as the physical senses of sight, touch, and sound. 3) That health of the Human Energetic body, or spirit is connected to most physical, mental and emotional states of being, often being able to be understood as symptoms of spiritual health or dysfunction. 4) Evidence of the pre-mortal existence of the human soul in NDEs and birth memory, as well as the ‘dualistic’ nature of this realm of existence composed of sets of contrasting/complimentary qualities such as hot and cold, bitter and sweet, love and hate, etc.

The Near Death case examples that will be explored in this book, show such significant poles of human states of joy and unhappiness after this earthly life, that they very plainly demonstrate that making the choice of which paths to take on this mountain is one worthy of careful consideration. The purpose of this book is therefore, quite simply, to consider aspects of paths on this mountain within the context of scriptures, and Near Death case examples, to determine whether any paths are more safe, direct, or likely to ensure the spiritual climber avoids any spiritual chasms and successfully reaches the summit.

At the end of each section, a few 'climbing principles' summarizing the main points will be given so the spiritual climber can take or discard those for which a case has been made.

The thoughts presented are those stemming from the analytical reflection of the author and contributions of cited sources. This work stands independent of any institution or organization and any claims or errors are the singular responsibility of the author and no other entity or individual. It is offered in respect to all those who devote their time and resources to reading and pondering its message.

GUIDES AND GUIDEBOOKS

The primary source of premises concerning laws regarding unseen dynamics and realities are those precepts recorded in works believed by their adherents to be divinely inspired scriptural texts. A few of the many such texts taken by various people to be scriptural include the Old Testament, the New Testament, the Koran, the Torah, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, the Pearl of Great Price, the Bhagavad Gita, the Upanishads, the Vedas, and many others. Inherent in the concept of a text being inspired by God is the belief that information can come by means of a non-linear, non-concrete method of reception. With the processes of 'non-local' or 'intuitive' reception of information becoming more widely documented and accepted [1], records claimed to be filled with information received through this means deserve careful investigation, especially where they coincide with accounts of life beyond this world given in NDEs.

Although those who accept certain writings to be scriptural share much in common with one another – the belief in an intelligent power that communicates to human beings by way of revelation through some sort of “channel” or “prophet” – revelations themselves do not all stand in accord, one with another. As it does not make sense for God to be the author of such confusion and contradiction, those who believe in scriptural records have therefore had to account for doctrinal differences between them. Most who hold one or more scriptural records to be authentic, consider that while some records have come through a process of revelation, others are merely productions of human creativity, or are essentially modern mythologies. Others maintain that not all processes of revelation are equal and attribute contradictions between records to some having an impure source of information or to error on the part of the receiver.

Though repeatable experiments have now demonstrated “non-local” or “intuitive” reception of information to be a natural capacity of the Human Energy Field (HEF) or energetic body [2], the degree of accuracy and reliability of the information received has been demonstrated to be a function of the capacity of the individual receiving it [3]. With scriptural texts teaching contradictory principles, this book will focus primarily on the major areas of disagreement, all of which this author contends can be resolved through examining aspects of the NDE which are universally common regardless of one’s cultural or religious background. While many have criticized those who try and use the NDE to support their particular belief system, this author will

will argue that the NDE provides evidence and material concerning spiritual realities that enables a new opening for theological study and reflection.

CLIMBING PRINCIPLES:

- Scriptural texts are composed of information received through processes referred to as intuition, revelation or non-local mind.
- As these processes have been demonstrated to be valid and reliable, information these records contain concerning the spiritual mountain are worth evaluating.
- Evaluating scriptural premises alongside NDE accounts is a method of applying evidence to conflicting scriptural claims to determine which are accurate depictions of the spiritual mountain, and which are not.

FAITH AND ACTION:

Introducing evidence into the arena of unseen realities is likely to draw sharp criticism from many who will say that this is somehow contradictory to faith. As unseen realities cannot be witnessed by the five basic senses or proven through experimentation, “faith” is defined as that which allows a person to act upon an unproven principle amidst uncertainty or the “evidence of things not seen.”[4] Belief structures concerning unseen principles are therefore referred to as “faiths.” As faith moves a person to action in the absence of proof, some argue that faith-based ideologies can be dangerous since they cause a person to

act without the certainty that the principles he is operating from are in fact correct. Yet all human action possesses some degree of uncertainty. Outcomes and responses to a person's actions are rarely, if ever, absolutely predictable or determined. Human beings do not act with full and perfect knowledge of every event that will arise after the words they speak or the actions they make. Every attempted communication requires a person to have the faith that his intended meaning will be conveyed. Every movement is enacted by the faith that its course will find completion. As no course of events or human response is entirely determined, no matter how likely, faith is ever-present in human action: faith in a person's abilities, faith in his decisions, faith in others, faith in the processes of day to day life. The scriptural declaration that "without faith you can do nothing" [5] is a universal law that applies to every deliberate or non-instinctual action, in every instance.

Faith is the principle of action by which humans move and enact their will in the world. All principles of human understanding, whether derived from experience or accepted on the authority of another source, require faith in their validity in order to apply them. The possession of knowledge of a principle concerning dynamics in the world gives a person the potential to negotiate with these dynamics rather than be at their affect. But this potential must be unlocked. The knowledge of the principle must be applied for this increased power to be realized. Faith allows the potential that knowledge promises, to be unlocked in each moment. As faith allows action in the midst of uncertainty, some who firmly hold to their "faith"

argue that uncertainty itself is a virtue, that faith has no need of knowledge, or evidence, or proof, and that these things may in fact be contrary to faith. This belief has caused some to reject any process whereby principles they hold to in uncertainty might be evaluated logically or with evidences that relate to them. Faith is not a substitute for knowledge, however, but rather the power through which beliefs and principles are translated into action.

The virtue of faith is not that it maintains uncertainty, but that where uncertainty of unseen truths exist, faith allows the possibility for a beneficial but uncertain principle to be lived. Without some evidence that one uncertain principle is more correct or plausible than another, there would be no way to determine which principles

to live by or have faith in. Faith in a principle is what allows it to be enacted at the individual level. A person cannot simply obey all laws and principles that she is taught since so many of them are contradictory. Reason and evidence (including experiential evidence) are, therefore, bearings for which to determine which directions to apply ones faith. The degree to which one believes in the truth of any principle is sometimes referred to as a person's "testimony" of that principle. Testimony of each and every principle of understanding that people believe to be true and include in their structures of reality is the foundation of the faith necessary to act in accordance with belief.

As receiving a piece of evidence or logical support



***Evidence is no
enemy of faith,
whether from hard
research, logical
substantiation or
intuitive or spiritual
confirmation***

for a principle seldom brings one to 100% certainty, logic and evidence rarely dissolve the need for faith; in reality, increasing one's belief in, or testimony of a principle through supporting evidence (up and until 100% certainty) can only strengthen one's faith to live the principle. The increase in testimony works to simultaneously decrease doubt and increase faith in the principle. The progression from uncertainty in a correct principle to certain knowledge in its correctness is not a negative thing. If one has lived a beneficial principle being only 70% certain of its validity (with faith carrying one's action amidst uncertainty), achieving 100% certainty of this same good principle can cause no harm. In a state of certainty, one will still continue to live and act from this useful principle of knowledge that they adhered to in uncertainty. Evidence is no enemy of faith, whether from hard research, logical substantiation or intuitive or spiritual confirmation.

While knowledge is lifeless without its application through faith and its power to enact understanding, faith's power to enact belief requires the existence of principles of understanding towards which it can be applied. If it were not so, all action would be instinctual and there would be no conscious direction of one's choices from moment to moment. Faith and knowledge are therefore inseparable and together comprise the foundation upon which human action is possible. As such, inquiry into the spiritual principles taught within the world's religious and spiritual paths which more accurately depict spiritual realities revealed in the NDE, can work to provide a

foundation of human action (driven by faith), which is grounded in spiritual truths with more concrete evidence than at any point in human history.

CLIMBING PRINCIPLES:

- Faith is the principle upon which human action is possible, allowing each to move and enact their will amidst uncertain outcomes to events and situations encountered throughout daily life.
- Faith and knowledge are inseparable, as evidence provides the means whereby a climber can distinguish which principles to apply one's faith toward, and which to discard.
- Logic and evidence do not dissolve the need for faith.

PATHS BEING CONSIDERED:

- At this point in the conceptual journey, all spiritual and religious paths are still open, none having yet been demonstrated to be dangerous to the climber or incorrect in their understanding of the spiritual mountain.

Spiritual Ascent

LIGHT AND PURITY

JUST as climbers scaling the top of Everest need to know what temperatures and air conditions they will face as they make their ascent, knowledge of the nature of a person's spiritual destination lets her know what preparations will be required in order for the journey to be successful.

The evidence of the pre-mortal existence of the soul [1], coupled with the emotional innocence of children testifies of a spiritual plane from which souls came that is pure beyond description. NDEs give additional support to this premise. In nearly every NDE described as pleasurable that has a period where the subject goes beyond the natural realm, there is a description of an incredible light that encompasses everything. This light not only illuminates the external surroundings, but pierces through the soul,

making every aspect of one's heart and mind open and visible before all others present. [2] One effect of being in such a place of authenticity is that people see themselves as they really are, even beyond their own self-image, or rationalizations of their behavior. There is no possibility of making oneself different in one's mind; every unconscious motivation is manifest. The experience is described as complete nakedness, all of one's life actions, thoughts, and desires opened, with every detail exposed in the light. Every thought or intention is instantly manifest before all others. It is impossible in this place to lie, to conceal one's feelings, or to even entertain a private thought:

“Whatever anyone thought, however fleeting or unwillingly, was instantly apparent to all around him, more completely than words could have expressed it, faster than sound waves could have carried it...What was it going to be like, I thought with a sudden panic, to live forever where my most private thoughts were not private at all? No disguising them, no covering them up, no way to pretend I was anything but what I actually was.”[3] In *Return From Tomorrow*, George Ritchie notes what an uncomfortable experience it would be to live in such a state of openness before all if one's thoughts and intentions were prideful, angry, or full of judgment or resentment towards others. “How unbearable. Unless of course everyone around me had the same kind of thoughts.” [4] This casual observation points to the difficulty of living in a place of such purity and authenticity if one is not prepared to do so. He explains understanding that living in this state of authenticity before others in a realm of purity, with any embarrassment

of one's deepest self, would be much more uncomfortable than living with others who had similar aspects of character that they were not comfortable exposing, whether pride, or lust, or hate, or bitterness, or deceit. While those who have had such experiences do not claim to be in the presence of God, those who returned from these experiences often testify of "purity" as an energetic reality and explain feeling uncomfortable to be near such purity while filled with any degree of impurity of heart or intention.

For this reason, nearly all scriptural texts exhort each and every soul to purify their hearts and intentions, understanding that "God is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." [5] In the course of the 'Life Review', Ritchie is asked what he has done with his life and searches for an accomplishment that would be of spiritual worth: "I started to point out my pre-med courses, how I was going to be a doctor and help people. But visible alongside the classroom scenes was that Cadillac car and that private airplane – thoughts as observable as actions in that all pervading Light." [6] Where the action of going to Medical School may have seemed an admirable thing on its own, this account demonstrates that beyond this life, the intentions behind action are as important as the actions themselves, and visible to others. Scriptures and NDEs set the standard of human worth far beyond achievements, and beyond how a person's actions may appear on the surface to others; spiritual worth is placed on the love and kindness shown to other souls, and the state of one's heart and intentions.

There is a massive gap between objects and qualities emphasized to be of worth in practical life, and the

spiritual qualities given importance in these types of Near Death examples. The gap between these two different value structures, those of the immediate world in contrast to those of the world to come, works to create the slope of this mountain. It is this gap which makes it an uphill climb to pursue things of spiritual worth while in a place which ignores them, or at times encourages one to hold values in conflict with things of spiritual worth. As with an actual mountain, it requires more effort to progress up a steep pitch than to take a leisurely walk through a gentle valley or downhill slope. Since it is more difficult to go uphill, unless the climber sees value in the objective of summing the mountain and therefore willing to do what is required (however more difficult to keep moving higher in elevation), any climber will certainly take what appears to be the easier path.

CLIMBING PRINCIPLES:

- Understanding the nature of one's spiritual destination is critical to knowing the preparations that will need to be made in this journey.
- There is a natural tension between things of importance on earth and those of the world to come, and therefore an uphill climb to develop qualities of spiritual worth.
- Do you see the value in climbing this mountain and developing the qualities that are demonstrated at the summit? Having this eternal

perspective is critical to maintaining the desire to press oneself toward higher elevation.

SPIRITUAL PROGRESSION

The concept of spiritual progression, given the immortal aspect of the human being as a spiritual body, hinges on the effect of a living a spiritual law on its actual composition. Living any principle will bring a certain pattern of behavior into a human being's life, which will affect the strength and constitution of the soul. There are therefore "lesser" and "higher" laws or principles. The principle of "doing no harm" might be considered a higher principle than "might makes right," but certainly lower than the principle of actively "loving others as oneself". Living one's life adhering to each of these principles will produce a different real effect on the "spirit" or "immortal body", as one's principles will affect one's actions and one's actions will shape one's character. The world's religions and spiritual paths represent collections of principles, each of which lies somewhere on a continuum of lesser and higher laws.

Different economic systems represent a practical example of lesser and higher principles. Adam Smith, the Father of economics looked at human nature and discussed economic systems and principles within this context. He noted that humans have a natural self-interest and would not be motivated in an environment where fruits of their labor were distributed too highly for the benefits of others. We all naturally would want greater personal

reward for greater personal effort. As he determined human nature to be so highly self-interested, he remarked that a capitalist system would work well for such persons as they would have less concern for the general welfare of their neighbors so long as each was rewarded individually. For this reason, capitalist economies can tolerate large gaps between the wealthiest and poorest segments of society.

If it were calculated that a certain level of higher taxes would eliminate poverty completely, most who would be required to make these higher concessions of income would not be happy for their personal wealth to be distributed for the good of others. For a society where every individual had more financially in common to be successful, each would have to live the law of 'loving his neighbor as himself'. Under no other circumstance would one feel happy with the fruits of their labor going to benefit others than if the happiness of another was of some value to them as well. It is true that most are more generous when it comes to their immediate family and selflessly working to provide for their spouse, children, and even extended family. But the nature of our current economy has been to let competition, not compassion, dictate the allocation of wealth and resources. Where this allocation falls in particular favor of some, or to particular detriment of others, most who feel they and their family fall on the better side of poverty and prosperity would be reluctant to sacrifice what would be required to even out this economic equation. When Capitalism has been celebrated for its successes or the creativity, ingenuity, and drive that it inspires, it owes a lot of this success to

a strong drive behind them - human self-interest. This is a poor cause for celebration. The day that a society flourishes based on higher principles - such as care for the welfare of others being of importance or value to the individual- there will be a true cause for that system, or people living within it, to be celebrated.

