

# **THE DOCTRINE OF GOD**

(De Deo)

A Look at What the Bible Says by  
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## THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

### 1. THE NATURAL KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

The Bible tells us that **God “Alone is immortal, dwelling in the light that no man can approach; whom no one has ever seen, or can see”** (1Timothy 6:16). And, because “no one has ever seen, or can see” God, apart from divine revelation, no human being can know that He exists, or know anything about Him. However, the words, **“The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse,”** tell us that God has revealed Himself to men through the things that He created (Romans 1:20). And, that raises the question: Why do men fail to see the evidence?

The words, **“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?”** tell us that men are more likely to deceive themselves than face the truth (Jeremiah 17:9). And, the words, **“When they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were they thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made to resemble corruptible man, and birds, and four footed beasts, and creeping things,”** tell us that when it comes to God self-deception seems to be the rule (Romans 1:21-23).

Has anything changed since those words were written? No! Not at all. **Utah is full of people who have “Changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made to resemble corruptible man,”** and idolatry is still widespread (Rom. 1:23). But, what about the atheists? The atheist professor Richard Dawkins answers that question with the words, **“Biology is the study of complicated things that give the appearance of having been designed for a purpose”**. (“The Blind Watchmaker” page 1, paragraph 2.) Those words tell us that he sees the evidence even if he chooses to deny it.

However, consider carefully his words, **“Things that give the appearance of having been designed for a purpose”**. Ask yourself: Do those things appear to a dog or a horse like they have been designed for a purpose? Of course not! It is our reason that tells us that they have been designed, and reason also tells us that for every design there is a designer. Dawkins has simply rejected reason preferring to deceive himself. And, the words, **“The heart is deceitful above all things,”** tell us why he prefers darkness to light, and why the knowledge of God revealed in nature is not enough to save souls (Jeremiah 17:9).

The words, **The “Lord of heaven and earth... has made of one blood all nations of men to live on all the face of the earth, and has determined their appointed times, and the boundaries they live in, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him, and find Him, although He is not far from any one of us. For in Him we live, and move, and have our being; and some of your own poets have said, We are His offspring,”** also testify to the witness of God in nature (Acts 17:26-28). However, the words, **“He [God] did not leave Himself without witness, in that He has shown kindness, and given us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, satisfying our hearts with food and gladness,”** tell us that men **not only** should see the evidence of God in nature, but should see His goodness in the fact that He provides them with rain, good crops and food (Acts 14:17). Sadly, however, the words, **“But the natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness to him: and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.”** explain why sinful man is blind to the evidence (1Corinthians 2:14).

The words, **“When the Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, they, not having the law, are a law to themselves: Who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another,”** tell us that the Law of God written on the heart [although blurred by sin] is a third way that God reaches out to the lost (Romans 2:14-15). And, the words, **“Who knowing the judgment of God, that those who commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in those who do them,”** tell us that men are more likely to ignore or excuse sin than cry out to God for forgiveness (Romans 1:32). Moreover, if they have rejected the True God for an idol, even if they do cry out their cries will be to a god who cannot hear (Jeremiah 2:28).

#### The Natural Knowledge of God is not Enough

The words, **“Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men, by which we must be saved [than Jesus Christ],”** tell us that the natural knowledge of God is not enough to save the lost (Acts 4:12). The words, **“The natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness to him: and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned,”** tell us why the natural knowledge of God is not enough (1Corinthians 2:14). The words, **“The fleshly mind is hostile to God: for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be,”** tell us that our sinful mind is by nature in opposition to the things of God (Romans 8:6). And, the words, **“Since... the world through its wisdom did not know God, it pleased God to save those who believe through the foolishness of preaching,”** tell us that because the natural

knowledge of God is not enough, the only way to save people is through preaching the gospel (1Corinthians 1:21). As it is written, **“Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”** (Romans 10:17).

The reason that the natural knowledge of God is not enough is this. Even if a lost person came to believe in the God who created all things, and earnestly desired His forgiveness, that person could not be saved unless God revealed to him **the promise of forgiveness in Christ**. The words, **“Scripture has concluded all under sin, that the promise might be given to those who believe, through faith in Jesus Christ,”** tell us that all who trust in Christ are trusting in that promise (Galatians 3:22). The words, **“If the inheritance comes by the law, it is not given by promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise,”** tell us that Abraham was saved through faith in that promise (Galatians 3:18). The words, **“I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; it will bruise your head, and you will bruise His heel,”** gave Adam and Eve that promise of a deliverer (Genesis 3:15). And, the words, **“That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed... from the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias,”** tell us that Able was a prophet, and, therefore, (like Abraham) one who had God’s promise of forgiveness in Christ (Luke 1:50-51).

#### But The Natural Knowledge of God is Still Useful

Even though the natural knowledge is not enough to save the lost, it still has a purpose in God’s plan. First of all, the Law of God written on the heart is often the basis of civil law. Secondly, that law (in our conscience) is often what convicts the lost of sin, preparing them to receive the gospel. The following dialogue by the Apostle Paul gives us an example of how he used the natural knowledge of God as a tool for evangelism.

**“As I passed through, and saw your objects of worship, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore I proclaim to you, the one whom you worship in ignorance. The God who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; Nor is He served by men’s hands, as though He needed any thing, since He Himself gives to everyone life, and breath, and everything else; And has made of one blood all nations of men to live on all the face of the earth, and has determined their appointed times, and the boundaries they live in; So that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him, and find Him, although He is not far from any one of us”** (Acts 17:23-27).

However, as useful as this may be in evangelism, whenever we do not define who God is, Satan is quick to introduce a false definition, and thus a false god. For

that reason, in describing God it is always important to describe Him as the God who has revealed Himself in Scripture, the one God who is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

## 2. THE HOLY TRINITY

Although the truth of God's triune nature is revealed throughout Scripture, the fact that only one God exists is the foundation and cornerstone of the doctrine of the Trinity. We find that fact emphasized in the first words of the Shema, "**Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD,**" in the words, "**There is but one God,**" and in many other places (Deuteronomy 6:4, 1Corinthians 8:6). The words, "**Has a nation ever changed its gods, which are not really gods? but my people have exchanged their glory for what is worthless,**" tell us that all other gods are not real and are worthless (Jeremiah 2:11). The words, "**We know that an idol has no real existence in the world, and that there is no God but one,**" tell us that all gods other than the one true God do not actually exist (1Corinthians 8:4). The words, "**The LORD the King of Israel, and His redeemer the LORD of hosts, says; I am the first, and I am the last; and there is no God but me,**" tell us that the Father ("The LORD") and Christ ("His Redeemer") are one God (Isaiah 44:6). [I will deal with that further in the section on the Trinity revealed in the Old Testament.] And, the words, "**You should turn from these fantasies to the living God, who made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and everything in them,**" make it clear that the heathen can only be saved if they turn away from their false gods (Acts 14:15). In short, from beginning to end the Bible stresses the fact that there is only ONE GOD.

At the same time, the Bible plainly teaches the threefold nature of God. In the first epistle of John we read, "**There are three who bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one**" (1John 5:7). Now, I specifically chose that verse because it is attacked by many. I could defend it by pointing out that those words are found in Old Latin Bible manuscripts dating back to the fifth century, in Vulgate manuscripts dating back to the eighth century, and it was quoted by Cyprian in the third century (200-258AD). However, let us examine it in the light of what the Bible says.

