

# The Message to God's Called-out Ones

**Why it is that so many Can't Understand the Bible  
is their Failure to Correctly Identify the Greater  
Essence of the Gospel Message**

The early New Testament Church was faithful to maintain the Faith-Once-Delivered for its first generation, but in time, their Love faded and a hierachal structure was allowed to take root and apostate teachers were permitted to infiltrate and pervert the true doctrines, disregarding the specific instructions given to the apostles by their Lord and Master.

Jesus warned that such a thing would happen, as did the Apostles Paul and John, who were alive to see it develop. By the late second century, the theology of what was reported to be that of the original apostles, had taken in elements drawn from other contemporary Pagan belief systems (Mithraism and Gnosticism). By the time the last-written New Testament books were being composed, Gnostic concepts had greatly affected what was accepted by the secular world as being "Christianity". Modern believers, for the most part, remain unaware that the theology of "the Church" had been perverted, with many followers largely abandoning the basic truths brought to us by the ministry of the Savior.

*"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;" (1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 4:1-2)*

The fundamental Doctrines of the Church are basically seven: Repentance; Faith; Baptism; Laying-on of Hands; the Resurrections and Eternal Judgment; each laying the basis for going on to Perfection, all as listed in Hebrews Chapter 6, verses 1 and 2. Not all of these are fully and comprehensively taught by the various main-stream denominations today!

# ❖ INTRODUCTORY CONSIDERATIONS ❖

## Why Creation?

In the vast limitless universe, we find ourselves on a planet that is unique. Generations of searching have not located another planet on which life as we know it could exist. Mankind has always wondered why it was that God created the earth as such a perfect environment for the life He placed upon it. Where did life come from? Is life just a random accident as evolutionists insist, or does the balanced, highly-interdependency of all things bear strong evidence that Creation had an intelligent Designer? And, why do we have the physical form that we do?

## Why Adam sinned;

The individual described in the Book of Genesis as the 'first man' was formed of the earth's elements and made a living being by the in-breathing of God. He was made, at first knowing nothing, but was given consciousness where he could be instructed by God while in his perfect environment, yet he was allowed to make his own choices. Knowing and walking with God personally as he did, it is then a question WHY Adam would choose to disobey? We're not told how long Adam and his wife Eve remained obedient, but ultimately Adam sinned and they both were excluded from the Garden. Upon doing what they did, they became the progenitors of all later generations, subjected to the effects of sin, all justly deserving of death. All descendants of the first man Adam are deserving of death in their original state! All who remain in their Adamic condition will die! The question then is, how does one escape that condition? What provisions did God make to remedy the otherwise inescapable situation?

## Divine Secrets Revealed;

Mankind was not created just to briefly live and then experience God's WRATH, being subjected to extreme punishment forever or to be condemned to an eternal death. Yet that is the Judgment due those who remain in their Adamic condition. There is a great purpose for mankind being placed on earth, which many, for the most part, are NOT aware of. Jesus Christ came to reveal the great Plan He and His Father purposed before the earth was created. But the full essence of that Plan is hidden from all but a few the Father has predestined to be 'called' in this generation. The rest are not given the ability to understand much at this time, but there is a Day in which 'whosoever wills' to become saved can avail themselves of Christ's pardon.

## Man is created with great potential.

Contained within the message of the Kingdom of God there are factors that reveal man's ultimate potential. Religion for the most part has overlooked many important factors contained in Christ's Message. While they may refer to man's potential of becoming a 'child of God', through the process of conversion, much is not fully appreciated with regard to the full implications of that process. Jesus Christ is creating a Family of beings with which to share His very existence for all eternity. A few are called first, with the majority in due time. Mankind has the unique potential of receiving into himself the Holy Spirit, upon repentance and baptism, the very essence of God's existence. By that Spirit, it is possible to become "like Him" both in Character and ultimately also in Form. At the time of Christ's return to earth, all His Saints will rise from their graves or from where they stand, as immortal Spirit Beings. It is God's purpose that His own called-out ones partake of His Divine Nature. The indwelling of His Holy Spirit is the power we are to employ in building His righteous character within ourselves. To those who overcome their sinful natures to the end will be given real power over the nations. His Saints will be granted to sit with Christ in His Throne in positions of Divine rulership, governing the whole earth in righteousness for 1,000 years. Few religions teach these things.

# ❖ FOREWORD ❖

In His own words, Jesus Christ pointedly stated that His Mission was to proclaim the “**Gospel of the Kingdom of God**”. “*Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.*” (Mark 1:14-15)

“*And he said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent.*” (Luke 4:43) “*And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him...*” (Luke 8:1) This and many other verses like it identify the intent of Jesus’ message. His focus was on the Kingdom of God (in Matthew’s gospel referred to as the Kingdom of Heaven – the same thing – the Kingdom of God will be administered from Heaven). But, do religious denominations accurately present the full essence of what that Message was?

But, at the same time was it His intent that everyone who heard His Message would understand what they were hearing? Logically, we would be inclined to say, Yes! There are clues in other places which indicate that His Message was intended for a limited audience, that not all who heard were intended to be enlightened upon hearing. There are some given to understand and others who are not given! “*And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others (I speak) in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.*” (Luke 8:10 quoting Isaiah 6:9-10 & 44:18) Here we see that the purpose of speaking in parables was to MASK the full meaning to those not given to understand in this age, not to make the Message more in-depth understandable.“

“*And he spake many things unto them in parables, ... And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables?* His answer was... “*Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.*” “*All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.*” (Matt. 13:10, 13, 34 & 35) The startling thing is to realize that Jesus didn’t intend that all would understand. Only those specifically GIVEN to understand – only those specifically “called by the Father” (John 6:44) and given a measure of His Holy Spirit – could or would fully understand the Message, at least in this generation.

We need to understand that a new emphasis was being made. Jesus’ Message contained a component not generally understood by worshippers oriented to just the Old Testament. We are told, “*The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presses into it.*” (Luke 16:16)

**This booklet is compiled to aid those who truly desire to understand His Message** and to better understand why it is that God created the world and what the ultimate purpose is for mankind. It is not well understood what the Kingdom of God really is. Explanations presented may be brief, but relevant Scriptures will be listed which will lead you on the path to a better understanding. We are admonished to...“*... seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*” (Matt. 6:33) “*Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needs not be ashamed.*” (2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 2:15)

Why would anyone choose to change their lifestyle and become obedient to the Laws of God – as Christ lived them as an example for us to follow – if it made no difference? “*Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.* Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, *Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*” (John 3:3 & 5) That said in reference to baptism and the receipt of (engenderment of) the Holy Spirit.

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## **WHO is the White Horseman in the book of Revelation?**

While some denominations identify the rider on the White Horse of Revelation 6 as being Christ, a careful comparison with His Olivet Prophecy in Matthew 24 (and Mark 13) will clearly show that this vision represents a false Christ, one who will teach falsehoods and deceive many.

Matthew 24:4-6 "And Jesus answered them, "See that no one leads you astray. For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and they will lead many astray."

Revelation 6:1-2 "Now I watched when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures say with a voice like thunder, "Come!" And I looked, and behold, a **white horse!** And its rider had a bow, and a crown was given to him, and he came out conquering, and to conquer."

Of course, the ones being conquered are the people. This is the very meaning of the name: "Nicolaitan"! That organizational approach that Jesus says He HATES! [Rev. 2:6 & 15]

Here Jesus warns His disciples, and by extension His believers, to be aware of and to not be led astray by false Christs or false teachers of the gospel that they will inevitably encounter. Jesus will come again to rule the world and though He is pictured in other places riding upon a white horse also ([Rev. 19:11-16](#)) this white horse represented in Revelation 6:2 is obviously not Jesus because He is never pictured wielding a bow but rather the sword of truth. This rider is presented as one who has the credibility to lead the majority astray, not just a few, and he will appear to be "Christ" or one standing as a representative of Christ, imposing his false versions of the "Christian" religion. This rider will be an ecclesiastical ruler and will go forth to conquer under the banner of religion. The bow represents his ability to summon military power to act on his behalf, the crown represents rulership and he will conquer and rule. Such is the state of the world today!

## **Jesus said, "Many Shall Come in My Name, Saying, I Am the Christ, and Shall Deceive Many"!**

Though warned of this eventuality, the religious world continues to stumble blindly along, thinking that those who claim to represent the Truth of God are all His genuine representatives.

The question is, was Christ explaining that those who come claiming to represent Him would affirm His Divinity, while seriously misrepresenting His Message, or would they come actually claiming an imposter to BE Him?

The Apostle Paul gave us a more clearly defined criteria showing what would develop as a misrepresented Message.

He explained that there would be a mis-defined Grace turning the Grace of God into license to disobey the law of God, giving heed to seducing spirits and presenting a false representation of the very Nature of the Godhead.

The Apostle John provided further definition of the False Doctrines as they were developing in the latter years of the early Church. Those were the inclusion of the preexisting elements of Gnosticism, which were well accommodating of their mis-defined Grace. His three final epistles show the effects of that perversion.

John also explains in type the effects of Nicolaitanism in the example of Diotrephes, where true Doctrines were being excluded from the basic teachings by an over-controlling ecclesiastical structure while the ecclesia (called-out ones) had their prerogatives denied them.

Mainstream religion represents the issues found in the book of Colossians and elsewhere as though referring to Old Testament practices, deceiving many as to the REAL issue – that of the fundamental Elements of Gnosticism being made a part of the theology then being developed.

It actually wasn't "Jewish" practices being spoken against, In Colossians 2, but rather the elementals of Gnosticism.  
Protestantism is highly Gnostic in its underlying theology.

Few are aware of the extent of this contamination.

## The Final Two Witness before the End of the Age:

Revelation 11:1 *And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.*

[2] *But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.*

[3] *And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.*

[4] *These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.*

[5] *And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.*

[6] *These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.*

[7] *And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.*

[8] *And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.*

[9] *And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.*

[10] *And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.*

[11] *And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.*

[12] *And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.*

Considering the world's reaction against God's Faithful Witnesses during these final 42 months before the Second Coming, it is no wonder that it will take a powerful Angel of God to make society aware of the levels of deception they have embraced. We read of those angelic proclamations three chapters later.

