

FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE



"But the greatest of these is Love."
Apostle Paul

Brother Woody Brohm



For through the Spirit we eagerly await by faith the righteousness for which we hope.

For in Christ Jesus...the only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.

Galatians 5:5-6

TABLE OF CONTENTS

[Introduction](#)

[A Treasured History](#)

[Abraham's Journey of Faith](#)

[Failure Under Pressure](#)

[Hope is the Key](#)

[Victorious Under Pressure](#)

[Greater Revelation](#)

[Patience](#)

[Faithful Obedience](#)

[Through the Ages](#)

[Blinded by the Light](#)

[The Priesthood of Christ](#)

[Faith, Hope and Love](#)

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[Glossary](#)

[Appendix A: Abraham's Timeline](#)

[General Bibliography](#)

[About the Author](#)

[Dedication](#)

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Introduction

Understand, then, that those who have faith are children of Abraham. Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: 'All nations will be blessed through you.' So those who rely on faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

...

The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. Scripture does not say 'and to seeds,' meaning many people, but 'and to your seed,' meaning one person, who is Christ.

...

So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:7-29).

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A Treasured History

The story of salvation is recorded in the Bible through true accounts of real people. Faith is a core element of salvation and has a long and treasured history. The narrative of Adam and Eve recounts the first sin and promise of redemption. After they had sinned, God sacrificed an innocent animal and demonstrated the concept of substitutionary sacrifice. Adam and Eve wore the animal skin that subsequently served as a remembrance of that important event. God promised a future redeemer and thus, the plan of God was revealed in capsule form.

The narrative goes on to present Abel, their second son, making an acceptable offering to the Lord. Abel was a shepherd and sacrificed animals selected from the firstborn of his flock. He understood the interdependence of faith and obedience. Though there is no record of him saying anything, he demonstrated his faith by his actions. By his example, we have learned to approach God on the right terms, and with the proper attitude. Abel's life came to an abrupt end, but he left a legacy of faith that will last for eternity.

“By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead” (Hebrews 11:4; cf. Matthew 23:35).

The Old Testament tradition of faithfulness and sacrifice is recorded in the story of Job. Even before Moses and the Law, men would make appropriate sacrifices for themselves and those in their household. The father, in essence, served as a priest for the family.

Job was a righteous and wealthy man and had seven sons and three daughters. They lived in Uz, southeast of the Dead Sea. The events and customs described in the book of Job indicate that he was a contemporary of Abraham, during the patriarchal period, or about 2000 BC. His priestly role is evident by his faithful actions.

“When a period of feasting had run its course, Job would make arrangements for them [his family] to be purified. Early in the morning he would sacrifice a burnt offering for each of them, thinking, ‘Perhaps my children have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.’ This was Job’s regular custom” (Job 1:5).

“I know that my redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand on the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!” (Job 19:25-26).

Job may not have known all the details of the gospel like we do today, but he believed up to the extent of revelation God made known to him. Faith was required to make regular sacrifices in anticipation of God’s ultimate plan of redemption.

Faith in God’s plan requires knowledge and understanding of God’s plan. It is obvious that God had revealed much to Job as he confidently spoke of his own resurrection. God has revealed much to mankind at large, but it is a *progressive revelation*. It began in the Garden of Eden and has been steadily unfolding throughout the ages. The recurring themes of this revelation are sin, sacrifice, and eternal destiny. Our eternal destiny will be either restoration with God, or isolation apart from him. Salvation is a work of God for sinful

man and is based on the sacrifice of God's own son, Jesus Christ. The animal sacrifices anticipated this ultimate sacrifice. The veracity of God's redemption plan is being revealed to us slowly and methodically. To exercise faith effectively, we must believe God is willing and able to save us. Faith leads to hope. Hope is fixing our eyes on God's perfect plan while we are in the midst of our imperfect earthly lives. Job's life was riddled with trials, but he remained focused on God's ultimate plan. He looked beyond his present circumstances and confidently anticipated his future glory. He remained focused on his eventual restoration with God, thereby affirming confidence in God's willingness and ability to redeem and restore.

We would do well to consider the hope of Job. The Apostle Paul encouraged believers by saying, "we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope" (Romans 5:3-4).

Even when we believe the gospel and are saved, our perception of life can fluctuate. If we remain focused on our glorious future, we can endure the trials of life gracefully. However, if we lose focus of God's plan and gaze upon mere earthly circumstances, the trials of life seem unbearable. By losing hope, we invariably make poor choices—which only compounds our misery. The extent that hope affects our journey through life may be observed by studying the experiences of Abraham. His story is a pillar in apostolic doctrine and is pivotal to understanding God's love for mankind.

Abraham's Journey of Faith

The Abrahamic Covenant contains a foundational element in God's redemption plan. God made a promise to Abraham that affects all people of all time. We will examine the details regarding the past, present, and future aspects of this important covenant. As the story unfolds, we will clearly see the gracious aspect of faith; the firm foundation to which the hope of believers is anchored; and the vast extent of God's love.

“The Lord had said to Abram, ‘Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father’s family, and go to the land that I will show you. I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others. I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you’” (Genesis 12:1-3).

This was the first contact between God and Abram. The year was roughly 2100 BC in Abram's hometown, Ur of the Chaldeans, Mesopotamia (Iraq). The local culture was immersed in idolatry with no regard for the true and living God. There is no indication that Abram personally had any previous knowledge or relationship with God. Therefore, this covenant promise contains within it the concept of grace. That is, Abram did not do anything to earn this great reward. God simply chose Abram to receive this blessing because God had a plan to redeem all mankind. Abram was selected, by grace, to play a role in this plan. He was going to be the progenitor of an entirely new nation from which God's chosen redeemer, Jesus Christ, would emerge.

This promise warrants a close inspection. *“Leave your native country, your relatives, your father’s family, and go to the land that I will show you.”* It was obvious that God wanted to separate Abram and his wife Sarai from everything to which they were presently connected. Abram’s country, relatives, and father all worshiped false gods. God hates idolatry.

“I will make you into a great nation.” The plan was to choose one man to respond by faith and move him away from that idolatry. The new, holy nation would bear witness to the true and living God. Abram understood what God intended, but struggled with the idea of leaving his present circumstances.

Abram was firmly seated in a family business with hundreds of servants counting on his leadership for their future. They were herdsman who raised cattle and sheep and were knit together as a family clan. Abram’s father served as the patriarch who used his experience and knowledge to manage the family affairs. Four generations of families typically would live and work together, participating in duties appropriate to their age and ability. A clan such as this would purchase servants who would also live and work within the camp. The family clan would retain ownership of these servants generation after generation, with the children of the servants automatically belonging to the clan. When properly managed, this was a mutually beneficial arrangement for all involved. Abram’s father Terah was aging so Abram was prepared to take over the responsibilities as patriarch. The forfeiture of this honored position would have been a disappointment and disgrace.

We do not know the details of why Abram responded to God's instructions the way he did, but we do know what happened. Abram's brother Haran died unexpectedly and left a son and two daughters. Abram's other brother Nahor married one of the daughters, his niece, Milcah. Nahor and Milcah prepared to stay in Mesopotamia to care for their own livestock. Abram's father, Terah, set out to the land of Canaan with Abram, Sarai, and Haran's son Lot. They traveled six hundred miles north to the city of Haran, Mesopotamia (Turkey) and settled there instead of continuing to Canaan. They stayed in Haran for a period and eventually Terah died. During their stay, they had accumulated more servants and possessions.

God's initial instructions to Abram indicated that he intended to separate Abram and Sarai from their country, relatives, and family. God was preparing to start a new nation from Abram. Abram failed to comply, instead staying within his country, with his relatives, and under the leadership of his father. Abram's father had chosen the route to Canaan. They followed the Euphrates River that provided the natural resources required for their livestock and servants. It is noteworthy that a direct route to Canaan was available to the west across the Arabian Desert. The desert route would have been possible without the entourage. While God allowed this disobedience, it did not work out very well as Terah died before any fulfillment of the promise. For now, God was exercising patience with Abram, allowing freedom to make mistakes while learning the ways of the true and living God.

Abram was seventy-five when his father died. Sarah was 10 years younger than Abram and had been barren her whole life. Lot, Abram's nephew who had recently lost his father, remained with the group Terah had assembled. If Abram had remained childless, Lot would have been the heir apparent.

The group traveled to Canaan and arrived at the great tree of Moreh at Shechem (30 miles north of Jerusalem). This was the first real sign of obedience as Abram left his country and walked by faith into a foreign land. Even though the Canaanites occupied that place as their own, the Lord appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." This revealed an exciting revelation not previously disclosed. God indicated that they would have a son to be an heir to this land. In response to that great revelation from God, Abram built an altar to the Lord and worshiped him there.

So we see the first of many fluctuations of Abram's journey of faith. The spike came initially when God chose Abraham by grace and made a great promise to him. Next we see a steep drop-off by Abram's disobedient response and the death of his father before any significant progress is made towards the fulfillment of the promise. Finally, we see a restoration of fellowship as Abram responded by faith and God expanded the revelation. The growth of this relationship is evident as Abram built an altar for worship. This is the first time of worship recorded between this man of faith and his God. This was a time of great joy for Abram and Sarai, even though they did not understand how God's promise of a son would be fulfilled.

Failure Under Pressure

The best parts of the land were occupied. Abram's group was large, and the herds required a constant supply of food and water. After grazing in an area for a period, they had to change locations.

From Shechem, they headed on to Bethel (10 miles north of Jerusalem) and built another altar and called on the name of the Lord. This would be an indication of sustained fellowship and communion with God. However, from this time of communion with the Lord came a time of divine trial and testing. God's testing is never for his own benefit as he is omniscient and already knows the hearts of men. The testing he puts people through is so we can learn about ourselves. Abram was about to learn an important lesson, the hard way.

The herds required new grazing plains again. To increase the difficulty of the trial, God had caused a famine in the land. Resources were thin and the locals were protecting their territories closely. The entire region was in survival mode.

The famine provided an opportunity for Abram to confidently seek God's provision in the land. God surely would have kept his promise. "I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others. I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt." This was the land God had shown him, and Abram had a blanket promise that he would be blessed. There were options available to Abram, but his old ways were influencing him. He failed to leave them behind in Mesopotamia too.

After a period, they moved on to the south towards the Negev, a dry desert area near Egypt. Obviously, they would not survive long in that region. Abram was making administrative and executive decisions for those traveling with him, as he was now the patriarch. Abram had been groomed by his father for this role and carefully considered all his options. On one hand, he had God's promise. It was because of his faith in God's promise that they found themselves in Canaan in the first place. On the other hand, he had conventional wisdom as he had seen his father successfully use for many years. The situation forced his hand. He made his decision based on a strategy he had probably had in mind since the day he left home.

Abram led the group out of the land God showed them and headed to Egypt. The plan was to offer Sarai to Pharaoh as a wife for his harem. This plan required lies, deception and greed. Though Abram and Sarai were married, they shared the same father, which meant they were half siblings. Abram planned to manipulate the facts so as to present her as his sister while omitting the fact that she was also his wife. By doing so, Sarai would be well cared for, and Abram would receive gifts and honor for her sake. Additionally, the rest of the group would survive the famine, living under Abram's leadership while in Egypt.

Sarai had been preparing for this deception for quite some time. Abram likely announced this strategy back when they first set out for Canaan. He coldly convinced her that participation in this lie would be her way of showing love for him. Her compliance resulted in exactly the outcome he had so cleverly anticipated. Sarai lived in the

palace; Abram received additional livestock as a bride price; the members of the group were free to work under Abram's leadership, tending his livestock. Their overall status increased greatly instead of sinking dramatically. Abram had used selfish human reasoning and had set aside God's plan and God's ways. The result of this testing revealed the utter sinfulness of the human nature. The end did not justify the means.

This phase of testing for Abram was complete, so the Lord inflicted serious disease on Pharaoh and his household on behalf of Sarai, Abram's wife. As a result of that divine intervention, Pharaoh discovered the truth and rebuked Abram. Abram was humbled and led the group back to Bethel, the last place he had previously built an altar, and again called on the name of the Lord and worshiped him there. The communion between God and Abram was restored.

This was the second cycle of peaks and valleys on Abram's journey of faith. Abram began from a place of holy communion with God and sank to the depths of his own sinful nature. He traded his wife for his own well-being even after God had promised to provide an heir to them. Perhaps he had previously reasoned that since Sarai had been barren, she would not be the woman to provide the promised son. He had considered her expendable, but God recovered his discarded wife and protected the sanctity of their marriage. Abram put his entire group at risk by seeking refuge in another country instead of trusting God to provide their needs in the land he showed them. In the end, Abram grew in his knowledge of God and his ways. This was a valuable lesson and it paid dividends immediately. The

old Abram was focused on self-sufficiency; the new Abram would focus on the hope of God's promises.

Hope is the Key

The growth of Abram's character became evident with the next test Abram faced. The natural resources in Bethel were too limited for their needs. Tension was high and the increased stress led to quarreling between Lot and Abram's herdsmen. Instead of solving this dispute in a traditional way, Abram exercised hope in God's promise and was finally comfortable implementing God's ways. He took this opportunity to generously release Lot and his share of livestock and servants.