The words, "**Loved by God the Father, and kept by Jesus Christ,**" tell us that the Father is God (Jude 11). Therefore, the Father bears record in heaven. The words, "**In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God,**" tell us that the Word is God (John 1:1). Therefore, the Word bears record in heaven. The words, "**The Spirit of the living God,**" tell us that the Holy Spirit is God (2Corinthians 3:3). Therefore, the Holy Ghost bears record in heaven. At the same time the words, "**There is but one God,**" tell us that there is only one God (1Corinthians 8:6). So every part of the verse, "**There are three who bear**

**record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one,**” is clearly taught in Scripture, and, therefore, is the Word of God (1John 5:7). Furthermore, the words **“these three are one,”** in Latin would be saying **“these tri are une,”** and that is where we get the term **tri-une [i.e. three-one]**. The word Trinity is just another way of expressing the word triune.

The word “Trinity” is the name we give to a body of doctrinal truths that are each clearly and explicitly stated in Scripture. For example:

1- The words, **“Don’t we all have one father? Hasn’t one God created us,”** give us the doctrine that **the Father is God** (Malachi 2:10)

2- The words, **“We are in the one who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God, and eternal life,”** give us the doctrine that **the Son is God** (1John 5:20).

3- The words, **“Why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Ghost... you have not lied to men, but to God,”** give us the doctrine that **the Holy Ghost is God** (Acts 5:3-4).

4- The words, **“There is one God; and there is none other but He,”** give us the doctrine that **there is only one God** (Mark 12:32).

In stating those four doctrines I in no way want to imply that the passages I quoted are the only passages of Scripture that teach those doctrines. Nor do I wish to imply that those four doctrines are all there is to the doctrine of the Trinity. There is far more. However, those four doctrines constitute the heart and core of the doctrine of the Trinity. And, the point I want to make is that each of them is clearly and explicitly stated in Scripture.

As you can see, **the Bible plainly tells us that the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God, and that there is only One God. Therefore, that is what God wants us to believe and teach.** However, the idea of three being one is totally alien to our way of thinking. In fact, in our universe it is impossible for three to be one. However, God transcends our universe. Although present everywhere, He exists in a different dimension, a spiritual dimension where Three can be One. Nevertheless, one false teacher after another has attempted to come up with some explanation aimed at reconciling what the Bible says about God with man’s ignorance. One such attempt claims that the Holy Spirit is nothing more than, “God’s active force”. We reject that claim because the Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit has a **"mind"** (Romans 8:27), **"speaks"** (1Timothy 4:1), **teaches** (John 14:26), can **"grieve"** (Ephesians 4:30), and can be **"lied to"** (Acts 5:3-4). Because **having a mind, speaking, teaching and so forth are the qualities of a personal being** (not a force), we speak of the Holy Spirit as a “Person”. Since the same can be said about the Father and the Son, we refer to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as three “Persons”

rather than three Gods. That terminology is used in order to avoid contradicting the fact that there is only One God.

Because Satan is continually at work trying to lead Christians away from what the Bible plainly says, and because the heart of man is **“deceitful above all things,”** we need to stick to what the Bible says (Jeremiah 17:9). (See John 8:31-32.) That means that when the Bible says that **the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God** we need to teach **that each of them is the one true God**, without trying to compromise what the Bible says in a vain attempt to make God’s Word fit our own puny little finite way of thinking. Compared to God, the most brilliant man is as ignorant as a worm. Therefore, we reject every attempt by man to deny that Christ is God, or to portray Him as only part of God rather than fully and completely God. The same holds true for the Father and the Holy Spirit. God wants us to teach what His Word says, without trying to make it fit our way of thinking. As it is written, **“He who has my word, let him speak my word faithfully.”** (Jeremiah 23:28).

The words, **“Who, being by nature God, did not see equality with God as taking something that was not His,”** tell us that Christ is equal to the Father (Philippians 2:6). The words, **“That all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him,”** tell us that both the Father and the Son are to be honored as God (John 5:23). And, the words, **“Whoever denies the Son, does not have the Father: but he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also,”** tell us that those who deny that Christ is God do not have the Father as their God (1John 2:23).

The words, **“Philip said, Lord, show us the Father, and that will be sufficient. Jesus replied, Have I been with you all this time, without your knowing me, Philip? he who has seen me has seen the Father; how then can you say, Show us the Father? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak to you do not come from me: but the Father who lives in me, is carrying out His work. Believe me when I say I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me on account of my works,”** tell us that that to see Jesus is to see the Father, and to hear Jesus is to hear the Father (John 14:8-11). And the words, **“That you might have the full assurance of understanding, and know the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ,”** tell us that the relationship of Christ to the Father is a mystery, and, therefore, something beyond our ability to understand (Colossians 2:3). For that reason, men need to simply teach what the Bible says, without **“Professing themselves to be wise”** by making up explanations (Romans 1:22).

Because Father Son and Holy Spirit are all one God, we need to realize that all true worship is directed at all three, even if we name only one, such as when we begin the Lord's prayer with the words, "**Our Father who art in heaven**" (Luke 11:2). The words, "**He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father,**" warn us against ever trying to worship one to the exclusion of the other two (John 5:23). And, because the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are all one God, they all share the attributes of God. For example, the words, "**I will always be with you, even to the end of the world,**" tell us that Christ is **omnipresent** (Matthew 28:20). The words, "**Jesus came to them, and said, All power is given to me in heaven and in earth,**" tell us that Jesus is **omnipotent** (Matthew 28:18). And, the words, "**Of Christ In whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,**" tell us that Christ is **omniscient** (Colossians 2:2-3)

At the same time, the Bible makes it clear that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit each have distinct roles, and a distinct place that is not shared by the other two. For example: the words, "**Jesus immediately went up out of the water: and, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him, and a voice from heaven, said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,**" speak of each person of the Trinity doing something different (Matthew 3:16-17). The words, "**God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son,**" tell us that it was the Son who died on the cross, not the Father (John 3:16). And, the words, "**They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance,**" tells us that it was the Holy Spirit that was poured out on the day of Pentecost, not the Father or the Son (Acts 2:4). At the same time, because there is only one God, whatever is done by one person of the Trinity is not done to the exclusion of the other two.

We worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; neither confounding the Persons nor dividing the Substance. For there is one Person of the Father; another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost is all one: the glory equal, the majesty coeternal. (From the Athanasian Creed.)

### **3. THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY TRINITY IN CONTROVERSY**

Although the doctrine of the Holy Trinity embodies truths that are plainly stated in Scripture, throughout history Satan has attacked it with a fury. He has attacked it through those who deny that only one God exists, and through those who deny or explain away what the Bible says about God the Son or God the Holy Spirit. He has attacked it through false religions, such as the Muslims who spread their



religion by the sword, killing, enslaving and persecuting Christians along the way. And, he has attacked it through false prophets and through fools **“professing themselves to be wise”** (Romans 1:22). Against all such attacks the Bible warns, **“There were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will privately introduce damnable heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves”** (2Peter 2:1).

Those who deny that there is only one God have to explain away passage after passage of Scripture. However, the words, **“Those who know God accept what we [the inspired writers of Scripture] say; those who are not of God will not accept what we say. That is how we can distinguish the Spirit of truth from the spirit of error,”** tell us that all who explain away statements of Scripture have a spirit of error, and should not be listened to (1John 4:6). As it is written, **“To the law and to the testimony: if they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.”** (Isaiah 8:6).

Regarding the fact that there is only one God, the words, **“Master, you have spoken the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but He,”** plainly state that truth (Matthew 12:23). The words, **“There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,”** again tell us that there is one God (1Timothy 2:5). And, the words, **“You believe that there is one God; you do well: even the demons believe, and tremble,”** tell us that even the demons believe that there is one God (James 2:19).