## The Three Angels' Messages to the Tribulation's Survivors:

Revelation 14:6 *And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,*

[7] *Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.*

[8] *And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.*

[9] *And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,*

[10] *The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:*

[11] *And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.*

With the world's religious ideas being as deeply-set as they are, as evidenced in the disbelief of and the contempt toward God's True end-time Witnesses, and considering how that people have been lied to by men of every persuasion, it will take the credibility of Angels to overcome the doubts and despair of the religious and non-believers alike. Even then, there will be those who will think to continue under their former belief system, thinking it was right after all. Thus the need for a firm

## ☒ **Reviewing the Essential Elements of the Gospel Message ☒**

### **1. There is a Great Purpose revealed for humanity.**

#### **a) Life as we know it is unique in the universe:**

Man has long wondered if there is life on other planets. The best sciences cannot provide any evidence that there is. Even something as basic as finding a planet with conditions that can support life has proven elusive. But, where does life come from? That too is a question that science can't answer. It doesn't just spontaneously happen! So, why would there be life elsewhere, unless the Creator specifically caused it to occur? The revealing statement in Genesis chapter 1, that God made man in His own image and after His likeness is profound. Not only do we bear the visible image of Him (them) in our physical bodies, but we are also able upon conversion to take on His very likeness in our spirit exhibiting His righteous Character. That of course depends on our willingness to allow Him to work to change our nature through the power of His Holy Spirit working within us, which is given to us with the 'laying-on-of-hands' upon truly repenting and being baptized.

[Genesis 1:1] In the beginning God Created the Heavens and the Earth  
 [Job 38:7] ... angels shouted for joy at the creation of earth ... before the time of man  
 [Jude 6] ... angels once were given charge over the earth, but left their given tasks.  
 [Job 38:4] Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?

[Genesis 1:26] Let US make man in our image according to Our likeness

[Psalm 139:14] I am fearfully and wonderfully made  
 [Colossians 1:18 & 24] The firstborn from the dead created all things  
 [Isaiah 40: ] ... all nations are as a drop in a bucket ...  
 [Isaiah 45:18] ... God created the earth to be inhabited ...  
 [Psalm 132:14] God intends ultimately to live on the earth Himself!!  
 [1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 15:24-28] Headquarters of the Universe will be on earth after the Father descends.

**b) God is creating a Family like Himself:**

Creating man in His image reveals God's intent to share His life with His created beings. For untold ages, God shared life with His angels, but they also were created with the ability to make choices. We are told that one-third of the angels eventually followed a rebellious arch-angel (Satan), becoming what we know as demons. Angels were created to be agents working in support of His Plan, watching over and influencing events around those He is calling to salvation. It is not from the angels that He intends to create Sons for His Family. Those Sons, after being raised in Spirit form, will share His Nature, attaining full immortality. The scriptures refer to the phenomenon of being "Born Again" which results from the very essence of God's Life being engendered in us by means of that Spirit which He places within us. The measure of that Spirit we are given is proportional to our Faith.

[Genesis 2:7] God formed man of the dust of the ground ... man became a living soul

[Genesis 5:1] God created man, He made him in the likeness of God

[Romans 8:15] ... Spirit of adoption by which we cry out, Abba, Father.

[Galatians 4:5] ... that we might receive the adoption as sons

[Ephesians 1:5] ... having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ

[Hebrews 2:10] God is "bringing many sons to glory ... a glorified state after the resurrection.

[2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 1:4] ... precious promises ... you may be partakers of the Divine Nature

[Romans 9:26] ... There they will be called sons of the living God.

[Romans 8:19] Creation eagerly waits for the manifestation of the sons of God

**c) Christ will rule over all the earth for 1000 years:**

Though not typically acknowledged by most religions, the returned Christ will take over all nations and rule the world with a rod of iron. The rod of iron indicating that there is no need to compromise with man's ways. His righteous government will not be devised using compromise or consensus. God knows what is right. Religion also will be changed to the form of true worship that He will institute, with all man-made forms of worship banned. This is what is commonly known as the millennial age, the term millennium refers to a timespan of 1000 years.

[Revelation 2:26] who overcomes and keeps my works ... I will give power over the nations

[Revelation 3:21] who overcomes I will grant to sit with me in my throne as I also overcame

[Daniel 7:27] ... all dominions shall serve and obey Him

[Revelation 2:27] ... He shall rule the nations with a rod of iron ...

[Isaiah 2:3-4] ... the Law shall go forth out of Jerusalem ... He shall judge between nations

[Isaiah 9:6] ... government will be upon His shoulders ... ever increasing ... unending peace

[Revelation 20:6] ... those first resurrected shall reign with Him for 1000 years

**d) His converted Saints will rule with Him as Kings and Priests:**

Those identified as 'Overcomers' are promised positions of rulership in the millennial Kingdom of God on earth. There will be those assigned to Civil Offices and those assigned to Religious Offices. Jesus Christ will literally be King of kings and Lord of lords. He will be the Supreme King, and under Him, lesser kings ruling at His discretion. King David of Israel will be resurrected to rule over the whole House of Israel (the united 12-tribes) and the 12 Apostles will rule under him, each over one of the 12 Tribes of Israel. The whole world, at present, groans in pain and distress waiting anxiously for the

time of the manifestation of the “Sons of God” when they are raised immortal, at the Last Trump, and are placed in positions of power, setting world affairs on a correct course.

[Revelation 5:10] Saints to become ... kings and priests ... we shall reign on the earth

[Revelation 20:4] ... they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years

[Daniel 7:18] ... the Saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom ... forever

[Daniel 7:27] ... world's kingdoms shall be given to the Saints of the Most High.

[Daniel 2:44] ... God's earthly kingdom shall not be left to other people to rule ...

[Ezekiel 37:24-25] David My servant shall be king over them – restored Israel - forever

[Matthew 19:28] ... you 12 who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones ... of Israel

**e) What IS a Saint?**

A prominent religious organization has established a convoluted process of nominating and electing certain persons of noteworthiness as “saints”. These are NOT True Saints as the Bible defines the term. A True Saint is one who is called by God and who has experienced conversion and has received God’s Holy Spirit. ALL truly converted Christians are Saints. It does not require that it be determined by any clergyman, as no man can know for certain the condition of another man’s heart or correctly assess his relationship with his Master. Further, there were multiple thousands of Saints long before that religious institution came into being!

[Revelation 14:12] ... saints are those who keep the commandments and faith of God

[Jude 3] ... common salvation ... faith which was once delivered to all the saints

[1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 16:1] ... concerning the collection for all the saints ...

[1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 1:2] ... those who are sanctified in Christ, called to be saints ...

**f) That coming Age is the True Kingdom of God:**

The religious world, for the most part, doesn’t grasp the meaning of the term “Kingdom of God”. To many, it represents the community of faith – the Church in other words – which is only partly true. The Church in this age contains those called to conversion, and who will inherit the Kingdom in the near future. But in its fullest definition, the Kingdom of God is the world-ruling government which will be established after the Second Coming, immediately following the time of “Great Tribulation” referenced in so many prophecies. Christ will rule over all nations together with His resurrected Saints for 1000 years. This is an age during which Satan and his demons will be bound (imprisoned). Jerusalem will be established as world Capitol, and the Law of God will be administered from there. The Saints will remain on earth with Christ, ruling over the physical survivors of the end-time Tribulation period and their descendants born during the millennium. It is that continuing Kingdom age extending beyond the millennium that’ll be most extraordinary. That will be addressed in later paragraphs.

[Revelation 11:15] ... the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord

[Zechariah 6:13] ... He ... shall sit and rule on His throne

[1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:24-25] ... He puts an end to all rule ... He must reign until He has put ...

[Revelation 2:27] ... He shall rule them with a rod of iron

[2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 3:13] ... His promise, ... a new earth wherein dwells righteousness

[1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:50] ... flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God

[John 3:3] ... except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God

**g) The Seventh Day Sabbath illustrates the Plan:**

The seven day week was instituted at Creation. The One who Created the earth (restoring it to a habitable state) rested on the Seventh Day. This weekly cycle illustrates the overall Plan in which six days – 6000 years – are assigned to man’s control, while the seventh day illustrates the 1000 year reign of Christ and His immortal Saints. When Christ returns, the whole world will begin keeping the seventh-day Sabbath.

[Genesis 2:2] ... God ended His work ... and He rested on the seventh day

[Hebrews 4:4] ... God rested on the seventh day from all His works

[Hebrews 4:9-10] ... Sabbath-keeping remains for the people of God

[Hebrews 4:1 & 10] ... at issue is the matter of “entering into His millennial Rest.”

[2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 3:8] One day with the Lord is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day

[Isaiah 66:23] ... from one Sabbath to another shall all flesh shall come to worship ...

**h) The Biblical Holy Days also illustrate the Plan:**

Further illustrating God’s Plan, the agricultural harvest seasons illustrate the two major harvest periods in the Plan of the Redemption of man. God gave us two sets of Holy Day seasons which picture those two harvests – known to some as “the early and latter rains”. The spring set of days (Passover through Pentecost) deal with the subject of personal salvation / the fall set (Trumpets through the Last Great Day) deal with the subject of world salvation. God’s Plan includes extending the opportunity for Salvation to all who have ever lived – in due season. Those not called in their natural lifetime are not ‘lost’ forever, as most religions teach. It is God’s intention to allow “whosoever wills” to come to Him, but not all will in this age. Only those called by God can avail themselves of salvation in this age (the first harvest). That is explained in John 6:44, spoken in the season of the spring harvest season (Passover). But that opportunity WILL be extended to all who desire to become converted. John 7:37-38, spoken a season later (Tabernacles), allows for all to have that opportunity IF they so desire. This “whosoever wills” period represents the ‘growing season’ for a second greater harvest. There are TWO Days of Salvation, a concept rejected by most religions!