This was not an easy decision for Abram. Lot was Abram's nephew and the natural affection and camaraderie was strong. More than that, Lot had become a fellow believer in the Lord. The comfort of a trusted ally was desirable, especially in this foreign land. The increased manpower and wealth also would have been beneficial in negotiating conflicts. Lastly, Lot had been Abram's potential heir. This separation would mark the end of that option. Abram had become confident in God's Word that he would receive an heir from his own seed. This was a bold and emotionally charged move for Abram. He displayed unselfishness and trust in God's plan. This was as momentous an event as the day he left Haran!

Abram graciously offered Lot the opportunity to choose an area where he would like to settle. Abram offered to go a different direction and settle in another place. On one hand, this would relieve the tension between the herdsmen. More importantly, it would provide an opportunity for Abram to separate himself from his family as God had initially instructed. Lot took the well-watered plain of the Jordan and headed east, near Sodom. Abram went to the great trees

of Mamre near Hebron, roughly twenty miles south of Salem (Jerusalem). At this point, he met the terms of God's initial instructions. Finally Abram was in the land of Canaan, and he was apart from both generations that originally accompanied him on the journey. It may have been a roundabout way of getting to this point, but it was a move in the right direction as indicated by the next communication from God. God waited until Lot had departed and spoke to Abram saying, "Look around from where you are, to the north and to the south, to the east and west. All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever. I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted. Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you" (Genesis 13:14-17).

The first test was disastrous as Abram fled to Egypt. This latest test was momentous as he demonstrated unselfishness and respect for God's plan and instructions. God was pleased with Abram and revealed another new and exciting aspect to his plan. Abram would have more than just an heir—his offspring would be too numerous to count and would retain this land forever! Abram's relationship with God was growing stronger. God even used Abram's trials to work together for a good result. Abram was growing to love the Lord and trust his ways.

Victorious Under Pressure

After a period, Abram received word that Lot had been taken captive by King Kedorlaomer from Mesopotamia. Four eastern kings were executing joint attacks against several regional cities including Sodom. Cities in this ancient region were walled fortresses and maintained national independence from other city-nations. Abram had made a covenant with an Amorite named Mamre and his two brothers. Given the amicable arrangement with these neighbors, he had stationed his camp near Hebron. Abram had 318 men born into his household who were trained for battle. He and his covenanted neighbors immediately pursued Kedorlaomer all the way past Damascus (Syria), approximately 200 miles north of Hebron. Under Abram's leadership, they routed the opposition. They recovered the hostages, possessions and livestock. As they headed back to Sodom, it was like an extended victory parade.

These eastern kings had subjugated several cities in this region fourteen years prior. They had been receiving a steady stream of income until about a year ago when these cities rebelled against the vassal arraignment. The eastern kings were there to collect – with a vengeance. God had promised to make Abram famous. This impressive victory was news that would spread throughout the ancient world. Abram was now a force to be reckoned with among the nations. Of course, the Lord provided the victory in accordance with his promise, working through Abram and his allies.

Sodom, a city famous for homosexuality and other perverted wickedness, had been entirely and completely looted. The King of Sodom was preparing to meet Abram as he was returning with

everything. Before that meeting, Melchizedek, King of Salem, arrived with bread and wine.

“He [Melchizedek] was priest of God Most High, and he blessed Abram, saying, ‘Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. And praise be to God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand.’ Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything” (Genesis 14:19-20).

Abram was refreshed, enlightened and encouraged by the presence of Melchizedek. He accepted the blessing, offered a tithe of all the loot, and promptly told Bera, King of Sodom that he would not accept anything from him as payment. The diametrical character of these two Kings could not have been greater. Abram masterfully communicated that truth to the residents of Sodom who were in tow, including Lot. Abram was careful to credit God with the victory, as well as his rise to fame and wealth.

Greater Revelation

After some time, Abram began to doubt that he would see the complete fulfillment of God's promise. Abram had good reason to doubt. The fulfillment of these promises would take more time and power than Abram could imagine.

God comforted Abram by stating that he would be his shield and very great reward. Finally, Abram openly shared what was on his mind. He reasoned that since God had not provided a son, a servant from his household would be awarded the estate.

God restated that Abram would have a son of his own flesh and blood. God reiterated that Abram's descendants would be as numerous as the stars in the sky. Abram believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.

Next, God stated, "I am the Lord, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to take possession of it." Despite this decisive statement, Abram still struggled with understanding how that would be possible. Abram was probably under the impression that all this would happen within his lifetime. We were just assured that Abram believed God. We also know that Abram's faith was unwavering. However, he did not understand how or when these great accomplishments would come to pass. The possession of the land was a major obstacle Abram was anticipating. God took this opportunity to expand the revelation and reassure Abram. God had Abram prepare for a ritual covenant. Various livestock would be cut in two, and the pledging partners would walk between the carcasses. The symbolism meant that if one of the pledging partners reneged

on their part of the promise, the same fate of the animals would befall that participant. Abram understood the significance of this ritual thoroughly. It was an oath of the highest caliber in their culture.

Next the Lord put Abram into a deep sleep. God revealed that Abram's descendants would serve as slaves in a foreign country for four hundred years before returning to inherit the land. Then God passed through the slaughtered animals alone. This last action signified that the fulfillment of the promise rested completely on God since Abram did not pass through the animals, as was the normal practice. God alone passed through, and God alone would be responsible for the fulfillment of the covenant.

That ritual confirmed one of the most important doctrines in the entire Bible. God's plan will be accomplished because God is Sovereign and Omnipotent. The fact that he chooses to work through men, angels, nature, or time is inconsequential. In other words, the accomplishment of God's plan depends on God, not on man—nor anything else. Abram now understood that the plan regarding the possession of the land would take many generations to be fulfilled. He learned that it involved slavery for his descendants prior to their inheritance. He knew it would be accomplished because God would see it through, according to the promise. We can be sure that Abram spent much time dwelling on the significance of this great revelation of God.

“[Jesus speaking to a first century audience of Abram’s descendants] Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad” (John 8:56).

The climax of God's promise was "*all families on earth would be blessed through you.*" At some point, Abram began to understand completely. In this last clause of the promise, God was referring to the Person and Work of Jesus Christ. Here's how it would be accomplished: Abram was chosen by grace and called out of Mesopotamia. He would be given a new land and his offspring would be made into a holy nation. Eventually, Christ would be born to this nation, all of whom were descendants of Abram. Christ would offer himself as a sacrifice for the sin of the entire world. Consequently, the sin of the world would be forgiven. Therefore, every family on earth would be blessed because their sin would not be an obstacle to salvation. Just as Abram believed God and was credited with righteousness, so also all people who believe in God's redemption plan would receive righteousness. Until Christ arrived, people were expected to believe up to the point of revelation they received. Now that Christ has died and rose again, we must believe in the sufficiency of Christ's death.

The writer of Hebrews explains God's purpose in passing through the slaughtered animals thereby confirming the promise with an oath:

"When God made his promise to Abraham, since there was no one greater for him to swear by, he swore by himself, saying, 'I will surely bless you and give you many descendants.' And so after waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised.

"People swear by someone greater than themselves, and the oath confirms what is said and puts an end to all argument. Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his

purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath.

“God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope set before us may be greatly encouraged. We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, where our forerunner, Jesus, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek” (Hebrews 6:13-20).

When he says, “we who have fled to take hold of the hope set before us” he means all people who believe God, just as Abram did. The believer’s hope is in God’s redemption plan; God’s ability to accomplish his plan; and Jesus Christ, the one in whom the plan is embodied. Jesus has anchored our hope to the inner sanctuary of the true tabernacle of God in heaven. There is no better foundation in all of heaven and earth!

The reference to Melchizedek in the New Testament book of Hebrews is as significant as the oath God had made. Christ, in his ascension, has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek. The point of this statement is that Christ’s tenure as high priest will never end. He continues to bless all the families on earth even after he accomplished the forgiveness of their sin. He serves in the true tabernacle of God, in heaven. From this holy place, he oversees a royal priesthood of believers on earth to whom he sent the Holy Spirit. Through the indwelling Holy Spirit, he gives each believer any number of spiritual gifts by which they are

equipped to serve mankind, just as Melchizedek had done for Abram.

The Apostle Paul connects Abram's faith and righteousness to that of all believers. "Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, 'So shall your offspring be.' Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah's womb was also dead. Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. This is why 'it was credited to him as righteousness.' The words 'it was credited to him' were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification" (Romans 4:18-25).

Faith is believing in God's plan of redemption and is based on the finished work of Christ on the cross. Hope is fixing our eyes upon Jesus who rose from the dead and ascended to serve as our high priest forever. Love is serving others as Christ has done for us—yesterday, today, and forever!

"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. ... And now

these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love” (1 Corinthians 13:4-8, 13).

Patience

Ten years had passed from the time Abram first arrived in Canaan. He still had no son. Sarai suggested that Abram sleep with her servant, a cultural alternative to traditional family building. Abram agreed and Hagar conceived. There was tension between Sarai and Hagar but the Lord intervened, and Hagar gave birth to Abram's son. Abram was eighty-six when Ishmael was born.

Thirteen years later, God appeared to Abram. God restated the covenant and renamed Abram and Sarai to describe their future status. He gave instructions to Abraham regarding the covenant of circumcision. Then God explained that Sarah would miraculously bear a son by this time next year. His name would be Isaac and God's covenant promise would be fulfilled through *Isaac*, not Ishmael. Abraham had planned for Ishmael to be the heir for the last thirteen years. He pleaded with God that Ishmael, his firstborn son, be the heir of the land. God clearly denied that request, but stated that Ishmael would be a ruler of a nation with twelve rulers serving under him. However, Isaac would be born to Sarah and the covenant promises would be fulfilled through Isaac's line. Abraham obeyed God's instructions and had all the males circumcised that very day.

Isaac was indeed born to Abraham and Sarah as promised. In time, Ishmael was observed mocking the child and Sarah became enraged. She stated to Abraham, "Get rid of that slave woman and her son, for that woman's son will never share in the inheritance with my son Isaac." Hagar and her son Ishmael, now an older teenager, were sent off to the desert. In time, Hagar found an Egyptian wife for her son, and he became ruler and had twelve sons. The Ishmaelites

were nomads who inhabited various areas across the Arabian Peninsula. Muslims regard Muhammad as a descendant of Ishmael. Islam has become an impressive global religion based on the law established through Muhammad.

Islam, Judaism and other major religions have a conceptual tenet in common—obedience of a law by which everyone will be judged. The common principle that aligns these religions together is the premise that the better the law is kept by the individual; the better things will be in the next life. This premise makes its followers slaves to their law. Christianity is an exception to the others. We believe, “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, ... in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles [believers of any ethnicity] through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit” (Galatians 3:13-14).

Christians identify themselves with Christ who has fulfilled God’s law already. He not only followed it perfectly, but he incurred the penalty of God’s law, death. He died on behalf of those who are incapable of keeping God’s law perfectly. When Christ died, the temple curtain was torn, top to bottom. That miraculous event signified the way to God was now open to all—*apart from law*. Therefore, believers are credited with the righteousness of Christ, by grace, through faith.

Law and grace are opposed. Law puts the emphasis on the individual and means you will get what you deserve. It should be noted that it is not possible to keep God’s law perfectly; it is an exercise in futility for all sons of Adam. Its purpose was to point to Christ, the Righteous One. Law ends in death; it is the ministry of death. Its ultimate goal was to teach us that mankind has no hope

apart from faith in God's redemption plan, the gospel. The gospel teaches us that the sin of mankind was imputed to Christ who died as a substitutionary sacrifice, which was acceptable to God.

Subsequently, the Righteousness of Christ is imputed to those who believe. It is based on faith, not works; Christians believe in the redemption God provided through Christ, not works performed by self. In other words, Christians believe in grace, not law.

Grace puts the emphasis on the love and mercy of God. It means you will get something you *do not* deserve, and have not earned. Righteousness is obtained by faith in the work of another, Jesus Christ. It is the ministry of the Spirit and brings life (2 Corinthians 3:7-18). Grace is opposed to law. The Apostle Paul used the opposition of Sarah and Hagar to illustrate.

“Tell me, you who want to be under the law, are you not aware of what the law says? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman. His son by the slave woman was born according to the flesh, but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a divine promise.

“These things are being taken figuratively: The women represent two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar. Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother. For it is written: ‘Be glad, barren woman, you who never bore a child, shout for joy and cry aloud, you who were never in

labor, because more are the children of the desolate woman [Sarah] than of her who has a husband [Hagar].'

“Now you, brothers and sisters, like Isaac, are children of promise. At that time the son born according to the flesh persecuted the son born by the power of the Spirit. It is the same now. But what does Scripture say? ‘Get rid of the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman’s son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman’s son.’ Therefore, brothers and sisters, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman.