The concept of “line upon line, precept upon precept” is a concept that understands the nature of spiritual progression. One cannot easily jump from living by a very low law to a very high one. It is easier to go from living “might makes right” to “doing no harm” than from “might makes right” to “selfless compassion”. If a person has worked only to provide for himself, it will be easier to make a random donation from these personal earnings than to live in an environment where he must give much beyond his needs for the provision of others. Asking someone to live a higher principle than they are accustomed to living is like asking them to do something which not only will take great effort, but may be more than a bit uncomfortable.

In support of this premise regarding lesser and higher spiritual laws, NDErs described witnessing souls grouped according to the dominant characteristics of their spiritual bodies. In a manner of spiritual organization, spirit bodies were very simply placed among others of the same character. An example is given of a group which were dominated by aggression: “At first I thought we were looking at some great battlefield: everywhere people were locked in what looked like fights to the death,

writhing, punching, gouging. It couldn't be a present day war because there were no tanks or guns. No weapons of any sort, I saw as I looked closer, only bare hands and feet and teeth. And then I noticed that no one was apparently being injured. There was no blood, no bodies strewn the ground; a blow that ought to have eliminated an opponent would leave him exactly as before." [7] Spirits with specific types of thought patterns were grouped together; the most dominant qualities of the spiritual body dictated the energetic environment it would abide (in a realm described as either spiritual paradise or confinement, yet preceding any type of judgment, resurrection of the soul, or permanent consignment to a realm of glory).

The frequency and vibration that comprise the unique composition of a body of spirit are attracted or repulsed from others based on their vibrational content – certain qualities and characteristics of the spiritual body one possesses. This makes sense logically, that energetic bodies would attract and repel each other based in similar manner to the way that magnets attract and repel each other based on their fields. Accounts given in the Bible and other scriptural texts also support this premise, with Jesus mentioning "many mansions" that souls will be consigned to and Paul describing various levels of spiritual glory, each governed according to lesser and higher sets of spiritual laws:

"There are also celestial bodies and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the Celestial is one, and the glory of the Terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars:

for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead.” [8] Scriptural records describe these kingdoms as being ordered and organized upon the principles of the laws that govern them, and those who cannot abide the laws cannot abide the realms governed by them:

“And there are many kingdoms; for there is no space in which there is no kingdom; and there is no kingdom in which there is no space, either a greater or lesser kingdom. And unto every kingdom is given a law; and unto every law there are certain bounds also and conditions. All beings who abide not in these conditions are not justified. For intelligence cleaveth unto intelligence; wisdom receiveth wisdom; truth embraceth truth; virtue loveth virtue; light cleaveth unto light; mercy hath compassion on mercy and claimeth her own.”[9]

The idea of souls being organized according to their actual quality of character is also given substantiation by the fact that human existence is a process of spiritual ‘becoming’, as the spirit is affected by one’s thoughts and actions as well as the fields within which one places their immortal body. Thus, NDE and scriptural accounts support the understanding that the actual spiritual body one possesses will determine the future destination that it will come home to. When scriptures explain that “no unclean thing can enter the



At the end of mortal life, the immortal energetic body will have developed a spiritual character which will be a composite of all of the thoughts, actions, and influences that have affected it.

kingdom of God” [10], they are inadvertently expressing a principle of physics. As energies attract similar energies and repel foreign ones, no spiritual body dominated by the quality of hatred and corruption could be able to come into and abide the light, purity, and compassion of the presence of God. Such a soul approaching absolute purity of character would be literally “thrust out” [11] of its presence.

At the end of mortal life, the immortal body will have developed a spiritual character which will be a composite of all of the thoughts, actions, and influences that have affected it. Choosing the paths on this mountain which best support the soul's ability to develop spiritual virtues and to overcome spiritual weakness, is therefore a choice which is critical to the happiness or discontent that one experiences at the end of this life. Near Death Examples testify that each soul is restored to a quality of environment and experience resembling the quality of the spiritual character of the soul they have become. Stated simply in one scriptural record, “[I]t is requisite that all things should be restored to their proper order.” [12]

CLIMBING PRINCIPLES/ SPIRITUAL EXERCISES:

- Religious and spiritual paths represent sets of lesser and higher spiritual laws. They are not all equal, and affect the spiritual character of those that live according to them.

- Does the thought of spiritual character defining spiritual destiny seem inspiring or intimidating? Can you find an image for what your spiritual character might look like?
- Living spiritual laws prepare the soul to live in spiritual realms governed by laws which apply to them. There is security in living higher laws on earth as they prepare the soul to be able to abide higher realms of existence in the world to come.

PATHS ON THIS MOUNTAIN

All of the religious and spiritual paths of the world represent different sets of spiritual laws of lesser and higher degree. People are energetically attracted to live certain spiritual laws depending on the current character of their spiritual body, based on all choices made thus far in their life, as well as their unique spiritual gifts and divine potential. The various religious and spiritual paths advocate different sets of laws which combine to provide opportunity for lesser and higher relative levels of spiritual progression. It cannot, therefore, reasonably be said that these structures are all equal. The Old Testament law of “An eye for an eye” is by any standard a “lesser” law than the commandment to practice forgiveness. It requires much more of a soul to obey a higher law than a lesser one. When someone feels wronged or injured, hardening one’s heart and pursuing revenge is a much easier course than attempting to authentically forgive the other person, understanding that only God can judge another- as only God has understanding of all factors

affecting their actions.

Understanding the various religious and spiritual paths as representing sets of lesser and higher spiritual laws can help to give people greater tolerance for those who live and obey different laws than one is accustomed to living. One can never know the chain of events in any individual's past that has led them to the place they currently feel most spiritually comfortable or inclined to make the actions and life choices that they do. For example, a spiritual body with low self worth or self-contempt coming into an institution teaching laws of intense self-discovery and overcoming personal weakness, may find the structure oppressive rather than inspired to grow into their highest potential self. The incredible attraction to spiritual paths, and popular books that tell people that there is no "right" or "wrong", or that all actions or paths on this mountain are equal, is that people who are prone to overly harsh self judgment may feel more self-acceptance in such an environment and living such a law.

For others, striving to overcome personal weakness may inspire virtue. Believing that all actions are equal allows one to keep negative qualities such as selfishness, anger and dishonesty as it takes more effort to develop the positive alternative of these weaknesses, and push towards continually increasing in spiritual elevation.

Aspects of the NDE such as the life review have demonstrated that all people are accountable for the actions that they make within the context of their capabilities and limitations at the time. The only person capable of determining whether one's actions are a success

or failure in any moment given one's current quality of spiritual character and potential, are oneself and any being that has omniscient knowledge of their capability and weakness. Looking at religious and spiritual paths within this context requires the individual to ask, "in taking this path, what are the spiritual laws and principles that I will be committing to live, and what will be the long term affect on my spiritual character by doing so?" Will this path be an easy stroll into a valley on the spiritual mountain, or will it press me to continually overcome my weaknesses to increase elevation and progress continually towards the summit?"

CLIMBING PRINCIPLES/ SPIRITUAL EXERCISES:

- A challenging spiritual path helps the climber ascend the spiritual mountain by over-coming weaknesses and difficulties, just as a good mountain trail presses one continually closer to the summit.
- Am I choosing this path because it looks like the easy way out, or am I choosing it because it seems like the correct choice, a result of my sincere desire to do what is right?
- In reflecting on life paths in front of you, are there any that you can clearly see will result in more personal progression than others?

PATHS BEING CONSIDERED:

- At this point in the discussion, all paths are open to the climber, yet some more clearly supportive of the climber developing qualities of virtue demonstrated in NDEs, or increasing in spiritual elevation.

Spiritual Chasms

ACTIVITY AND PASSIVITY

ONE of the most critical points of divergence between religious and spiritual paths lies between all those that warn of risks to the eternal welfare of the soul and all those that claim such things are an illusion, that ultimately, all roads on a spiritual mountain will lead to the same place.

Near death experiences give insight into dangers that exist for the soul in their spiritual journey. NDEers have reported witnessing spirits in a state where they seem obsessively focused on fulfilling some sort of addictive behavior and report understanding that when these souls were in the body they had developed a “dependence that went beyond the physical”, that became an energetic or mental craving.[1] While in a physical body, when one is cut off from the use of a substance that they have become

dependent on, the withdrawal period and associated experiences are described in many instances as completely “hellish,” experiences where one feels energetic torment causing physical convulsion, indescribable unrest, and other negative energetic and physical sensations. Having any desire left unfulfilled, whether hunger, or thirst, or an aspiration, is an inherently unpleasant experience. As the intensity of the unmet desire increases, the level of suffering to possess the unattainable desire increases proportionately.

Some have described witnessing the condition of spiritual bodies in states of torment due to permanent withdrawal from a substance or activity they became energetically dependent on while in body. “Then when they lost that body, except they could briefly take possession of another one, they would be cut off for all eternity from the thing that they could never stop craving.”[2] These souls are described as “damned” from further progression by their own compulsion to pursue an object of attachment. In the flow of spiritual progression, such addictions demonstrated capability of halting the ability of the soul to continue to learn and progress in the same way that a dam literally stops water from flowing. Just as the road to the summit of Mt. Everest is laced with deep crevasses sometimes hidden underneath the surface of shallow snow, spiritual bodies can fall into pits from which they may struggle to pull themselves out.

Imagining falling into a deep crevasse with slippery

walls ascending thirty feet in height, and that may be next to impossible to climb out of without the help of someone throwing in a rope, helps to portray the level of anxiety and sense of powerlessness anyone in these NDE accounts might experience. Activity, or the ability to ‘act’ upon objects in the world in pursuit of the outcomes one intends stands on one side of a continuum, with complete passivity at the other- a state where one is acted upon by external forces to such degree that they do not maintain the freedom to act according to their own will and intention. For those that allow themselves to be acted upon to this extent, their power and freedom are swallowed up in addiction. The entirety of the experience and existence of the soul in these cases lies within the prison of the obsessive focus on the substance or activity they seek to attain or engage themselves in.

NDErs describe understanding this exquisite suffering as a metaphorical “Lake of Fire and Brimstone” of the soul:

“I had always thought of hell, when I thought of it at all, as a fiery place somewhere beneath the earth where evil men like Hitler would burn forever. But what if one level of hell existed right here on the surface— unseen and unsuspected by the living people occupying the same space. What if it meant remaining on the earth but ... to burn with most desire, where you were most powerless – that would be hell indeed...An eternity like that – the thought sent a chill shuddering through me – surely that would be a form of hell.” [3]

One of the largest chasms that NDErs saw many spirits had fallen into were that of sexual addictions which,

without physical bodies to fulfill them, became sources of unfulfilled desire that tormented souls. “Even more hideous than the bites and kicks they were exchanging were the sexual abuses many were performing in feverish pantomime. Perversions I had never dreamed of were being vainly attempted all around us.”[4] While there are many people who willfully control their state of sexual arousal within appropriate contexts, others experience sexual desire as something that acts upon them as an energetic force for which they must find some outlet to release.

In the process of eating food, there is a principle that the food is consumed to bring nourishment to the body. In this process there is pleasure in taste which accompanies the natural process of eating. If someone fell so in love with the pleasure of the taste of food that he continually chewed different foods and then spit them out of his mouth, this act would not leave a deep satisfaction but an emptiness of the physical body which was denied sustenance so that the brain could receive pleasure. The brain will be only momentarily satiated, with the desire to re-pleasure itself soon resurfacing. In this same manner, can sexual desire ensnare the soul where it becomes something desired in and of itself, for the pleasure alone, separate from a full and healthy relationship with another person, ideally in a committed marriage. Human sexuality and reproductive potential is a gift from God, and has the power to connect two souls in a beautiful and eternal way. So it should only be engaged in where the relationship has the most likelihood of lasting permanently, as there may be great emotional pain to feel eternally connected with someone they cannot be with but still possess love for, if the relationship were to end.

The thing that can make a hell, is a hellish experience. An energetic hell such as the hell of suffering from an unfulfillable desire for a substance or activity does not need a specific physical location to be experienced. It is a hell without location, a torment experienced within. Most people who have overcome addiction describe having lived at times in a “hell on earth” as they struggled to overcome their dependency. NDErs state that the “Lake of Fire and Brimstone” may refer to the sting of psychological pains and regrets in addition to the exquisite pain of addictive desires that are unquenchable without a body. In the same way that souls in the crevice of addictive bonds cannot progress spiritually, souls with destructive patterns of thought also find that they are in a prison from which they cannot find release or continue to progress in knowledge and understanding.

“The creatures seemed locked into habits of mind and emotion, into hatred, lust, destructive thought-patterns... And the thoughts most frequently communicated had to do with the superior knowledge or abilities or background of the thinker. ‘I told you so!’ ‘I always knew!’ Didn’t I warn you!’ were shrieked into the echoing air over and over. With a sick feeling of familiarity I recognized here my own thinking. This was me, my very tone of voice— the righteous one, the award-winner.” [5]

Anything that can consume the soul’s power has the ability to halt it’s progression. NDEs show that psychological regrets such as permanent affects to a loved one’s life that were made by a thoughtless action can be as consuming to the soul as any addiction. The word ‘passive’ derives from

‘passion’, which is a state where one’s emotional state is affected by an external source. To be passionately in love or passionate about anything means that one’s emotions or state of experience are intensely ‘acted upon’ by something outside of themselves. Where the soul is ‘passive’ or at the affect of things outside of itself, it loses control over its own state of experience. It needs the relationship to the object it holds passion for to be happy, and if it loses it, such as in the loss of a great love, it can be devastated.

Developing the ‘activity’ of the soul, or the ability to control its own state of experience absent of any external activity or substance, is to increase in spiritual power. One is not ‘acted upon’ but has greater and greater power to enact its will in the world. As the independent and willful activity of the soul can become lost inside of chasms from which it cannot escape, one of the most important criteria in choosing any spiritual path must be the degree of support that it provides the climber in avoiding and overcoming these common spiritual pitfalls that lace this road to the summit- to be able to succeed in possessing one’s own soul at the end of this mortal life. The powerful spiritual risk of these chasms must be respected in order to succeed in this journey.

CLIMBING PRINCIPLES:

- There are very real dangers that exist on this journey up the mountain. The soul falls into a chasm as it loses its ability to freely act, and it loses its power to the extent that it is ‘acted

upon' by desires and things outside of its control.

- Powerlessness to this degree is a miserable state, and may be one from which one is unable to recover.
- The most important criteria in choosing a spiritual path is whether or not it will support the climber in developing the 'activity' and power of the soul, and avoiding loss of spiritual power, or spiritual 'passivity'.

ENERGY AND ADDICTION

As the states of peacefulness or anxiety, joy and despair that a person experiences have been demonstrated to correlate directly with an individual's state of spiritual and emotional health [6], all people naturally seek to positively affect their state of energetic experience. In the same way that a person suffering from a physical disease seeks after immediate relief for undesirable symptoms, anyone suffering depression, exhaustion, anxiety or despair, will certainly look for immediate ways to improve their energetic experience. Someone feeling energetically or spiritually fatigued might call a good friend, play a favorite song, or go for a walk to nurture their energy field. Most human behavior can be understood within the context of being a conscious or unconscious attempt to improve one's individual sense of energetic or spiritual well-being, as this correlates with one's experience of peace or anxiety, joy or despair.