[John 6:44] No man can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him.

[James 5:7] God presently exhibits great patience waiting for these two harvests.

[John 7:37] If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. (spoken a full season later)

[Revelation 22:17] ... let him who thirsts come, And whosoever wills, take water of life freely.

[Revelation 22:17] ... is spoken after the Second Coming ... Christ and His Bride invite these.

[Colossians 2:17] Holy Days are a representation of future events – they’re prophetic.

[Isaiah 49:8] ... this is A day of salvation. (2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 6:2) has ‘the day’.

**i) Common religious holidays celebrate falsehoods:**

While Biblical Holy Days teach and picture the important milestones in the greater Plan of Redemption, the world's religious holidays are for the most part false. Examples are that Jesus was not born on December 25<sup>th</sup>, a date borrowed from sun worship. Nor was He resurrected on Easter Sunday morning. The resurrection was three-days-and-three-nights after the Passover (the date on which He was crucified). He arose the evening before He ascended to the Father to be our 'Wave Sheaf Offering'. Many traditional religious customs were 'borrowed' directly from the worship of Mithras – a belief system popular in the Roman world – with little more than a name change.

[Matthew 15:9] ... in vain do they worship me teaching for doctrines commandments of men.

[Jeremiah 10:2-3] Learn not the way of the heathen ... customs of the people are vain.

[Jeremiah 7:18] ... they make cakes to the queen of heaven ... (hot cross buns?)

[Matthew 15:9] "In vain do they worship Me," ... based on many human reasonings

## **2. All are destined to be called by God in due time.**

### **a) Some few are called for salvation now:**

A clear statement by Christ Himself, that no man CAN come to Him unless drawn by the Father, is largely contradicted by the Christian community, as it differs from traditional teachings where they say THIS is the ONLY DAY of Salvation. Salvation IS for those being called now. That position is based on the verse which seems to state that there is one – and only one – day of Salvation. That anyone not responding NOW are doomed to Eternal Damnation. But the quote in the New Testament (2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 6:2), seemingly to that effect, is quoted from Isaiah 49:8. That passage doesn't contain "THE" Day of Salvation, it refers to "A" day of Salvation. Such a simple word can introduce us to a world of difference, that there IS no "Only Day" of Salvation. That will be addressed in greater detail as we progress. Those being called now are undergoing evaluative judgment in this lifetime, the rest will be similarly evaluated later.

[1<sup>st</sup> Peter 4:17] Judgment is now ongoing upon the Church of God (but not condemnation)

[Revelation 14:7] ... evaluative Judgment is extended then to the rest of humanity.

[Matthew 20:16] Many are called but few are chosen (upon having inclination to respond)

[Revelation 17:14] ... the successfully overcoming elect are 'called, chosen and faithful'.

[Romans 2:4] ... those called are 'led' to repentance ... it isn't entirely their own choice.

[John 11:17-26] He is the resurrection and the Life ... believers are already entered into Life

### **b) Most are not called in this lifetime:**

As should be apparent to all, the vast majority have little or no interest in seeking the True God and pursuing a real repentance experience. Those who ARE called, this is the day in which they must respond, but the majority, not being called presently, will have to await that "whosoever wills" period after the Second Coming. So, what of those who die before the Second Coming? Their day will come, but that's explained under a later heading.

[Acts 28:27] For the heart of this people has grown dull ... their eyes are closed ... (even Israel)

[Matthew 13:15] Christ has deferred the majority to a later calling – even Jews

[Romans 11:8-10] God has given them a spirit of stupor, Eyes that they should not see...

{Romans 11:7} ... the elect have obtained it, and the rest were blinded.

[Mark 4:13-20] It is understood that not all seed sown will produce sons for the Kingdom.

**c) Some are purposely blinded:**

We are told, not only in John 6:44, but also in places like John 12:40 and Romans 11:7 that some are purposely blinded BY GOD so that they could not truly understand. These types of statements lead some denominations to conjure up a “predestination doctrine”, alleging that some are to be called, while the rest can never be accepted for salvation. Yet, we see of those who are blinded, that their blindness is temporary, that their day of salvation is delayed until a certain point. Regarding blinded Jews, Paul explains in Romans 11 that their blindness will be reversed, when the fullness of the Gentiles is come. (verses 12, 25 & 30-31). In verse 32 Paul explains the rationale for God having blinded them is: “...that He might have mercy upon all.” How is being blinded merciful? When we understand the TWO harvest periods, that becomes clearer.

[2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 4:4] ... the god of this world has blinded the minds of non-believers ...

[John 12:40] ... He (God) has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, Lest they should see...

[Revelation 12:9] Satan also contributes continually to overall societal blindness.

[Romans 11:7] ... Israel has not obtained what it seeks; ... (some did); the rest were blinded.

[Romans 11:32] God has committed them all to blindness, that He might have mercy on all.

[2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 3:14-18] ... the veil over their hearts not taken away ... until later.

[Matthew 11:25] The Father has selected who He will allow to understand at this point.

**d) There are two ‘harvest periods’:**

What is not generally understood in the religious community is that there are two distinct phases in the Plan of Redemption. As is illustrated in the Biblical Holy Days, and as shown in John chapters 6 and 7, there is a small (spring related) harvest consisting of those called to Salvation in this age. There will be a greater harvest (fall related) in which a calling will be extended to all the world, ALL who have ever lived. In this latter harvest, salvation will be offered to those who survive the Great Tribulation and their descendants in the millennial age, and then those multiple billions who are resurrected after the 1000 year millennium will be provided an opportunity, which their prior lives didn’t offer them. This does not suggest that all will be successful in such a quest, but according to their faith. All who never were called in this lifetime will then have such opportunity to be included in the second harvest. Those who WERE called, and who spurned their calling

will not arise with these, but will remain ‘asleep’ awaiting a just sentencing at the final resurrection.

[James 5:7] ... early and latter rains’ produce ... God will patiently wait for both those harvests

[Revelation 20:12] ... the Bible will be opened to the great majority later

[Revelation 20:12] ... the Book of Life will be re-opened for additional names to be added

[Revelation 22:17] ... at the appropriate time, all will be invited to “come” (whosoever wills)

[Revelation 14:6-10] There will be a later time of True God-worship / false religion banned

[Revelation 20:5] ... the rest of the dead lived not again until the 1000 years are finished.

[Mark 4:13-20] ... there’s a good seed / failed seed situation. Not all will be successful.

**e) Being called begins a Loving relationship with God and Brethren:**

The Family of God is a love-based community. We are told that God is love, and that we are to reflect that love, not only toward Him, but toward one another. He loved us before we knew of His existence, gave Himself for us, and desires above all things that we share His Life and existence forever. The Church of God is that community of believers who share His Holy Spirit. That Church is not a building or an organization, but a fellowship of believers, who follow Him (Christ: the Word) where-ever He leads. That Church, called in this generation, will ultimately become Christ’s Bride, where those called later will come into the Family as children of Christ and His Bride. Bride-hood involves a special high calling, not available to those not called of the Father in this age.

[1<sup>st</sup> John 4:19] We love Him because He first loved us.

[Ephesians 2:4] ... because of His great love with which He loved us

[John 13:1} ... having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.

[1<sup>st</sup> John 4:7] ... love one another, for love is of God ... he who loves is born of God

[John 14:15] .. If you love Me, keep My commandments.

[1<sup>st</sup> John 3:10-11] ... he who doesn’t practice righteousness is not of God

[1<sup>st</sup> John 2:9] He who says he is in the light and hates his brother remains in darkness

[John 3:29] He who has the bride is the bridegroom (referring to Christ and the Church)

[John 13:34-35] Our love for God carries over to fellow brethren

[John 15:9-10] Our love toward Him reflects the Father’s love ... involves commandments.

[Revelation 17:14] ... those with Him are called and chosen and faithful

**f) Satan will be bound during the second harvest period:**

One distinct difference between the present age of man (the approximate 6000 years allotted for him to self-govern) and the age to come is the removal of Satan and his fallen angelic hosts (demons) from contact with and influence upon society. Think what God's Kingdom will be like without demonic influences working upon individuals and society. Satan will be restrained (imprisoned) for the 1000 year millennium, but will be released at the end of that age for an important purpose and for a brief time. After his defeat, and the deaths of those who live in the last millennial generation who side with Satan, he again will be removed from society, being exterminated in the Lake of Fire, never again to have any influence on the families of man or of God.

[Revelation 20:1-2] ... angel imprisons Satan in bottomless pit ... for one thousand years

[Revelation 20:7-9] Post-millennial release to assault the Camp of the Saints

[Revelation 20:10] Satan's FINAL defeat will remove him from contact permanently.

### **3. The Laws of God are an Everlasting Standard**

**a) The Laws of God define true righteousness:**

The Apostle Paul states insightfully that he wouldn't know definitively what sin is except for the Law's definition. The Moral Code known as the Ten Commandments have been in existence since Creation. It's ironic that the one Commandment with the most positive proof of pre-existence – the Seventh Day Sabbath, established at Creation – is the one in particular that traditional religion seeks to disregard and explain away.

[Hebrews 4:4] And God rested on the seventh day from all His works.

[Genesis 2:2-3] ... He rested on the seventh day ... blessed the Sabbath Day and hallowed it

[Romans 7:12] ... the Law and Commandments are Holy and Righteous and Good!

**b) Traditional religion effectively disregards Law-keeping:**

Traditional Christianity, by and large, has diminished the importance of what are known as the Laws of God in Christian Life. Instead, they promote a definition of Grace that effectively renders law-keeping as no longer relevant. In some evangelical circles, a person is soundly FAULTED for any desire or any attempt to keep the Laws of God. In their views, such intent is only for the purpose of attempting to earn salvation by works. While it is true that salvation is a gift which cannot be earned, there are appropriate responses to having received that Gift.