“It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised [signifying that you intend to be under law], Christ will be of no value to you at all. Again I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law. You who are trying to be justified by the law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace. For through the Spirit we eagerly await by faith the righteousness for which we hope. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love” (Galatians 4:21-5:6).

Faithful Obedience

Abraham sent Ishmael away and prepared to see the fulfillment through his promised son, Isaac. God had a final test in mind for Abraham. Many years later when Isaac was about fifteen, God instructed Abraham to sacrifice his beloved son. Abraham responded promptly and prepared to perform the sacrifice. Just as he was ready to kill Isaac, God stopped him and provided a substitutionary animal sacrifice. It was at that point that God promised to fulfill the covenant because of Abraham's obedience. James, a New Testament writer, used this example of obedience to link justification by faith with works that validate faith.

“Was not our father Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. And the scripture was fulfilled that says, ‘Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,’ and he was called God’s friend. You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone” (James 2:20-24).

God's judgments are true and just. If God declares a person is justified, there is no changing that verdict. However, God does more than just work in dimensions that rise above human comprehension. He demonstrates things to mankind on a level that we can plainly grasp. Since humans can only perceive if a person has faith by what we see, believers are enabled to perform good deeds. These deeds validate God's justification in the eyes of men. Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his promised son is a good example. Approximately thirty

years prior to this event, Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness. God knew Abraham's heart; he knows all things past, present, and future. Man does not have access to that divine omniscience. We can only make conclusions by what he did. It is clear that Abraham did believe God. He must have concluded that God would fulfill his promise even if Isaac died. The only thing Abraham could have imagined is that God would resurrect him from the dead (cf. Hebrews 11:17-18). We know Abraham believed because his actions demonstrated his belief to us. When it comes to salvation, obedience is the fruit, not the root; the end, not the means; the effect, not the cause.

Through the Ages

A basic review of some Bible history is required to skip through the rest of the Old Testament to the time of Christ. God had stated to Abraham that he would be the father of many nations. Abraham did, in fact, have several descendants who became nations. However, Israel is the primary nation in view throughout the Bible. The other nations are mentioned merely as they relate to Israel. This holy nation was formed from a specific genealogical line. That is, only the descendants of Isaac were qualified to inherit the land. Furthermore, Isaac had twins, but only the sons of one twin, Jacob, were chosen for the covenant fulfillment. Jacob's name was changed to Israel, and he and his sons went into Egypt during a great famine. They ended up serving that nation as slaves as God had explained to Abraham during the oath ritual (Genesis 15). Even though all these sons had died during the four hundred year stay, the descendants carefully kept records indicating from which son of Jacob they had descended. The family of about seventy-five grew into a sizable nation during their enslavement. As they traveled out of Egypt and through the desert to the Promised Land, they operated as a unit and became known collectively as Israelites. So they were one nation comprised of twelve tribes; each tribe was named after a descendant of Jacob, also known as Israel.

Levi was the third son of Jacob and his descendants were known as Levites. Moses and Aaron were brothers that descended through Levi's line. The Levites were the only ones to align themselves with Moses after the golden calf incident (Exodus 32). God used them to execute judgment on the rest of the tribes, and they slaughtered

about three thousand fellow Israelites that day. After that time, the Levites were set aside for priestly service. Aaron served as high priest, and his sons carried on the core priestly duties including sacrifice and prayer. The other Levite descendants assisted in setup, maintenance, administration, music, singing and teaching. The Levite tribe received no inheritance of the Promised Land, but rather the other tribes supported the Levites via a tithing system.

It should be noted that Melchizedek was a man who lived during the time of Abraham, so he predates any tribal association. In fact, he was not an Israelite at all. Furthermore, we have no record of his genealogy or death.

Judah was the fourth son of Jacob and received his father's greatest blessing. Many generations later, Christ descended through Judah's line. That is to say, Jesus' legal father was Joseph, a descendant of Judah; Mary also was a descendant of Judah and was the natural mother of Jesus. By the time of Christ, the temple in Jerusalem was being used as the place of worship instead of the tabernacle.

Blinded by the Light

During the time of Christ's death and resurrection, the Jews were very familiar with all the tribal affiliations and priestly regulations. The writer of Hebrews leverages this cultural familiarity by pointing out that Christ had become a high priest in the order of Melchizedek. He emphasized that Christ descended through the line of Judah, so he was not even qualified for the Levitical priesthood. He skillfully used their familiar Scriptures to press the point that it was an entirely new priesthood prophesied by David in Psalm 110. Moreover, it was superior to that of the Levitical priesthood! Christ, like Melchizedek, was a king as well as a priest thus establishing the priesthood of Christ as a *Royal Priesthood*. This was an attribute not associated with the Levitical priesthood. The change in the priesthood indicated that a change regarding the Law of Moses was in order. In fact, the reign of the Law of Moses was to be set aside.

“This Melchizedek was king of Salem and priest of God Most High. He met Abraham returning from the defeat of the kings and blessed him, and Abraham gave him a tenth of everything. First, the name Melchizedek means ‘king of righteousness’; then also, ‘king of Salem’ means ‘king of peace.’ Without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life, resembling the Son of God, he remains a priest forever.

“Just think how great he was: Even the patriarch Abraham gave him a tenth of the plunder! Now the law requires the descendants of Levi who become priests to collect a tenth from the people—that is, from their fellow Israelites—even though they also are descended from Abraham. This man, however, did

not trace his descent from Levi, yet he collected a tenth from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. And without doubt the lesser is blessed by the greater. In the one case, the tenth is collected by people who die; but in the other case, by him who is declared to be living. One might even say that Levi, who collects the tenth, paid the tenth through Abraham, because when Melchizedek met Abraham, Levi was still in the body of his ancestor.

“If perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood—and indeed the law given to the people established that priesthood—why was there still need for another priest to come, one in the order of Melchizedek, not in the order of Aaron? For when the priesthood is changed, the law must be changed also. He of whom these things are said belonged to a different tribe, and no one from that tribe has ever served at the altar. For it is clear that our Lord descended from Judah, and in regard to that tribe Moses said nothing about priests. And what we have said is even more clear if another priest like Melchizedek appears, one who has become a priest not on the basis of a regulation as to his ancestry but on the basis of the power of an indestructible life. For it is declared: ‘You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.’

“The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless (for the law made nothing perfect), and a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God.

“And it was not without an oath! Others became priests without any oath, but he became a priest with an oath when God said to

him: 'The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind: 'You are a priest forever.' Because of this oath, Jesus has become the guarantor of a better covenant [better than the Mosaic law covenant].

“Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office; but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.

“Such a high priest truly meets our need—one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself. For the law appoints as high priests men in all their weakness; but the oath, which came after the law, appointed the Son, who has been made perfect forever” (Hebrews 7:1-28).

While some of this cultural jargon and logic may go over our heads in this day and age, it made perfect sense to the original audience. It was, in fact, powerful and decisive. The non-believers remained blinded and outraged that someone would challenge their established law and priesthood. The point is—there was no indecision either way. The argument was so skillfully presented that the listeners were polarized; there were either firm believers, or blatant rejecters. The letter to the Hebrews dates back to just before the destruction of the temple in AD 70.

Up to that time, the Jews had remained fixated on their religious trappings. The Jews were rich, by their calculations, when compared to the Christians. They had the temple, the priesthood, God's law, the prophets, the scribes, and the covenant promises. Though all these things were designed to glorify Christ, they failed to see; they refused to trade their traditions for faith in Christ.

The Christians had nothing comparable to the Jews. Baptism, the Lord's supper and faith in the ascension of Christ were all based on intangibles. The Jews considered all those things worthless.

Consider the story Christ had told to provoke his legalistic followers:

“There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores.

“The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. In Hades, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.’

“But Abraham replied, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been

set in place, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.'

"He answered, 'Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my family, for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.'

"Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.'

"No, father Abraham,' he said, 'but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.'

"He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead'" (Luke 16:19-31).

The Priesthood of Christ

The comparison of Christ's priesthood to that of Melchizedek was to emphasize that it was superior to the Levitical priesthood. This priestly role of Christ is crucial to all apostolic doctrine. It was as high priest he offered his own body as a sacrifice for the sin of mankind. By his death and ascension, believers are saved completely by Christ's once-for-all sacrifice and ongoing ministry. Furthermore, believers are established as a new royal priesthood under the direction of Christ as high priest. A close examination of the priesthood of Christ is in order.

This present priesthood began in the upper room the night before his crucifixion. The narrative recorded in John chapters 13-17 introduces this new ministry. The teaching began with a demonstration. Jesus washed the disciples' feet and instructed them to follow that example. He noted that they would not understand what this meant until a later time. It was not about literal foot washing, or merely serving others with humility. It would be related to the cleansing of sin from believers. He noted that their bodies were clean and only their feet needed washing. This illustration was intended as a metaphor. The metaphor was describing someone who had placed his or her faith in Christ and were cleansed eternally, or positionally sanctified. Such a person has no fear of eternal condemnation because they have been justified. However, such a person does continue to sin during the course of their earthly life. The associated guilt of that sin can bring a person down to the depths of depression. The results are harmful and may range from ineffectiveness to indifference, and in extreme cases, suicide. The role of the disciples

would be to encourage these sinning believers to confess their sin, repent, and be restored. They would, metaphorically, wash the dirt away in much the same way as Christ did when washing the feet of his disciples. The blood of Christ would remove the guilt, but the water would remove the uncleanness associated with sin. This combination of blood and water would become a pillar in apostolic teachings. It is the basis for the confession of sin even though Christ died for the forgiveness of all sin. This cleansing is a core role of the believer-priest. The risen Christ serves as a mediator and advocate for the sinning believer. He answers all claims of the accuser, Satan, regarding the sin of believers. He proclaims that his own shed blood is sufficient for forgiveness of any and all sin. The role of believers, now a part of the royal priesthood, would be to restore the sinner back into the fold; to continually purify and sanctify our bodies for holy service; to love in the same way as Christ loved. In fact, Christ would explicitly state his desire for his followers saying, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another" (John 13:34).

The new command was supported by a new hope. The disciples were all Jews and all Jews had focused only on earthly blessings. Here, Jesus raised their line of sight from the promised land on earth, up to heaven. The Jews had always thought of the temple as the dwelling place of God on earth. God would descend behind the curtain, in the inner chamber. Only the high priest was allowed to enter and that only once a year on the day of atonement. He was required to enter with the blood of an appropriate sacrifice and offered prayers of confession and supplication for himself and those he represented. Jesus offered them a new hope when he said, "My

Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am" (John 14:2-3).

Under the Levitical priesthood, the way to God involved a path through the *one and only gate* to the tabernacle, or later, to the temple. The first stage inside the gate was the altar where the animals were sacrificed. Next was a basin for cleansing. These two outer stages of the way represented the removal of guilt and uncleanness, or blood and water. Moving along the way, the next stage would bring the priest inside the outer room where there were loaves of bread, a lampstand, and incense used for prayer. These stages spoke of communion, especially regarding sustenance, enlightenment, and communication. The inner room, behind the curtain, was the place where God would descend upon the Ark of the Covenant. The point of all this is that the priests were very careful to follow all the rituals connected to this way; otherwise they would be struck dead. The lessons were many, but basically taught that sinful man could only approach a Holy God on God's terms. It's the same lesson we learned back with Abel, but more detailed. Jesus was now explaining to his disciples that He was the way. He said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." They would learn later that Jesus himself was replacing the stages of the old way. He was the gate; the sacrifice; the cleansing; the bread of life; the light of the world; the incense; the high priest. When Jesus said he was the way, it was to emphasize that the old way via the Levitical priesthood would soon be history. It should be noted that the next day, at the time of Christ's death, the

temple curtain was miraculously torn from top to bottom, which confirmed this teaching of Christ. The temple was totally destroyed in AD 70. The path that Christ established led to the True Tabernacle of God in heaven where he entered with his own blood.

This new path would not be possible for the disciples unless they had divine assistance. For that reason, Christ promised to dispatch the Holy Spirit to be *in* them. Through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, this priesthood is empowered to serve both God and man. Christ, as high priest in heaven, bestows various spiritual gifts via the Holy Spirit to accomplish this service. The priesthood of believers on earth includes apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4:7-13). Believer-priests are taught and trained by these spirit-filled servants to offer their own bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God (Romans 12:1). The writer of Hebrews encourages them saying, “Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that openly profess his name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased” (Hebrews 13:15-16). The Apostle Peter confirms this special calling saying, “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy” (1 Peter 2:9-10). The Priesthood of Christ includes

all believers and in no way refers to an elite group. If you are a believer, you are part of this priesthood.

So Christ continues to bless all families on earth. As high priest, he oversees the ministry of believers who serve both God and man. Through the means of this priesthood, God is honored, praised, thanked and worshiped. Sinful mankind receives intercessory prayer, enlightenment, encouragement and restoration. The post-resurrection ministry of Christ is just as vital to fulfilling the Abrahamic covenant as was the sacrifice he made on the cross. Though he is king, Christ is presently serving as high priest.