Those who deny that there is only one God have been known to quote the words, **“There are gods many, and lords many,”** but they are pulling that statement out of context (1Corinthians 8:5). In context that verse says, **“When it comes to eating meat that has been offered in sacrifice to idols, we know that an idol has no real existence in the world, and that there is no God but one. For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as There are gods many, and lords many,) Yet for us there is but one God,”** so those words are saying the opposite of what they claim (1Corinthians 8:4-6). And, to all who think that they can just make the Bible say what they want it to say, God says, **“Woe unto those who are wise in their own eyes, and think they are shrewd... Their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have cast away the law of the LORD of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel”** (Isaiah 5:21,24).

Those who go in the other direction by denying that there are three distinct persons, usually deny the deity of Christ. However, the words, **“Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government will be on His shoulders: and**

**His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace,**” plainly tell us that Christ is God while emphasizing His unity with the Father (Isaiah 9:6).

The words, **“Surely you are our father, even though Abraham does not know us, and Israel does not recognize us: you, O LORD [Jahweh], are our father, our redeemer; your name is from everlasting,”** tell us that our redeemer is Jehovah (Isaiah 63:16). And, the words, **“Behold, the days come, says the LORD, when I will raise to David a righteous Branch... and this is the name by which He will be called, The LORD [Jahweh] Our Righteousness,”** ascribe the name Jehovah or Jahweh to the descendant of David, namely Christ (Jeremiah 23:5-6).

The words, **“Before you brought the mountains into existence, or formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, you are God,”** tell us that God is from eternity (Psalm 90:2). While the words, **“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you will He come forth unto me who is to be ruler of Israel; whose origin is from long ago, from everlasting,”** tell us that Christ has existed from eternity (Micah 5:2). So we see that the Bible equates God with Christ by ascribing eternal existence to both.

The words, **“I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged according to what they had done, as it was written in the books,”** tell us that God will judge all men (Revelations 21:5). At the same time, the words, **“The Father does not judge anyone, but has committed all judgment to the Son,”** tell us that when we are judged by God, it will be God the Son (not God the Father) who will judge (John 5:22).

The words, **“Don’t we all have one father? Hasn’t one God created us?”** tell us that God the Father is our creator (Malachi 2:10). The words, **“The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty has given me life,”** tell us that God the Holy Spirit is our creator (Job 33:4). The words, **“All things in heaven and earth, both visible and invisible, were created by Him, whether they be thrones, or jurisdictions, or provinces, or authorities: all things were created by Him, and for Him, and He is before all things, and by Him all things have their existence,”** tell us that God the Son is our creator (Colossians 1:16-17). And, the words, **“Who, being by nature God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the nature of a servant, and was born as a man,”** tell us that God the Son is equal to God the Father (Philippians 2:6-7). In fact, if God the Son was not equal to God the Father He would not be fully and completely God. That is why all attempts to portray the Son as subordinate to the Father wind up with more than one God. And, that is how we know that when Christ

says of Himself, "**My Father is greater than I,**" He is speaking of Himself according to His human nature in His state of humiliation (John 14:28).

Those who portray Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as three modes or faces that God puts on, wind up explaining away all of the Bible passages that speak of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as distinct from each other. For example: The words, "**Jesus lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the time has come; glorify your Son, so that your Son may also glorify you,**" tell us that the Son is not the Father (John 17:1). The words, "**I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, that He may remain with you forever,**" tell us that the Son and the Spirit are distinct from the Father (John 14:16). And, the words, "**When the Comforter comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of me,**" again tell us that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are distinct persons within the One true God (John 15:26).

We know that the Holy Spirit is a person, not just a force, because the words, "**The Spirit specifically says, that in the future some will depart from the faith,**" tell us that the Holy Spirit speaks (1Timothy 4:1); the words, "**He who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit,**" tell us that the Holy Spirit has a mind (Romans 8:27); the words, "**The Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things,**" tell us that the Holy Spirit teaches (John 14:26); the words, "**Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God,**" tell us that the Holy Spirit can grieve (Ephesians 4:30); and the words, "**Why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Ghost,**" tell us that the Holy Ghost can be lied to (Acts 5:3). Those are all the qualities of a personal being, not a force.

We know that Christ's divine nature is distinct from that of the Father because the words, "**In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God,**" tell us that Christ [the Word] not only was God but was with God (John 1:1). We know that Christ is "the Word" because the Bible says, "**The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us**" (John 1:14). And, we know that Christ existed from eternity because Christ said, "**Truly, truly, I tell you, Before Abraham was, I am,**" and because the words, "**You, O LORD, are our Father, our Redeemer; your name is from everlasting,**" tell us that Christ [our Redeemer] "**is from everlasting,**" (John 8:58, Isaiah 63:16).

The Bible tells us that, "**The minds of those who do not believe have been blinded**" (2Corinthians 4:4). And, Satan has several ways of blinding those he wants to keep in darkness. He blinds some by making them think that they are smarter than everyone else. That keeps them from listening to those who try to point out their errors. He blinds some by making them think that the Bible is full of deep mysterious

statements. That gets them so busy looking for something profound that they fail to see the plain meaning of the words. He gets some into cults that lead them to twist and explain away many truths of Scripture. He leads some to filter everything the Bible says through the Godless philosophy of naturalism. And, he leads all of them to think that they are good people, or that the rules they keep make them good. It is those who have been blinded by Satan who are not satisfied with the Doctrine of the Trinity as it is plainly stated in Scripture, and as it has been taught by the Christian church for two-thousand years.

#### **4. THE TRINITARIAN TERMINOLOGY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH**

Although the doctrine of the Trinity is clearly taught in Scripture, those who refuse to accept what the Bible says often try to hide their disagreement by redefining the words of Scripture. We see that today in the way cults redefine Biblical terms in order to appear Christian. We also see it in the way theistic-evolutionists redefine the words of Genesis. Historically Christians have regarded that sort of double-speak as dishonest. Nevertheless we have to deal with it, and the ancient church countered that sort of double talk by adopting terms that false teachers would not accept.

In 325AD church leaders from all over the Roman empire met in the city of Nicea to deal with the followers of Arius, who denied the deity of Christ. Like many “liberals” today, the followers of Arius hid their rejection of Scripture behind Christian terminology. For example: They would say that Jesus is the son of God, but denied that Jesus had a divine nature and existed from eternity. Of course the Bible says the opposite. The words, **“Out of you will He come forth unto me who is to be ruler of Israel; whose origin is from long ago, from everlasting,”** tell us that Christ is from everlasting (Micah 5:2). I could quote other passages, but what I want to stress is that the ancient church countered that problem by adopting a creed (recited during every worship service) that included words the Arians would not accept. That creed is known today as the Nicene Creed, and that creed (with minor variation) is recited by traditional Christians around the world.

#### **THE NICENE CREED**

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, True God of True God, Begotten, not made, Being of one substance with the Father, By whom all things were made; Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary And was

made man; And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried; And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures; And ascended into heaven, And sits on the right hand of the Father; And He shall come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead; Whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Ghost, The Lord and Giver of Life, Who proceeds from the Father and the Son, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, Who spoke by the Prophets. And I believe one holy Christian and Apostolic Church. I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, And I look for the resurrection of the dead, And the life of the world to come. Amen.

The wording of this creed is carefully thought out, so let me explain some of its statements. The words, **“I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth,”** simply restate the words, “Don’t we all have one father? Hasn’t one God created us?” (Malachi 2:10). Those words were never intended to deny what the Bible says about Christ and creation (Col. 1:16). Everything cannot be included in a brief creed. Those words were intended to affirm what the Bible says about Creation, while the words, **“Maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible,”** were intended to make it clear that, unlike Christ, angels are created beings.