[Colossians 2:14] ... the Law wasn't nailed to the cross, our sin penalty was satisfied there.

[Romans 6:1] ... we become obligated to cease from sin once we come under grace.

[Romans 6:15] What, shall we sin that grace may abound? God forbid.

[Romans 7:22] Paul continually sought to comply with the Law's requirements.

[Romans 6:14] Sin must not continue having dominion over us as it once did.

[Matthew 15:9] Man-made religion substitutes man-created laws in place of God's Laws

[Philippians 2:12] ... we must ... "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."

**c) Christ did not 'do away with' the Law or Prophets:**

We are told to NOT THINK that Christ had any intent to 'do away with' the Law. Yet, that is the traditional "New Covenant" teaching, perhaps not stated openly, but effectively, that is the gist. Such a position should be obviously wrong, considering that the terms of

the New Covenant involve writing God's Laws in the hearts and minds, as affirmed in both Old and New Testaments. It is the position of some that the Old Testament Laws were the imposition of the Father. But that the Son came along to rescind those OLD Laws and introduce a new set of commandments of His own in place of the originals. That idea is overturned with the realization that the Being who led Israel out of Egypt and to the foot of Mount Sinai was the same Being who later was manifest as the Son! Why would Christ do away with what He Himself originally gave? Especially the Seventh Day Sabbath, created by His own personal rest after the six days of Creation?

[Matthew 5:17] ... think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets...

[Hebrews 8:10] The Law will be written in the hearts and minds of New Covenant Christians.

[Jeremiah 31:33] The Law will be written in the hearts and minds of New Covenant Christians.

[1<sup>st</sup> John 2:4] ... anyone who doesn't keep His commandments doesn't know God.

[Romans 7:25] Paul inwardly sought God's help to continually comply with the Laws of God.

**d) He fulfilled the Law as an example we must follow:**

A second argument against the Laws of God is the idea that Jesus "fulfilled" the Law, meaning in some peoples' reasonings that we are then exempt from any requirement to do the same ourselves. In other words, that His fulfillment made it unnecessary for us to similarly comply. In that Christ left us an example that we should follow in His steps, who did no sin, we are left with a different definition of "fulfilled" than is commonly taught. One person's fulfillment (compliance with) a law does not exempt any follower from a need to do the same themselves. Fulfillment on the part of one does not satisfy another's obligation to also comply.

[1<sup>st</sup> Peter 2:21] ... Christ ... left us an example that we should follow in His steps.

[Revelation 14:4] The first redeemed are those who follow Christ wherever He goes.

[2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 2:22] ... pursue righteousness, faith, love peace with those who call on the Lord.

[Revelation 12:17] ... who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony ...

**e) Transgression of the Law is Sin and earns Death:**

Christians of every persuasion are especially focused upon the subject of sin, and they well should be. We are told that the wages of sin is death, and that all have sinned! That would leave the obvious conclusion that all are deserving of death. It is the full definition of exactly what sin is that can be at issue. There are many definitions, even some that ignore the obvious, that sin is the transgression of the Law! This is clear in the New Testament, and is reinforced in the Old, which states, the soul that sinneth, it shall die!

[Romans 6:23] The wages of sin is death

[Ezekiel 18:20 & 18:4] ... the soul that sinneth it shall die.

[Romans 7:7] ... the law defines what sin is – it isn't sin itself.

[1<sup>st</sup> John 3:4] Sin is the transgression of the Law

[Romans 3:23] All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

**f) Grace facilitates the remission of sin, it's not permission to continue in sin:**

Dealing with the “sin problem”, we are drawn to the subject of Grace. As the remission (forgiveness or rolling back) of sin is not something that we can in any way ‘earn’ by our own efforts, we are left to throw ourselves upon God’s Mercy. But are there requirements to receiving God’s forgiveness? Forgiveness is basically what Grace is. Undeserved pardon! The more common teaching with regard to Grace is what some refer to as “cheap grace”: a grace which requires no ‘works’ or life-changing performance on the part of worshippers: a grace which is generally ‘licentious’, giving ‘believers’ license to abandon keeping God’s Laws.

[Romans 6:1-2] ... God forbids that we continue in sin once we’re forgiven.

[Romans 6:15] ... being under Grace does not condone lawbreaking.

[1<sup>st</sup> John 1:8] ... sinlessness is a condition that must be carefully maintained

[Romans 8:7-9] ... God’s Spirit is our helper in keeping His Commandments.

[1<sup>st</sup> John 1:9] Confession is an ongoing necessity to maintaining a cleansed condition.

## **4. Importance of the Covenants.**

### **a) A Testament provides information to individuals:**

The written Word of God is what we regard as His Testimony to us. It expresses His Will. It is a source of information to us or witness against us, irrespective of what response a person might have toward it. God’s Word testifies to us explaining the right Way of Life.

[Deuteronomy 30:19] I call Heaven and Earth to testify against you ... choose life or death

[Hebrews 12:1] ... encompassed about by a great cloud of faithful witnesses ...

[Hebrews 3:16] “For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all ...”

[Romans 10:21] God extends extraordinary chances to His chosen.

### **b) A Covenant is an agreement made between two parties:**

When we recognize the importance of the Testimony, we are placed in a position to either respond positively to the information or not. A positive commitment on our part creates a Covenant relationship between us and the Testifier. A Covenant is a binding agreement between both parties. The distinction between a Testament and a Covenant is an important realization. Since both Old and New Covenants are based on the same standard of righteous conduct, the Laws of God, we should not think of the Law as “done away”.

[Ephesians 2:12] ... baptism seals our commitment to our calling and the Way of Life.

[Hebrews 8:8] ... circumcision once exhibited a covenant commitment (but they failed)

[Romans 2:25-29] ... today, circumcision of the heart is a more effective condition.

[Exodus 19:5] ... our Covenant relationship makes us a special people to God.

[Exodus 31:16] ... Sabbath keeping ... throughout all generations, is a perpetual covenant.

[2nd Kings 17:38] “And the covenant that I have made with you ye shall not forget; ...”

[Nehemiah 1:5] God... keeps covenant and mercy with them ... who observe his commandments

[Psalm 111:9] “He hath commanded His covenant for ever: holy and reverend is His name.”

[Ezekiel 20:37] “... and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant:”

[Romans 11:27] “For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.”

[Hebrews 8:6] “He is the mediator of a better covenant ... established upon better promises.”

### **c) The commitment to Baptism affects a Covenant with God**

All too often, individuals seek baptism without adequate counsel and fail to realize what kind of life commitment their action implies. It should never be taken lightly. Being put under those waters, which represent the death of our ‘old man’, we must remain faithful to the end of our lives. While most Christian denominations practice what is called “the Lord’s Supper” or “Communion” on a frequent basis throughout the year, the origin of such a practice was actually the Passover Supper Christ observed with His Disciples on the eve of His crucifixion. The True Christian practice is to observe the Passover once a year. By so doing, we renew our Covenant with our LORD, and any who do not participate in the Service and in His foot-washing example risk being ‘none of His’, as He emphatically said to Peter in John 13:8.

[Acts 2:38] Repent and let every one of you be baptized ... for the remission of sins.

[Luke 22:15] He said ... With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer

[John 13:8] Jesus said unto him, “If I wash you not, you have no part with Me.”

[John 1:12] ... as have received Him, to them gave He the power to become the sons of God.

[Mark 1:15] The time is fulfilled, ... kingdom of God is at hand: repent ... believe the gospel.

[Luke 3:3] ... preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins;

[Acts 3:19] Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out,

[Acts 26:20] ... that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.

[Revelation 3:19] As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

**d) Abandoning ones' Covenant relationship with God results in Eternal Death:**

Not all people realize the seriousness of making a Covenant with God. Upon doing so, He also is making a Covenant with us! Entering into the New Covenant opens our minds and wills to His Laws, which by His Spirit are implanted into our minds and hearts. It is and should be our heart's desire to remain obedient thereafter.

[Hebrews 10:26-29] Spurning the Gift of the Holy Spirit imposes a spiritual death sentence.

[Hebrews 12:25] ... do not refuse Him who speaks to us ...

[Luke 19:27] ... those who would not that I should reign over them ... slay them before Me.

[Hebrews 10:26-27] .. no space for repentance with those who reject the gift once given ...

**e) The New Covenant is based on God's Law (the Commandments):**

The all-important TERMS of the New Covenant are clearly stated in both Old and New Testaments. What needs to be made clear is that the replacement of the Old Covenant with the New Covenant does not void the Law. Once the New Covenant is established with one called-out by God, that same Law is implanted in the heart and mind of that individual. The righteous Laws of God are thereby made a Way of Life for us once we enter into that Covenant relationship. The major difference between the Old Covenant and the New is the shift from a fear-based approach to a love-based approach.

[Hebrews 8:8-10] ... I will put my laws in their minds and write them upon their hearts

[Jeremiah 31:33] ... I will put my Law in their minds and write it upon their hearts

[Matthew 22:40] Ten Commandments are the base framework for the Law and Prophets. [Romans 7:16] I consent unto the Law that it is good

[Romans 7:12] Law is Holy and the commandment is holy and just and good.

**f) The Old Covenant taught righteous values to a largely unconverted nation:**

We might wonder why the Old Covenant was not effective and sufficient for all time. Understanding what was inadequate with it deals with the nature of the recipients. They as a nation were not given the Holy Spirit at that time. Just being given the Testimony and the Law of and by itself was insufficient. Though they appeared to sincerely Covenant with God at Mount Sinai, their Will Power alone didn't do it. There were physical blessings to those who were obedient, but that did not equate to true conversion. They, for the most part, remained carnal as the natural man is. God has a place for them in the future, but at present, He holds most under a veil of blindness, unable to grasp the full Plan, reserving them mercifully to a calling in an age when a better environment for conversion will exist: That being the millennial Kingdom of God, with all practicing His True Religion and with Satan under restraint.