The time will come when Christ will assume his role as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. At that time, he will return to the earth and reign with an iron scepter from David's throne in Jerusalem. The descendants of Israel will return to inherit the land from the Nile to the Euphrates. During the Millennial Kingdom, the ultimate fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant will be completed. Righteousness, peace and knowledge of the Lord will fill the earth as the waters cover the sea. In the meantime, we will exercise faith in God's plan as we focus on the hope revealed by the Risen Christ, and serve one another with love.

Because of the progressive revelation of God to mankind, we are able to clearly understand God's plan. The sin of the world has been paid for by the sacrifice of Christ. The decision to reject God's salvation is the choice that will precede each person's eternal destiny. Every person has the opportunity to believe, and belief is well within the reach of anyone. Jesus is the way—the one way that does not coexist with any other. All other ways lead to condemnation.

“Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham’s offspring—not only to those who are of the law [his natural descendants] but also to those who have the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all” (Romans 4:16).

Faith, Hope and Love

“And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love” (1 Corinthians 13:13). These three attributes are spiritual gifts common to all believers. The extent that they are manifested in our lives is limited only by the extent of our sinful behavior. It may be compared to the moon's reflection of the sun. It is limited only by the extent that the world (earth) gets in the way.

The reason love is considered the greatest may be understood using a simple formula. Faith + Hope = Love. Love requires and includes both Faith and Hope. Love validates faith and hope just as Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac validated his confidence in God. Apart from faith, there is no hope. Possessing faith *without* hope is a common condition but one that robs the individual of much blessing, including the ability to demonstrate love. We observed that Abraham had faith throughout his journey. He sometimes fixed his eyes on the hope of God's promises, and at times he focused on himself. The difference of his perception determined his actions. All the great examples of faithful lives are combined with the exercise of hope, and they all end with the manifestation of divine love. Hebrews 11 is the unofficial hall of faith and highlights many real life examples to study.

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the

throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart” (Hebrews 12:1-3).

The greatest demonstration of love is that God sent his own son, Jesus Christ, to bear the sin of the world. Jesus came and demonstrated faith; he exercised hope; he laid down his life in love. Believers serve others by using the same formula, faith + hope = love.

The meaning of faith, hope and love described in these contexts is a divinely allocated form of each of these attributes. We use these words, at times, to describe people and events common to believers and nonbelievers. However, in the Biblical context, they are only available to believers because of the love of God, the sacrificial death of Christ, and the power and presence of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

“Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.

“And hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

“You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:1-8).



Glossary

This word index contains commentary primarily to aid the reader in understanding the usage of these words within the scope of this series. It may double as a reference guide to any Bible Study.

[A](#) - [B](#) - [C](#) - [D](#) - [E](#) - [F](#) - [G](#) - [H](#) - [I](#) - [J](#) - [K](#) - [L](#) - [M](#) - [N](#) - [O](#) - [P](#) - [Q](#) - [R](#) - [S](#) - [T](#)
- [U](#) - [V](#) - [W](#) - [XYZ](#)

A

Abel - A son of Adam and Eve who was murdered by his brother Cain. Abel brought an appropriate sacrifice to the Lord that infuriated Cain who refused to comply with God's requirements. Abel's story is told in Genesis 4 but he is also mentioned in the New Testament, "By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead" (Hebrews 11:4).

Abraham - The man God chose to be the progenitor (father) of the Israelites. This particular line would come through his son Isaac and grandson Jacob. Jacob's name was subsequently changed to Israel. The Twelve Tribes proceeded from Jacob's sons and became the Jewish Nation. Familiarity with the life and career of Abraham is critical to understanding the Bible. See the Appendix for reference. God told Abraham that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore (Genesis 22:17-18). The former may represent his spiritual lineage while the former may represent his natural lineage. "If you belong to Christ,

then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:29).

Abyss - A place where certain demons are held in bondage until released. "And they [many demons] begged Jesus repeatedly not to order them to go into the Abyss" (Luke 8:31).

Adam - The seminal work of God in creating mankind. From Adam's side Eve was formed, and from his posterity emerged everyone who has ever existed with one exception, Jesus Christ. Adam was formed from the dust of the earth. God breathed life into him, and Adam became a fascinating union of body and soul complete with intellect, conscience, free will, and accountability. Adam's sin had the effect of death on all mankind. Christ has been described as the Last Adam as he had a similar yet opposite effect by redeeming us from death. "For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous" (Romans 5:19).

Advocate - One who speaks for another in an official capacity much like a lawyer does for a client. Christ is presently fulfilling this role for sinning believers as he defends them against Satan. He would defend them by the mention of His own blood that was presented to forgive all sin (Revelation 12:9-11). The Holy Spirit is also described as our advocate as He knows our hearts and intercedes accordingly; expressing things we would not be able to put into words (Romans 8:26-27). He also teaches us the things of God, as the need arises. "The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit.

The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments, for 'Who has known the mind of the Lord, so as to instruct him?' But we [believers] have the mind of Christ" (1 Corinthians 2:14-16).

Angels - An innumerable army of spirit beings who possess supernatural abilities. Apparently divided into ranks with various capabilities and authority, they perform duties as assigned by God. Satan was originally a high-ranking angel and sinned. This rebellion resulted in a judgment that included a number of minions usually now described as demons. Angels do not propagate or die. The Lake of Fire was prepared for the Devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41). Angels are normally mentioned as being in the presence of God and assisting in a wide array of tasks. "I tell you, whoever publicly acknowledges me before others, the Son of Man [Jesus] will also acknowledge before the angels of God ... " (Luke 12:8).

Antichrist - A man who will emerge as the leader of the world. Satan will indwell this man and will manipulate world events to accommodate his rise to power. His popularity, authority, and purported peace are the culmination of the counterfeit kingdom of Christ. After promising peace, the antichrist will demand worship at a temple in Jerusalem.

"For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back [The Holy Spirit] will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming. The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with how Satan works. He will use all sorts

of displays of power through signs and wonders that serve the lie, and all the ways that wickedness deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refuse to love the truth and so be saved. For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness” (2 Thessalonians 2:7-12). See also Revelation chapters 19-22.

Apostle - One who is sent by the authority of the Holy Spirit who empowers them. After Jesus’ death, certain men were recognized as Apostles. The most famous ones were Peter, James, John and Paul. These and others established doctrines that have been recorded in their writings. Apostleship denotes leadership and authority whereas discipleship refers to a follower or student (Matthew 5:1-2). The original Apostles have died but the message must continue to be told. Therefore, the term now also includes those who have received a spiritual gift that enables them to identify and communicate the untainted message established by the original Apostles. Subsequently the Holy Spirit illuminates truth to believers validated by the full testimony of Scripture. “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles (Acts 2:42-43).

Apostolic - Of or relating to the work or office of Apostle. The Apostles were given authority to establish and lead the early church. God has communicated to man in various ways such as through creation, through the prophets and His Son. However, nothing has been as explicit as the Holy Spirit working through an Apostle

resulting in an inspired written explanation of God's previous methods of communication. While the previous methods may be correctly or incorrectly interpreted by some of us, the recorded teachings of the Apostles formulate sound doctrine. Their writings are contained within the canon of the New Testament. They will prove to be the only reliable conclusions for those who seek a proper understanding of God's Message to mankind. "Consequently, you [believers] are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone" (Ephesians 2:19-20).

Ark - A boat that was constructed by Noah according to God's specifications. "Every living thing on the face of the earth was wiped out; people and animals and the creatures that move along the ground and the birds were wiped from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those with him in the ark" (Genesis 7:23).

Ascension - The movement of Christ from earth to heaven. This was a literal event where he visibly rose into the clouds and out of sight (Acts 1:10-11), but it also includes all that was implied including the fact that He was seated on the Throne of God. It denotes the distinguished honor bestowed on the Risen Christ by God the Father. Christ is now serving as High Priest, Advocate, and Mediator (Hebrews 10:5-10). At a time appointed by God, He will return and establish a Kingdom on Earth for 1000 years (Revelation 19:11-20:15). The Ascension of Christ is a pillar of Christian doctrine. "Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on

things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God” (Colossians 3:1).

Atonement - An act that negates the effect of sin for one party by the imputation of sin and its effect to another party. God used various animal sacrifices to teach mankind the concept of substitutionary sacrifice and then sent Christ as the ultimate sacrifice as He died in place of mankind. The Divine atonement formula revealed to man is that sin requires the substitutionary death of a qualified candidate. Guilt is subsequently removed once the process of imputation and atonement is accomplished. “When he had received the drink, Jesus said, ‘It is finished.’ With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit (John 19:30).

B

Baptism - A public act performed to signify identification to Christ, and consequently to others who have done the same. Believers are either immersed under water or have water applied to them shortly after they announce their belief in Christ. The Apostle Paul taught that in a spiritual sense, believers were baptized into death with Christ. This spiritual act identifies our choice to die to self and to live as Christ (Philippians 1:21). Additionally, believers are also described as being baptized with the Holy Spirit. “In him [Christ] you were also circumcised with a circumcision not performed by human hands. Your whole self ruled by the flesh was put off when you were circumcised by Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead” (Colossians 2:11-12).

Belief - Denotes an informed, contemplated conclusion. The decision to believe or reject the gospel is the decision that will precede our eternal destiny.

“Then they [representatives from an unbelieving crowd] asked him, ‘What must we do to do the works God requires?’

Jesus answered, ‘The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent’ (John 6:28-29).

Bible - God’s revealed Word recorded and preserved in written form. A collection of sixty-six books (Genesis to Revelation) and broken down into two sections, the Old Testament and New Testament. Approximately forty authors contributed over a span of about fifteen hundred years. The subject matter ranges from the creation of the world to the destruction of the world and the next life. It covers activities of God, angels, Satan, and man. It speaks authoritatively on all subjects as the authors miraculously worked under the guidance of the Holy Spirit resulting in an inspired text. Its contents include history, science, poetry, allegory, parables, and many other literary devices to convey its message. It expands our minds by revealing God’s attributes, purposes, and glory. The Bible magnificently frames Jesus Christ as the Savior of the World. He is essentially concealed and anticipated in the Old Testament, revealed in the New Testament, and worshiped by all who believe. “But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and

training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:14-17).

C

Called-out Ones - A term used when God called out someone to be set apart or Holy. God called the Nation Israel to be set apart from the other nations. He calls believers individually to be set apart from sinners. The term may be used to signify any or all believers as they were each called and responded accordingly. "Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness" (2 Peter 1:2-3).

Chosen Ones - The Bible teaches us that God chose certain individuals for salvation before the creation of the world. God chooses every believer before we ever chose Him. There is no hindrance for any man to choose to believe except for his own will to reject the Gospel. "In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory" (Ephesians 1:11-12).

Christ - (Messiah or Anointed One) God's chosen one. His mission was to deliver the human race from the law of sin and death. Famously anticipated by the Israelites, God's Messiah would redeem not just their one nation, but also the whole of mankind. Additionally, He will rule over the world as God's Representative on Earth assuming the role originally assigned to Adam. Christ is a title; Jesus

is a given name. “Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne, and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth” (Revelation 1:4-6).

Christ the King - Jesus Christ fulfills many roles. He is the Eternal Second Person of the Trinity; He is the Creator; He is Savior; He is High Priest; and He will reign as King over the earth upon His Second Coming. While He is presently seated on God’s Throne and is the recipient of much honor and glory—that is still technically the Throne of God the Father. He will receive the Throne of David as promised and reign as King of Jerusalem and the entire world. His role as High Priest and the duties of Advocate and Mediator are the priority of Christ at this time. Upon His second coming, he will return in power, defeat Satan, bind him in the abyss, and then rule the earth as King. “Coming out of his mouth is a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. ‘He will rule them with an iron scepter.’ He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: king of kings and lord of lords” (Revelation 19:15-16).

Christmas - A day that commemorates the Birth of Christ, the Son of God. The significance is that God became man so he could die as a Substitutionary sacrifice for mankind. “She [Mary] will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21).

Circumcision - This sign of circumcision was given to Abraham and was meant to distinguish his natural descendants through the

specific line of Isaac. The line extended through Jacob and then finally the 12 tribes. Abraham complied immediately and the sign has lasted through the ages.

Circumcision is a voluntary procedure to the flesh and serves as a sign of faithfulness to God's covenant with Abraham. If Abraham's descendants failed to comply with the sign of circumcision, they were to be cut off from the covenant nation. Moses, for example, was almost cut off from God's holy nation for failure to have his son circumcised (Exodus 4:24-26). Because of the association with faith and obedience, slang usage emerged as recorded in Stephen's speech to the Sanhedrin: "You stiff-necked people! Your hearts and ears are still uncircumcised. You are just like your ancestors: You always resist the Holy Spirit!" (Acts 7:51).

Colossians - A book of the Bible that was originally a letter from the Apostle Paul. He wrote to the church in Colossae and included in-depth spiritual instruction. "Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, To God's holy people in Colossae, the faithful brothers and sisters in Christ: Grace and peace to you from God our Father" (Colossians 1:1-2).