The purpose of the phrase, **“Begotten of His Father before all worlds,”** is to affirm the fact that Christ did not come into existence when His human nature was begotten in the womb of the virgin Mary, but that He existed as God the Son from eternity. It is not saying that Christ’s divine nature was begotten, but that He existed before anything was created.

The purpose of the words, **“God of God, Light of Light, True God of True God,”** are to emphasize the fact that Christ is true God. The words, “Light of Light,” relate to the words, **“God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all”** (1John 1:5).

The purpose of the words, **“Begotten, not made, Being of one substance with the Father,”** is to emphasize the fact that Christ is not a created being. The idea is that a created being would be made of a different substance than its creator. For example: If you create something in your own image such as a statue, it would not be made of the same substance that you are made of. But, your natural son would be made of the same substance you are made of. Therefore, to say that Christ is of one substance with the father, is to say that He is by nature God. However, unlike a human father and son, there is only one divine being, not two or three. The three are one!

If some of this wording seems strange, realize that it was necessary in order to expose those who were undermining the gospel by denying Christ's deity. And, it worked! If you travel to Egypt, you will find that the Coptic [Egyptian] Orthodox Church — which has endured Moslem persecution for well over a thousand years, and only recently has been allowed to have its own church buildings — still uses this creed, as do traditional churches around the world.

The word trinity is simply a name we give to all that the Bible tells us about God — with emphasis on the fact that the Father is God, the Son is God and the Holy Ghost is God, yet there is only one God. Moreover, **because “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked,” we should never attempt to supplement what God has revealed about Himself with ideas dreamed up by men** (Jeremiah 17:9). God wants us to teach His Word as He revealed it, **“Line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little,”** not our ideas (Isaiah 28:10). Because Trinitarian terminology has played such an important role in preserving this doctrine, Christians need to understand the terminology, use it and defend it. Those who think that they can improve on it only cause suspicion, conflict, and division. Moreover, **because “The heart is deceitful above all things”** we need to continually remind people that God transcends our universe (Jeremiah 17:9). Although He is present everywhere, He exists in a different dimension, a spiritual dimension where Three can be One. And, it is just as foolish for someone to think that he can explain the truth about God by making up explanations, as it would be for him to think that he can discover the name of my next door neighbor by making up a name.

## **5. THE HOLY TRINITY REVEALED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT**

Although the doctrine of the Holy Trinity is clearly taught in the New Testament it is not alien to the Old Testament. On the contrary, the Old Testament lays a strong foundation for it. And, even though it is not explained in the Old Testament, there were some Jews of that era who realized that its pages reveal a plurality within the One True God, and even evidence of a threefold nature.

The Hebrew language has more than one word for God. In addition to the name Jahweh or Jehovah, there is the more generic term “Elohim” which is found throughout the Old Testament. And, unlike the name Jahweh (which is closely related to the Divine name “I Am,” and can be translated as “He Who Is”) Elohim is the plural form of the word “Eolah” which means “God”. That being understood, let us look at the first words of the Shema (the Jewish Creed).

**“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, is one LORD!”**

### Deuteronomy 6:4

As we examine that statement, we find that the word translated, “LORD” in both occurrences is the name Jehovah, which is emphatically singular, while the word “God” is a translation of the plural word Elohim. If we look at the meaning of the names, that verse could be translated as “**Hear, O Israel: He Who Is our Gods, is one God**”. Furthermore, the word translated, “one” is the Hebrew word, “**echad**” which signifies a compound “one”. That word is used in the sentence, “For this reason a man will leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be **one** flesh” (Genesis 2:24). It is also used in the sentence, “Join both of them together as a single stick; and they will become **one** in your hand” (Ezekiel 37:17). Now, the Jews do have another word which signifies a solitary “one”, and that word is “**yachid**” — which is usually translated into English as “only”. That word is used in the sentence, “Take now your son, your **only** son Isaac” (Genesis 22:2). It is significant that Moses used the word “echad,” not “yachid,” in Deuteronomy 6:4.

### Father Son and Holy Spirit

The Old Testament uses the terms Father Son and Holy Spirit in reference to God.

The words, “**Turn, O backsliding children, says the LORD... I thought you would call me, Father; and would not turn away from me,**” identify God with the word father (Jeremiah 3:14, 19). The words, “**If I am a father, where is my honor?... The LORD of hosts says this,**” identify God with the word father (Malachi 1:6). The words, “**The LORD says... for I am a father to Israel,**” identify God with the word father (Jeremiah 31:7, 9). The words, “**Don’t we all have one father? Hasn’t one God created us?**” identify God with the word father (Malachi 2:10). And, the words, “**You, O LORD, are our father, our redeemer; your name is from everlasting,**” again identify God with the word father (Isaiah 63:16).

The words, “**Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government will be on His shoulders: and His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace,**” identify God with the word son (Isaiah 9:6). The words, “**The LORD said unto him... I will have mercy on the house of Judah, and will save them by the LORD their God,**” speak of the God who has mercy, and the God who saves, as if they are distinct from each other (Hosea 1:7). The words, “**You, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you will come one who will rule in Israel for me; whose origin is from long ago, from everlasting**” identify God with one who will be born in Bethlehem [a Son] (Micah 5:2). And, the words, “**Behold, a virgin will conceive, and bear a son, and will call His name God with us,**” again identify God with the word son (Isaiah 7:14).

The words, **“Create in me a clean heart, O God... Do not cast me away from your presence; or take your Holy Spirit from me,”** speak of God’s Holy Spirit (Psalm 51:10-11). The words, **“He [God] said, Surely they are my people... But they rebelled, and grieved His Holy Spirit,”** speak of God’s Holy Spirit (Isaiah 63:8, 11). And, the words, **“The Spirit of the LORD spoke by me, and His word was in my tongue,”** tell us that the Spirit of the Lord is not a mere emanation from God, but one who speaks (2Samuel 23:2).

Isaiah 48:12-16

**“Listen to me, O Jacob and Israel, whom I called; I am He; I am the first, I am also the last. My hand has laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand has spread out the heavens: when I call them, they stand forth together... Come near to me, listen to this; From the beginning I have not said anything in secret; from the time that it was, there I am: and now the Lord GOD, and His Spirit, has sent me.”** [Comment: notice that the one who is speaking is the one who **“Laid the foundation of the earth”**, and **“spread out the heavens”**. Yet His words, **“The Lord GOD, and His Spirit, has sent me,”** speak of two more who are God.]

#### Some Other Passages

The words, **“God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness... So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him,”** speak of God in the plural **“our image,”** and then in the singular **“His own image”** (Genesis 1:26-27).

The words, **“I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?”** speak of God in the singular **“Whom shall I send,”** and then switch to the plural **“who will go for us”** (Isaiah 6:8).

The words, **“The LORD God said, Since man has become like one of us, to know good and evil,”** have Jehovah speaking as more than one, saying **“like one of us”** (Genesis 3:22).

The words, **“Your throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the scepter of your kingdom is a righteous scepter. You love righteousness, and hate wickedness: that is why God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your companions,”** address God in the first line, and then speak of God His God (Psalm 45:6-7).

The words, **“The messenger of Jehovah said to her [Hagar], Return to your mistress... And she called the name of Jehovah who spoke to her, The God who sees me,”** identify **“The messenger [angel] of Jehovah,”** as Jehovah (Genesis 16:9 and 13).



The words, **“The LORD said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool,”** speak of more than one Lord (Psalm 110:1).