[Romans 11:26] All Israel shall be saved (but they aren't all being called now!)

[Galatians 3:19] The Ceremonial Law was added because of unbelief / disobedience

[Revelation 20:12] The books will be opened unto them for understanding

[Revelation 11:19] ... the Temple was opened for ALL (it wasn't so before?)

[Ezekiel 37:12-14] In the second resurrection, Israel will be given God's Spirit.

## **5. True Conversion is a misunderstood condition**

### **a) Why do all people need salvation:**

As was explained earlier, we all, having descended from Adam, are naturally inclined to sin, which means failing to obey God. In our natural state we are set at odds against the Laws of God. There is no one born who is righteous, not deserving of spiritual death. We have all – early on – failed to in any way exhibit the righteous character of our Maker.

[John 1:8] ... John the Baptist wasn't that light but bore witness of that light.

[Psalm 14:3] ... there is none that does good – no not one.

[Psalm 53:3] ... every one of them is turned aside – there is none that does good.

[Romans 8:7] ... the natural mind is at enmity against God's Laws.

[Romans 3:10] ... there is none righteous, no not one.

[Isaiah 55:8] ... My thoughts and My ways are not your (natural) thoughts or ways.

### **b) Salvation and forgiveness is a Free Gift:**

One thing that is understood correctly in the religious community is the fact that our calling to repentance and the remission of our sins is totally a free Gift. We are led to repentance. Even that is not wholly self-generated. But it is that Gift that causes an area of great misunderstanding as it does not cancel out our obligations to follow God, to obey God, and strive to overcome our 'old man', (our sinful natures), which remains in waiting, ready to reemerge as we let down our guard.

[Romans 2:4] ... the goodness of God leads you to repentance ...

[John 15:16] We are called as a result of God's choice, it's not entirely of our own choosing!

[Romans 5:18] ... only Christ's Sacrifice makes possible forgiveness and justification.

[John 1:29] ... the Lamb of God which takes away the sins of the world ...

[Isaiah 53:6] ... the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

[Romans 3:24] ... being justified freely by His grace ...

### **c) Conversion involves a life-long process of overcoming:**

We read in the messages to the seven Churches in Revelation's chapters 2 and 3 that overcoming is required in order to receive future blessings. Those include access to the

Tree of Life, being given a new name, power over the nations, white raiment, being set as pillars in God's Temple, even to be enthroned beside Christ on His earthly Throne! The challenge of overcoming speaks to our condition. We commit sin but we are sinners. In other words, while we may have received forgiveness, there remains the tendency to re-commit future offenses throughout our remaining lifetimes. That tendency must be overcome.

[1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 9:24] ... run that you might obtain the prize ...

[Galatians 6:9] ... let us not grow weary in well doing ... we shall reap in due season

[1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 9:27] ... I discipline my body and bring it into subjection ...

[2<sup>nd</sup> John 1:8] ... be watchful that you don't lose what we have worked for ...

[Galatians 6:9] ... in due season we will reap, if we don't faint.

**d) We are rewarded according to our works:**

This is another area in which traditional religion fails to understand. Under the no-works belief system, it is concluded that there are no works appropriate to our calling. They allege everything is a free Gift, Christ did it all for us, we need to do nothing. The Word is clear on the other hand, that there is a Reward which will be provided to each Saint at the Second Coming that varies according to our works! Those of minimal accomplishment in the end, who have achieved little in their spiritual lives, will receive little. Some even may lose even that which they have on account of under-achievement! There is what is and can be a free Gift only, but there is another area which is dependent upon merit.

[Revelation 2:23] I will give to each one of you according to your works

[Revelation 22:12] I am coming ... My reward is with Me to give ... according to his work.

[1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 3:14-15] ... ones' work ... built upon foundation, if it endures ... receives reward

[Matt. 25:14-30] Parable of the Talents shows us additional reward depends on achievement

[Luke 6:35] Loving / being kind to ones' enemies has great rewards

**e) Faith, repentance and baptism is required before receiving the Holy Spirit:**

Most who hear the Gospel Message and who respond positively to it at first usually think their understanding of it and their desire to repent are entirely of their own choosing. As we grow in Faith and understanding, we come to the realization that God's Gifts extend beyond our early awareness. We are called by the Father, we are led to repentance, we are given clarity of mind to see what is veiled to the masses. Our resulting early level faith in Him and His Word is gradually overtaken by the Faith OF Christ in us. We then must submit ourselves to the symbolic death of our old natures in the waters of baptism, and the receipt of His Holy Spirit by the laying-on-of-hands ceremony, performed by a faithful servant once we are appropriately baptized.

[Acts 2:38] ... repentance and baptism makes possible forgiveness of sins.

[2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 7:10-11] ... describing the seven aspects of True Godly repentance.

[Matthew 3:13] ... baptism is necessary to fulfil all righteousness.

[Acts 2:38] ... receipt of the Holy Spirit must be preceded by baptism.

[Luke 7:29] ... baptism alone is only a first step ... one must receive the Holy Spirit.

[Acts 8:16-17] ... laying-on-of-hands is a prerequisite to receiving the Holy Spirit.

[2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 1:6] ... stir up the gift that is in you by laying-on-of-hands.

[Acts 19:4-6] ... they had not yet been made aware of the laying-on-of-hands ...

**f) Without the Holy Spirit, a person is ‘none of His’:**

The importance of this step in the conversion process cannot be overstated. In order to have the very Nature of Christ and the Father in us, we must have residing within ourselves a measure – small at first – of His very Life. It is that engendered Life – referred to as being “**born again**” – which must be nourished in growth. It is that power which makes it possible to develop the righteousness of Christ. Taking on His righteousness is not something we can achieve using only our own strengths. There are limits to ‘will power’ which in time proves inadequate to the task of overcoming. Without His Spirit within us, we are not accepted as a member of His Family. It is the failure to preserve the Gift of the Holy Spirit to the point of it dying out in us that is an unpardonable sin. None who despise that Gift, through neglect, can be re-engendered of the Holy Spirit!

[Hebrews 6:1-2] ... describes the seven fundamental doctrines of God’s Church.

[John 3:3] Except a man is ‘born again’ he cannot see or inherit the Kingdom of God

[John 3:6-8] We must be “born of the Spirit” – raised / changed into the Spirit Kind.

[Romans 8:9] ... if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.

[Romans 8:14] ...as many as are led by the spirit of God ... are the sons of God

[Galatians 5:22-25] Those having the gift of the Holy Spirit exhibit the Fruits thereof!

## **6. There will be a resurrection of all who have ever lived.**

**a) All Saints will rise immortal at the Second Coming:**

Despite the fact that the resurrection of all Saints which occurs at the time of Christ’s Second Coming contrasts with the common teaching of them having ‘gone to heaven’ upon their death, being raised in immortal Spirit bodies is a clear Biblical Promise.

[Revelation 2:11] He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death

[Revelation 20:6] ... those first resurrected are exempt from the second death.

[John 5:24] Faithful believers are exempt from eternal death already.

[1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:51-54] ... all Saints are to be changed to Spirit at the Second Coming.

[1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:20-23] ... all Saints resurrections will be like Christ’s resurrection.

[1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 4:13-17] ... those dead shall rise immortal at the Last Trump.

**b) There will be a Rewards Ceremony at the Second Coming:**

While we must at some point appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, the fact of our pre-judgment to Life suggests a different scene than the Final Judgment's sentencing at the End of Time. Overcomers will be rewarded based on merit, for the accomplishments in their spiritual lives, using the power of the Holy Spirit toward perfection.

[Matthew 16:27] ... the glorified Son will come rewarding each man's works.  
[1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 3:8] ... each will receive reward according to his own labors.  
[2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 4:8] ... a crown of righteousness awaits us at His appearing.  
[Revelation 11:18] ... the time of reward to Saints is announced – Second Coming  
[Rev. 20:5] Those raised in the first resurrection experience an additional 1000 years of Life

**c) The vast majority are raised to life after the millennium:**

Christ's own words explain that the majority, (the rest of the dead who are not included in the first resurrection), will wait in their graves until sometime after the millennium. We're made aware that there is to be another resurrection unlike the first one. But it's a curious statement that only those who hear the call to arise will do so at that time, as opposed to there being an even later resurrection in which ALL will hear. Some see these as a second and third resurrection. It could also be interpreted as a phase one / phase two situation in those physical resurrections that occur after the millennium. Christ spoke of people from vastly different ages rising up together and learning of each other's response failures.

[Revelation 20:5] The rest of the dead arise after the 1000 year millennium.  
[Ezekiel 37:] ... describes the resurrection of physical Israel after the 1000 years.  
[1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:22-23] ... each will be resurrected in his own order.  
[Matthew 12:41-42] The dead of vastly different ages will rise together and co-mingle.  
[Luke 11:31-32] The dead of vastly different ages will rise together and co-mingle.  
[John 5:25] Those who hear the (first) call at that time will arise, exempt from condemnation.

**d) There is yet an opportunity period for those not-called in this age:**

What is not generally understood is the full purpose of that resurrection that will occur after the millennium. It is thought of as a Judgment situation, but in fact is not for the purpose of immediate sentencing. Instead, it allows evaluation of those who lived and died without ever having had an opportunity for salvation. Those who did have a true chance in their natural lifetimes, and who rejected it, remain in their graves until the Final Sentencing event at the end of time.

[Revelation 20:12] ... the "books" are opened to the understanding of the formerly blinded.  
[Revelation 20:12] ... the Book of Life is also re-opened to add new names into it.  
[Revelation 7:9] A great innumerable multitude respond after the 'firstfruits' generation.  
[Revelation 7:13-15] These too are destined for the Family, as children, dwelling with God.  
[Isaiah 65:20] A child of God during the millennium will die and await sentencing as now!  
[Matt. 25:31-46] Both righteous and wicked will rise together for Final Sentencing at the END!  
[Rev. 14:14] White Cloud event shows the harvest of those converted after the Second Coming.