Communion - A healthy relationship between oneself and God. Sin inhibits this relationship for believers, but confession of sin restores it. At regular intervals, the Church celebrates the Lord's Supper at which time the bread and wine (or grape juice) is shared which remind us of the life and death of Christ, the forgiveness of sin which we received, and the importance of maintaining fellowship. This ordinance, by its very nature, encourages the confession of known sins and also the fact of our sinful nature. The Church will continue

this practice until Christ returns to establish His earthly Kingdom. “For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, ‘This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.’ In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.’ For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes” (1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

Condemnation - The Divine judicial ruling of all who reject God’s provision for sin. “For certain individuals whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord (Jude 1:4).

Conscience - Knowledge of good and evil. Care must be exercised because we may be so conditioned to evil that we may consider the evil within us to be good. We must trust God’s principles to guide us. “If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn’t do it, it is sin for them” (James 4:17).

Corinthians - Recipients of two letters from Paul, 1 and 2 Corinthians. Paul apparently contacted them by letter other times as well, but these two were included in the canon (Bible) while the others were not. “Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes, To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be his holy people, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of

our Lord Jesus Christ—their Lord and ours: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 1:1-3).

Creation - All material things known to man including planets, stars, animals, plants, and mankind. “In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe” (Hebrews 1:1-2).

Creator - Refers specifically to Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Godhead. “The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together” (Colossians 1:15-17).

Cross - The Cross that Christ was nailed to as He died carries with it the implication of all that was accomplished in His life, death, and resurrection. “When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross” (Colossians 2:13-15).

D

Daniel - A prophet of God and the author of the Old Testament Book of Daniel. "Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever. But you, Daniel, roll up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end. Many will go here and there to increase knowledge" (Daniel 12:2-4).

Death - Death represents a separation. Physical death is a separation of man's body and spirit. Spiritual death is a separation between man and God. When a person dies, the body deteriorates and returns to dust while the spirit is contained at a place determined by God until the resurrection of the dead at which point body and spirit will be reunited for eternity. "And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what they had done" (Revelation 20:12-13).

Demerit - Denotes evil behavior. Christians normally refer to this as sin where others refer to the same thing as demerit. Both believers and unbelievers mistakenly think that merit (or good works) can make up for demerit. The Bible teaches that man is evil and no good can come from him. Only once we are made into a new creation can the Holy Spirit accomplish anything good or holy in our life. "He

[Jesus] went on: ‘What comes out of a person is what defiles them. For it is from within, out of a person’s heart, that evil thoughts come—sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and defile a person” (Mark 7:20-23).

Demons - Fallen angels. (See Satan.) “The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons” (1 Timothy 4:1).

Devil - For all intents and purposes, used synonymously with Satan. “You [unbelieving Jews] belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies” (John 8:44).

Disciples - Followers of Christ. Jesus chose 12 men to teach and travel with as He presented Himself as King to the Jewish Nation during His earthly ministry. Of this group, Peter, James, and John gained special access and instruction. After the death of Christ, certain disciples became known as Apostles and provided leadership to the growing group of disciples. “So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith” (Acts 6:7).

Dispensation - A biblical dispensation refers to a revelation from God that forms a standard for a segment of mankind during their time. The seven dispensations together span the timeline of the created world. These periods are not divided equally, nor are the durations the important issue as the emphasis is on the results of the

portion of mankind who are under observation. Their stewardship (management) of the responsibility God entrusted to them determines whether or not they meet His standard. The conclusion in each dispensation is that man fails to meet God's standard. God uses these dispensations to teach us a series of lessons about ourselves, and Him. "Now to him who is able to establish you in accordance with my [The Apostle Paul's] gospel, the message I proclaim about Jesus Christ, in keeping with the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all the Gentiles might come to the obedience that comes from faith—to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen" (Romans 16:25-27).

Divine - Refers to God's handiwork or God's enablement. "For though we [believers] live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds" (2 Corinthians 10:3-4).

Divine Solution - God has a Glorious remedy for all man's problems. It starts with our awareness of our sinfulness and moves on to our belief in the Gospel. To validate this solution, God sent Christ to be a substitutionary sacrifice for mankind. The Holy Spirit who instructs us on sin, judgment, and righteousness followed Christ. The final phase of God's solution is the destruction of the created heavens and earth, mankind, and all that was cursed by Adam's sin. Salvation from this destruction is the ministry of God for mankind. All other solutions will prove to be invalid. "Concerning this

salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that would follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told to you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things” (1 Peter 1:10-12).

Doctrine - A teaching or truth that serves as a pillar to an organization. False doctrine will displace true doctrine in the Church, and in the end the church will fail. “As I [Paul] urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain people not to teach false doctrines any longer or to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. Such things promote controversial speculations rather than advancing God’s work—which is by faith” (1 Timothy 1:3-4).

E

Easter - The day Christians traditionally celebrate the Resurrection of Christ. “And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith” (1 Corinthians 15:14).

Ecclesiastes - An Old Testament book of the Bible written by Solomon. He observed that life is seemingly meaningless with endless cycles of nature including death. He spent much time and effort exploring various life choices. Solomon was renowned for his great wisdom and he instructed leaders from all around the world. “Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear

God and keep his commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil” (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14).

Enoch - A descendant of Seth. Seth was a direct son of Adam who established a godly line of descendants. Enoch is said to have walked with the Lord for 300 years and was taken away without dying. “Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about them [false teachers]: ‘See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all of them of all the ungodly acts they have committed in their ungodliness, and of all the defiant words ungodly sinners have spoken against him” (Jude 1:14-15).

Esau - The twin brother of Jacob born to Isaac and Rebekah. Esau sold his birthright for a bowl of stew; he lost his blessing as a result of Jacob’s deception. Esau married several wives including Mahalath, a descendant of his Uncle Ishmael. He is known as the progenitor of the Edomites. His descendants continue to live in contention with Israel. Esau is depicted in the New Testament as shortsighted and unfavored by God. “See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son” (Hebrews 12:16).

Eternal Kingdom - The Kingdom of God in Eternity Future. At that time Christ will present the purified kingdom to the Father (1 Corinthians 15:24-28). “Therefore, my brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm your calling and election. For if you do these things, you will never stumble, and you will receive a rich welcome

into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:10-11).

Eternal Life - Technically begins with belief of the gospel in this world, but the thrust of the usage means life in heaven for eternity as opposed to the eternal existence in the lake of fire. “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16).

Eternity - Where time doesn't exist. Time is apparently a mechanical system incorporated into our creation and marks the progress towards the ultimate destruction of all things that fell under the curse resulting from Adam's sin. Eternity past marks all things before the fall of man and eternity future begins (for us) with the destruction of the present heavens and earth. “In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire” (Jude 1:7).

Eve - The first woman formed by God from some flesh and bone taken from Adam. She became one with Adam through marriage and went on to be the mother of all the living. Though Eve ate the forbidden fruit first, her condemnation came because of Adam's disobedience to the direct command of God as Adam received God's command before Eve was formed. “And the Lord God commanded the man, ‘You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.’ The Lord God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.’” (Genesis 2:16-18).

F

Faith - The Bible speaks of a faith that is abandoned, and a faith for healing, and saving faith. Saving faith is what is referred to in this work and the explanation can be found under the glossary entry for Belief. “God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith (Romans 3:25).

False Church - The one-world church that will emerge under the antichrist. The world will believe that it is the true church and that peace has been finally accomplished. Movement is already underway to this end though it is impossible to predict how near it will manifest itself in full. “The whole world was filled with wonder and followed the beast. People worshiped the dragon because he had given authority to the beast, and they also worshiped the beast and asked, “Who is like the beast? Who can wage war against it?” (Revelation 13:3-4).

False Religion - All religious systems that do not rest on faith in the gospel alone as the sole source of salvation. Most religions emphasize either totally false doctrines or perhaps faith-plus-works in a way that denies the efficacy of Christ’s death and resurrection to some degree. False religion often puts the emphasis on man and enslaves the follower to an impossible set of standards. The gospel frees a person from sin and guilt and the Holy Spirit manifests Himself in believers who invariably serve others. “Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless. Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to

look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world” (James 1:26-27).

False Teacher - A leader in a church or some religious group that projects himself as knowledgeable in the things of God but rather leads his followers away from the truth of the Gospel. “But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves. Many will follow their depraved conduct and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. In their greed these teachers will exploit you with fabricated stories. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping (2 Peter 2:1-3).

Fire - Often used biblically as a symbol for divine judgment. “By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly (2 Peter 3:7).

Flesh - The body our spirit resides in during our life on earth. Our bodies in this life are under the curse of sin and death and the sinful nature contained within will lure us to sin even after we are believers of the gospel. “For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live (Romans 8:13).

Flood - The Divine Judgment which wiped out all mankind except for Noah, his sons and their wives, eight people in all. God warned Noah of the flood, gave him instructions on how to build the ark, and allowed time for its completion. Students of the Bible see many

similarities between the flood and God's final judgment of mankind. He has warned us, given instructions on what to believe, and allowed time for the gospel to be preached to every people group. At a time appointed by God He will destroy the world again, except for those who believe the gospel. "But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens came into being and the earth was formed out of water and by water. By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly (2 Peter 3:5-7).

Free Will - The ability human beings have to make choices culminating in the choice to believe the gospel or reject it. Free will exists alongside predestination which means God set a plan in motion in which He controlled all things including our will. Obviously the logistics of such a plan rises above human comprehension. The fact remains that we are able to choose, we will be held responsible for our choice, and God's plan will be fulfilled down to the last detail. "Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son (John 3:18).

Fruit - As a tree bears fruit that removes all possible doubt as to what type of tree it is, so also humans bear fruit, figuratively speaking. We either bear the fruit of our sinful nature or we bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit. "So, my brothers and sisters, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God. For when we were in the realm of the flesh, the sinful

passions aroused by the law were at work in us, so that we bore fruit for death (Romans 7:4-5).

Futility - The lack of purpose or meaning to life since we have been infected by sin and death. This observation is magnificently presented in the Book of Ecclesiastes written by King Solomon. “‘Meaningless! Meaningless!’ says the Teacher. ‘Everything is meaningless!’” (Ecclesiastes 12:8).

G

Garden of Eden - The beautiful abode of Adam and Eve prior to their sin. The exact location is unknown. “The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the Lord God commanded the man, ‘You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die’” (Genesis 2:15-17).

Genesis - The first book of the Old Testament authored by Moses the Prophet. Its content includes creation, the flood of Noah, and the story of the Israelites as they sought comfort in Egypt. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1).

Gentile - A person from any race or background other than an Israelite. All Israelites practiced Judaism and were called to be Holy or set apart from the rest of the world. So according to the Israelites there were Jews, and there was everyone else, or Gentiles. “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile” (Romans 1:16).

Glorification - Describes the death of our physical body of sin and signifies our presence in Heaven where the power and presence of sin is gone. We will receive new bodies in the order of the Risen Christ. Glorification denotes the same state as Ultimate Sanctification. "Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2).

God - The Supreme Being who for man's benefit has created our universe and all things contained within including the earth, plants, animals, and mankind. He has progressively revealed Himself to us as One God but revealed in Three Persons; The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit. While this concept rises above human comprehension it remains logical since God is, by nature, above human comprehension. God is Eternal, Righteous, Holy, and Sovereign. He is Omniscient, Omnipotent, and Omnipresent. God became flesh in the Person of Jesus Christ and Jesus died as payment for man's sin. God's plan for creation was determined before the creation was started, and nothing that happens will surprise or disappoint God. He has brilliantly orchestrated all things to accomplish His Will. As the concept of God is contemplated, consideration must be given to the Greatness of our God and Creator. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord. 'As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. As the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for

the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it” (Isaiah 55:8-11).

God’s Right Hand - The Highest Place of Honor. God (the Father) is Spirit but is often personified to poetically illustrate a point. “It [Spiritual Baptism] saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at God’s right hand—with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him” (1 Peter 3:21-22).

God’s Word - Used to emphasize that the Bible is authoritative since it originated from God and was miraculously provided to us through Inspiration. “And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is indeed at work in you who believe” (1 Thessalonians 2:13).

Gospel - Good News, specifically the proclamation that Jesus Christ bore the sin of the world in his body as he died on the cross and rose again to declare justification to all who believe. “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile” (Romans 1:16).

H

Headship - A designation of authority where the submission is voluntary and mutually beneficial. Christ is the Head of the Church. A husband is the head of his wife. Citizens should submit to the authorities. Children should submit to their parents. Everyone has a role and should accept the responsibility of that role. Even within the

Godhead where the Father, Son, and Spirit are equal and considered One, the Son submits to the Father and the Spirit submits to both the Son and the Father. The Father sent the Son and the Son fulfilled the Father's will and sent the Spirit who is now working with believers. A willing submission is Christlike, mutually beneficial, and efficient. "But I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God" (1 Corinthians 11:3).

Heal - To change from a condition of illness or sickness back to healthy and normal. Many miracles included healing of various ailments including physical death. These infirmities are symptoms of our real problem, which is sin. Jesus heals us from sin based on His sacrifice that paid the penalty for sin, and His work as High Priest where he continually cleanses us from the filth of sin as we journey through this life. The penalty for sin is death. Jesus took our medicine but we were healed. "But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5).