The words, **“Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory,”** tell us that Jehovah is thrice holy indicating a threeness in the one Lord (Isaiah 6:3).

In addition, many see the Aaronic blessing (Numbers 6:24-26), with its threefold reference to Jehovah as an indication of God’s threefold nature.

**“The LORD bless you, and keep you:**

**The LORD make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you:**

**The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace.”**

Genesis 18:1-3

**“The LORD appeared to Abraham in the plains of Mamre: as he sat in the tent door during the heat of the day, and he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself toward the ground, and said, My Lord, if now I have found favor in your sight, I pray you, do not pass by your servant.”** [Notice that when the LORD (**singular**) appeared to Abraham, Abraham saw **“three men,”** ran to them, bowed, and said **“My Lord”** (**singular**).]

Although this verse has been used to illustrate the Trinity, because the Bible says **“No man has seen God at any time,”** this appearance of God is better viewed as a pre-advent appearance of Christ along with two angels, the same two angels that later visited Lot in Sodom (John 1:18).

## **6. GOD'S ESSENCE AND ATTRIBUTES**

### **1. THE DOCTRINE IN GENERAL**

God has revealed Himself in Scripture as **the only God**, the Living God, the one who unlike all others exists from eternity supreme and perfect, **“The God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, mighty and terrifying, who does not regard persons, or take bribes. // who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings... Who alone is immortal, dwelling in the light that no man can approach; whom no one has ever seen, or can see // He is before all things, and by Him all things have their existence.”** (Deuteronomy 10:17, 1Timothy 6:15-16, Colossians 1:17). Therefore, even though the Bible sometimes uses the name god or gods in reference to false gods and authorities, it makes a distinction between the One True God and so-called gods. Making it clear that, **“An idol has no real existence in the world, and that there is no God but one”** (1Corinthians 8:4-6).

Furthermore, the names that God applies to Himself in Scripture are not mere titles, but a description of God Himself in terms of His fundamental nature, attributes

and works. That is especially true of the name Jahweh or Jehovah, which has its origin in Scripture, and sets the God of the Bible apart from all others. That name shares its origin with the divine name “I Am” and can be translated as “He Who Is”. Through the words, **“God said to Moses, I AM WHO I AM: therefore you will say to the children of Israel, I AM has sent me unto you,”** God reveals Himself as an eternal being (Exodus 3:14). Through the words, **“God also said to Moses, Tell the children of Israel, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me unto you,”** God reveals Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Exodus 3:15). And, the words, **“I am Jahweh: that is my name: and I will not give my glory to anyone else, or my praise to graven images,”** explain why the divine name Jahweh or Jehovah is never applied to any created thing (Isaiah 42:8).

When we describe a man, we might describe him according to his being (origin, looks), his accomplishments, or his attributes (kind, honest etc.). However, none of these things describe his essential core being. Accomplishments may be faked, looks and personality can change, and even one’s origin may be wrong since some people are never told that they were adopted. In contrast, Biblical descriptions of God’s origin (“I Am”), accomplishments, or attributes reveal His essential core being, things that will never change. As it is written, **“I am the LORD, I do not change”** (Malachi 3:6).

The words, **“There is no other God besides me; a just God and a Savior,”** tell us that God is **just** (Isaiah 45:21). The words, **“The LORD is longsuffering, and of great mercy,”** tell us that God is **merciful** (Numbers 14:18). And, the words, **“God is not a man, that He should lie,”** tell us that God is **truthful** (Numbers 23:19). Those are three of God’s attributes. However, when those attributes are ascribed to any man (when we say that someone is just, merciful or truthful etc.) the best we can find in man falls far short of perfection. It is not so imperfect that it is entirely unrelated to what God has revealed about Himself. In fact, the shortcomings we see in men help us to appreciate God all the more. Nevertheless, the attributes we ascribe to men are gifts of God not part of their essence, and may be lost. A person may cease to be just, a person may cease to be merciful, a person may cease to be truthful, a person may even cease to live, but God never changes.

In learning what God has revealed about Himself in Scripture it is important to adhere strictly to what the words say without letting the imagination run wild. The words, **“What we now see is like a dim reflection on a glass; but then we will see face to face: now I know in part; but then I will know even as I am known,”** remind us of our own ignorance, and the danger of assuming that we know more than what the Bible actually says (1Corinthians 13:12). For example: much harm has been

done by those who twist what the Bible says about the goodness of God into an excuse to sin, or twist what the Bible says about God's hatred of sin into a denial of the gospel. In short, we need to let Scripture define God's attributes.

## 2. THE PASSIVE ATTRIBUTES

It would be difficult, if not impossible, to compile an exhaustive list of God's attributes. Not only because we know so little, but also because human language uses synonyms to describe things. For example: The words, "**He, [God] being full of compassion,**" reveal God as **compassionate**, while the words, "**Blessed is the LORD: for He has shown me His marvelous kindness,**" tell us that God is **kind** (Psalm 78:38, Psalm 31:21). The question is: Do we treat kindness and compassion as two separate attributes, or as synonyms? Or do we treat God's kindness as one aspect of His compassion? Since the purpose of this Theology is to look at what God says in His Word, not what men think, I will not attempt to answer those questions, or make an exhaustive list of attributes. Instead I will focus on attributes that are fundamental to our knowledge of God.

The attributes that I have listed as passive are those that have to do with who God is, rather than what He does. They are His **eternity, unity, omnipresence, infinity, glory, inscrutability, perfection, immutability, and indivisibility.**

**ETERNITY** – The words, "**From everlasting to everlasting, you are God,**" tell us that God has always existed, and will always exist (Psalm 90:2). The words, "**Thus says the LORD the King of Israel, and His redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God,**" tell us that no God existed before God (Isaiah 44:6). And, the words, "**Now to the eternal King, the immortal, invisible, and only wise God, be glory and honor for ever and ever. Amen,**" tell us that God is **eternal, immortal, invisible and wise** all of which are all attributes of God (1Timothy 1:17). [See Psalm 102:27, Deut. 33:27, Isaiah 9:6, Gen. 21:33, Isaiah 40:28, 2Cor. 5:1.]

**UNITY** – The words, "**There is no God but Me,**" tell us that there is only one God (Isaiah 44:6). The words, "**God is a Spirit,**" tell us that the One God is "a Spirit" — singular (John 4:24). And the words, "**I am He: no God was formed before me, and there will be none after me,**" tell us that no God came into existence before God, and none ever will (Isaiah 43:10).

**OMNIPRESENCE** – The words, "**Can anyone hide himself in a secret place where I will not see him? asks the LORD. Don't I fill heaven and earth? asks the LORD,**" tell us that God is present everywhere (Jeremiah 23:24). The words,

**“Where can I go to escape your spirit? or where can I flee to escape your presence? If I go up into heaven, you are there: if I make the grave my bed, behold, you are there. If I take the wings of the morning, and stay at the most distant parts of the sea; Even there your hand will lead me, and your right hand will hold me,”** tell us that there is no place where God is not present, and nothing that He does is done without Him being present (Psalm 139:7-10). And, the words, **“In Him [God] we live, and move, and have our being; and some of your own poets have said, We are His offspring,”** tell us that He is with us at all times (Acts 17:28). And, because God is present everywhere, He cannot be measured or confined. However, even though God is present in all of His creation (including in us) the creation is not joined to Him, or a part of Him as pantheists imagine. Instead God is distinct and separate from His creation as the Bible plainly says.