### e) Those who reject salvation will have earned the Second Death:

Rejection of the calling of God has serious consequences. Being called by God is an extreme privilege. Rejecting ones' opportunity by indifference or thru neglect leaves that individual in an irreversible condition. No one is assigned to the second death without having had their opportunity to become converted. At Final Sentencing, it would be patently unjust to condemn an individual to eternal death who never had an opportunity. The same would be true of the recipients of eternal Life. Assignment to either destiny, in order to be just, must be based on their acceptance or rejection of their calling and their achievement with regard to overcoming.

[Hebrews 6:4-6] ... impossible to restore the calling of one who purposefully turns away.

[Hebrews 10:26-29] Spurning the Gift of the Holy Spirit imposes a spiritual death sentence.

[Matthew 25:33 & 41-46] ... goat-acting individuals face extinction in the Lake of Fire.

[Hebrews 10:31] ... a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

[John 15:2] There is a pruning process where unfruitful are removed from the Family of faith.

[Revelation 21:8] ... unbelievers will perish in the Lake of Fire which is the Second Death.

[Matthew 10:28] Fear Him who is able to destroy both body and soul in Gehenna (Hell Fire).

## 7. Physical Death is a temporary sleep-like state.

### a) Physical death is not permanent:

This statement raises an obvious question with regard to the common belief system of persons going to heaven or hell immediately after death. A fundamental biblical teaching affirms that there will be resurrections of the dead at various key points in the future. One resurrection will be directly into Spirit form, the others will be physical.

[1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:40-44] ... we are to receive Spirit bodies in the first resurrection.

[1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:49] ... we shall bear the image of the heavenly Man.

[1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:52-54] ... we shall be changed into an immortal form.

[1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 4:15] ... the dead in Christ will rise at the Last Trump.

### b) The soul is not immortal:

In concert with the heaven or hell teachings, the underlying supporting belief involves the soul being represented as immortal and ever conscious. In part, the belief originates with a misunderstanding of what a soul is. The soul, by biblical definition, is that component of our existence which gives us animal life form. It is the human spirit which provides us intellect and consciousness. The human spirit is what is taken into God's hands at death. It is our spirit that contains our character, which will be re-implanted in our future Spirit bodies, allowing us in that form to be the same person we had been.

[Ezekiel 18:4 & 20] The soul that sinneth, it shall die.

[Ecclesiastes 3:19] As dies the beast, so dies the man. They die a common death.

[1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 6:16] God only has immortality (but He can give it to His own elect.)

[1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:53] This mortal must put on immortality.

**c) There is no after-death consciousness:**

Scriptures are clear that the soul does not remain in any state of consciousness after death. While scriptures are explicit regarding death's true condition, many religions 'teachers' disregard their clarity.

[Psalm 146:4] When a man dies, that very day his thoughts perish.

[Psalm 6:5] "in death ... no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?"

[Eccl. 9:10] "... no work, ... nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, where you go."

[1<sup>st</sup> Thess. 4:14] Even those "dead in Christ" are in a "sleep-like" state awaiting a reawakening.

**d) The Second Death is the final end of the wicked:**

Someone being assigned to Eternal Death before the Final Judgment at the end would be a miscarriage of justice if the individual never was called by God and never had any opportunity to become converted. Understanding the Plan of God requires answers to the enigma of there being so many who obviously never had a reasonable opportunity, either through ignorance, through premature death such as with infants, or never having heard the true Gospel. The parable of the seed being sown in Matthew 13 illustrates various response situations that can result.

[Revelation 20:14] ... death and hell will be consumed after the Final Sentencing of the wicked.

[Revelation 21:8] Lake of Fire is the Second Death – all vestiges of the sinful are consumed.

[Revelation 14:18] The angel having power over fire "reaps" the wicked for destruction.

[John 5:28-29] The final resurrection will be the time of sentencing: Life or the Second Death.

**e) Accomplished in the Lake of Fire:**

A greatly misunderstood situation regards the final destiny of those proven to be wicked. Unlike in the common belief system, their destiny is to an unconscious extinction, not eternal torment. The Second Death is a state from which there is no further possibility of a resurrection. Those sentenced to death will experience a quick end in what is likened to a Lake of Fire. This end is accomplished in a brief time period, after the Final Sentencing event after the millennium and after living in the final opportunity period known as the

Last Great Day (also known as the Great White Throne judgment period – A day when evidence is accumulated to permit a just sentencing.)

[Revelation 20:14] The Lake of Fire consumes all cast therein. (even death and the grave!)

[Revelation 21:8] Incorrigibly Wicked are assigned to this fate.

[Matthew 10:28] Christ cautioned the unbelieving of their date with this destiny.

## **8. Judgment of the great majority occurs after the millennium**

### **a) Only those called by God are being judged in this lifetime:**

It is important to realize that one must be called by God in order to be judged. And this requires that we understand the term. Judgment involves both evaluation which leads to a correct verdict which we know as sentencing. That judgment process has begun with those referred to as “the household of God”. True Christians are being evaluated at this time. Those kept from understanding are deferred to a later time of evaluation. Being that ones’ calling is so important, we must not assume we are not included among those being called at this time, as there is NO second chance!

[1<sup>st</sup> Peter 4:17] ... a Judgment is ongoing upon just the Church of God, not all of humanity.

[Hebrews 4:7] We must listen and respond when it is our time to be called.

[Revelation 20:12] The books are not at this time opened to the understanding of all the rest.

### **b) The rest will be entered into their judgment period after the Second Coming:**

Only after the Saints are resurrected and the millennial Kingdom of God is in full operation will the rest of humanity have the books of the Bible opened to them. Their judgment period (their evaluative phase) will then begin. The veil over their minds will be lifted. Angels will introduce true religion to the survivors of the Great Tribulation first, and they to their descendants after them. ALL will all “know the Lord”. At the same time, former false religions will be banned under the severest of punishment.

[Hebrews 8:12] ... all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest.

[Revelation 14:6] An angel proclaims the Everlasting Gospel to those living at this time.

[Revelation 11:19] Temple and Ark of the Covenant will be opened after the Second Coming

[Revelation 20:12] The “books” (Bible) will be opened to general understanding at this time.

[Revelation 20:12] Time for the rest of the world to enter evaluative judgment comes later.

[2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 3:16] The veil over their understanding will then be lifted from their eyes.

[Revelation 14:9-11] Worship under any of the Beast System religions is absolutely prohibited.

**c) Just Judgment must involve an evaluation phase first:**

It would be patently unjust for God to assign people to eternal death if they never were provided any opportunity for salvation. Most people think of condemnation when they hear the word “judgment”. As in any court proceeding, there first must be an evidentiary period in which the merits of the case are evaluated. Only then can a just verdict be rendered and true justice be imposed. Such identification is not based on a momentary experience, such as in response to an altar call or an insincere repentance. Being awarded Eternal Life and ultimately being brought into the Family of God involves a full lifetime of overcoming. We must also build and demonstrate the Character worthy of our calling.

[Revelation 14:6] Everlasting Gospel preached by angels to all alive after the Tribulation.

[Revelation 14:13] Overcomers from this millennial age will await their reward as we do now.

[Revelation 14:7] Evaluative Judgment period is here extended upon the rest of humanity.

[Revelation 20:11] This is known as the “Great White Throne” evaluation period for the rest.

[1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 3:12-14] Character built leads to a good reward in addition to Life.

**d) Evaluation leads to Final Sentencing:**

Only when all the evidence is accumulated can a Just and Final Sentence be rendered. There is no place where un-called, un-evangelized individuals can justly be assigned until their situations are adequately demonstrated.

[Revelation 14:14-20] ... describes the “White Cloud” sentencing: some to Life/some Death!

[Revelation 14:17-20] ... describes the fate of those deemed unredeemable.

[Revelation 21:8] Incorrigibly Wicked are assigned to the Lake of Fire.

[John 5:29] Righteous and wicked will rise together for final sentencing at the very END.

[Matthew 25:31-46] Sheep-from-the-goats illustration explains the same (all nations).

**e) Eternal punishment – the Second Death – is just and final:**

Only when each person has identified himself as being either a spiritual sheep or a goat by his actions can they be assigned to their appropriate destiny. The punishment of Eternal Death is justly experienced only by those truly worthy of comprehensive extinction. The Second Death does not involve a conscious eternal torment but a cessation of existence.

[Matthew 25:46] The ‘goats’ (stubborn) will be assigned to everlasting punishment.

[Psalm 146:4] The Second Death doesn’t involve consciousness just as physical death doesn’t.

[Hebrews 10:27] A fearful end awaits those who reject the gift of the Holy Spirit.

*“And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.” (Mt. 13:10-17)*

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## Q & A

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### Questions from a minister in East Africa,

Received

12/21/12

Here are some questions I received from my congregation leaders and I present them as follows; Replies are in bolder type: These questions reflect the core beliefs of modern Christianity. By way of introductory comments, it is important that we understand the correctness or error of certain basic premises.

- 1) The Being who gave the Law on Mt. Sinai was one-and-the-same Being who led Israel thru the wilderness. Paul says that was Christ. (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 10:4) It was not the Father! There is a general sense among evangelicals who allege that it was the Father who imposed the Law, but the Son came along later and suspended (abrogated) “did-away-with” His Father’s harsh old Law. (Misconception 1.) No, the lawgiver was the Being who became Christ. So, the Law was given by Christ Himself. That awareness will prove significant later.
- 2) That the Law and the Covenant are one-and-the-same thing is another common teaching. They are not! Some allege that since one is ‘done away’ the Law is done away with it! No. The Law is the legal code which defines righteousness and the way to live. There is nothing evil, unnecessary or burdensome about God’s Laws. A Law is a law, whether anyone keeps it or not. A Covenant is an agreement between two parties. A Covenant can come or go, depending on the disposition of the individuals making that Covenant. The Law is not abolished IF one party reneges on his Covenant. This was the premise put forth by a major CoG denomination after 1990, which led it into rank apostasy. The Law happened to be the basis of the Covenant Israel of old made with God. The Law of God remains whether anyone agrees to keep it or not. If I agree (Covenant) to keep God’s Laws today, but then later change my mind, the Covenant falls apart, but the Law upon which it was originally based

does not! In the case of the Laws of God, His Commandments, they tell us HOW to Love God and to Love man.