In this effort to pursue things which improve individual sense of energetic or spiritual well-being, there is a risk of forming dependency upon whatever substances or activities a person uses to affect their spiritual or emotional state of experience. Nurturing spiritual health requires avenues of affecting one's energetic state which promote spiritual self-sufficiency rather than dependency. Yet as this is not often a conscious process, it is easy to be drawn to engage in something which will provide a short term improvement in one's energetic state of experience. One example is widespread use of stimulants and depressants to

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artificially stimulate and relax one's energetic body. In order to produce energy at will, or when one does not naturally have enough to meet the commitments in their life, lots of daily morning caffeine can become the norm. Where this is the case, the spirit can begin to feel less naturally peaceful, which drives higher use of alcohol to pacify the energetic body, or sedatives to help bring it to complete rest in aid falling asleep.

Where the spiritual body is manipulated to produce the states an individual desires with artificial means, the soul loses the ability to regulate itself naturally, or naturally produce the effects that it is relying upon from an artificial source. Higher energy correlates with increased sense of purpose and a happier disposition. Depression correlates to

low levels of natural energy and subsequent sense of drive and purpose. Where one relies on stimulants to artificially produce energy, their sources of natural energy production decrease. Therefore, the source of energy, which correlates directly to drive, happiness, and sense of purpose, becomes externalized; it is decreasingly within the capacity of the spiritual body to generate independently and increasingly relied upon from a source outside of itself. For this reason, it is commonly mentioned that with any source of dependence constituting addiction, greater and greater levels of the substance or activity are required to produce the same effect. And where the source depended upon to maintain one's quality of energetic experience is absent, one can feel miserable. Those in the NDEs suffering hellish states of withdrawal from sources of energetic dependence demonstrate the miserable spiritual result of this path.

Addiction is caused by the reliance on any substance or activity that will produce a desired change in one's energetic experience. The aspects of addiction which make it a dangerous and destructive cycle are: 1) when the substance or activity relied on is unhealthy, or unhealthy in the quantity that one relies on it. 2) The aspect of energetic dependency- that without this substance one does not have the ability to feel spiritually peaceful or healthy. 3) The aspect of compulsion- that one may be so spiritually dependent that the drive to use the substance or perform the activity addicted to has more control over the person's actions than their mental willpower. The soul gradually loses its power of autonomy- its freedom

of will and intention dissolves into a life more and more confined by dependence to sources it relies upon to maintain a diminishing level of artificial energy and quality of experience.

For this reason, some spiritual and religious paths attempt to support the development of energetic or spiritual self-sufficiency through practices such as prayer. They teach the soul to affect its own state through seeking connection with sources of spiritual light, or practices of meditation, developing ability for the soul to learn to affect its own state of experience through intention to overcome anger, etc. Other disciplines such as yoga, tai chi, and qi-gong support spiritual health through learning to move, circulate and purify one's own energetic body. In one study of the results of such exercises upon the health of the energetic body, a simple magnetometer measured and quantified similar bio-magnetic fields from the hands of meditators and practitioners of yoga and qi-gong. These fields were 1,000 times greater than the strongest human bio-magnetic field and were in the same frequency range as those being tested in medical research laboratories for use in speeding the healing process of certain biological tissues. [7] Both avenues are important, as a soul who develops the ability to overcome negative emotions through their own spiritual willpower, will not need to pray every time they are irritated, for God to fill them with love and remove their anger. Yet developing a connection to sources of spiritual light is an indispensable aspect of spiritual health, as the soul begins to learn that it can affect its spiritual state of experience with a source of purity, light, and love, and

never again need rely on a counterfeit.

SPIRITUAL EXERCISES:

- What are some of the ways that you positively influence your spiritual state... prayer, meditation, yoga, music, exercise, going in nature?
- Are there any places that you can see liability for developing an energetic dependency to a substance or activity?
- What are some ways you might look to increase your spiritual 'activity' or self-sufficiency?

STRENGTH OF THE SOUL

In looking at humanity's freedom of will over the forces that seek to bring them into captivity, a continuum can be seen. On one end stand those who are subject to every whim of their physical impulses and emotional states; on the other end are those who have the ability to maintain internal peace in the face of adversity and a loving disposition in the face of all manner of negativity. The souls of the people on the first end stand as prisoners serving the forces that act upon them; on the other, they stand as free agents choosing which inclinations they will act upon and which they will deny. Potential for happiness and misery fall on either side of the continuum: freedom in accordance with potential for joy, and despair following those who are held captive to forces in their environment which act upon them.

As the human spiritual body must have the strength

to overcome the forces that would bring it into captivity, learning the difference between those on each side of the continuum of active freedom and passive captivity is critical to helping all people choose the paths on this mountain that will support lives of peace and fulfillment. Just as the physical body has various natural capabilities – sight, physical strength, etc. – so too does the soul have capabilities inherent to being a body of energy or spirit.

The potential and limitation of a person's innate physical capability is affected by activities which develop those capabilities or the lack thereof. For example, someone born with a smaller physical frame can do strength training to develop the capability of lifting more weight than another person whose physical body may have had more potential for the same activity, but whose potential was never developed. Similarly, the inherent capabilities of different energetic bodies vary, but such capabilities can also be developed. As an example of spiritual development, remote viewing tests (the psychic description of a remote location) performed by the CIA demonstrated that all people could develop the ability to receive non-local, intuitive information, yet the degree of ease and accuracy of this process was affected both by the subject's innate potential and the level to which they had worked to develop this ability. [8]

Practices such as attempting to maintain an internal state of calm in the midst of a noisy and chaotic place, or to be loving in the face of expressed anger, strengthen the power of activity of the soul – its ability to be unaffected by internal or external forces acting upon it. Often, when practitioners go somewhere to meditate,

a quiet place, free from distraction and disturbance, on vacation from the intimate relationships in which emotions are felt more intensely. In reality, everyday practical life, with its frustrations and challenging relationships where one's emotions or dysfunctional patterns of behavior are most easily triggered, is an arena in which there is more opposition to one's ability to control one's internal state. It is therefore an advanced training ground for doing so.

It is one state of activity, one power of the soul, to be able to maintain internal calm while staying in a nice quiet room in a lodge in the middle of a beautiful retreat center; it is an entirely different state of activity to maintain this same level of internal peace in the midst of the forces working to dislodge it. Just as lifting a heavier weight will build a stronger muscle, greater oppositional force operating against a soul, so long as it can still be overcome, gives the opportunity to create more personal growth in defeating it. The energetic body maintaining peace in the midst of ongoing financial and practical struggle might be the spiritual equivalent of running a marathon. Lovingly withstanding a devastating life event might correlate to being able to lift an enormous weight for one singular occasion. Everyday life and relationships, the frustrations and challenges of the day-to-day struggle, are the proving ground of the soul. With enough pressure sustained upon a piece of coal over a long enough period of time, it will become a diamond. The pressures of life, and the attempt to continually progress in elevation on the spiritual mountain, work in the same way upon the soul. If it is not broken by them, the soul can be refined, purified and

strengthened, by the pressures of life that operate on it.

On this journey of spiritual progression, not all roads are equal, nor will they all lead to the same place; some roads are safe and others are treacherous; some work to refine and purify the soul and lead it to well-springs of joy and peace, others work to impede or disable its journey of spiritual progression and bring it into misery. In choosing a path, of great importance must be whether it supports the energetic body's ability to maintain it's freedom and autonomy in the midst of a world of forces which can gradually take its power and ultimately possession of the whole of it. The ability for the human soul to remain a free and willful actor is both it's greatest gift and power, and of greatest consequence in its ability to succeed in this journey.

SPIRITUAL EXERCISES:

- In what ways have the life or spiritual paths you have chosen increased or decreased your spiritual 'activity' or power?
- Where spiritual progression feels difficult, remember that as you press forward you are being refined, and if you endure to the end will have become like a diamond.

PATHS BEING CONSIDERED:

- At this point in the discussion, all paths which preserve the autonomy and power of the soul are advocated above those that are all-permissive and

have risk of allowing the climber to develop a spiritual dependency.

- Paths avoided from this point will be all that say there are no spiritual risks, and therefore no relationship between the choices one makes and the spiritual character they develop upon the earth.

Forces of Opposition

OPPOSITION IN NATURE:

IN the course of climbing any mountain, one will encounter many different types of natural opposition. Natural opposition, within the context of progression toward the summit, would be defined as any and all circumstantial impediments to one's chartered path. This opposition can come in many forms and serve to either temporarily or permanently undermine one's progression. On an actual mountain, types of opposition that would have a temporary affect might include challenges such as slipping on ice and falling down, walking into a very strong headwind, needing to take shelter during a storm, getting hypothermia, or losing the main trail and getting lost. Opposition that would permanently affect the climbers ability to continue would include things such as falling into a crevice that one is inca-

pable of pulling themselves out of, being buried in an oncoming avalanche or falling off a cliff to one's death.

On a spiritual mountain, as increasing in elevation is represented by the development of the character of the soul towards love, integrity and other qualities demonstrated to be of worth in NDEs, spiritual opposition is any activity or influence that would work *against* such developments. This opposition decreases the strength or degrades the character of the energetic or spiritual body, making it less capable of abiding the climate of the summit or being able to progress in its journey. Spiritual opposition which would bear a temporary affect would include things such as death of a loved one, being forced to live or work in an environment where one's values are not respected or supported, problems in a marriage or other relationship, a spiritually draining lifestyle, etc. Spiritual opposition which may have a permanent effect would include things such as crippling addictions, developing negative patterns of behavior which one allows to control their life, and any actions which would result in a permanent and undesirable condition of the soul in the eternal world- such as murder or actions for which it is difficult to obtain forgiveness, or may not be forgiven (Alma 39:5-6, D&C 42:18).

The fight to increase the soul's spiritual elevation in the midst of forces of natural opposition acting upon it, is an energetically exhaustive affair, even if overcoming opposition can be a soul-strengthening process. Living around negative people with toxic energy fields while trying to always express love in the face of criticism and replace negativity with positive thoughts is comparable

to walking up a mountain while carrying an incredibly heavy pack. It's easy to imagine trying to take steps on a steep trail with loose rocks and slipping in moments, or to imagine the pack one is carrying being simply too heavy to continue with, unless the climber stops and takes a rest. (Just imagine trying to walk up a steep trail with loose rocks underfoot, causing the occasional stumble, especially if the pack is so heavy that frequent breaks are required.) Maybe with a lighter burden, or a more stable trail, the climber would be capable of progressing more quickly in moments. But these types of challenges are inherent in the ascent of any actual mountain, just as they are inherent in the course of one's life journey upon this spiritual mountain.

In the course of climbing any mountain, the risks presented by natural sources of opposition, in and of themselves, are significant and may slow or permanently halt the progress of the climber to the summit. Yet NDEs and many spiritual and religious paths teach that natural opposition is not the only type of opposition to be encountered on this spiritual mountain. On this journey of spiritual progression, one of the greatest points of divergence in the paths that climbers choose to take concerns whether the threat of a force of intelligent opposition to souls is a myth or reality.

CLIMBING PRINCIPLES:

- Natural forces of opposition are inevitable on this spiritual journey.
- When encountered, the climber can be taken off

course, or quickly find ways to overcome them and press forward with their intended course.

- Surrounding oneself with others who hold the same values and who are also trying to avoid spiritual opposition will buoy you up as you climb.

LIGHT AND DARKNESS:

In contrast to opposition occurring naturally is any type of opposition that is directed with intention. If naturally occurring opposition were the only challenges one had to overcome in their spiritual journey, this alone would represent a significant challenge. But naturally occurring opposition is not the only type of opposition that exists on this spiritual mountain; there is also opposition that is intentionally directed.

Where inherent dangers exist on any mountain, a force of deliberate opposition would use whatever means possible to thwart an individual's attempt to move closer to the summit. On an actual mountain this might happen if there were a climber in another party who does not want to share the summit or a native to the area that feels protective of the mountain and doesn't want it ascended. Willful opposition by one of these adversaries could include things as subtle as placing signs which say "This way to the summit" but that lead towards a dangerous area, or posing as a guide and explaining to the climber "there are no risks on this journey, no need to take a first aid kit or bring warm clothes". It might also include things as direct as throwing a large rock from above to make

a climber fall. While certainly not common, it is easy to imagine someone opposing another's climbing effort in a competitive setting, and the variety of more subtle and direct means of doing this. For many, the concept of an intelligent force of opposition to God and the progress of human souls upon a spiritual mountain seems fanciful and impossible to be proved. Yet evidence from NDEs support the theological premise of a force of intelligent opposition to souls, making determining whether or not this risk is actual, of great consequence to one's potential for success in their spiritual journey.

While people describe distressing NDEs much less often than pleasurable NDEs, there are enough cases to demonstrate that there are dark spiritual realms which contrast those of the light and love testified of in NDEs. Rather than the beautiful heavenly landscapes and encounters with beings of light described by most, some say they were in ugly or scary landscapes, sometimes with evil beings, annoying noises, frightening creatures, and/or other human spirits in great distress. [1] Within the context of moral law as something that pertains to actions human beings make that bear effect upon each other, the use of the words "good" and "evil" are associated with those actions believed to be either nurturing or destructive to the temporal and eternal welfare or progression of other souls. The philosophical "problem of evil" refers to the attempt to explain the presence of actions that fall into the category of being destructive to the welfare of souls. The difficulty in explaining the presence of "evil" stems from the premise that it does not make sense for the parent or

creator of souls to want their temporal or eternal misery, and therefore, the existence of such acts upon the earth, and of those suffering a miserable state of existence as described in NDE accounts, seem at first to logically testify against the existence of a benevolent creator. Many have asked, “what would be any compassionate creator’s purpose for allowing souls to enter into a realm where violence and hatred, war and human conflict exist in the degree to which they do upon this earth? How can compassionate design be understood in allowing any soul to experience the degree of suffering that many experience upon the earth?”

In response, believers have said that God does not intervene to stop violence, or to prevent choices which will bear an undesirable eternal consequence because the preservation of the free agency of souls is critically important to spiritual progression. Still one might ask, even so, why would God ever have engineered a realm where human interaction could go to such unloving places, or where there exists possibility of inheriting less than desirable states of existence beyond this life? Did God foresee all of the wars that human beings would freely choose to make, and still decide to allow them to come and interact in this world? This conversation is critical to understanding the type of being that God is and the nature of this spiritual mountain.