**INFINITY** – The attribute of infinity tells us that God is not only eternal and present everywhere in space, but that He transcends both space and time. The words, **“In the beginning [of time] God created the heaven [space] and the earth,”** tell us that God created space and time (Genesis 1:1). The word “heaven” is not referring to the sun, moon and stars, because they were not created until day four. The words, **“You, even you, are LORD alone; you have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are in it, the seas, and all that is in it, and you preserve them all; and the host of heaven worships you,”** tell us that God made heaven [space] so His dwelling place transcends space (Nehemiah 9:6). The words, **“With the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day,”** tell us that God is not bound by time (2Peter 3:8). The words, **“The angel... swore by Him who lives for ever and ever, who created heaven, and everything in it, and the earth, and everything in it, and the sea, and everything in it, that time should be no longer,”** seem to be saying that time will end (Revelation 10:6). And, the words, **“So shall we ever be with the Lord,”** tell us that our life with God will never end (1Thessalonians 4:17).

**GLORY** – The words, **“Who is like you, O LORD, among the gods? who is like you, glorious in holiness, awesome in splendor, doing wonders?”** speak of God’s glory and holiness, both of which are attributes (Exodus 15:11). The words, **“I will speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty, and of the wonderful things you have done,”** tell us of God’s glory and splendor (Psalm 145:5). The words, **“May His glorious name be blessed for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with His glory,”** tell us that God’s name is Glorious (Psalm 72:19). And, the words, **“Be watchful to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that you may fear this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD YOUR GOD,”** again tell us that God’s name is a glorious name (Deuteronomy 28:58).

**INSCRUTABILITY** – The word “unsearchable” is sometimes used for this attribute of God. The idea is that God is unfathomable, that our minds are too little to fully understand Him, His thoughts, or why He does what He does. The words, “**O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!**” Tell us that God’s judgments are unsearchable (Romans 11:33). The words, “**Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and His greatness is beyond our comprehension,**” tell us that God’s greatness is beyond our ability to comprehend (Psalm 145:3). And, the words, “**I realized that a man cannot find out the meaning of all the work God requires under the sun: because even though a man works hard to discover it, he will not find it; yea even though a wise man claims to know it, he is not able to discover its meaning,**” tell us that we cannot understand why God does what He does (Ecclesiastes 8:17).

**PERFECTION** – The words, “**Be perfect, even as your Father who is in heaven is perfect,**” tell us that God is perfect (Matthew 5:48). God’s perfection includes His attributes of righteousness and holiness. However, it also includes what are sometimes called God’s negative attributes — the fact that He does not have any of the faults we see in men. For example: The words, “**God is not a man, that He should lie,**” tell us that God will not lie (Numbers 23:19). And, the words, “**The LORD redeems the soul of His servants: and none of those who trust in Him will be condemned,**” tell us that God will not betray our trust (Psalm 34:22).

**IMMUTABILITY** – The words, “**O my God... Long ago you laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you will endure: yea, all of them will grow old like a garment; you will change them like clothes, and they will pass away: But you are the same, and your years will never end,**” tell us that God does not age, or change with time as the things He has created do (Psalm 102:24-27). The words, “**Every good and perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, who does not change, or shift as the shadows,**” tell us that God does not constantly change like we do (James 1:17). The words, “**A man has many plans in his mind; nevertheless the LORD’S plan will stand,**” tell us that nothing can stop what God has determined to bring to pass (Proverbs 19:21). And, the words, “**I am the LORD, I do not change; that is why you sons of Jacob have not been destroyed,**” tell us that Jahweh [He Who Is] does not change, either according to His existence or the plan being carried out by His divine will (Malachi 3:6). Therefore, whenever the Bible speaks of God changing His mind, such as when it says, “**I am sorry that I made Saul king,**” those

statements need to be understood in a way that is consistent with God's divine foreknowledge and eternal purpose (1Samuel 15:11).

**INDIVISIBILITY** – The attribute of divine indivisibility (sometimes called divine simplicity) affirms the fact that God does not consist of matter and form, as created things do. While a man is the sum total of his parts, eyes, ears hands etc., **“God is a Spirit”** (John 4:24). And, because God is a Spirit, He is invisible. As it is written, **“Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory for ever”** (1Timothy 1:17). Therefore, it would be wrong for us to portray God as some sort of exalted man consisting of parts (hands, eyes etc.) In fact, the words, **“Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man,”** condemn those who portray God as an exalted man (Romans 1:22-23). That being the case, whenever the Bible speaks of God's hands or eyes etc., we need to realize that His hands and eyes are not just parts of God, but are everywhere He is. So, when the Bible says, **“The eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth,”** it is not saying that God has two eyes, but that He sees everything (2Chronicles 16:9). Moreover, because the eyes of God are everywhere He is, He sees every person on earth at the same time. And, He sees each person in such detail that “the very hairs” of their head “are all numbered” (Matthew 10:30). Likewise, when the Bible says, **“This comes from the hand of God,”** it is not saying that God has two hands (Ecclesiastes 2:24). On the contrary, because God's hands are wherever He is, when He created the stars there were not just two hands at work. In fact, if we speak of hands at all we would have to say that when He created the stars trillions upon trillions of microscopic hands were at work fashioning subatomic particles from nothing, atoms from subatomic parts, and stars from atoms.

### **3. THE ACTIVE ATTRIBUTES**

The attributes that I have listed as active are those that have to do with how God deals with us or what He does. They are life, knowledge, wisdom, will, holiness, justice, honesty, power, and goodness.

**DIVINE LIFE** – The words, **“The LORD is the true God, He is the living God,”** tell us that unlike all idols, our God is alive (Jeremiah 10:10). The words, **“Who alone is immortal, dwelling in the light that no man can approach”** tell us that God is immortal (1Timothy 6:16). The words, **“In Him we live, and move, and have our being; and some of your own poets have said, We are His offspring,”** tell us that God is the source of our life (Acts 17:28). The words **“The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God: and those who hear**

**will live. For as the Father has life in Himself; so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself,**” are not just telling us that God is alive, but that He alone has the power to give life (John 5:25-26). And, the words, **“They became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made to resemble corruptible man,”** tell us that God is incorruptible (Romans 1:22-23). [See also: Deut. 32:39, 1Tim. 1:17, Acts 14:15 and 17:25, Heb. 10:31, 1Tim. 3:15 and 4:10.]

**DIVINE KNOWLEDGE** – The words, **“The eyes of the LORD are everywhere, watching the wicked and the good,”** tell us that God sees all things (Proverbs 15:3). The words, **“Your eyes saw me, before I was formed; and in your book all the days of my life were written, before they ever took shape, before any of them began,”** tell us that God knows all that will happen (Psalm 139:16). The words, **“If for any reason our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things,”** tell us that there is no limit to God’s knowledge (1John 3:20). And, the words, **“O LORD, you have searched me, and known me. You know when I sit down and when I get up, you understand my thoughts from far away. You watch over my travels and my rest, and know all my ways. Before there is a word on my tongue, O LORD, you know all about it,”** tell us that God knows everything about us (Psalm 139:1-4).

The words, **“There is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and is making known to king Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the future,”** tell us that God knows the future (Daniel 2:28). The words, **“And you, Capernaum... if the mighty works, that have been done in you, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained to this day,”** tell us that God even knows what might have happened, but did not (Matthew 11:23). And, the words, **“Do not let anyone say when he is tempted, I am tempted by God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, nor does He tempt anyone,”** tell us that God does not cause men to do evil things, even though He knows what they will do (James 1:13). [See 1Sam. 2:3, 1Kings 8:39, Psalm 7:9, Ps. 34:15, Ps. 139”1-2, John 21:17, John 2:25, Isaiah 66:2, Matt. 6:32.]