Sin is the transgression of the Law, whether a person is under the Covenant or not. We don't acquire the ability to sin by making a Covenant. We accrue sin by breaking the Law of God, irrespective of where we stand with respect to having made any Covenant with God. (Misconception 2.) Remember, sin did not originate at Mt. Sinai. It was possible to sin clear back to Adam and Eve and Cain's time. (Rom. 5:14) Sin, which is the breaking of God's Laws (1<sup>st</sup> John 3:4) did not come upon man only with the giving of the Ten Commandments, nor did the breaking of the Covenant by Israel end or in any way diminish the Law. The Law is an eternal standard! (And I'm referring to the Moral Code as it relates to the present day.)

- 3) It's taught that the Law was harsh and burdensome, but Jesus replaced that outdated code with Love: That His Laws were different than His Father's. No, actually, the Law itself provided a practical expression of love. It's just that the legalist Jews of His day overlooked that in their zeal to 'keep their own traditional interpretations' of what they thought the Law to be. Love was imbedded in the Law from the beginning, but it wasn't necessarily within the people. (Misconception 3.) (See 1<sup>st</sup> John 2:3-7 & 5:3)
- 4) The BIG one that people miss is the relationship between law-keeping and justification. In every place where you find the Apostle Paul speaking in what appears to be a negative tone toward law-keeping, it is always in the context of 'justification'. Paul is very positive toward the Law except as it relates to the IDEA that people can EARN salvation on their own by their perfect law-keeping. His point is that no amount of perfect law-keeping can pay the penalty for sins once committed. We can do nothing by way of 'good works' or law-keeping after the fact to obtain remission of our sins. Sin warrants the death penalty. (Rom. 6:23) It takes a blood sacrifice to achieve forgiveness! The idea that such statements by Paul, that we'll address below, relegate the Law of God to irrelevance is a perceptual mistake. This is the common belief system in the main-stream religious world. (Misconception area 4.)
- 5) Intertwined with this perceptual area is the confusion between the basic Moral Law as defined in the Sinaiatic Code (The Ten Commandments), and the Ceremonial Laws, (which included Temple Ceremonies and Sacrificing), which were ADDED because of the people's unbelieving disobedience. (Gal. 3:19) Seeing that the people didn't have the ability to keep the Covenant that they had made, God saw need to ADD another educational component to their belief system to keep them ever-mindful of their sin and what they need for remission of it. Their deeds could never DO that. Once broken, the law demands shedding of blood to achieve remission. (Heb. 9:22) No sin is forgiven without a blood-penalty being paid, either the substitutionary Sacrifice of Christ OR payment by the shedding of one's own blood to pay for our own sins. If we refuse to accept His substitutionary sacrifice, we must pay for our sins ourselves, with death in the Lake of Fire. (The Second Death.) When would that self-payment-option occur, you ask? There is a clear and graphic picture of that event in plain sight in the late era New Testament. While the Ceremonial Law is suspended, (Not Done Away), THAT is no longer required of us, but the remaining Moral Code is everlasting in its applicability to all who have ever lived! (Illustrating Misconception area 5.)

## Now to this minister's Elders' questions:

1. Paul's emphasis was on justification "by faith apart from observing the law " (Romans 3:28), "because by observing the law no one will be justified " (Gal 2:16). Why then, should a Christian feel obliged to observe the law of the Old Testament? Is not the guidance of the spirit sufficient? **Reply: Paul's statement is completely correct. We cannot obtain forgiveness of sin BY 'observing the law'.** Item 4 above addresses this point. Where people today mis-understand is in thinking that there is now a different way to live, one which effectively authorizes disregard of God's Laws. Paul is here making it clear that our Law-keeping, our 'righteous deeds', by themselves, are ineffective as means of achieving the remission of sins. Though called-upon to live righteous lives, we cannot ever earn forgiveness. It is a GIFT with these absolute prerequisites: belief, obedience, repentance, baptism and the receipt of God's Holy Spirit. (See Hebrews 6:1-2) God states clearly that He cannot give His Spirit to anyone who does not obey. (Heb. 5:9; Acts 5:32) **He also requires that we overcome to the end. Salvation is dependent upon 'holding fast thru to the end' of our lives.**

2. I thought the Old Covenant had been abolished and that therefore we are no longer under an obligation to obey those laws? **Reply: This is explained in Item 2 above. The Covenant was the AGREEMENT that Israel originally made with God at Mt. Sinai. That Covenant was 'done-away', but not including the premise upon which it was based.** When we examine the terms of the NEW Covenant, we see that OUR AGREEMENT is established upon the same code: The same LAW that the first Covenant was based upon. Hebrews 8:8-10 reiterates the Promise as first stated in the Old Testament in Jeremiah 31:31-33. *"For finding fault with them, (the people) he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:"* What Laws? Some NEW set, or the same Laws upon which the Old Covenant was based? This is where the perception of WHO was the Law-giver becomes important. The same Law-giver functioned in the New Testament as did in the Old! Christ did NOT "do-away with" His Father's Law. HE was the One who gave the Commandments on Mt. Sinai. It was the pre-incarnate Christ who dealt with Moses face-to-face, whom Moses saw in semi-glorified form, and whom he, Aaron and the seventy elders saw and ate with God on the mount! (Ex. 33:11; Ex. 33:18 thru 34:6; Ex. 24:9-11.) This Being whom they saw was NOT the Father! (We know that from among other places, John 5:37 and 1<sup>st</sup> Tim. 6:16.) So the idea that the Son did away with the harsh old laws of His Father and substituted another set, requiring love only, is badly mistaken. The difference between the New Covenant and the Old is where the Laws are placed. With carnal unconverted (un-forgiven) Israel, the Law was imposed from without. With Christians, the Law is internalized, being set IN their hearts and minds! It would be important to request the article "*We are NOT Under the Law*".

3. Jesus came to bring us a new commandment to love one another (John 13:34). Paul said that if we love we fulfill the law (Rom 13:8, 10). If we are loving others, then we are fulfilling the law. We are dwelling in Christ's love and He is living within us. Therefore, since we are in His rest, we do not need to keep the fourth commandment as it was given to Israel. Don't you agree? **Reply: There is a fallacy in this thinking also. Anyone who keeps God's Laws will as a result express love toward God and toward neighbor. (See Matt. 22:36-40) The Love component is not a new idea. It was**

present in the Law of God from the beginning, long before Moses' time. Overzealous Law-keeping Jews didn't get it. The Ten Commandments are 'hung upon' (are framed upon) the practical expression of love. The 'fulfillment' of the Law requires the component of love. Love does not abolish the Law which defines it. That would be counter-productive. In loving God, we are called-upon to love our neighbor also. Because He loves them, we should love whom He loves. (1<sup>st</sup> John 2:8-11) Law kept without love is law not fully kept. (fulfilled) Is that a better way of stating it? Religion is always looking for a way and an excuse to discard God's laws, and there is no more effective way than to reason that 'fulfillment' accomplishes the cancelling-out of our obligation to live righteously as His Law defines.

Consider this example: I put up a STOP sign on a new street that I made. After I put it up, in driving by, I stopped at the sign that I put up. I fulfilled what that sign required. Since I fulfilled what that sign requires, no person after me needs to stop at that sign, because I fulfilled it perfectly. Now, religious people reason like that. That kind of reasoning makes perfect sense to people who want to suspend our obligation to obey God and keep His Commandments, citing Christ's righteousness, but without having to imitate Him.

4. What did Paul mean by, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness for everyone who believes"? (Rom. 10:4). **Reply:** One might ask, "*You are doing that to what end?*" This is an expression we use. What we mean by that is to ask what objective we are intending to achieve by something that we're doing. What objective (what end result) does the Law bring us toward? This is the real question, and its answer is that it brings us to have a Christ-likeness. HE kept the Law did He not? Evangelicals will insist that He did, doing so perfectly (otherwise He would've sinned) so that he could 'do away' with it, as they reason. The fault in that reasoning should be obvious, but religiously, it's the basis upon which they build their law-rejecting theology.

If the Law is 'ended', then on what is the New Covenant based? And, why would Christ 'take away' (end) the Law which He created and He Himself gave to mankind, His model nation first, then to all who will enter into His Covenant?

When we read this scripture with an anti-law bias, it says one thing to us. When we read it with a different regard, we can see that it describes what a person becomes when imitating Christ: Accepting Christ, allowing Him to create in us His own righteous Character. If we are to live exactly as He did, keeping the Law as He did, then the Law serves to remake us in the character image of Christ. This is the 'end' that is intended by the creation of the Law. But anyone seeking to set aside the Law of God will never admit to such an explanation.

The prior verse helps explain Paul's point. "*For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.*" There is a self-created standard that men set up in their own minds (and Paul was speaking to religious people of his day). As Paul explains, theirs' is a standard that is different from what Christ did. The righteousness of God is what? Law-breaking? These Jews thought that their self-effort, attempting to keep the Law as they thought it should be kept, was adequate to reverse their guilt. When, in fact, it was just religion, their version of it, not unlike the unbelief that their ancestors in the ancient nation exhibited. This again speaks to that motive of attaining justification by self-effort that we discussed above in Item 4. It is only thru our identifying with Christ that we can hope to exhibit the pure righteousness that He did. He intends to create the likeness of Himself in us, if we allow Him to, and if we have His Spirit, which is the all-important condition.