The concept of an active adversarial power comes from a scriptural account which makes sense of processes of corruption of innocence, and the difference of character between children and some adults. In the scriptural

account, as souls were to enter into a dualistic world in which they would progress and become open to experience, one of these energetic intelligences, the angel Lucifer, rebelled against God and his plan for the progression of souls, and “because of their agency” convinced “also a third part of the hosts of heaven” to follow him. [2] Given that societies of citizens in spiritual dimensions is well documented in NDE case studies, as well as evidence of the pre-mortal existence of the soul, the concept of a divide in members of a heavenly society is an entirely plausible concept:

“Enormous buildings stood in a beautiful sunny park and there was a relationship between the various structures, a pattern to the way they were arranged, that reminded me somewhat of a well planned university. Except that to compare what I was now seeing with anything on earth was ridiculous. It was more as if all the schools and colleges in the world were only piecemeal reproductions of this reality... As we entered one of the buildings... I was actually startled to see people in the passageway. I could not tell if they were men or women, old or young... We entered a studio where music of a complexity I couldn't begin to follow was being composed and performed. There were complicated rhythms, tones not on any scale I knew. ‘Why’ I found myself thinking, ‘Bach is only the beginning!’” [3]

This and many accounts of the existence of spiritual societies beyond this earthly dimension of existence make the story of a divide in heaven between those who chose to follow Lucifer in rebellion, and those who did not, a

conceivable event. After convincing such a number not to follow God's plan, what ensued between those who chose to follow God and those who chose to follow Lucifer is described as a war in heaven: "And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels." [4]. As souls have intelligence and free agency, each had freedom to intellectually accept or reject the case made by Lucifer. The support of the third of the hosts of heaven could have had him feeling more powerful than he would have fighting to overthrow God alone, and therefore his *pride* and open rebellion would be more than enough cause to be cast out of heaven as is told in scripture. "And they were thrust down, and thus came the devil and his angels." [5]

Thus, the scriptural account explains that Lucifer was thrust out of heaven with those that had followed him in rebellion against God. These energetic intelligences are described as continuing this war started in heaven



The "Problem of Evil", or the philosophical objection to the concept of an intelligence behind creation based on the existence of evil, is resolved in the concept of a force of intelligent opposition to God.

upon the earth, fighting with energy fields of hate and bitterness and seeking to corrupt the fields of light and innocence that abide here within physical bodies. This account of the origin of light and darkness not only provides a plausible explanation for the corruption of love and the level of hatred and violence present upon the earth; it also intellectually reconciles such atrocities with the attributes of compassion and omniscience often

ascribed to God, and that the experience of compassion experienced by those in NDEs testifies this universe is governed with. If God could have foreseen the hate upon the earth, his compassion to let it take place would be called into question. If he could not have foreseen it, then he could not be called omniscient. The “Problem of Evil”, or the philosophical objection to the concept of an intelligence behind creation based on the existence of evil, is resolved in the concept of a force of intelligent opposition to God.

The risk of this type of an intelligent adversary to the progression of the human soul is immeasurably greater than naturally existing forces of opposition. Such an adversary would have the power to design, to plot against, and even to seek after the individual. A danger that would only hurt one passively, such as touching a stove burner in ignorance of heat, requires no active defense, just simple precaution. A danger that actively pursues one’s downfall and spiritual destruction requires a much more active awareness of its presence and active defense against its designs. Choosing whether to take a path on this spiritual mountain which accepts this risk as reality, or rejects it as a myth, is therefore, one of the most critical choices that can be made in this journey.

CLIMBING PRINCIPLES:

- NDE accounts of ‘evil’ beings and dark realms, testify that there is a force of opposition that is

intentionally working to stop the climber's ascent of the mountain.

- The existence of a force of intelligent opposition to God reconciles the state of conflict and suffering upon the earth with scriptural and NDE depictions of an omniscient and compassionate God.

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Considering this earthly realm as a war zone between light and darkness lets one know that the forces that chose to fight against God would have nothing to lose and would use any means to injure those souls to whom they are bitterly opposed- those who follow the plan of the one they rebelled against. They would fight with every means and method they could obtain, no matter how grotesque, how vile, no matter how "evil". These energetic bodies would have all the same capacities of any energetic body, and would be, according to these beliefs, running abroad in the earth and bearing energetic influences that counter the purity of spiritual character and qualities demonstrated in NDEs: hate and aggression instead of love, resentment and intolerance in place of forgiveness and acceptance.

From scientific research demonstrating that energy fields can contain and transmit thought waves, one might deduce that an "evil" energetic body would transmit negative thoughts constantly. Valerie Hunt, a researcher at UCLA who has measured the Human Energy Field,

or energetic body demonstrated that the frequency with which one's energetic body resonates allows them to be more or less open and receptive to these waves. In the same manner that one will tune their radio, and hear only static until the dial turns to a certain "channel", Hunt's research demonstrated that frequency of the field at certain thresholds made an individual's spiritual reception more attuned to these waves of non-local information and strands of consciousness. [6] Often thoughts come suddenly into one's mind as if from nowhere. Someone can be in the middle of analytically deriving a math formula and suddenly think of a friend living in another city. The person calls his friend, who says she was thinking of him even though they had not talked in a while. Where did this thought come from? It was picked up as a thought wave, not a train of analytical derivation. In this way, one's energetic body can pick up positive and negative waves of thought just as a cellular phone can transmit and receive waves of sound and information over great distance. NDE Researcher Arvin S. Gibson relates the account of a young woman who felt that she was communicated with in this manner by an adversarial energetic intelligence:

"One night I was laying in bed, asleep. I was awakened by a male voice saying: 'I'm going to get you. Sooner or later, I'm going to get you.' The event frightened me and I sat up, wide awake. I told my roommate, and she said it was just a dream, and not to worry about it. About a week later, everything seemed so hopeless that I took the bottle of tranquilizers. My full intention was to kill me. It seemed the best way to handle my problems, just go to sleep.

It didn't work out the way I wanted, though, because I fell out of bed and woke my roommate...At the hospital, I found out later, they pumped my stomach and put charcoal in it. They didn't think I was going to make it. My heart stopped, and they used defibrillator paddles to restart it.

During this period I became aware that I was conscious, but I was enveloped in total darkness. It was pitch-black all around, yet there was a feeling of movement. My conscious self assured me that I was in the form of a spiritual body. A male voice spoke to me, a different voice than the one I heard a week before. This voice said: "You have a choice. You can stay here, or you can go back. If you stay here, your punishment will be just as it is right now. You will not have a body, you will not be able to see, touch, or have other sensations. You will only have this darkness and your thoughts, for eternity. Terrified because of the experience and because of what I had heard, I understood that this would be my private hell. There would be no contact with other life or with the sensations of life, for eternity. Yet I would remain conscious with my thoughts in total blackness. Frantically scared, I knew immediately that I had made a terrible mistake. Telling the voice that I had made a mistake, I asked to go back, to return to life. The voice said, 'All right, you may return.'" [7]

Given the entrance of souls into a dualistic realm- one where the experience of joy and misery, bitter and sweet, hot and cold are distinguishable through contrast with their opposite and complimentary qualities- it is interesting that when this woman sought to end her life

to be free of the painful aspects of her human experience, she lost both positive and negative aspects of experience, lost the possibility for experiencing altogether. [8] In this context, within the journey of human spiritual progression, the painful and difficult aspects of our human experience ought not to be wished away as they come as a “compound- in-one” with all that is joyous and beautiful. It is after having been sick that one comes to appreciate most the gift of health, after having known sorrow that joy can stand in more brilliant contrast. The pain one experiences in the effort to overcome forces of opposition on this journey, will make the arrival on the summit an infinitely greater reward.

Had the woman not chosen to return to life, this action of having taken her own life would have resulted in the permanent end of her spiritual progression. This example describes an instance in which a climber may have taken a permanent fall after interaction with willful opposition. While the adversary she encountered contributed to her sense of despair, ultimately he did not push her off the cliff, she jumped. And what is at stake in this case was very literally the spiritual life of the soul. Permanent separation from God is spoken of in many places scripturally as spiritual death [9].

If energetic bodies with negative intent want to injure souls, they might transmit destructive thoughts that people will take as their own and act upon: “Don’t forgive him, he deserves to suffer for what he did.” “One more drink won’t hurt anything.” The sphere of influence of these beings upon human action is evidenced in the

incomprehensible production of “horror” movies at levels of pure, unadulterated violence and contempt, and video games where criminal acts are allowed to be engaged in a virtual manner. Masuro Emoto’s experiments regarding the affect of fields of energy demonstrate the formative and corruptive power over the spiritual character of the soul that violence through large screens in theatres or allowed to saturate the home, can have upon the individual. In these experiments, matter exposed to negative and violent content was corrupted beyond recognition of the initial properties it held and in some cases destroyed. The measurable and spiritually corruptive affects of negative spiritual forces in the environment testify of darkness not as some figurative or metaphorical thing, but as an energetic reality. [10] When people need to make a decision that will affect their lives, they often feel conflicting or even completely oppositional messages. It is possible that, on occasion, one is from a source of light and one of darkness. The soul’s active power resides in its ability to choose which thoughts to obey and act upon, and in its capacity for discerning whether they are from external sources of light and darkness or one’s own unconscious mind and motivation.

Acting from negative thoughts allows one’s energetic body to become more subject to negativity, and acting on the positive and light-filled thoughts brings one’s energetic body into greater power of light, love, and good intention. As previously discussed, energetic bodies with which one comes into contact can affect one’s own field. If an energetic body filled with pure hatred, one

of those loose upon the earth that never came into a body, comes close to any person, it can bear a force of energetic influence toward hatred and anger. One will only overcome these forces so long as one's own field dwells in love and purity enough that it has more power than the force that comes upon it. This is why stories of "possession" of one's energetic body, as accounted in the NDEs, often took place within people who were intoxicated and had lowered the vibration of their spiritual body to the extent that it could be breached. [11]

A recent article of those who binge drink to a certain level states that 44% experience "black outs". [12] A multitude of stories of abuse and actions of which a person has no recollection, occur after large intakes of alcohol or drugs. One NDE gives a vivid description of seeing disembodied spirits entering into live persons through the crown of their head after a large intake of alcohol. The account also implies that alcohol weakens the energetic body, in this case enabling the physical body to be breached:

"I was staring in amazement as the bright cocoon around the unconscious sailor simply opened up. It parted at the very crown of his head and began peeling away from his head, his shoulders...A man passed out, a crack swiftly opened in the aureole round him, one of the non-solid people vanished as he hurled himself at that opening almost as if he scrambled inside the other man. Was the covering of light some kind of shield, then? Was it a protection against...against disembodied beings

like myself. Presumably these substance-less creatures had once had.” [13] This account describes the experience of a medical student who had died, and traveled as a spirit upon the earth to a bar, where he saw other disembodied beings who were so addicted to alcohol that they had not gone towards the light, but stayed on the earth to try and take temporary possession of the physical body of any person intoxicated enough to have their compromised their energetic body.

The spirit that has breached the physical body then operates it while its rightful owner experiences a “black out”, or a period in which they have no memory of events which took place even though others will later recount to them many actions they performed during this time. This visual description fits with spiritual concepts of the “crown chakra” being a place at which there is a point of access between the human soul dwelling upon the earth and spiritual dimensions of existence. It is interesting that it is also the place where those who give blessings or spiritual ordinations place their hands upon the person when doing so. This story of ‘possession’ was made by an earthbound spirit rather than a dark energetic intelligence, yet it gives powerful testimony of the need to protect oneself spiritually in light and not to allow the energetic body to be compromised by substances which have been measured to dim it’s vibration [14] and shown here to lower it’s spiritual defenses [15].

Where the energetic body correlates to a specific vibration, and is influenced towards a lower or higher state by it’s actions and the influences upon it, spiritual

fortification of one's spiritual body requires being nurtured by sources of light and purity in order to maintain one's energetic character while in the midst of a world with such spiritually destructive influences. The energetic war being fought is fought specifically to win control over souls dwelling here in physical bodies and where possible, complete possession of the physical tabernacle itself, so that they can be directed for evil design. Yet the scriptures testify that God gave to souls a spiritual influence of light and purity to be able to combat the forces of darkness they would encounter while upon the earth, a spirit which possesses the very attributes of God himself - The Spirit of God.

Scriptural passages discuss the character of the soul at the end of this life, that it will have a composition either of more light, or more darkness, as a result of the energetic influences one has allowed to influence and shape them. In an admonition to those that would allow their spiritual character to be corrupted, one passage emphasizes that death will be too late to try and recover their lost spiritual character: "Ye cannot say, when ye are brought to that awful crisis, that I will repent, that I will return to my God. Nay, ye cannot say this; for that same spirit which doth possess your bodies at the time that ye go out of this life, that same spirit will have power to possess your body in the eternal world" [16] In the climber's consideration of what path will help him arrive at the summit, he must consider paths which not only acknowledge the existence of these forces of spiritual opposition, but also those that will best help him to overcome this enemy through helping him

to develop a spiritual character of light and purity.

CLIMBING PRINCIPLES:

- Spiritual discernment is a critical part of this journey as there is a spiritual war in progress between those who have bodies and negative spiritual bodies that are trying to persuade those attempting to reach the summit to take other paths.
- The soul is influenced by the forces of light and darkness which act upon it, and which it allows to shape its character.
- Fighting to develop one's spiritual character towards attributes of light and purity is not easy, and would require the support of an influence of spiritual light more powerful than all energetic forces of darkness one will encounter.

PATHS BEING CONSIDERED:

- The paths discussed after this point will only include those which accept the premises of light and darkness and the existence of an intelligent force of spiritual opposition.

An Insurmountable Obstacle

SEPARATION

WITHOUT a force of willful opposition to the progress of souls on this spiritual mountain, natural forces of opposition would have left souls with an obstacle that still was impossible to be personally overcome. But beyond sometimes difficult interaction with other climbers, the existence of forces of darkness upon the earth have measurable corruptive and destructive power [1], and have further separated souls on the earth from the absolute purity of the plane of existence from which all of us have come. Therefore, most religious and spiritual paths discuss the need for spiritual purification and give methods for such. Yet the most incredible scriptural claims are that God provided a way to redeem humanity from its fallen state, and provided a path for each soul to be able to come home again, into his presence.

Investigation of these spiritual premises in context of NDE accounts, provides new insight into the character of God, moral law, and what might be considered an infraction of it. They also point to the need of this redemption, and the spiritual influence the climber can obtain to help them develop in spiritual character of light and purity upon the earth.

The Life Review described in NDEs gives insight into the identity and character of God. The following four paragraphs from 'One Great Whole' are included here as evidence of God's character. The experience of the life review is one that is described as instilling incredible empathic concern for others. For the first time one not only experiences every emotion they maintained while living, but also those of persons with whom they interacted. They experience the effects of their actions upon others in a way that is not possible on the earth, literally having the very experiences and thoughts of every person that one's actions affected throughout mortality:

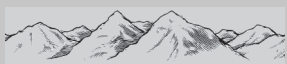
"Mine was not a review, but a reliving. For me it was a total reliving of every thought I had ever thought, every word I had ever spoken, and every deed I had ever done; plus the affect of each thought, word and deed on everyone and anyone who had come within my environment or sphere of influence whether I knew them or not... No detail was left out. No slip of the tongue unaccounted for." [2]

"The minute history of my criminal career was thus relived by me, plus all the small injuries I had inflicted unconsciously by my thoughtless words and looks and omissions. Apparently nothing was omitted in this nightmare of injuries, but the most terrifying thing about it was that every pang of suffering I had caused others was now felt by me..." [3] These descriptions coincide perfectly with scriptural concepts regarding the 'Book of Life' or a record of every aspect of one's life, every thought, every intention. [4]

Most NDEers describe being in the experience of someone who they were mean or hurtful to as the single most transformative aspect of the experience. The literal definition of "compassion" is "to suffer with," not just to feel empathy, but to feel sorrow and pain at the sorrow and pain of another. As NDEers feel the sorrow and pain or the joy and happiness others feel as an effect of their own actions, they quite literally "suffer with" every other person with whom they have ever directly or indirectly affected. Parents feel the broken hearts of their children when they repeatedly don't give time to them, or are harsh or insensitive. Having gone through what they describe as the most compassion evoking experience comprehensible, NDEers return to earth with a unique level of understanding of the way that we affect each other as human beings and the need to strive always to be compassionate.