**DIVINE WISDOM** – The words, **“Now to the eternal King, the immortal, invisible, and only wise God, be glory and honor for ever and ever. Amen,”** tell us that God is wise (1Timothy 1:17). The words, **“O LORD, how many are the things you have made! in wisdom you have made them all: the earth is full of your creatures,”** tell us that the design we see in all created things is evidence of God’s wisdom (Psalm 104:24). The words, **“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!”** tell us that God’s wisdom is beyond our ability to understand (Romans 11:33). While the words, **“Every good and perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, who does not change, or shift**

as the shadows,” and the words, **“If anyone of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives to all men generously,”** tell us that all true wisdom comes from God (James 1:5 and 17).

**DIVINE WILL** – The words, **“Who has known the mind of the Lord? or who has been His counselor?”** tell us that God has a mind (Romans 11:34). The words, **“For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that you abstain from sexual immorality,”** tell us that God has a will (1Thessalonians 4:3). The words, **“The LORD tries the righteous: but He hates the wicked and anyone who loves violence,”** tells us that God hates wickedness (Psalm 11:5). The words, **“We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; so that each may receive the things done in the body, according to everything he has done, whether good or evil,”** tell us that it is God’s will to condemn sin (2Corinthians 5:10). And, the words, **“He who believes on Him is not condemned: but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God,”** tell us that God will condemn all who do not trust in Christ (John 3:18). In understanding God’s will it is important to stick strictly to what God has revealed in His Word (Pr. 30:6, Rom. 1:22).

**DIVINE HOLINESS** – The words, **“I am the LORD your God: you shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and you shall be holy; for I am holy,”** tell us that God is Holy, the words, **“This is the will of God, even your sanctification, that you abstain from sexual immorality,”** tell us that God wants His people to be holy [set apart from the world, sanctified] (Leviticus 11:44, 1Thessalonians 4:3). The words, **“The LORD is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works,”** use holiness as a synonym for righteousness (Psalm 145:17). The words, **“Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I, who am but dust and ashes, have taken upon myself to speak to the Lord,”** tell us that because God is holy we should approach Him with reverence (Genesis 18:27). And the words, **“We were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, // In whom we have free and confident access to God through faith in Him,”** tell us that is only through the forgiveness that is ours in Christ that we have access to our holy God (Romans 5:10, Ephesians 3:12). [See Deut 32:4, Lev. 11:44, 1Pet. 1:15-16, Isaiah 6:3, John 12:41, Ex. 3:5, Romans 5:1.]

**DIVINE JUSTICE** – The words, **“Be careful what you do: for you do not judge for man, but for the LORD, who is with you in the judgment. Therefore now let the fear of the LORD be upon you; take heed what you do: for there is no injustice with the LORD our God, or respect of persons, or accepting gifts,”** tell us that God is fair and just in all of His decisions, and will condemn all judges who are not just (2Chronicles 19:6-7). The words, **“You shall not make unrighteousness**



**judgments: you shall not respect the person of the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty: but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor,”** tell us that just judgments are righteous judgments (Leviticus 19:5). The words, **“The ungodly will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous,”** warn the ungodly that because God is just they will be punished (Psalm 1:5-6). The words, **“Because of your hard and impenitent heart you are stockpiling wrath for yourself in the day when the wrath and righteous judgment of God is revealed; For He will render to every man according to his deeds,”** warn the unrighteous of their need to repent (Romans 2:5-6). And, the words, **“The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and who refuse to accept the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who will be punished with unending destruction away from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His might,”** remind us that because God is just He has provided a way of receiving forgiveness through **“the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ”** (2Thessalonians 1:7-9). [See Psalm 92:15, Hosea 14:9, Ps. 19:7, Isaiah 45:23, Ps. 119:137, Romans 1:32, Acts 17:31.]

**DIVINE HONESTY** – The words, **“God is not a man, that He should lie; nor the son of man, that He should repent: has He said, and shall He not do it? or has He spoken, and shall He not make it good?”** tell us that God is unfailing in speaking the truth and in keeping His promises (Numbers 23:19). The words, **“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away,”** tell us that what God has promised will never fail (Matthew 24:35). The words, **“Let God be true, but every man a liar... That you might be justified in your sayings, and might overcome when you are judged, // Looking to the hope of eternal life, that God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago,”** tell us that we need to believe God’s Word not man’s word [i.e. science, tradition etc.] if we want to escape God’s judgment (Romans 3:4, Titus 1:2). And, this is God’s promise, **“Whoever believes in Him [Christ] will not be ashamed,”** on the day of judgment (Romans 10:11). [See Psalm 146:6, 2Sam. 7:28, Isaiah 65:16.]

**DIVINE POWER** – The words, **“Jesus looked at them, and said to them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible”** tell us that nothing is impossible for God to do (Matthew 19:26). [See Gen. 18:14, Mark 10:27, Luke 18:27.] The words, **“The LORD made the heavens by His word; and all the stars by the breath of His mouth... Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast,”** tell us that God’s power is revealed in His creation (Psalm 33:6-9). However, the words, **“An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign; but no sign will be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonah,”**

tell us that even though God can do all things, He does not use His power arbitrarily (Matthew 12:39).

In the past, enemies of God [See James 4:4] have tried to confuse believers by saying, “If God cannot lie, steal, die, or make a stone that is too big for Him to lift, then there are some things that He cannot do”. That sort of reasoning only shows their ignorance, for by the miracle of the virgin birth God took upon Himself the nature of man in the person of Christ Jesus. In the person of Christ it was possible for Him to lie or steal but He did not. As man there were many stones that He could not lift. And, as the God-man He did die. He died in our place so that we could have forgiveness. As believers, there are many things that we do not understand, however, in regard to those who use such arguments God warns us, **“Beware lest any man take you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy”** (Colossians 2:8). **“If they do not speak according to” God’s “Word, it is because there is no light in them”** (Isaiah 8:20).

**DIVINE GOODNESS** – The Bible passages that reveal God’s goodness include those that speak of His compassion, love, mercy, grace, long-suffering and so forth. That being understood, the words, **“God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life,”** clearly reveal God’s goodness (John 3:16). The words, **“You, O Lord, are a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth,”** are aimed at assuring those with a repentant heart of God’s mercy (Psalm 86:15). The words, **“You, Lord, are kind, ready to forgive; and full of mercy for all those who call on you,”** urge the lost to seek God’s mercy (Psalm 85:5). The words, **“Do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance and patience; not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?”** tell us that God’s longsuffering gives us time to repent (Romans 2:4). And, through repentance God reveals, **“The exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus”** (Ephesians 2:7) **“In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace”** (Ephesians 1:7). [See Psalm 145:9, Ps. 36:6-7, Ps. 86:15, Ps. 103:8, Eph. 2:4, Rom, 8:28]

### **More on God’s Attributes**

God is Compassionate. 1Kings 13:23, Lamentations 3:22-23, Psalm 78:38.

God is Faithful and True. Joshua 21:45, 2Samuel 7:28, Psalm 19:9, Isaiah 25:1.

God is Gracious. Nehemiah 9:31, Isaiah 30:18-19, Exodus 34:6.

God is Incomprehensible. Job 36:26, Job 37:5, Psalm 40:5, Psalm 139:6.

God is Incorruptible. Leviticus 11:44, Malachi 3:6.

God is Invisible. Job 23:8-9, 1Timothy 1:17.

God is Jealous. Exodus 20:5, Deuteronomy 32:16.

God is Longsuffering. Numbers 14:18, Psalm 86:15.

God is Merciful. Exodus 34:6-7, Numbers 14:18, Psalm 36:5, Psalm 136, Psalm 106:1, Psalm 13:5.