Heaven - A place that exists in the spiritual realm but is usually spoken of in human terms in reference to the place where God dwells with all His Holy ones. The Apostle Paul spoke of it as the third heaven. The first heaven would be the sky and atmosphere that surrounds planet earth. The second heaven would be outer space where all the stars and planets are. The third heaven would be where God dwells. "I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out

of the body I do not know—God knows—was caught up to paradise and heard inexpressible things, things that no one is permitted to tell” (2 Corinthians 12:2-4).

Heir - One who qualifies for a share of an inheritance. “The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory” (Romans 8:16-17).

Holy - People, places, and things set apart from ordinary use for special purposes may all be considered to be Holy or sanctified. God is Holy as He is set apart from man or angels. Heavenly Angels are set apart from fallen angels. God established Israel as a Holy Nation as they were set apart from the nations of the world. Believers (saints) are set apart from sinners. Objects may be set apart (sanctified) for Holy purposes. God may set man apart to be Holy and man may set God apart to be Holy. “They [believers] are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified” (John 17:16-19).

|

Imputation - Primarily used in accounting, the concept of imputing means to credit or debit someone’s account. A change to the record may be necessary because of the direct action of the account owner or someone acting on their behalf. The meaning of imputation has expanded over time to include more than just its use in ledgers. Honor, shame, legal judgments and other traits are often attributed to

someone because of the actions of another. In this work, various forms of 'imputation' are incorporated to describe how God attributes sin and righteousness to individuals. "Since we [believers] have now been justified [declared to be righteous] by his [Jesus'] blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! For if, while we were God's enemies [declared to be sinners], we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!" (Romans 8:9-10).

Indwells - The Holy Spirit lives within a believer. He is a deposit against our full inheritance. "You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ" (Romans 8:9).

Ishmael - Abraham's son born to Hagar, his wife's maidservant. This was the result of a human solution to the problem of Sarah's inability to bear children. "So after Abram had been living in Canaan ten years, Sarai his wife took her Egyptian slave Hagar and gave her to her husband to be his wife. He slept with Hagar, and she conceived" (Genesis 16:3-4).

Inspiration - The miracle of chosen men recording God's message through the Work of the Holy Spirit. All sixty-six books of the Bible are considered to be a complete collection of God's Written Word. "We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of

Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:19-21).

Iron Scepter - A scepter is a rod used as a symbol of power and authority by a king and an *iron* scepter denotes that his authority will be established by force. He will demand compliance by any and all means necessary! "Coming out of his mouth is a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. 'He will rule them with an iron scepter.' He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: King of Kings and Lord of Lords" (Revelation 19:15-16).

Isaac - The promised son of Abraham. Spared from being sacrificed by his father, he went on to marry Rebekah who gave birth to twins Esau and Jacob. God revealed to Rebekah as she was still pregnant that the older son would serve the younger, indicating God's Sovereign choice of the line that would eventually lead to Jesus. "Not only that, but Rebekah's children were conceived at the same time by our father Isaac. Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad—in order that God's purpose in election might stand: not by works but by him who calls—she was told, 'The older will serve the younger'" (Romans 9:10-12).

Isaiah - A prophet from the 8th century BC who authored the Book of Isaiah. "The vision concerning Judah and Jerusalem that Isaiah son of Amoz saw during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah" (Isaiah 1:1).

Israel - The name given to Jacob but normally used to refer to the Nation of Israel, also known as Israelites (Jews). They descended from Abraham as a fulfillment of God's Promise, were redeemed by Moses, and later dispersed throughout the world by God. Israel will eventually be re-gathered and exalted above all nations of the world during the Millennial Kingdom. "For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my people, those of my own race, the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption to sonship; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of the Messiah, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen" (Romans 9:3-5).

J

Jacob - The grandson of Abraham and son of Isaac. After wrestling with God, his name was changed to Israel. The Jewish Nation emerged from his posterity. As the reigning patriarch, he decided to seek comfort in Egypt instead of the land God provided. This decision eventually led to slavery for his posterity until Moses arrived and redeemed them by a mighty display of the Power of God. "Then Jacob went down to Egypt, where he and our ancestors died" (Acts 7:15).

Jesus - God in the flesh, conceived by the Holy Spirit, born to a virgin, living, eating, breathing, and dying as any human being. The only human who ever existed that didn't originate from Adam. Jesus is the Creator, Savior, High Priest, King, and Judge of mankind. He is the Eternal Second Person of the Godhead and was sent by the Father to be the Lamb of God to bear the sin of the world. Upon

dying, He sent the Holy Spirit to instruct the world regarding sin, judgment, and righteousness. Of the offices listed above, King and Judge are awaiting the advancement of time. The office of Creator and Savior are history, and the office of High Priest is ongoing in the True Tabernacle of God (in heaven). Though seated on God's Throne, Jesus will return to earth at an appointed time, and reign from David's throne for 1000 years—followed by the judgment of the world. See Hebrews Chapters 7-10 for a synopsis of His Ministry to mankind. "In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven" (Hebrews 1:1-3).

Jew - One who practices the religion of Judaism. These are descendants of Abraham and/or converts. Also known as Israelites, and includes various sects such as Pharisee, Sadducee, and others. They accept the Old Testament Scriptures but reject Jesus Christ as the Messiah. They are mistakenly still waiting for the messiah to arrive. They will experience reconciliation with God after the Rapture. "Then I (John) heard the number of those who were sealed: 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel" (Revelation 7:4).

John - Originally one of the twelve Disciples and later an Apostle. He authored the Gospel of John, three New Testament Letters, and the Book of Revelation. "The revelation from Jesus Christ, which God

gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, who testifies to everything he saw—that is, the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Revelation 1:1-2).

Jude - Short for Judas, a son of Joseph and Mary and half brother of Christ (Joseph wasn't involved in the conception of Jesus). Jude authored the New Testament Book of Jude, which strongly warns us about the infiltration of false teachers in the Church. See Matthew 13 for validation of his warning as well as his identification as a brother of Christ. “Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James, To those who have been called, who are loved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ: Mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance” (Jude 1:1-2).

Judgment - A disciplinary action of God because of sin. God has used a series of minor and/or major judgments for mankind, nations, groups, and individuals since the Garden of Eden, but the end will culminate with a final judgment of man and creation. “In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire” (Jude 1:7).

Just - An attribute of God consistent with Righteousness. Fair when considering perspectives of all parties concerned. “And I heard the altar respond: ‘Yes, Lord God Almighty, true and just are your judgments.’” (Revelation 16:7)

Justice - Divine righteousness. Signifies the truthfulness, righteousness, and sovereignty of God in all matters. Humans may

be just in a limited capacity or promote justice, however nothing compares to the perfect justice of God. “Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom” (Psalm 45:6).

Justification - The act of God declaring a sinner to be righteous. Justification is awarded by grace through faith, which means the justified one didn't deserve or earn it, but rather believed in the Person and Work of Christ—the Righteous One. Faith in the gospel results in imputed righteousness, which is followed simultaneously with justification. Only God can justify someone and His judgments are always right and true. Once justified, there is no way to lose that standing. Subsequent sin is dealt with in a Father-son type relationship as opposed to a Judge-defendant relationship. Christ serves believers as an advocate and answers all accusations with the power of His cleansing blood, which ends any or all accusations. “Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us” (Romans 8:33-34).

K

Kingdom of God, Everlasting - God is the Ruler of all things from everlasting to everlasting. At one point He decided to initiate a plan that included the creation of our universe. This plan included things like sin, redemption, salvation, and glorification of those He chose for salvation. While God is altogether Holy and ruler of this world, He allows sin, evil, sickness, and injustice to achieve His purpose for the

created world, which is to honor His Son Jesus Christ. So it's important to understand that God is the Ruler of all things including our rebellious creation. "David praised the Lord in the presence of the whole assembly, saying, 'Praise be to you, Lord, the God of our father Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Yours, Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, Lord, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all. Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all. Now, our God, we give you thanks, and praise your glorious name'" (I Chronicles 29:10-13).

Kingdom of God, Proffered - Jesus Christ began His public ministry by offering Himself as King to the Nation of Israel. They rejected Christ and crucified their King so that kingdom didn't ever materialize. "These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: 'Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. As you go, proclaim this message: 'The kingdom of heaven has come near'" (Matthew 10:5-7).

Kingdom of God, Spiritual - Believers of the gospel experience a spiritual Kingdom of God. They are no longer of this world but have become a new creation and are alive spiritually. They receive spiritual food, spiritual gifts, and maintain a spiritual faith and hope. Christ is King in their hearts and minds but is not ruling the physical world they live in. "For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit,

because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and receives human approval” (Romans 14:17-18). “Jesus said, ‘My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place’” (John 18:36).

Kingdom of God, Millennial - Upon the second coming of Christ, He will establish an earthly Kingdom for 1000 years, the millennial kingdom. He will be present physically and will reign from Jerusalem with an iron scepter. At the end of the 1000 years, there will be an attempt to overthrow Him and He will execute the judgment of the Great White Throne. The heavens and earth will be destroyed by fire. “Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years” (Revelation 20:6).

Kingdom of God, Eternal - Once the cursed world and all wickedness has been purified by fire, all that will remain is what Christ made new: a new heaven, new earth, new glorified mankind and so on. He will then hand the purified kingdom over to His Father and His Kingdom will last forever. The eternal kingdom will (in a sense) merge back in with the everlasting kingdom but with several new features. “Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For he ‘has put everything under his feet.’ Now when it says that ‘everything’ has been put under him, it is clear that this does not

include God himself, who put everything under Christ. When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all” (1 Corinthians 15:24-28).

L

Lamb of God - Animal sacrifices were established by God to teach man the concept of substitutionary sacrifice. The most famous of these lessons was the Passover lamb, which happened when the Israelites were serving as slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt. The last of the ten plagues would be the death of the firstborn. God was preparing to kill the first-born son of each family and the first-born cattle from their herd. The Israelites were instructed ahead of time to sacrifice a lamb and put some of its blood on the door of their home. When the Lord came, he would pass over the homes with the required blood markings. In so doing, the Israelites were spared the death of their first-born sons and animals. (See Exodus 11:1 - 12:30).

Later, Jesus was described as the Lamb of God indicating that his blood would save man from death if applied as instructed (spiritually). The implication is that Jesus is God’s Sacrifice for the sin of man. “The next day John [John the Baptist] saw Jesus coming toward him and said, ‘Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!’” (John 1:29).

Lake of Fire - The future eternal abode of Satan, his demons, and all those who rejected God’s Provision for sin. Fire often is used by the Holy Spirit to refer to judgment. Probably not a literal lake of fire, existence will invoke the knowledge of God’s wrath and judgment. “In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns

gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire” (Jude 1:7).

Language - A way humans communicate with one another. The various languages used throughout the world are a result of one of God's judgments on mankind. These different languages led to nations who went to battle with other nations and we still are suffering from the effects of that judgment to this day. “That is why it was called Babel—because there the Lord confused the language of the whole world. From there the Lord scattered them over the face of the whole earth” (Genesis 11:9).

Law, Law Code - God’s revealed Law given through Moses, which includes the 10 commandments and much more. This Law was intended for the Israelites alone to teach them principles needed for sinful man to approach a Holy God and to set them apart from the other nations. This aspect of the Law ended with the death of Christ, however many of the moral principles have always and will always be in effect. For example, it was always wrong to murder, covet, and engage in idolatry. The Law wasn’t given to make men righteous but rather to demonstrate that they aren’t. Christ was perfect as the law demanded, and he also suffered the penalty of death the law required. By meeting the full requirements of the Law, Christ clearly put mankind under grace instead of law. Grace requires nothing more than faith, and that is within reach of all mankind. “Christ is the culmination of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes” (Romans 10:4).

Law of Sin and Death - A divine law that establishes that sin will result in death. Because of Adam's sin, all men are now under the law of sin and death. Freedom from this law is available to those who believe the gospel. "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:1-2).

Leviticus - The Third Book of the Old Testament authored by Moses. It details many of the rituals required by the Law that emphasize how sinful man can approach Holy God. "These are the commands the Lord gave Moses at Mount Sinai for the Israelites" (Leviticus 27:34).

Life (New Life) - Denotes the newness of life experienced by a believer when the gospel is accepted through faith. Sin is acknowledged to be forgiven and removed, purpose and meaning in our human existence is heightened because of our newly acquired spiritual gifts, and communion with Christ is experienced in this new life. "Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit" (Galatians 5:25).

Light to the World (Israel) - The Nation of Israel was chosen to be light to the Gentiles. God's light would culminate in illuminating the truth of the gospel, however Israel failed to complete their mission. They isolated themselves from the world and became full of pride and selfishness thereby hiding their light. "[Jesus saying] You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way,

let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:14-16).

Light of the World - Jesus became the Light of the World since Israel had neglected to fulfill that role. “[Jesus saying] While I am in the world, I am the light of the world” (John 9:5).