These and thousands of NDE case examples support spiritual premises that conceive of God having attributes

of “love” and “compassion”, as it stands to reason that a universe so concerned with the treatment of souls by one another, valuing the actions that nurtured the welfare of souls above all other human activity, must be governed by a compassionate being. As souls are referred to as God’s literal “offspring” [5] biblically and in many spiritual traditions, such a spiritual parent would possess this compassionate love toward those referred to as his spirit children. [6] He would therefore, by definition, actually suffer at every single pain that human beings cause to each other because of his deep love for all. An infinitely compassionate being would be in great agony over any soul suffering the degree of spiritual pain that so many suffer upon this earth, much more when one considers the collective of humanity and their great violence toward each other. This concept of a God who feels compassion



This concept of a God who feels compassion at the actions of souls toward one another is supported by a scriptural statement intended to be reflective of God’s experience when we help or hurt each other: When you do this, “you have done it unto me”.

at the actions of souls toward one another is supported by a scriptural statement intended to be reflective of God’s experience when we help or hurt each other as souls: When you do this, “you have done it unto me”. [7]

Humans’ actions toward each other are the primary cause of dysfunction within the energetic or spiritual body. The health of the energetic body has been demonstrated to be connected to every one of the negative emotions; therefore, in ‘One Great Whole’ they are noted as the symptoms of spiritual

disease, or the disease of the soul. [8] All of the injury each commits against his spiritual brother or sister, offends and injures also their infinitely compassionate spiritual parent. If any parent has two children they love immeasurably and one is unconscionably mean to the other, the action will not only cause a wound in the relationship between the two children, but the parent will also grieve over the action. In this same manner do all souls injure their relationship with their spiritual parent with every injury they commit against other beloved spiritual children. The word “sin” is generally used to refer to any infringement of divine moral law and encompasses all actions which break this law. Many consider that the affects of breaking moral law, or sin are a wound in one’s relationship with God or separateness from him.

In entering into the dualistic world where perfect love and its polar opposite exist in a continuum upon the earth, it is inevitable that souls hurt each other and cause injury also in their relationship with God. When there is an injury in any relationship, some kind of atonement must be made in order to heal the wound that was created. There is some intangible reality to wounds and atoning for the actions that caused them which is evidenced in everyday relationships. When someone hurts another person and is authentically *broken-hearted* to have done so, it does much more to heal the wound than having no remorse. As the injury caused to an infinitely compassionate being for injuring a child He loves infinitely is also infinite, the atonement that any soul’s apology and repentance could make to have hurt another, no matter how deep

or authentic, will only be a finite atonement as human beings cannot be infinitely repentant. It can, therefore, *in no instance*, heal a wound caused to a God who experiences immeasurable compassion for souls. For the atonement to heal the wound it must be commensurate with the injury. An infinite injury can only be healed with an infinite atonement.

Scriptural passages emphasize that all souls will experience their imperfection in this moment, and the magnitude of affect that our actions have upon our relationship with God: “For our words will condemn us , yea all our works will condemn us; we shall not be found spotless; and our thoughts will also condemn us; and in this awful state we shall not dare to look upon our God; and we would fain be glad if we could command the rocks and the mountains to fall upon us to hide us from his presence.” [9] The intensity of this description, fitting perfectly with descriptions of the state of absolute nakedness of the soul in this place of perfect light, demonstrates the gap between the state that souls currently dwell, and the purity of God’s presence. The evidence of human moral law centered upon compassionate action given in NDEs, in conjunction with the evidence of existing upon the earth in a state of very clear separateness from God, support the premise that in this spiritual journey, human beings have a personally insurmountable obstacle standing between themselves and returning to the presence of God.

This depiction of the spiritual mountain ties to the premise that after having been “cut off ” from God’s presence through his willful rebellion, the greatest injury

a force of intelligent opposition to God could inflict upon his opponent would be to cause injury between God and his beloved spirit children. Introducing every corrupted attribute of character upon the earth would cause souls to inflict injury upon each other and therefore cause injury in their relationship with their spiritual parent, causing souls to be “cut off both temporally and spiritually from the presence of the Lord.”[10] Upon this earth, souls do not dwell in the same purity of the presence of God that the emotional innocence of infants shows all souls have come from, and realms of light in NDEs explain being much closer to:

“And then I saw, infinitely far off, far too distant to be visible with any kind of sight I knew of...a city. A glowing, seemingly endless city, bright enough to be seen over all the unimaginable distance between. The brightness seemed to shine from the very walls and streets of this place, and from beings which I could now discern moving about within it. In fact, the city and everything in it seemed to be made of light, even as the Figure at my side was made of light.” [11]

The account testifies of the summit of this spiritual mountain being so immensely far from this lower plane of existence, that even the realms NDEers think of as heavenly when they die, come nowhere near the actual light and glory of the realm that God might be thought to inhabit. These accounts give empirical support of spiritual premises concerning humans existing in a state of separation from their God. This earthly plane of existence is one in which many go through pronounced experiences of separateness and alienation, trying to determine why they do not feel

whole, filling themselves with every temporal distraction and pleasure that can quell the profound energetic sense that there is something more, something that would bring a true joy and abiding peace if they only knew where and how to find it. This principle of separation, that human beings do not currently dwell in the presence of God, and that the obstacles of sin and mortal death represent insurmountable obstacles to returning to God's presence which cannot be personally overcome, is a point at which there is a major fork in the road on this spiritual mountain. All paths which accept these premises move forward in one direction, and all paths which reject it, in another.

CLIMBING PRINCIPLES:

- When we hurt another person, whether directly or indirectly, we are damaging our relationship with our spiritual parent.
- In order to make things right with a being who is infinite, the atonement must be an infinite one, something that a human being cannot do.

DISPERSION

Beyond NDEs, the principle of separation, that all souls do not currently dwell in God's presence and have an obstacle separating them from God, is also supported by scriptural premises shared by many different spiritual paths related to the need for a reconciliation in the relationship between souls and God. These prophecies contain many specific geographic, linguistic, and historical relationships

within them which can be verified as true or false. Quite simply, there are concrete evidences which can help the climber to determine whether this spiritual depiction of the nature of God and this universe with obstacles of ‘sin’ and mortal death in the path towards the summit is an accurate depiction of the spiritual mountain, and if so, how the climber can overcome them.

Prophecies are important aspects of scriptural texts, as they often concern verifiable timelines and events which help to authenticate claims contained within them. While many different texts claiming to be inspired by God contain prophecies, there is no topic with as many prophecies as that of the coming of a “conciliator” or “Messiah” who would provide a means of reconciliation between souls and God. The record of the Old Testament, the word testament meaning “covenant” in Hebrew, purports to relate God’s interaction with the nation of Israel during the period of preparing them to recognize this figure when he comes to the earth. The term “House of Israel” refers to all those who descended from the twelve sons of Jacob, also called “Israel”. Some of the most literal and specific prophecies that are contained in these records relate to God’s declaration in this text that he will scatter and eventually re-gather the “House of Israel” from among the nations- prophecies which transcend religion as cultural story or myth, and represent a way to verify the inspired or human origin of these records.[12]

Cultural and historic evidences of this scattering can be evaluated in comparison to specific timelines and details of prophecies concerning it. The evidences that follow are

of unique importance as they give credibility to the same scriptural text that contains description of the concepts of the state of human separation from God, and prophecy related to an act of atonement that will be performed in order to reconcile souls with their spiritual parent. The following examples are evidence of this dispersion, or God's "scattering of Israel among the nations" [13]:

"In Kashmir (in the northern part of India, east of Afghanistan and Pakistan and west of Nepal) live 5-7 million Kashmiris. Many place names are found in Kashmir which are virtually identical to those in ancient Israel, including Har Nevo, Beit Peor, Pisga, and Heshubon. Many people and villages also bear Israelite names. In the spring, the Kashmiris celebrate Pasca (the ancient name for the passover) and adjust the lunar calendar and solar calendar according to Hebrew tradition...Udu, the language of Kashmir, includes many words identifiable as Hebrew. While most Kashmiris are Muslims, they are sympathetic towards Jews. The name Israel is very common among Kashmiris, although it is never used among Muslims. Kashmiris light a candle on the Sabbath, have sideburns, beards, and a design of the Shield of David. To this day, a group lives in the Yusmarg (Handwara) on the border of Pakistan calls itself B'nei Israel, which means 'children of Israel.'" [14]

"In Africa, Ethiopian Jews are known both as Falashas, the Amharic word for landless, wandering Jews, and as Beta Israel, the house of Israel. In Ethiopia, they engaged primarily in agriculture, but were known also for their exquisite crafts and jewelry. Today, most of the Beta Israel

live in the state of Israel. In the 1970's and 80's, the Israeli government airlifted thousands of Ethiopian Jews to Israel, rescuing them from political and economic distress. According to one tradition, the Ethiopian Jews are the descendants of one of the ten tribes, as their religion is an ancient form of biblical Judaism. Their religious practices are prescribed by the Orit - the Torah translated into their Gez dialect. They possess none of the post-biblical laws. Over the centuries, the Beta Israel have been connected with the tribe of Dan. This association has eased the process of their return to the state of Israel in recent times." [15]

"Straddling the boundaries between Afghanistan, Pakistan and Kashmir lives the world's largest tribal grouping – the Pathans. All of the 15 million Pathans, who comprise some 60 tribes, claim descent from Kish, an ancestor of the Biblical King Saul. Many of them also claim to be children of the Lost Israelites. The Pathans perform circumcision of the eighth day, wear a fringed garment similar to the Jewish tzitzit, light candles on Friday nights and observe food taboos similar to the laws of Kashrut. Their tradition is that they were carried away from their ancient homeland." [16] Not only the Pathans, but also the Afghan Royal Family places their ancestral line in ancient Israel, believing themselves to be descendants from the tribe of Benjamin. [17]

Evidences of the Dispersion extend to China:"Behold, these are coming from afar. These from the north and the west and these from the land of Sinim." [18] This prophecy, spoken by Isaiah, promised the return of Lost Israelites from all corners of the Earth and from Sinim.

Interestingly, Sinim is the Hebrew word for China. “An article by Rabbi Marvin Tokayer translated from Japanese by Arimasa Kubo states: In the mountainous area of northwest China, west of the Min River, near the border of Tibet, in Szechuan lives an ancient people called by the Chinese, Chiang or Chiang-Min, who numbers about 250 thousand people. According to their tradition, the Chiang tribe is the descendant of Abraham and their forefather had 12 sons. In times of trouble, they call God Yah-weh....The Chiang tribe lives a very special way of life based on the offering of animal sacrifices...It is forbidden to worship statues or foreign gods and anyone who offers a sacrifice to another god faces the death penalty. There is an atmosphere of holy worship in all these sacrifices. They are performed by priests whose priesthood is passed down through inheritance from father to son. This was the same in ancient Israel. These priests wear clean white clothes and perform the sacrifices in a state of purity as the priests in ancient Israel did [19]...Before the offering of sacrifices, one is required to wash one’s self and one’s clothing and to dress in clean garments. This system of sacrifices is very similar to the sacrifices brought in ancient Israel at the time of the dispersion of the Lost Tribes.” [20]

While the prophecies of the Old Testament stand as one collective witness of the identity and purpose of a Messianic figure, they are complimented by another scriptural record of comparable length and expressed purpose to the Old Testament and written by a people claiming to be descendant of Joseph of ancient Israel. [21] The existence of a 531 page record stating itself

to be a temporal and spiritual history of “a remnant of the seed of Joseph, whose coat was rent by his brethren into many pieces” or Joseph of Israel’s descendants, adds additional support to the truthfulness of spiritual premises related to the nature of souls existing within a state of separation from God, and the need for a reconciliation in this relationship to be made. The record recounts the story of a small Israelite group who were guided by God from ancient Jerusalem to the American continent in approximately 600 BC and relates the history of this people through the year 400 A.D. Just as the central feature of the books of the Old Testament is the preparation of a people for the coming of a Messiah, so too is the central aspect of this record the preparation of another branch of the house of Israel for the recognition of the coming of a messianic figure to the earth to “answer the ends of the law.” [22]

As the seed of Joseph who was sold into slavery in Egypt, his descendants who record their history in this record demonstrate the same gift of receiving visions and revelations in dreams in the manner that Joseph demonstrated to Pharaoh in the Old Testament. From visions and revelations received before he left Jerusalem about 600 B.C., one of the prophets depicted in the record, Lehi, was given knowledge of the Messiah to come and the nature of his mission on earth. It was revealed to Lehi that in six hundred years “a prophet would the Lord God raise up among the Jews – even a Messiah, or, in other words, a Savior of the world.” [23] In public exhortation, visions, and personal reflection, all authors

of the ancient record declare that the Messiah is the Son of God, the Holy One of Israel who will be born of a virgin, perform miracles, heal the sick, raise the dead, cast out devils, take upon himself all of the iniquity of all souls in an act of atoning sacrifice: “[F]or this end hath the law of Moses been given; and all things which have been given of God from the beginning of the world, unto man, are the typifying of him.” [24]

In addition to providing another witness of the mission and identity of the coming Messiah, the record of the “remnant of Joseph” and his descendants, contains within it many prophecies that accord perfectly with historical events: the transition of the early settlers across the ocean to the North American continent [25], the revolutionary war with England [26], the scattering of the natives of the land [27], America being preserved as a free nation and fortified against falling under the conquer and rule of other nations so that individual liberty and freedom of worship would exist [28], among many other historical accuracies.

The overwhelming evidence of the reality of the scriptural declaration made by God to scatter Israel among the nations in the books of the Old Testament gives credibility to the record’s prophecies concerning the fallen state of humanity and the coming “conciliator” who will reconcile the relationship between God and human beings. Many different spiritual and religious paths on this mountain accept the Old Testament and the prophecies concerning this “conciliator”. Divergence between all of the spiritual paths that accept parts of the Old Testament

as scriptural, and accept the premise of a human state of separation from God- including Christianity, Judaism, and Islam- is based upon disagreement upon the identity of this spiritual figure.

CLIMBING PRINCIPLES:

- Many scriptural texts and cultural histories support the idea that there was a scattering of the children of Israel. Decedents of the house of Israel remain in many countries of the world.
- These concrete linguistic, geographic and historical evidences intertwine and therefore provide credibility for prophecy related to a conciliator that would come and reconcile the relationship between God and human beings.
- Evaluating these prophecies and whether the concept of a conciliator is justified, ties specifically to the character of God and is a point at which religious and spiritual paths disagree.