5. Can a person be saved, even if they don't keep one of the commandments, such as, for example, that of the Sabbath? Those questions raised by my congregations' leaders and they need more

explanations about it. Reply: Reading James 2:10, one would conclude that this question is answered in the negative. Matthew 5:19 is a little softer on that point, but the gist is that we cannot be selective, keeping those points of Law that we like and dismissing those that we deem unnecessary. God's Law is a full set of instructions as to how to live. It is noteworthy that the very Commandment that religion seeks so desperately to abandon is the very one which has the most solid evidence of longevity. The Sabbath (fourth Commandment) clearly traces back to Creation Week. It did NOT originate at Mount Sinai during the Exodus! That same Sabbath will be kept by all humanity after the Second Coming, so those who advocate a different day of worship need to be prepared for their 'day of awakening' on that subject!

What is notable is that this entire argument revolves around one point. The Seventh Day Sabbath. No one is advocating for murder, adultery, theft, idolatry or any other of its points being abolished. It's just this one that motivates the "law is all done away" premise! And, why would anyone want to reject God's Sabbath in favor of a different day of worship no-where authorized in scripture?

The Sabbath was kept in the early New Testament Church. This is an undisputable fact of history. It would have been unthinkable to them to change to another day of the week. Hebrews 4 states that "... Sabbath-keeping remains to the people of God". When Christ returns, all people will be restored to keeping His Sabbath. (Isa. 66:23)

Your Brother,

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### **Before concluding, let's consider some relevant scriptures:**

**Matt. 5:17-18** "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law, till all be fulfilled." As a fundamental premise, we are TOLD to not think that Jesus' mission was to 'do away with' the Law! So many do the very thing that He said not to do! It is the underlying base of their theology and a very misleading premise.

**Rom. 3:20-31** "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: ( lawkeeping does not accomplish justification ) for by the law is the knowledge of sin. ( The Law tells us what sin is ) But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets;

( so this is not a new teaching, it is in fact an Old Testament idea. That's what the law and prophets means ) Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; ( Sin involves all peoples, not just those who made a covenant. This shows that the Law did not come in with the Covenant, and isn't 'cancelled out' with its discontinuance.) Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, (explaining the blood sacrifice, necessary even in the New Covenant era.) through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we

establish the law. ( Evangelicals attempt to explain that faith negates the Law, the opposite of Paul's conclusion, that faith incorporates the Law with a proper motivation: not trying to earn, but in grateful reflection of the grace extended to us. True Christians are not law-breakers. That's the point of Rom. 6:14. "Under" means still under penalty for having broken the Law. A person forgiven comes out from being 'under' its penalty. Evangelicals distort the meaning, attempting to explain that 'not under' means no longer obligated to keep it, that it no longer 'applies' to us, where it more correctly means no longer subject to its lethal penalty.)

**1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 2:21-22** "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Doing no sin means that He kept the Law (not FOR us, but as an example to follow.) If we 'follow in His steps', yet fail to keep the Law as He did, we put forth a statement, by example, that He was (or IS in us) an author of a lawless way of life. If we are claiming to 'follow Him' but refuse to do what He did, how is that true? Christ asked, "Why do you call Me Lord, Lord, when you do not the things which I say?" (Lk. 6:46)

**Gal. 2:17** "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. ( Lawkeeping doesn't absolve past sin.) But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, ( Lawbreakers) is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid. ( Here's the point: We understand that Jesus KEPT the Law perfectly. Now, if we 'accept Him into our hearts', then claim that He is living in us, yet we disobey the Law, we allege that He is the author of that! ) For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.

( The previous comment would allege that Jesus is the REASON why we disregard keeping His Law. A very strange thought process. )

**1<sup>st</sup> John 5:3** "The love of God is the keeping of the Commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome." **1<sup>st</sup> John 2:3-7** "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked. Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning." How much clearer can it be stated. Law keeping is not a means of earning salvation, but obedience is a clear expression of Love toward God. Anyone not keeping His Commandments is a liar. Strong words! But the insidious consideration is that the person deceives himself on the matter. And, those who teach such things are setting themselves up for condemnation. John (the last writer of the NT – the Apostle of love) had no illusions regarding the abrogation of the (old) Ten Commandments.

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The above addresses the general sense of the matters regarding the place for God's Law in our lives. It is not a new issue with believers. One Church of God organization of about 25 years ago became embroiled in these same issues when the administration of the time ran to our evangelical enemy and learned from them how to 'put it over' on our members. The administration at the time wasn't sufficiently expert to do it well themselves, but main-stream teachers have a long history of proclaiming Satan's lies in a most convincing manner. Satan's subtle lies are effective with those who aren't well grounded in the Word.

Always keep in mind that these matters are not a new thing. I knew of them from childhood, having grown up in an evangelical conservative Baptist Church for my first 26 years prior to 1971. Many of our organization's people were not sufficiently grounded in the Truth to know the difference when the decision was made to throw off our Spirit-led understandings in favor of the babble of this world.

Satan is subtle. He ‘uses’ scripture also. What is particularly unsettling is that he has duped so many sincere Christians into expressing an effective hatred for God while thinking it is Love!

The mental posture within main-stream Christianity is generally framed around a certain contempt for God in a number of ways.

First, there is a subtle resentment toward God the Father. He is generally regarded as being that HARSH unloving tyrant that we can’t really relate to, as opposed to His KIND gentle Son who removed the burden of all those burdensome old laws.

Secondly, there is a discernible resentment toward the Holy and Righteous Laws of God, largely due to their association with that harsh old Father God idea that they’ve embraced from their religious teachers. They allege that those laws were imposed by the Father, when in fact, it was the Son who was the Lawgiver on Mt. Sinai, though on behalf of His Father. Many have been led to believe that the Son came to ‘do away with’ the Law as being applicable to us under the New Covenant, despite the obvious re-inclusion of them under the New Covenant, with them being written in our hearts, as both Old and New Testaments clearly state. This subtle resentment of God’s Laws is not of God. They further their lie with the suggestion that the Son replaced those Old Testament Laws with a NEW set of commandments.

Thirdly, main-stream religion has convinced the sincere worshippers that simple belief is all that is needed now. Obedience is deemed irrelevant. Some evangelicals even go so far as to condemn anyone who might attempt to keep God’s Laws as an offense against the auspices of Grace. They do so using the excuse that such a person is attempting to EARN their salvation by their works, not realizing that law-keeping is the appropriate response to having received His Grace. There is more than one reason to keep God’s Laws than just attempting to earn something. Law-keeping is the result of salvation, not the means of it. Why is that not obvious?

Such a mis-conceived belief system effectively blocks people from true salvation. They may be deeply religious, expressing a profuse emotional love toward Jesus, but lack the essential prerequisite for real salvation: Repentance! The first step toward salvation, after that first faith (which to start is of ourselves), is repentance. We must repent of Sin! Sin is the transgression of the Law (1<sup>st</sup>. John 3:4) If a person hasn’t repented of sin, he is nowhere near being ready for baptism, and cannot receive God’s Spirit and thus is not yet really ‘one of His’! God’s Spirit is essential in developing that Faith which is not of ourselves. Satan has sold people on the idea that they can love Jesus emotionally, and that is all sufficient. They overlook the plain and clear statement of Christ, that we must demonstrate our love for Him by keeping His Commandments. “*The love of God is the keeping of the Commandments.*” “*Anyone who says he loves God but who doesn’t keep His commandments is a liar.*” The emotional expression of love is thought to be all that is necessary, where Christ repeatedly required that our love be exhibited not by profuse emotion only, but by our obedience.

Lastly, the evangelical community has sold the idea that love replaces the Law, where in fact it supplements it. They say, there is no love in the law, where it is in fact built upon it. Consider Matt. 9:13 & 12:7, which repeats Hos. 6:6. Twice Jesus reminds them that He preferred mercy to sacrifice. Mercy is an act of love. The Ten Commandments are framed upon principles of Love, as He said so plainly in Matthew 22:36-40. The first four express love toward God, the last six express love toward our fellow man. But those who despise the Laws of God don’t accept that.

Unconverted people generally disregard God’s Laws. That is the cause of their condition, living lives of sin! What is profound is the fact that main-stream religion actively campaigns to persuade the sincere worshipper to continue disregarding God’s Laws. In other words, they reinforce law-breaking, they actively work to solidify it, by convincing people to pointedly disregard it. So people go from disinterested in keeping God’s Commandments when unconverted to being purposely contemptuous of them after conversion! Judge for yourself if such a message is of God or not.

Jesus described a condition in His day where religious zealots would work diligently, effectively ‘sealing their converts out’ while ostensibly ‘bringing them in’. “*But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows’ houses, and for a pretense make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.*

*Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.*" (Mt. 23:13-15) What IS a 'child of hell', let alone one doubly that? We need to picture that. Here deeply religious people went to great lengths to gain a convert, but then would teach them their ways, which were NOT God's ways at all, and would make it harder for that convert than if they'd not pursued him! It isn't all that different today. We have religious teachers who teach against God's Commandments and His way of Life, though under a different religious banner. These also have found a way to turn people against God in a subtle way, and they're not the least suspecting. We do have tares among us!

Everybody loves love. It's just that most want it to remain purely emotional. They don't want it to intrude into the way we live our lives forcing us to change. That's why the 'love only' message gets such good reception. "Love is all you need!" Well, no. Jesus put a condition on that. "*If you love me, keep my commandments*". (Jn. 14:15) Not just as outward actions, but as a reflection of His very Nature living on in us, by His Spirit. He is reproducing Himself in us, if we let Him. That's how the anti-law zealots effectively bar the way for converts to 'enter God's Kingdom'.

**If you are a student of the Way, and even more, if you are a leader of people, be very careful what lines of reasoning you subscribe to. I hope this will give you the reader the basis with which to be convinced of the place that 'the Law' has and of the importance of God's Laws as an appropriate framework around which to build a Christ-likeness within. Much is at stake at this point. Christ is forming His Bride at this time. As the Ten Virgins parable shows us, there is an impending cut-off date to that activity.**

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