Lord’s Supper - An ordinance begun just before Jesus was crucified and will continue until He returns in Glory. (See Communion)

M

Man, Mankind - A creation of God for the special purpose of revealing the depth of His love. To this end, God created man knowing he would sin and require grace, forgiveness, and redemption. The glory of God is manifested in Jesus Christ, the Man from Heaven, who gave Himself over to death to redeem mankind. Humanity has been equalized by the imputed sin of Adam so the individual depth or extent of any one isn’t significant. We’ve all sinned; we’ve all received forgiveness for sin. We must believe the Gospel to be reconciled with God. “Consequently, just as one trespass resulted in condemnation for all people, so also one righteous act resulted in justification and life for all people. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous” (Romans 5:18-19).

Man from Heaven - Natural man came from Adam who was formed from the dust of the earth. Jesus Christ is distinguished from all other men by the fact that He came from heaven. He was miraculously born to a virgin and is fully man and fully God. “The first man was of

the dust of the earth; the second man is of heaven” (1 Corinthians 15:47).

Mediator - One who serves as a link or bridge between two parties. Jesus Christ is serving as High Priest for mankind and one of the responsibilities of that role is to be a mediator between God and man. Even believers retain their sinful nature and require a mediator. It's important to note that we don't work through angels or saints to communicate with God, but through Christ. "For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all people” (1 Timothy 2:5-6).

Merit, Meritorious - The perceived good that comes from within man through training and good choices. While some men are obviously better than others by comparison, all are sinful and the Bible teaches that no good can come from within man. Only when we believe the gospel and receive the Holy Spirit will He provide spiritual gifts, guidance, and enablement for good works. False gospels promote merit and meritorious works. “What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith; but the people of Israel, who pursued the law as the way of righteousness, have not attained their goal. Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone [Jesus Christ]” (Romans 9:30-32).

Moses - Chosen by God to serve as redeemer for the Israelites from Egypt. He went on to be a great prophet of God as he received the Ten Commandments and the rest of the Law Code for Israel. He authored the first five books of the Old Testament. His story begins in

Exodus Chapter Two but his tenure is closely tied to God's Law, which extends into the New Testament. "Now if the ministry that brought death, which was engraved in letters on stone, came with glory, so that the Israelites could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of its glory, transitory though it was, will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious?" (2 Corinthians 3:7-8).

Mount Sinai - The place where Moses received the Ten Commandments. "On the first day of the third month after the Israelites left Egypt—on that very day—they came to the Desert of Sinai. After they set out from Rephidim, they entered the Desert of Sinai, and Israel camped there in the desert in front of the mountain" (Exodus 19:1-2).

N

New Creation, man - Natural man is made into a new creation upon belief of the gospel. The new creation follows the pattern of the Risen Christ (the Last Adam) rather than Adam. "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

New Earth - The present earth will be destroyed by fire and a new earth will be made. "Then I saw "a new heaven and a new earth," for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea" (Revelation 21:1).

New Heaven - Outer Space, or the universe that exists outside of the earth's atmosphere will be destroyed by fire and a new heaven will be made. "Then I saw "a new heaven and a new earth," for the

first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea” (Revelation 21:1).

New Jerusalem - The present city of Jerusalem will be destroyed with the present earth. A New Jerusalem will be the eternal abode of believers. “I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband” (Revelation 21:2).

New Song - A song of praise to Christ as we will have a greater understanding of His Greatness once we are in heaven. “And they sang a new song, saying: “You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation” (Revelation 5:9).

NIV - The New International Version (NIV) is a completely original translation of the Bible developed by more than one hundred scholars working from the best available Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts.

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Noah - A descendant of Seth and noted to be a preacher of righteousness (2 Peter 2:5). Noah and his family were saved from the flood that destroyed the rest of mankind. “This is the account of Noah and his family. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God” (Genesis 6:9).

O

Omnipotence - An attribute of God that speaks of His Mighty Power. He is all-powerful. This is a conclusion drawn from the full counsel of Scripture and no particular passage sums up the concept adequately.

Omnipresence - An attribute of God that speaks of His simultaneous presence everywhere. He is all-present. This is a conclusion drawn from the full counsel of Scripture and no particular passage sums up the concept adequately.

Omniscience - An attribute of God that speaks of His Mighty Wisdom. He is all-knowing. This is a conclusion drawn from the full counsel of Scripture and no particular passage sums up the concept adequately.

P

Paul - An Apostle of Jesus Christ who was uniquely instructed by the Risen Christ (Galatians 1:11-12). Embarking on several missionary trips he gained the reputation as the Apostle to the Gentiles though he sought converts from the Jewish community first wherever he traveled. He preached of justification by grace through faith and referred to this core doctrine as “my gospel” to set it apart from the many perverted and twisted versions of the gospel. Tainted truth was apparently as common then as it is today. Paul’s story is told in Acts and bits and pieces are scattered throughout his writings in the New Testament which includes Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon. “Now to him who is able to establish

you in accordance with my gospel, the message I proclaim about Jesus Christ, in keeping with the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all the Gentiles might come to the obedience that comes from faith—to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen” (Romans 16:25-27).

Perfection - An attribute of God that emphasizes His Pure, Holy Nature. When used in this context, nothing compares to God’s Perfection. One exception is made as a believer is made into a new creation and imputed with God’s righteousness. “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Person and Work of Jesus Christ - Denotes that God has been revealed to us as One God, in Three Persons (The Trinity). God the Father is the First Person, Jesus Christ the Son is the Second Person, the Holy Spirit is the Third Person. The work of Christ was to become man, live a sinless life, offer Himself as a sacrifice for the human race, and rise again to proclaim justification for all who believe the gospel. “He [Jesus Christ] was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification” (Romans 4:25).

Pharaoh - A title used for whichever individual was presently King of Egypt. “Joseph was thirty years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from Pharaoh’s presence and traveled throughout Egypt” (Genesis 41:46).

Posterity - The descendants of a person. Children’s children encompassing all subsequent generations. “Posterity will serve him;

future generations will be told about the Lord. They will proclaim his righteousness, declaring to a people yet unborn: He has done it!" (Psalm 22:30-31).

Predestination - God initiated a marvelous plan for creation knowing all the details of how it would progress and end up. Mankind is included in this plan and we have free will. We don't understand how these two coexist but we know them to be factual as revealed in God's Word. Those who choose to believe the gospel realize that God chose them first. "In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory" (Ephesians 1:11-12).

Priest, High Priest - Under the Law of Moses the High Priest would make a special annual sacrifice for the Nation of Israel on the Day of Atonement. The writer of Hebrews compares and contrasts Jesus to that office of High Priest. He concludes that Jesus is superior for several reasons. The main point of the explanation is that there is no longer any need for sacrifice because sin is now forgiven by the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ. (See Hebrews 6:13 - 10:18).

Prodigal Son - Jesus told a parable about a young man who demanded his inheritance early and then proceeded to squander it. Upon returning home, he was welcomed back by his father. The comparison showed how God would accept anyone who seeks Him and will rejoice when they arrive no matter what the circumstances. (See Luke 15:11-32).

Prophecy - The Divine gift to identify and communicate spiritual truth. This may involve interpreting Scripture accurately, advising wisely, or predicting the future with certainty. “Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? Now eagerly desire the greater gifts” (1 Corinthians 12:27-31).

Prophet - A person designated by God as one who would reveal God’s truth to man. Often thought of as one who predicts future events, it also includes those who properly interpret past events and/or truth concerning the present. The world abounds with false prophets and caution must be exercised when weighing what is communicated. False prophets will be proven false when what they say turns out to be false. “Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1).

Propitiation - A way or means to satisfy God. In regard to the sin of man, there would be two ways to provide atonement. The first would be the eternal death of the race; the second would be by the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ. “God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—he did it to demonstrate his righteousness

at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus” (Romans 3:25-26)

Purified Kingdom - At the end of the Millennial Kingdom there will be a rebellion against Christ the King. Christ will end this rebellion by destroying the world as we know it and judging all the wicked of all time and binding them to the lake of fire for eternity (Revelation 20). This act will purify the remaining features of the kingdom at which time He will hand over the kingdom to His Father. “Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For he ‘has put everything under his feet.’ Now when it says that ‘everything’ has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all” (1 Corinthians 15:24-28).

Q

R

Rapture - Denotes the removal of the Church (also known as the Body and Bride of Christ) from the earth as the Tribulation Period begins. This includes a resurrection of the dead as well as the removal of the living believers. This event precedes the Second Coming of Christ to earth by seven years. At the Rapture we rise to meet the Lord in the air. At the second coming, Christ establishes a kingdom on earth beginning with an unmistakable entrance (Zechariah 14:4; Revelation 19:11-21). The end times sequentially is

as follows: Rapture; Tribulation; Second Coming; Millennial Kingdom; Destruction of Heavens and Earth; Eternal Kingdom.

“According to the Lord’s word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever” (I Thessalonians 4:15-17).

Reconciliation (with God) - When Adam sinned mankind suffered a fall. The only way we can be reconciled to God is to believe that He has provided an adequate substitutionary sacrifice for us. God didn’t move, we did. God initiated the sacrifice before the world was created. He accomplished it as Christ died on the cross. Our choice to believe or reject the gospel will determine if we are reconciled or not. “We (Apostles and all believers) are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:20-21).

Red Sea - A body of water that parted for the Nation of Israel to pass through but then closed up and wiped out Pharaoh’s Army. “Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and all that night the Lord drove the sea back with a strong east wind and turned it into dry land. The waters were divided, and the Israelites went through

the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left” (Exodus 14:21-22).

Redemption - Adam (and all mankind) sinned and fell under the Divine judgment of physical and spiritual death. God’s revealed law allows for substitutionary sacrifice where one party takes the place of another. Christ became man to redeem mankind from the bondage of sin and death by offering Himself as a pure and blameless sacrifice. God showed His approval of this substitutionary sacrifice by raising Jesus from the dead and awarding Him the highest place of honor on God’s throne.

An example of the redemption process can be seen in the redemption of Israel from Egypt. Jacob and his family entered Egypt as a clan of about 75 and after approximately 400 years developed into a nation of over 600,000 men plus women and children. You might say the nation was formed, or born in Egypt. Egypt was ungodly and may be compared to our cursed and sinful world. Israel may be used to represent mankind as we are born in a sinful world. Pharaoh, the leader of Egypt, may be used to represent Satan. Moses may be used to represent Christ as redeemer. God sent Moses and by a mighty demonstration of the power of God, Pharaoh was defeated and the Nation of Israel was redeemed from slavery. Subsequently, they chose to submit themselves to God’s Law received at Mount Sinai and began a journey to their promised land.

In a similar way, mankind was born into sin and held in bondage to death by Satan. God sent Christ and by a mighty demonstration of the Power of God, Satan was defeated at the cross and mankind was redeemed from death. Though this happened as an event in

time, it was an eternal certainty that God preordained. Therefore each man is presented with a choice to believe the gospel or reject it. Those who believe God will begin a journey to their promised abode in the New Jerusalem. Those who fail to believe will begin a journey to their promised abode in the lake of fire. The contrast is stark enough to be compared to life versus death. Just as Adam had a choice before he sinned, we each have a choice to obey God. Obedience to God is demonstrated by belief in the gospel. Disobedience of God is demonstrated by a rejection of the gospel.

“Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God—the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures regarding his Son, who as to his earthly life was a descendant of David, and who through the Spirit of holiness was appointed the Son of God in power by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord. Through him we received grace and apostleship to call all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith for his name’s sake. And you also are among those Gentiles who are called to belong to Jesus Christ” (Romans 1:1-6).

Remnant - A small portion of the whole. There is an ongoing theme throughout the Bible of a remnant of believers over against the larger whole of mankind. “[Jesus emphasizing the point of a parable] ‘For many are invited, but few are chosen’” (Matthew 22:14).

Revelation (Sixty-sixth Book) - The last book of the Bible, which wraps up all the loose ends. The Apostle John wrote this prophetic book in his old age. “The revelation from Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. He made

it known by sending his angel to his servant John, who testifies to everything he saw—that is, the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.” (Revelation 1:1-3).

Righteousness - Perfection; as in no failure, blemish or shortcoming. Only God is righteous. Also used in a human sense where we are sometimes proven to be righteous though always qualified and limited to a certain act or duration. Man may gain a righteous standing with God by having God’s righteousness imputed to us. Our standing is much different than our state. A believer may have a righteous standing by believing the gospel but simultaneously be in a sinful state by committing some type of sin or sinful practice. The context must qualify the intended meaning. The believer begins immediately with imputed righteousness and continues the process of sanctification where righteousness is imparted or learned as the Holy Spirit is given control of one’s will. “God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—he did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus” (Romans 3:25-26).

Romans - A letter from Paul written to a group of believers in Rome. He contacted them in advance of his first visit to clarify his doctrinal teachings. “I urge you, brothers and sisters, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary

to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them. For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people. Everyone has heard about your obedience, so I rejoice because of you; but I want you to be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil” (Romans 16:17-19).

S

Sacrifice - See Substitutionary Sacrifice.