RECONCILIATION

If the climber has come to the place where they can see the forks which divide at the point of disputed identity of a messianic figure, and investigates the reason each diverge in the direction they do, it is an intellectually fascinating inquiry to examine evidence related to this disagreement. Messianic prophecies are so detailed and concerning so many historic markers as to themselves provide additional evidence for the accuracy of this spiritual trailbook's depiction of the spiritual mountain. The prophecies are given in such a way as to act as points of reference from which to recognize this figure when he does come.

The most fundamental disagreements upon the identity of the Messianic figure surround one who claimed that he

was the literal fulfillment of these promises of redemption. One of the interesting things about Jesus as depicted in the gospels, is that he frequently responds to a question or verbal attack with a direct quotation from Hebrew scripture. Many of these statements concern the nature of his identity, and the scriptures he quotes are frequently those concerning prophecies of the Messiah. Since the purpose of prophetic markers is to provide veridical or verifiable evidence regarding scriptural claims, it is of great interest that in his ministry, Jesus declared himself to be the Messiah and attributed the predictions of the prophets to himself, stating that the scriptures “are they which testify of me” [29] and told the Jewish rulers that Moses “wrote of me” [30].

In addition to stating that he was mentioned in messianic prophecy, Jesus made many references to specific examples of this: He made allusion to Isaiah’s prophecy about the healing of the infirm [30a]. Before his crucifixion he reminded his followers: “this that is written must yet be accomplished in me.” [31]. During the trial before Caiaphas, When asked by the high priest whether he is “Christ, the Son of God”, he affirmed this statement concerning his identity and referenced the prophecy concerning the Son of Man given in the Book of Daniel [32]: “Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.” His response served as the formal reason for his being condemned to death. [33] Upon resurrection from the dead, Christ again drew connection between himself and the words of the prophets concerning him, expressing that

the apostles had been “slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.”[34]

Compelling evidence of who Jesus believed himself to be lies in his statements about his role in the fulfillment of God’s old covenant with humanity. During his ministry, Jesus said that he came not to destroy the law of Moses, but to fulfill it: “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.” [35] He then demonstrated that he believed he possessed the authority to institute a new law or covenant between God and humanity by explicitly referencing the Old Covenant law and then stating new requirements of souls for entrance into covenant relationship with God. “Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also...Ye have heard it said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you...For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same?...Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.” [36]

The promise of a New Covenant is made by God in the Old Testament, and the prophets described the Messianic period as one where there would be a New “Testament”, or “Covenant”, between God and humanity. The defining feature of the New Covenant was that other nations would be called to enter into it beside the House of Israel. The Prophet Jeremiah spoke of this new covenant: “Behold, the

days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more” [37].

In the above passage, God uses the word “I” in declaring that he will make a new covenant with humankind, and the understanding of God as “lawgiver” is clearly stated throughout the Old Testament record. Through Jesus instituting this covenant himself, many have claimed this act provides further evidence that Jesus is himself the very Jehovah of the Old Testament, come to earth, or literally “Immanuel” meaning “God with us”, as one of the names given to him signifies. This position is supported by Jesus’s use of God’s most specific name of the Old Testament to refer to himself. This happened when he informed the Jewish rulers that “Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad” [38]. When asked how he and Abraham could have known each other when their lives on earth were separated by so much time, Jesus replied,

“Before Abraham was, I am” [39]. The Greek term here translated “I am” is identical with the original Hebrew phrase used in Exodus 3:14 when God identifies himself as “I AM”: “And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM; and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.” [40]

Jesus’ audience understood that he had plainly told them he was none other than Jehovah – also known as I AM, the God of Abraham and Moses – because the scriptures then explain that the people “took they up stones to cast at him.” They supposed that he had blasphemed. When Jesus asked: “For which of [my] works do ye stone me?” Their reply was “for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God” [41]. All of these statements demonstrate two things: first, that Jesus believed and declared openly that he was the Messiah promised by the prophets; and second, that Jesus did not want to leave room for doubt concerning his belief about his own identity, and so boldly made this declaration of divine identity that his statement would be in fact considered blasphemy to the Jewish rulers who questioned him and his mission.

That Jesus came upon the earth and with such boldness declared not only the scriptures to be true but to be the literal fulfillment of them, is at the very least deserving of the climber’s investigation. Interestingly, Jesus also spoke very specifically about the Spirit of God, and declared that he would send it upon the earth to be a constant earthly companion to his followers in his absence. [42] Many of the prophecies he claimed to personally fulfill relate to the Messianic figure overcoming the insurmountable obstacles

of sin and mortal death which separate souls from God, claiming that he thereby provided a way for all souls to return to God's presence. In the climbers consideration of the source of spiritual light they need to overcome all opposition they will encounter on this journey, and how they might overcome the obstacles of sin and mortal death to return to the presence of God from which all have come, considering whether the claim of Jesus to be the Messiah is true or false is of great spiritual importance.

CLIMBING PRINCIPLES:

- The state of separation between souls and God as well as NDE concepts of morality derived from the Life Review testify of the need for a reconciliation in the relationship between God and humanity.
- Scriptural promises related to the Spirit of God (or the spiritual influence that can help climbers overcome darkness upon the earth), intertwines with questions concerning the character and identity of God.
- During his time on earth, Jesus plainly claimed that he was the promised Messiah and declared that he would send God's spirit to the earth, making investigation of these claims of relevance to overcoming the obstacles of sin, mortal death, and the spirit promised to help souls achieve the summit.

PATHS BEING CONSIDERED:

- At this point, religious and spiritual paths which maintain that a reconciliation in the relationship between God and souls was required, will be focused on, specifically investigating evidence related the claims Jesus made to be this figure.
- All paths which reject concepts related to the need for an atoning sacrifice to be made in order to reconcile souls with God, diverge at this point.

The Perfect Guide

PERFECT COMPASSION

IN considering choosing a guide on any attempt to summit a mountain, the best guide would be one who has actually been to the summit. In this spiritual journey, with the obstacles separating souls from God being injury in their relationship with Him as a result of sin, and the obstacle of mortal death, achieving the summit would require overcoming both. If there were a guide that can be argued to have lived a sinless life, and to have physically resurrected after mortal death, it could be argued that he had indeed, achieved the summit of his own merits, without the aid of any other. Many believe that in addition to all Messianic prophecy fulfilled in events of Jesus life, he did indeed live a life of perfect compassion, and bridge the gap between mortality and eternity through resurrecting from the

dead. The climber's determination of whether Messianic prophecy is fulfilled in the life of Jesus Christ or not is a significant decision, as it will dramatically affect how one conceives of and approaches the insurmountable obstacle of human separation from God upon the earth, and how they choose to approach the summit.

At this fork, there are literally hundreds of messianic prophecies that can be examined within the context of the events of Jesus' life, to determine whether his claim to be the fulfillment of these prophecies should be accepted or rejected. Some of the Messianic prophecies fulfilled in Christ's life include his being of Abraham's descent [1], from the tribe of Judah [2], born in Bethlehem [3], born of a virgin [4], preceded by a messenger to prepare his way [5], healed the deaf and blind [6], spoke in parables [7], rejected by his own [8], entered Jerusalem as a King riding on an Ass [9], betrayed by a friend [10], for 30 pieces of silver [11], forsaken by his disciples [12], accused by false witnesses [13], silent before his accusers [14], spat upon and scourged [15], crucified with criminals [16], thirsty during execution [17], given vinegar and gall for thirst [18], died on the cross without the aid of any broken bones – an unusual circumstance since it was common in those times to break the shins of the victim to speed their death [19], pierced in his side [20], buried with the rich [21], and rose from the dead, according to witnesses [22].

It is said in the New Testament that "In the Mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established." [23] In a court of law where one gives witness, a testimony is established regarding a certain depiction of

events. Yet where a second person can stand as another credible witness of that same testimony, the argument is strengthened. The prophecies of the Old Testament and their fulfillment in Jesus's life stand as one collective witness of his identity and purpose upon the earth, but with something as important as correct designation of the figure who can provide reconciliation for the wounded relationship between humanity and God, it would make sense that scripture would explain that there would be not only one, but in fact "two or three" witnesses as stated in this New Testament passage.

During his ministry among the Jews, Jesus told them that there were "other sheep" who would hear his voice: "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd." [24] When Jesus sent the Apostles to preach to the Gentiles, many assumed that they were the other sheep to whom he was referring. But Christ said these sheep would "hear my voice", and the Gentile nations did not ever hear his voice literally as did the those he walked among during his ministry. Therefore, the question of the identity of these other sheep remains unanswered in the Bible. Yet the existence of the record of Joseph solves the mystery of the identity of the "other sheep", including record of the resurrected Jesus specifically appearing to a people whom he identifies as a "remnant of the house of Joseph" [25] a branch of the tribes of Israel, and then declaring:

"verily I say unto you, that ye are they of whom

I said: Other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold and one shepherd. And they understood me not, for they supposed it had been the Gentiles; for they understood not that the Gentiles should be converted through their preaching. And they understood me not that the Gentiles should not at any time hear my voice— that I should not manifest myself unto them save it were by the Holy Ghost. But behold, ye have both heard my voice, and seen me; and ye are my sheep, and ye are numbered among those whom the father hath given me.” [26]

In this record, to these “sheep” Jesus personally shows His resurrected Body and teaches His gospel, enlarging the concept of the Ministry of Jesus in absolute accord with the otherwise unanswered question of “Who are these other sheep who will hear Christ’s voice?” Jesus came to the Jews as prophecied to occur and then sent the apostles to preach to the “gentile” nations, giving them his spirit that they might demonstrate the same spiritual power and authority as he did while upon the earth during his ministry. The Gentiles were able to know of his spirit but not to be personally ministered to by Jesus, not to literally “hear his voice” as those he had walked among.

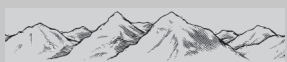
Beyond all of these examples, the most compelling evidence of the identity and mission of Jesus Christ lies in evidence that he demonstrated perfect compassion

in the atoning sacrifice he made on behalf of all souls. The concept of humanity being in a “fallen” or “sinful” state entails existing within this dualistic plane where no human being is perfectly loving in thought, intention and action in all moments – where none is completely “sinless.” Within the character of God understood from NDEs as infinitely compassionate, this premise immediately brings one to understanding that a person cannot return to the presence of God in a state of “sin” or a state in which he is inclined to injure other souls consciously or unconsciously, purposefully or inadvertently, in any degree. This makes rational sense inasmuch as a soul that cannot be in God’s presence because of a wound in their relationship with him, must not only heal that wound but also change their very nature so that they no longer have any desire to recommit the same offense. Therefore, souls cannot return to the presence of God until they heal the wounds in their relationship with him, and transform themselves into individuals that no longer have any disposition to commit sin, or perform any of the actions which can result in spiritual injury to others.

The nature of this world where so many forces operate against loving others, makes a human soul’s achievement of perfect compassion on this plane of existence impossible. Within the context of this spiritual path and scriptural story, by injuring the relationship of souls with their spiritual parent, Satan believed that he had dealt a blow which would forever separate all souls from God, an irreconcilable wound in their relationship with each other. As no soul can

completely make amends and atone for all of the offense they might commit throughout life, yet the law demanding the price of commensurate atonement to heal any wound in this relationship in order to be reconciled to God, the summit is out of the reach of any individual to achieve based on their own spiritual merit. Therefore do scriptures state that the primary purpose of Jesus coming into the world was to suffer innocently and demonstrate perfect compassion in order to fill the demands of justice and at the same time, fulfill an absolutely perfect, sinless life. [27]

Where on the earth souls often struggle to be kind in the face of another's aggression, Jesus demonstrated perfect compassion where in the midst of incomprehensible pain during the crucifixion and while being mocked and scorned, he asked- "Father forgive them, they know not what they do." [28] Where 'activity' is defined as the ability to direct one's action in the face of all forces acting upon it, Jesus demonstrated himself to have perfect power of



Where so many forces work to bring souls into powerlessness and passivity upon the earth, 'activity' is a divine quality being synonymous with spiritual power to contend with, and overcome, them all.

activity. Where so many forces work to bring souls into powerlessness and passivity upon the earth, 'activity' is a divine quality being synonymous with spiritual power to contend with, and overcome, them all. The demonstration of perfect activity in an act of perfect incomprehensible compassion, after a sinless life, is the greatest evidence of the identity and mission of the saviour.

In terms of the concept of justice, Christ coming into the world and

committing no injury to any soul, yet being punished with such malice and magnitude, would represent the greatest injustice imaginable. Suffering unjust punishment would give him a credit in terms of having caused no injury to souls but having been punished as if he caused all of the injury to souls that will ever take place. Therefore, just as a debtor can have his debt paid by a rich man, Jesus would be able to pay, on behalf of souls, the claim of justice upon them for actions which were not personally atoned for.

Through the injustice to Jesus Christ a new opportunity was born - the possibility for mercy. Mercy could now be extended toward souls because another had born their punishment where the claim of justice would have fallen upon them. At the same time, the infliction of this punishment for sin met the demands of the law which required a just atonement for souls to be reconciled again to God. As one filled with compassionate love would suffer any pain in place of another, Jesus is described as possessing perfect compassion, love that enabled him to willfully endure indescribable torment so that he could make atonement on behalf of souls in relationship with their God. Performing this act is why Jesus is referred to as the great "mediator," allowing him to say "Father forgive them" [29] and tell a soul "thy sins are forgiven thee," [30] because he personally has the ability to satisfy the claim for justice upon each soul.

Therefore Christ says that he will speak for those who, when they learn of this sacrifice made on their behalf, respond with sorrow for the injury they have caused to others and seek to turn their hearts toward love and cast

off all judgment of others. These are all who would take on a life of trying to become the most loving soul possible by accepting the ordinances that will allow Christ's Spirit, the Holy Ghost, to work within them, the "baptism by fire" [31] which is said to cleanse the soul of any desire to injure others or do evil. Therefore, many believe that Jesus provides a way for the impossible to become possible: for the infinite atonement required of each soul to heal their relationship with God to be repaid, and for each to be cleansed from all impurity of heart and disposition to commit sin and therefore become able to return home to the purity of the presence of God, the Father of souls, once again.

For every climber there is a divide or fork at the point of rejecting or accepting Jesus as a divine figure. Most who do not take him as a divine figure often refer to him as a "great prophet" or a "great spiritual master," who came to earth to teach humans how to walk on water, heal people, and multiply fish. Alongside these comments, it is usually mentioned how many other spiritual examples came upon the earth to show humans what type of life to live. These statements are meant to categorically reject all messianic prophecy in the Old Testament as cultural myth, or they may accept these prophecies, but directly reject Christ's claim to be their fulfillment. They therefore inherently reject the act of conciliation he expressed being the most important aspect of his earthly mission, his atoning sacrifice on behalf of souls. It is therefore no compliment to call Jesus a 'good spiritual teacher' or 'spiritual example', but rather the equivalent of rejecting everything he claimed

to be and the reason for which he declared he came to this earth. At this fork, Jesus deliberately presses souls to choose whether to accept or reject him and the spiritual implications of the act of his atoning sacrifice. This life is not about temporal comfort and worldly pursuits; there are matters of eternal weight at stake, and scriptures seem to demonstrate that Jesus takes one's acceptance or rejection of these principles very seriously. Even though within one household one may accept these principles and another reject them, Christ says that loyalty to him is even more important than ties of family and friendship:

“Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance with his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.” [32]

When one of his disciples, asked Jesus how to find the right path and ascend this mountain of spiritual progression, Jesus responded plainly- “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me.” [33] As the only one with this redemptive power, Jesus has the ability to ask the Father to forgive a soul, and offer his atonement in place of any to which the law of justice would have laid claim. At the same time, Christ

says that he will only do this for souls who upon learning of these things accept these truths, who do not deny them before skeptics or deny his divine mission or the power of his atoning sacrifice. “But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.” [34]

On this spiritual mountain, Jesus Christ represents a guide who ascended to the summit through living a life without sin, a life of perfect compassion. He offers to be a guide to help each climber be successful in their journey, and leaves each to choose whether to accept or reject this offer.

A HIGHER LAW

One of the most notable aspects of Christ’s life was the institution of a New Covenant between God and souls, which is why the Bible is divided into the New and Old Covenants or ‘Testaments’. People often ask, “why does the New Testament seem different than the Old Testament? Why does God require human beings to forgive each other now, but allowed people to pursue “an eye for an eye” in that period? Within the record of the Old Testament, God declares that there will be a point at which the old covenant will be fulfilled and he would institute a new law or new covenant with humanity. Many have made remarks about the difference between the Old and New Testaments of the Bible, especially at the harsh manner in which God interacted with humans in the Old Testament compared to the gentle, loving disposition of Christ in the New

Testament. Comparing these records, people have asked ‘has God changed’? The answer is that within the context of this scriptural account, God gave human beings a more difficult law to obey. Where souls in the Old Testament were asked to sacrifice a portion of their flocks, in the New Testament they are asked to sacrifice their anger and resentments toward others. Where there had been a focus with the Old Covenant on external cleanliness, with the New Covenant there is now an emphasis placed on the purification of one’s innermost self. Similarly, the change in God’s interaction with these peoples reflects a change in the type of law being lived. God did not change; the laws he asked humans to follow have changed.

The change in the Old and New Testament law is itself evidence of the identity of Jesus, considering that messianic prophecies describe the work that the messiah will perform as focused less on directly treating external ills such as sickness, crime, societal discord, and more on curing the spiritual disease from which these symptoms arise - the disease caused as a result of the soul’s transition into this dualistic world separated from their God. This figure is depicted as beginning the act of salvation of people by healing the root cause from which these symptoms arise: the injured soul that has protected and hardened itself. The greatest challenge of this healing process as described within scriptural context, is that healing requires the active intent of the individual as a person who cannot be compelled to heal or to grow spiritually, but must choose to do so voluntarily and invest effort in this process.

Therefore, laws Christ declares, and which a soul can

choose to enter into a covenant to live, also represent the means whereby the soul will begin to perfect its nature toward the attributes of spiritual character demonstrated to be of most worth in NDEs. This path is described as the narrow road on this mountain, and one less traveled: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." [35] Having performed an act of incomprehensible compassion for all, Christ asks those who have faith in him to demonstrate their appreciation for this gift of love by loving each other. While on the earth, he said, "If ye love me keep my commandments" [36]; two of the most emphasized by him are to love all souls and to forgive all those who commit injury against them. The commandments are given in accordance with principles upon which mercy and forgiveness before God are possible:

To Love: Christ expresses the injunction to love as a "new" law given unto human beings: "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." [37] Actions of love are expressed as being those of most worth to God. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." [38] In stating: "if you love me than keep my commandments"

and commanding souls to love, Jesus is plainly stating that a way to demonstrate personal appreciation and love for him and the atoning sacrifice he has made on one's behalf, is by showing love to others. As any parent would want to see their children demonstrating love towards one another, it makes sense for this commandment to be of such importance to God. This is also very literally the opposite of sin. Where sin injures souls, love heals them. Therefore, to love is to commit the opposite of sin. Sin injures one's relationship with God, and love heals and nurtures this relationship.

To Forgive: Christ exhorts souls to forgive each other, that they might receive forgiveness themselves, and explains that this principle is a law according to which forgiveness will or will not be extended when one stands before God: "It is commanded of you to forgive all men." [39] "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." [40] In connection with being able to forgive another person is to let go of judgments one has against them. When a person holds another's character or actions in judgment it is easier to feel justified in being condemning rather than forgiving.

Therefore does Christ exhort souls not to judge one another, understanding that only God has perfect understanding of all aspects of a person's life that affect their capability and actions in each moment: "And why beholdest thou the mote that is in the brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye. Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out

of thine eye; and behold, a beam is in thine own eye?” [41] Furthermore, he expresses a relationship between the degree to which one is forgiving and condemning of others and the degree to which they will themselves be forgiven or condemned by God for their own weakness and failures:

“Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged, and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured against you.” [42] As it is often difficult to forgive someone for a particularly grievous offense, this principle provides incentive to be forgiving even when it is difficult, as one will in turn find greater forgiveness before God for their own shortcomings.

Living any principle that requires one to grow beyond their current capabilities is inherently more difficult than not doing so. Living the gospel of Jesus Christ requires that one continually strive to overcome human weakness to develop their divine potential. The challenge would have many persist in activities which have strong hold on their spiritual body and may be of incredible challenge for the climber to overcome. Yet living these higher laws and working to purify the soul is worth all of the difficulty to do so in contrast to the alternative: “But remember that he that persists in his own carnal nature, and goes on in the ways of sin and rebellion against God, remaineth in his fallen state and the devil hath all power over him. Therefore, he is as though there was no redemption made, being an enemy to God; and also is the devil an enemy to God. [43] The time is now to choose what to make of this life, whether one will seek after paths on the mountain that

take them casually into familiar valleys, or to move towards those paths that appear steep and may require a deep commitment to achieve the summit they pursue, but that ultimately will lead toward an eternal joy and progression of their soul in the eternal world.

CLIMBING PRINCIPLES:

- In the New Testament Christ gave souls a more difficult law to follow that was more concerned with inward cleansing of the spiritual character of the individual.
- Two of the more important commandments are forgiveness and love.
- Following these commandments is one way to heal wounds that may have been created in the individual relationship with God.

THE SPIRIT OF GOD

Just as a climber on the journey to summit a mountain cannot abide a certain level of thin air without the aid of oxygen, so too can no soul abide the purity of God's presence without first having been sanctified by that very same spirit of God dwelling within him. Jesus taught that such purification is necessary to bring the soul back into the condition wherein it can abide the purity of God's presence. He explained that his spirit will slowly work within the individual to transform the very character of the soul into the likeness of God, into its highest potential, by purifying every negative and unholy thought or emotion.

This is done so that one might dwell not in states of anger and contempt and resentment, but instead persist in the energetic state of love and charity toward fellow souls.

In giving souls a higher law to live upon the earth, and with the spiritual opposition souls would encounter on the earth, Jesus did not expect human beings to be able to achieve this massive transformation without significant spiritual help. Before the resurrected Christ left his disciples, he told them that, after he left, the Spirit of God would be sent to earth to sanctify their souls and to guide and sustain them: “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever: Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him” [44]. He explained that the baptismal cleansing that is performed for the remission of sins is only the beginning of the process of the sanctification of the soul, that baptism by water is followed by a cleansing of the spirit, wherein the body of the soul, would be purified by the spirit of God coming to dwell within it. When baptizing in the River Jordan, John the Baptist said that he baptized “with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me... shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.” [45] Among his disciples Jesus confirmed that he would send this sanctifying agent, “For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.” [46] As one is born in the realm of dualistic existence where there is such corruption, to re-enter a kingdom of perfect purity, scriptures state that each soul must be literally reborn of spirit:

“That by reason of transgression cometh the fall, which bringeth death, and inasmuch as ye were born into the world by water, and blood, and the spirit, which I have made, and so became of dust a living soul, even so ye must be born again into the kingdom of heaven, of water, and of the Spirit, and be cleansed by blood, even the blood of mine Only Begotten.” [47] The concept of a sanctifying agent being sent to help souls purge all impurity from their spiritual body accords with principles of health and detoxification. Where the physical body has ingested impurities, it naturally purges them from its system. Similarly, where the energetic body encounters sources of spiritual impurity on a daily basis upon the earth, being able to continue to purify one’s spiritual character requires the help of a purifying agent dwelling within the energetic body. Where impurities and dysfunction within the energetic body have been seen and measured and represent spiritual disease connected to most physical, mental and emotional unhealth, cleansing and healing the spiritual body supports all other aspects of physical, mental and emotional health.

As each person has a spiritual body that came into a physical body with innate biological impulses and emotional inclinations, scriptures describe the necessity of mastery of the spirit over the natural inclinations of the body in the pursuit of joy. Joy is present where the soul has power to direct itself. It can do no such thing where it is the servant of biological impulse and emotional inclination.

“For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of

the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.”[48] As a result of presence in a dualistic world, souls find themselves possessing a “nature” which is in conflict with the possibility of both joy and fulfillment. One often hears about innate drives and tendencies, forces pulling the spirit to their command. Human nature is always exerting its pull. The spirit has an uphill battle in its attempt to gain self-mastery, a state wherein it rules and educates its desires rather than being ruled by them.

Therefore does God offer souls a path to happiness, a path upon which the soul will not suffer unfulfilled desire and at every moment can direct its course according to its own will. In the perfecting of one’s spiritual power and activity over the nature of the body, the attributes of a portion of the spirit of God dwell within one’s individual spiritual body and begin to heal its wounds and perfect its nature. In opposition to all the energetic fields that bear unhealthy and negative impact to the spiritual body of the soul, the Holy Ghost represents a portion of God’s spirit that dwells within one’s own. In the persistence of the Spirit of God upon the individual, the individual is said to develop more and more into like the character and likeness of God himself, a character of righteousness, purity, and compassion.. of peace unmoved by worldly tempest.

Being the “Spirit of Truth,” this spirit is said to hold the

power to influence all souls upon the earth and to guide and direct them towards truth. It is a perfect guide that can help overcome every chasm on the spiritual journey and is the only guide that can help souls reach the summit of the mountain of spiritual progression. “[T]he Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” [49] Christ explains that this spirit will bear witness of truth and, specifically, of him: “[T]he spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.”[50] The spirit may give one an incredible feeling of peace after performing an act of selfless service, thereby testifying of Christ and the truths that he taught.

Even if one has felt the effects of the spirit as a periodic influence, this does not signify that one has the Holy Ghost with them as a constant companion. Christ demonstrated that such baptism by fire comes only after having received an ordinance by those commissioned of him and possessing the authority to confer the Holy Ghost upon the individual by the laying on of hands. [51] There has been great confusion regarding the spirit and its effects. This Spirit of God is not merely personal intuition or energetic sensation. As energetic bodies possess inherent capabilities just as physical bodies have capacities of vision and motion, people who have had an intuitive insight or feel a spiritual sensation have confused such experiences for being the effects of the Spirit of God, or “gifts of the spirit”. The body of the soul has a capacity for energetic sensation and experience just as the physical body has

sensation. The effects of the spirit are those of the purity of God's attributes in spiritual presence, and of the qualities of love, peace, and stillness of such profound quality that they are undeniably a different quality of experience than one's normal emotional or energetic states. As the Spirit of God brings the soul to health, it will heal all spiritual disease and all of its effects, every negative emotional state, and bring one to the composition of spiritual character, the very emotional innocence of the child one was upon entering into this world.

The statement that souls must "become as a little children" [52] in order to "inherit the kingdom of heaven" [53], is a direct reference to the climate on the summit of the mountain of spiritual progression. NDEs and scriptural accounts depict the summit of this spiritual mountain being of a quality of energetic innocence and purity, resembling the character of little children. Becoming like a child requires purifying oneself of every impurity of heart, every harsh inclination. Thus, reaching this summit requires the sanctifying influence of the Spirit of God working in the individual to assist in returning the character of the soul to this level of spiritual innocence. On this journey where there are many would-be guides offering souls direction and influence, the Holy Ghost is, therefore, the only source of guidance and spiritual purification by which souls can reach the summit of the mountain of spiritual progression and return to God's presence.

CLIMBING PRINCIPLES:

- The Spirit of God, or 'Holy Ghost' can be given to the climber as a portion of God's spirit, in helping the soul to progress spiritually.
- The Holy Ghost, is a sanctifying agent which can continually cleanse the soul of all energetic impurities it encounters in daily life and gradually will work to perfect its nature.

PATHS BEING CONSIDERED:

- After accepting premises related to the need for an atonement and a reconciliation between souls and God, only the individual climber can determine whether they feel Messianic prophecy was fulfilled by Jesus Christ.
- There is a very clear divergence at this point, between all who accept Jesus as this figure, and those who reject his claims and his offer to be a personal guide upon this spiritual mountain.
- The final chapter will consider the path of accepting Jesus as this figure, and his promise to give souls God's Spirit while upon the earth, to help them to achieve the summit of this mountain.

The Summit

PARABLE OF THE SEED

ONE of the principles stated explicitly in the Bible, yet not largely taught in Christianity, is the idea that human souls are literally the offspring of God: “For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone.”[1] In this passage, the apostle Paul makes the point that if the character of a child resembles that of their parent, a Child of God would be in the “very likeness and image” of their spiritual Father. The Bible states that Jesus Christ is in the “express image of the father” or that the Father and Son are identical in their makeup. This makes sense in considering Jesus the ‘only begotten’ of the Father. All children resemble their parents to a degree; a perfect genetic transfer would result in being identical or in the

‘express image’ of one’s parent. Considering this biblical precept concerning God’s character, it is interesting that after Christ’s resurrection, one aspect of this image to which he took great care to bring attention, was the physicality of his form: “Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet..” [2]

Moses prophesied that in the last days strange doctrines would be taught concerning God’s character, that God would be described as being without form or passion. [3] If Christ has a physical body and is in the “express image” of the Father, then the Father must also not be considered a great formless, unknowable, spirit. Some have argued that god could not have a body since matter known on earth is corruptible. Yet where the bible explicitly teaches the souls eventual resurrection in a glorified, incorruptible body, it stands to reason that the same incorruptible matter that souls will find their resurrected bodies composed of could also be the substance of God the Father’s body. [4] Those who would deny this must deny also the often quoted scripture from Genesis which teaches that all were created in the very image and likeness of God. The scriptural evidence of God’s corporeality is plainly stated, through Christ’s emphasis of physicality in conjunction with the teaching that his image is identical to God, all teachings being in harmony with the principle that souls are the spirit children of God born in his very image and likeness.