Salvation - An all-encompassing word that describes the work of God for sinful mankind. The death and resurrection of Christ is the only basis for the salvation of mankind. It includes redemption, forgiveness, reconciliation, propitiation, imputation, justification, sanctification, and glorification. “Bear in mind that our Lord’s patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him” (2 Peter 3:15).

Sanctification - A process that takes one from a sinful standing and state to a Holy standing and state. The new standing, often referred to as positional sanctification, happens instantaneously with belief of the gospel. Following this initial act, a lifetime program of learning and practicing Holiness is instituted and guided by the Holy Spirit and this is referred to as experiential sanctification. Experiential sanctification occurs while we battle against and often succumb to our sinful flesh in this life. Finally as we cross over from this world and into the next we experience ultimate sanctification where we are removed from the power and presence of sin for eternity. So we are Holy and are being made Holy simultaneously. All this depends on the Divine work of God on our behalf. “It is God’s will that you should

be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the pagans, who do not know God; and that in this matter no one should wrong or take advantage of a brother or sister. The Lord will punish all those who commit such sins, as we told you and warned you before. For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. Therefore, anyone who rejects this instruction does not reject a human being but God, the very God who gives you his Holy Spirit" (1 Thessalonians 4:3-8).

Satan - The adversary of God and accuser of believers. He was originally a Holy angel who rebelled and suffered a Divine judgment. Though retaining some of his original attributes, he is awaiting his certain destiny in the lake of fire. He is often mistakenly thought of in connection with heinous acts of immorality but these are merely the fruit of man's sinful nature. Satan's goal was, and is, to be like the Most High God and is manipulating world events to that end (up to the extent that God allows). His present work involves arranging a counterfeit to Christ's Kingdom on earth in which he will deceptively offer world peace but will end up demanding worship. He showed his hand in the temptation of Christ where he offered all he possessed, the kingdoms of the world, in exchange for worship (Luke 4:5-8). Jesus declined, but the nations of the world will rally around the antichrist hoping for solutions to the world problems and Satan will receive the worship he so strongly craves. He is a wolf in sheep's clothing. He works through men and women who fit in as fine upstanding members of society and churches. He would have his minions in all walks of life even promoting high morals, church attendance, and preaching and serving. However, he would stop just

short of faith in the gospel, the key to salvation. He has an innumerable host of fallen angels, also known as demons, to assist with his worldwide manipulation. With many years of collective experience with a rather predictable mark, mankind, Satan is very adept at his art of deception. Satan doesn't need to tempt man any longer as that was taken care of in the Garden of Eden. The sinful nature from within lures us into sin now. He is referred to as the prince of the power of the air, the god of this age, and is obviously powerful. Angels and fallen angels are able to perform supernatural acts and they seem to be organized in ranks with various abilities and authority. If size equated to power and an average man was six feet tall, an average angel may be say ... ten feet tall to represent the greater powers they possess. Some angels that are more powerful or would possess greater authority may be much larger. In this hypothetical analogy, Satan would probably be as big as planet earth. The exaggeration is to suggest that we probably underestimate the power and authority of Satan much more than we should. "The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God" (2 Corinthians 4:4; cf. Ephesians 2:1-2, 6:12; John 12:31).

Scapegoat - While Israel was following the Law of Moses, two goats were chosen on the Day of Atonement. The sin of the people was ritually transferred to these animals and one was killed to demonstrate the penalty of sin, which is death. The other was led out to the desert never to return again demonstrating that as sin is paid for it is also removed. The goat led to the desert was known as the scapegoat (Leviticus 16).

Scripture - The Bible contains a complete library of sixty-six books, which form the whole counsel of the Word of God. "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Second Coming - The first coming of Christ was when He was born in a manger and later died on the cross. The Second Coming is when He will establish an earthly kingdom and reign for 1000 years in the same place He was rejected. "Coming out of his mouth is a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: king of kings and lord of lords" (Revelation 19:15-16).

Second Death - A description of a conscious eternal existence in the lake of fire. This term represents the contrast to second life that is for believers in the New Jerusalem serving the Lord with purpose, meaning, worship, and communion with all the Saints forever. Fire often is used by the Holy Spirit to refer to judgment. Probably not a literal lake of fire, the existence will invoke weeping, gnashing of teeth, and the knowledge of God's wrath and judgment (Revelation 20).

Second Life - Life in heaven after we experience glorification. Second life technically begins when we are born again in this life by believing the gospel but effectively starts when our resurrected body is reunited with our spirit. Used as an intentional antonym for the second death. "Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death" (Revelation 20:14).

Sin - Anything done by man that falls short of the perfection of God. Adam was the first man who sinned and the guilt of that one sin was imputed to all mankind. Simultaneously Adam earned a sinful nature, which was transmitted to the entire race. The sinful nature manifests itself in various ways and to varying degrees. Sin may be an action such as lying or stealing, inaction such as failing to care for the helpless, or an internal desire such as lust or pride. God established the standard that sin must be paid for by death to teach us of His perfect righteousness. "Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires" (Romans 6:12).

Sinful Nature - The innate desire to sin. The sinful nature signifies our separation from God and has been judged at the cross but not eradicated from existence. We must choose to follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit bearing spiritual fruit rather than following our sinful desires bearing sin and consequences (Galatians 5:13-26).

Solomon - The King of Israel during its greatest historical expansion. He was granted great wisdom by God and was also blessed with wealth and fame. He authored much of the Book of Proverbs in addition to Ecclesiastes and a couple of Psalms. A synopsis of Solomon's character can be found in 1 Kings 3:5-28.

Spirit - The immaterial part of man. God formed Adam from the dust of the earth and breathed life into him. The former speaks of the body and the latter speaks of the spirit. The body will die and return to the earth while the spirit will continue on. While there may be a difference between soul and spirit in certain scriptural texts, it does not seem to be consistent enough to draw definitive conclusions. The material and immaterial parts of man will be reunited in eternity.

“Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed” (1 Corinthians 15:51-52).

Spiritual Baptism - Believers have been baptized with Christ into death and raised with Christ to newness of life. This isn't something we experience but rather we accept it by faith (Romans 6:1-14).

Spiritually Blinded - The inability to see the truth no matter how clear it may be. This condition is more likely after a period of willful rejection or rebellion. “The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God” (2 Corinthians 4:4).

Standing (Sin or Righteousness) - God maintains an official standing for each individual at any given time. We are born in the standing of sin and move to a standing of righteousness when we believe the gospel. This may be in contrast to a person's present state. For example, a believer may have a righteous standing but be caught up in a sinful practice. We must remember that we are saved initially though we don't deserve it (because of sin) and we are kept safe though we don't deserve it (because of sin). “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Substitutionary Sacrifice - God's revealed law states that sin requires death. In order to allow the guilty one to live, a substitute for death is required. The qualification is that the substitute must be

blameless. In the Old Testament times, animals were used as innocent substitutes for man's sin. Ultimately, Jesus Christ became the substitute for the human race. "God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—he did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus" (Romans 3:25-26).

T

Thessalonians - Recipients of two letters from the Apostle Paul. These two letters became two books of the New Testament. "Paul, Silas and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace and peace to you" (1 Thessalonians 1:1).

Temple - The place where God met mankind during the Old Testament era. This was originally a traveling tent or tabernacle and later became a more permanent structure. Over the years the temples were destroyed, rebuilt, and changed in various ways as noted in both the Old and New Testament. Presently one does not exist but after the Rapture, a temple will be established and sacrifices will resume (2 Thessalonians 2:1-12).

Temple Curtain - A curtain within the Temple that separates the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. This curtain was torn as Christ died which indicated that access to God was available to all through Christ, not through the old way of the Law established by Moses.

“The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom” (Mark 15:38).

Temptation in the Desert - Satan tempted Jesus in the desert.

Jesus resisted and never sinned there or anywhere. The fact that God raised Jesus from the dead and seated Him at His Right Hand validates the fact that Jesus had been a pure and blameless Sacrifice. “Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God” (1 Peter 1:21).

Terah - The father of Abraham. He was the patriarch of their wealthy clan of herdsman. Terah led Abram and the others up to Haran and settled there until he died at the age of 205. “Joshua said to all the people, “This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: ‘Long ago your ancestors, including Terah the father of Abraham and Nahor, lived beyond the Euphrates River and worshiped other gods” (Joshua 24:2).

Timothy - A missionary companion of Paul. He is the recipient of two letters from Paul known as 1 and 2 Timothy. “But as for you [Timothy], continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 3:14-15).

Tower of Babel - The descendants of Noah foolishly disobeyed God and erected a tower. As punishment, God confused their languages (Genesis 11:1-9).

Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil - One of the two special trees in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve ate the fruit of this tree and gained Knowledge of Good and Evil. This sinful act resulted in a pattern of sin that will continue until the end of the world (Genesis 2:9).

Tree of Life - One of the two special trees in the Garden of Eden. Apparently Adam had access to it until he sinned. Theoretically, if he had eaten from the Tree of Life, there would be no death and consequently no deterioration of the body (Genesis 2:9).

Trespass – A term for a specific type of sin, which refers to the willful disobedience of an established command. “But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God’s grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many!” (Romans 5:15).

Tribulation - A seven-year period that includes many things including a severe judgment of the present world. The details are revealed in the Seven Seals, Seven Trumpets, and Seven Bowls that span a large portion of the book of Revelation. (Revelation 6 - 19:10).

True Church - Authentic believers of the gospel as opposed to fake believers. Fake believers exist for several reasons including financial gain, social relationships, and intentional deception instigated by Satan. “For this reason God sends them [those pretend to believe] a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness” (2 Thessalonians 2:11-12; c.f. Titus 1:4).

True Tabernacle of God - The writer of Hebrews compared the earthly Tabernacle and Temple used by the Israelites to a Heavenly Tabernacle where God really resides (Hebrews 8:1-2). The emphasis was on the superiority of Jesus as He took His own blood to the True Tabernacle and not the earthly facsimile. The earthly tabernacle was used to instruct sinful man how to properly approach The Holy God. Since Jesus' Sacrifice, the only way is through Jesus. "Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me'" (John 14:6).

U

Universe - All of creation including man, animals, planets, and stars. "In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe" (Hebrews 1:1-2).

V

W

World (sinful) - On planet earth, where man resides, everything has fallen under the curse of sin. Satan is the ruler of this realm and manipulates events under the permissive will of God. The system that Satan rules through his network of demons and men is considered the world. Believers are in the world but not of it. "I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness" (John 12:46).

X, Y, Z

Appendix A: Abraham's Timeline

Paul spoke of Abraham as being justified by faith (Romans 4:1-25). James spoke of Abraham as being justified by works, not by faith alone (James 2:14-24). These passages are often compared out of context as if only one could be correct. A review of the life of Abraham may be helpful to see how both are correct in their respective contexts.

Approximately 2100 BC:

Age = 75, Abraham leaves Haran (Genesis 12:4).

Age > 75 Abraham parts with Lot (Genesis 13:8-9).

Age > 75 Abraham justified by faith (Genesis 15:6; cf. Romans 4).

Age = 86 Ishmael is born (Genesis 16:16).

Age = 99 Sign of circumcision instituted (Genesis 17:24).

Age = 100 Isaac is born (Genesis 21:5).

Age > 100 Sacrifice of Isaac (Genesis 22:1-19; cf. James 2:20-24).

Age = 137 Sarah dies (Genesis 23:1-2).

Age = 175 Abraham dies (Genesis 25:7-8).

We know that Isaac was a young man when Abraham received instructions to sacrifice him. Referring to the timeline, we can estimate that more than thirty years would have passed from the time that Abraham was justified by faith until he demonstrated his

faith through his actions. In other words, Paul was referring to an event that happened thirty-plus years before the event that James was referencing. That observation helps clarify much confusion on the subject.

It may be concluded that justification from God comes by faith. In the due course of time, God's judgment will prove to be true in the eyes of men. The only means men have to judge is by the works they observe. Justification in the eyes of men comes by works.

Of course, justification by God is salvation. Justification from men merely validates God's judgment. All God's judgments are true (Revelation 19:1-10).

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About the Author

Brother Woody Brohm has been a believer of the gospel of grace for most of his 49 years. After an extended period of willful disobedience to God's will, a final warning was given to this prodigal son in 2003 and everything changed. The positive response, surprising as it was, brought newness of life and motivation for studying God's Word and communicating God's message. The turnaround in this individual is unmistakably the handiwork of the Holy Spirit. After several years of ministry and Biblical studies, Brother Woody is now using his unique combination of intellect, observation, and personality to present The Grace and Knowledge Series: Faith, Hope and Love.

“Posterity will serve him; future generations will be told about the Lord. They will proclaim his righteousness, declaring to a people yet unborn: He has done it!” (Psalm 22:30-31)

Dedication

For my brothers and sisters in the Lord: May you grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ!

I would like to express a special thank-you to my prayerful parents, my faithful wife, and my loving daughters. May God also bless all the Christ-like believers that have impacted my life over the years. Your kindness and patience is greatly appreciated.

“Walk with the wise and become wise, for a companion of fools suffers harm” (Proverbs 13:20).

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Brother Woody Brohm - Gold Canyon, Arizona

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