The biblical premise that human souls are the very

“offspring” of God provides a revelatory understanding of human identity and potential. A seed that falls from a tree may look in comparison to be absolute nothingness. One might look around at all of the other seeds and then look up at the glorious branches and leaves of the tree extending far into the heights above, ascending so far that the seed from its position at the base of the tree cannot even see but a tiny portion of its glory. The seeds may say to each other, “look at the Almighty and glorious tree above us; we are certainly no such thing, we are certainly an entirely different species.”

One day, such a tree whispered to one seed, “Here is the great secret: I was once as you now are, and as I am, you have potential to become. But I did not grow to this stature without many things supporting my transformation and exaltation. I was first planted firmly in the ground and then I drank water from the rain and took nourishment from the sun. I followed line upon line and precept upon precept, as I obeyed principles upon which seeds can become trees, and according to those laws I did progress, slowly, but over time I received height upon height, growth after growth until I did become the very size and stature that you see before you. I must let you know, little seed, you have this same potential to grow according to the same principles; in fact, you are my very child and I am your father.”

The little seed felt more than ever that he knew his purpose and the end to which he had been created. He had enjoyed rolling in the grass with other seeds, but he was inspired by the glory of the tree, and sought to

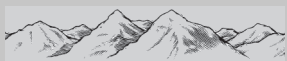
become more like his Father and to develop the attributes he now knew he had potential to become. Upon learning these things, the little seed told the other seeds about his experience and taught them this simple principle, to which the other seeds said, "You blaspheme the tree to say that you are his child, you are nothing like him. Look at his magnificence, his perfection, his power, his glory. You are none of these things. And none of these things will you become." To this, the little seed replied, "But my Father taught me that on principles which transform seeds into trees, I might become exalted from my inferior state, little by little, over the course of great lengths of time, through obedience to these laws by which trees grow from seeds." The other seeds mocked the little seed, who decided to leave the world of frolicking in the grass, as these activities could no longer bring him any sense of significance, knowing his true identity and potential.

The little seed planted himself firmly in the ground and began to nurture himself according to the same principles of growth taught by his Father. He drank in the rain, and took in nourishment from the sun. He thus sprouted his first tiny root and soon grew right up out of the ground. He now saw again his friends, who were rolling in the grass and blown by the wind. He noticed that some seeds were smashed into rocks or blown into crevices from which they did not return. When the winds came, the little budding tree was blown on his top, but stayed grounded in his root. He began to understand that the principles he was obeying, the good soil he planted himself in, and the roots he was developing gave him more strength to withstand

all of the same forces that caused much greater harm to the unplanted seeds. He also began to realize that he felt more happiness being less affected by all of these forces, that the principles he was obeying not only helped him further develop his potential to be like his Father the tree, but also to become more powerful amongst forces that acted upon him and therefore more happy, as no gust of wind could ever smash him into a rock or down a crevice as he saw happen to so many unplanted seeds.

In this manner can souls slowly grow to become the very image and likeness of God himself, according to laws by which the soul is progressed, in the same way that the body of a newborn child grows into that of an infant, then a toddler, then a young child, young adult and eventually a mature adult. Where spiritual potential is realized, happiness follows, as there is inherent joy in fulfilling one's greater potential. When realizing our potential, with each step, we become more fully who we are. The laws and ordinances of the gospel of Jesus Christ are the principles upon which souls can have their nature perfected, upon which the exaltation of souls toward their divine potential is possible. These are also the principles to which the happiness or misery of the soul throughout eternity are attached. All souls exist within a universe where laws exert influence upon them. These laws are not confined to the manifest physical world, but pertain to human moral life and the processes of spiritual becoming that take place upon the earth. It is impossible to achieve happiness while acting in opposition to forces that universally apply in this manner. Seeking to understand them and live by them, to

obey every commandment of God, is the path to eternal joy and security.



Where spiritual potential is realized, happiness follows, as there is inherent joy in fulfilling one's greater potential.

“An intelligent being, in the image of God, possesses every organ, attribute, sense, sympathy, affection, of will, wisdom, love, power, and gift, which is possessed by God himself. But these are possessed by man in his rudimental state in a subordinate sense of the word. Or, in other words,

these attributes are in embryo, and are to be gradually developed. They resemble a bud, a germ, which gradually develops into bloom, and then, by progress, produces the mature fruit after its own kind. The gift of the Holy Spirit adapts itself to all these organs or attributes. It quickens all the intellectual faculties, increases, enlarges, expands, and purifies all the natural passions and affections, and adapts them by the gift of wisdom to their lawful use. It inspires, develops, cultivates, and matures all the fine-toned sympathies, joys, tastes, kindred feelings, and affections of our nature. It inspires virtue, kindness, goodness, tenderness, gentleness, and charity. It develops beauty of person, form and features. It tends to health, vigor, animation, and social feeling. It develops and invigorates all the faculties of the physical man. It strengthens, invigorates, and gives tone to the nerves. In short, it is, as it were, marrow to the bone, joy to the heart, light to the eyes, music to the ears, and life to the whole being.” [5]

CLIMBING PRINCIPLES:

- All souls are spoken of biblically as being the ‘offspring of God’, created in his image.
- Because all were created in God’s image, and human beings are not formless Spirits, one can reasonably deduce, and the bible explicitly conveys the understanding, that God is not an “all-encompassing spirit.”
- If God is the literal parent of souls, all have divine potential. The Spirit of God helps the soul to develop Godly attributes as it represents a portion of the Spirit body of God which dwells within one’s own.

PURITY OF HEART

While there are many who believe that the infinite atonement wrought by Jesus Christ has power to redeem souls from the effects of transition into this dualistic world and heal their state of separation from God as a result of sin, there is widespread disagreement on what principles allow Christ’s atonement to be accepted by God on behalf of another soul. Some have argued that mere intellectual assent or belief on this act alone will allow Christ’s suffering to reconcile them with God. Of this perception, it is written: “Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?” [6] This statement points out that one can believe these things and not have it affect one’s heart, nor open

remorse for the personal wounds one has caused to other souls. Scriptural passages support understanding that the infinitely compassionate Father does not allow his son's suffering to be applied in place of another's without their sincere appreciation for the gift of being spared personal suffering. They therefore advocate spiritual progression in becoming less callous to the emotional and spiritual injury one has committed to others in their life, so that they can offer to God "a broken heart and a contrite spirit" [7] at the end of this life, through compassionate understanding of the effects of their actions upon others. This is a disposition in which one trembles to commit sin, or to injure another soul, understanding that every injury to a soul represents suffering that Jesus Christ endured on their behalf in atonement. Therefore one who highly esteems Christ's atoning sacrifice seeks to live in such a way that his thoughts and actions have a loving and healing effect on other spirit children of God. Such contrition is also considered in the process of courtroom justice, where severity of punishment is often dependent on the level of remorse of the one who has caused the offense. "Therefore, whoso repenteth and cometh unto me as a little child, him will I receive, for of such is the kingdom of God. Behold, for such I have laid down my life, and have taken it up again; therefore repent, and come unto me ye ends of the earth, and be saved." [8] Therefore, the principle of mercy operates entirely in connection to the principle of repentance. God requires that the personal repentance of a soul also be a prerequisite to access the healing power of the atonement.

While no soul can perfectly atone for the wounds in their relationship with God which are the result of sin, each can certainly feel some degree of compassionate sorrow at the hurt they have caused to others. The attempt to fully comprehend the impact of any injury one has ever caused to other souls is itself a purifying exercise for the heart, which softens it where it has been hardened, and places compassionate response where there had been emotional defense. Therefore, Christ spoke about an internal conversion: “For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart.”[9] Actions which appear righteous externally may or may not signify the authentic state of one’s heart. Purifying the state of one’s heart, so that it becomes softer and more capable of “loving one’s neighbor as oneself,” is expressed as being the greatest gift that one can render unto God. This internal sacrifice of the condition of one’s heart to so love others as oneself is said to be of more worth to God “than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.”[10]

The process of repentance brings one into compassionate connection with all souls, as it is the principle that works to enable a soul’s ability to love fully, reversing the effects of the Fall and the hardening of the soul in a harsh world, turning the heart toward God so that it can be healed. Repentance is the process by which each individual soul purifies, from his own heart and spirit body, prideful, aggressive, vengeful, bitter, malicious, resentful emotions that come from having his emotional

innocence first injured in a dualistic plane. It is therefore a principle that serves to prepare souls to return to the purity of the presence of God from which they came, a principle that aids spiritual progression and must be lived by everyone serious in their journey up the mountain of spiritual progression. Jesus plainly expressed this principle: “Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” [11] “For behold, I God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent; But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I; which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit– and would that I might not drink the bitter cup and shrink – Nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men.” [12]

The scriptures invite all souls to enter a covenant relationship with Christ, wherein they may become perfected in him and therefore have ability to achieve the summit: “Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind, and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in [him].” [13]

CLIMBING PRINCIPLES:

- The power of the atonement Christ made upon behalf of all souls operates upon the principle

of repentance, or the degree to which each soul takes personal accountability of the affects of their actions upon others and seeks to purify their heart.

- Christ requires much more than the souls declaration of faith in Him, but that the soul will enter into a covenant relationship wherein they will “take upon [oneself] the name of Christ” [14], and live according to the laws and ordinances of the gospel he set forth while upon the earth.

DIVINE POTENTIAL

The soul dwells within an instrument with incredibly powerful natural aspects and inclinations. Achieving directive power over this instrument is a task which requires incredible determination of the soul, and the help of God’s spirit to strengthen him. Accomplishing such strength of spirit over the flesh is not only possible, it is a principle upon which the seed becomes as the tree, neither blown with every wind of desire, but grounded with strength of roots in the paths it chooses.

Developing this activity of the soul is the path to godliness, and is why God offers to give unto man a portion of his spirit to dwell within his own, to help to shape him if he will submit to its enticing rather than to subject himself to become a servant to his “natural aspects”. Scriptures speak of the need to subject the flesh to the enticing of the spirit rather than one’s spirit to the direction of every whim and inclination they experience as a result of inhabiting

a body, stating that: “The natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever, unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord, and becometh as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love....” [15]

Souls came to this earth to progress and to become more like their spiritual parent. In the struggle to overcome the “natural man”, the soul is given the opportunity to develop a quality of godliness. Christ endured every temptation and yet he overcame them all. Interestingly, he does not tell souls that they are too weak to do as he has done, nor have the capacity he has as the Son of God to overcome their trials and temptations. His instructions to souls testify of the unlimited potential of each spirit child of God. He exhorts each to “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” [16], directing each to seek with all power of their soul to work to grow into the likeness of the mature tree of which we are all seeds.

Ultimately, the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ are those essential for the salvation and exaltation of souls. They teach souls of the true nature of their identity and put them on the path to becoming like their spiritual parent. This path is both the most challenging and the most rewarding path available for any soul, with God having literally promised to share ‘all he hath’ with those who return to him and his kingdom. As an earthly father certainly will share all that he has with his children, so too has our father in heaven prepared for each an “inheritance’

in heaven [17].

NDEs and scripture testify that humans are immortal and will move into an eternal world upon leaving this temporal one. To conceive of God as being one's literal spiritual parent yields understanding of the incomprehensible love that he has for each soul and their eternal welfare. To know this is to know that one has been endowed with divine potential. There is an incredible amount at stake in this journey as one can choose paths that will lead toward the purification of their character and summit of this mountain, or towards the soul's loss of opportunities for progression in the eternal world.

The laws and ordinances of the gospel of Jesus Christ include not only those required to heal one's relationship with God, but also the means of obtaining God's Spirit to dwell within one's own in order to sanctify the soul so that it can return to His presence. The transformation made upon the soul through living this life is not instantaneous. Those who have ascended Mt. Everest have remarked that rather than incredible technical difficulty, what the mountain demands is the ability to persist through opposition - to continue moving upward, however gradually, and even when all that can be focused on in the moment is one's next breath or step. Given strength by God's Spirit, and with the intention to use each small spiritual step or opportunity to choose kindness over aggression, forgiveness over resentment, and actions which increase spiritual power and activity over those which bring it into dependence, the soul will begin to transform. It is these individual steps that take one up incredible elevation. From very small steps

compounding over time, one is able to climb a mountain.

Series Conclusion

THE moment that a climber looks down the path that forks into Christianity, there are thousands of splintered paths and even more guides claiming their sect has a correct understanding of the road forward. This confused and fragmented state of the Christian world has been one of the main reasons stated by climbers for rejecting it. Interestingly the New Testament gives prophecy of an ‘apostasy’ of the Christian church, as given evidence by the period where the Church proclaiming itself to be His and acting in Christ’s name sold the remission of sin, murdered those considered to be heretics, vied for power through political manipulation, and bore other fruits of corruption. The apostle Paul warned, “I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter among you, not sparing the flock.” [1] After the apostles were killed and political authorities became leaders in the Christian church, the line of direct succession of priesthood authority conferred initially by Jesus upon his apostles by laying on of hands was destroyed, as priest holders were often given that position through political appointment. In place of

clear doctrine established by Christ, debates were held such as the council of Nicea, where Christian doctrine was derived analytically, after much debate. [2] In order to make Christianity more palatable to the Greeks, Aristotelian and Platonic philosophy was incorporated into the teachings of the gospel. To convert the pagans, Christian holidays were placed atop pagan ones so that pagans used to celebrating on specific days could keep their tradition, just with a Christian holiday instead.

Biblical prophecies of an “apostasy” and their support by historical events are supported in detail by the record of Joseph - the record of comparable length and purpose to the Bible, written by the descendants of Joseph being one of the twelve sons of Israel just as the Bible is the record of Judah of Israel, and his descendants (discussed in chapter 5). One of the most notable and relevant concerns the formation of a church that will perform incredible iniquity and actually remove plain and precious portions of the gospel, the result being doctrinal confusion among those who appeal to the Bible to understand God and his will, represented by the thousands of fragmented Christian sects present upon the earth today. [3] The record prophecies of the joining of the Bible (the record of the descendants of Judah) and the record of Joseph of Israel, in the reconciliation of all fragmented religious sects, bringing all religion into one whole:

“Wherefore the fruit of thy loins shall write;
and the fruit of the loins of Judah shall write; and

that which shall be written by the fruit of thy loins, and also that which shall be written by the fruit of the loins of Judah, shall grow together, unto the confounding of false doctrines and laying down contentions, and establishing peace among the fruit of thy loins, and bringing them to the knowledge of their fathers in the latter days, and also to the knowledge of my covenants, saith the Lord.” [4]

In the process of the bringing forth of this work of Scripture, there is significant evidence that where the apostasy left the Christian church in thousands of fragmented sects, God restored the fullness of the truth of His gospel and the laws and ordinances thereof to the earth, in fulfillment of the promise of the “restitution of all things” [5] prior to the second coming of Christ. The conclusion of this series, “A Testimony of Christ”, intertwines my personal spiritual journey with detailed exploration of this claim. Ultimately, where any reader came to this book or comes away from it, with a belief in the reality of the Spirit of God and a desire to live with the guidance and spiritual protection of this Spirit upon them, determining how this Spirit may be conferred upon them, and by what authority this ordinance can take place is of eternal spiritual importance. The series conclusion attempts to resolve all conflict on this question in sharing both personal experiences and detailed evidences relating to this topic.

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