God is Righteous. Ezra 9:15, Psalm 145:7 & 17.

God is Upright. Psalm 25:8, Psalm 92:15.

## THE DOCTRINE OF THE DIVINE DECREES

The purpose of this section is to focus on certain lasting commitments or decrees that God has made. These ongoing decrees are to be distinguished from external acts of God, (such as Christ changing water into wine) that only occupy a brief period of time. The Bible speaks of three such decrees the decree of creation, the decree of redemption, and the decree of predestination.

### The Decree of Creation

The decree of creation is that commitment God made from the beginning, not only to bring all things into existence, but to sustain them according to His divine plan.

The words, **“Praise the LORD from the heavens: praise Him from the heights. Praise Him, all you His angels: praise Him, all His hosts. Praise Him, sun and moon: praise Him, all you stars of light. Praise Him, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens. Let them praise the name of the LORD: for He commanded, and they were created. He has also set them in their places forever: He has made a decree which shall not pass,”** use the word “decree” in regard to what God has created (Psalm 148:1-6). The words, **“He gave to the sea His decree, and would not let the water flow further than He ordained: when He laid out the foundations of the earth,”** tell us that the limits of the sea are determined by God’s decree (Proverbs 8:29). The words, **“God has known all that He will do from the beginning of the world,”** tell us that before God created He was committed to carrying out a plan (Acts 15:18). And, the words, **“God, who in the past spoke to the fathers at various times and in different ways by the prophets, has spoken to us in these last days in the person of His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, and through whom He made the universe. Who being the brightness of His glory, and the true image of His nature, and sustaining all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself made purification for our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high,”** not only affirm the deity of Christ, but also tell us that God not only created the universe, but also sustains it “by the word of His power” (Hebrews 1:1-3).

### The Decree of Redemption

The decree of Redemption is that commitment God made from the beginning to send Christ to redeem lost mankind, whose fall He has foreseen, but not caused.

The words, **“This Jesus, being delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you have taken, and by the hands of wicked men have crucified and slain,”** tell us that God allowed the Pharisees to arrest Jesus, because that was His plan from the beginning (Acts 2:23). God did not cause the Pharisees to crucify Christ, but He knew they would, for they had placed themselves under Satan’s control by rationalizing their sins instead of repenting (Compare Mark 7:9-13 with John 8:44). The words, **“When the time had fully come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons,”** tell us that God sent Christ into the world at the time He did because of His plan to redeem those who are condemned by the law (Galatians 4:4-5). And, the words, **“In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace. Which He has lavished upon us with all wisdom and understanding, having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He has purposed in Himself. That in the distribution at the fullness of times He might bring all things together, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; under one head in Christ,”** tell us that Christ accomplished the plan God had from the beginning (Ephesians 1:7-10).

### The Decree of Predestination

The decree of predestination is that commitment God made from the beginning to work through His Word to bring multitudes to salvation through faith in the forgiveness Christ won for us. Predestination and election will be treated at greater length when I deal with that doctrine. They are dealt with here only as eternal decrees of God

The words, **“The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,”** tell us that it was God’s plan from the very beginning for Christ to die for the sins of the world (Revelation 13:8). The words, **“He [the Father] has chosen us in Him [Christ] before the foundation of the world,”** tell us that God did not choose us before He decided to send Christ to die for our sins, but chose to save us **“in Him”** that is “in Christ” (Ephesians 1:4). The words, **“No man can come to me, unless the Father who has sent me draws him,”** tell us that we do not choose God, He chooses us (John 6:44). And, the words, **“We are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God has from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and faith in the truth. To this end He called you by our gospel, to obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ,”** tell us

that God calls those He has chosen “through the gospel,” and saves them through “faith in” the gospel’s promise of forgiveness in Christ (2Thessalonians 2:13).

At the same time, the words, **“As I live, says the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but want the wicked man to turn from his way and live,”** tell us that God does not want anyone to be lost (Ezekiel 33:11). The words, **“God... has made of one blood all nations of men to live on all the face of the earth, and has determined their appointed times, and the boundaries they live in, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him, and find Him, although He is not far from any one of us,”** tell us that God wants all men to seek Him and find Him (Acts 17:24-27). The words, **“Everyone whom the Father gives me will come to me; and I will never turn away anyone who comes to me,”** tell us that God will never reject those who want to be saved (John 6:37). The words, **“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets, and stone those who are sent to you, how often I longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you would not,”** tell us that God actively reaches out to those who reject Him (Matthew 23:37). And, the words, **“God speaks time and again, yet man does not notice,”** tell us that the lost turn a deaf ear to the word of God (Job 33:14). Therefore, those who are lost are lost by their own fault, and not because God did not want them.

## THE DOCTRINE OF CREATION

### 1. THE ORIGIN OF ALL THINGS

The words, **“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,”** tell us that time, space, and matter originated with God (Genesis 1:1). The words, “In the beginning,” denote the beginning of time, and the words “heaven and earth” are the Hebrew way of saying “all that exists,” or “the entire universe”. And, that is a reference to space, because the stars were not created until the fourth day. In other words, the Bible is telling us that space and time did not exist until God created it.

The reason time and space are intertwined is because, for time to exist there must be a place (space) where time is passing. Likewise, for space to exist movement must be possible, and movement takes time. This relationship of space and time is generally known as the “space-time continuum”. Furthermore, if time did not have a beginning we would never have arrived at this point in time. Those who question this may imagine that time has always existed, but they fail to understand the meaning of “infinite”. If time was infinite, then no matter how far back in time you went there would always be an infinite amount of time before that. There would be no beginning. However, the Bible tells us that there was a beginning.

The words, **“The invisible things of Him [God] from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead,”** tell us that God created time to be eternal and space to be infinite in order to illustrate the fact that He is both eternal and infinite (Romans 1:20). Moreover, because time and space were created by God, they both illustrate His triune nature. Like God, space consists of three parts (three dimensions) often spoken of as length, width and height. Likewise, time consists of three parts past, present and future. In both cases the three are one! In fact, it is impossible for space to exist without all three dimensions. Those who dispute this may try to imagine a two-dimensional existence where everything is as thin as a piece of paper. However, they forget that paper has thickness. If you take all of that thickness away nothing will remain. Space must exist as both three and one or it will not exist at all.

The words, **“The heavens declare the glory of God; and the sky displays His handiwork,”** tell us that all we see in the sky is the handiwork of God (Psalm 19:1). The words, **“The universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was made of what is not seen,”** tell us that God did not create the universe from pre-existing matter (Hebrews 11:3). The words, **“God... gives life to the dead, and calls into existence things that do not exist,”** tell us that when God created He called into existence that which previously did not exist (Romans 4:17). And, the words, **“All things in heaven and earth, both visible and invisible, were created by Him, whether they be thrones, or jurisdictions, or provinces, or authorities: all things were created by Him, and for Him, and He is before all things, and by Him all things have their existence,”** tell us that God created everything that exists outside of Himself (Colossians 1:16-17). Therefore, in opposition to pagan naturalism, which ascribes creative power to matter (evolution), the Bible tells us that God created everything that exists outside of Himself.

## **2. THE ORDER OF CREATION**

The words, **“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,”** tell us that God first created time, space, and matter (Genesis 1:1). The words, **“God said, Let there be light: and there was light,”** tell us that God created light before He created the sun (Genesis 1:3). The words, **“And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, plants yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after its kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so,”** tell us that God filled the earth with plants before He created the sun, moon and stars (Genesis 1:11). The words, **“And God said, Let there be lights in the expanse of the heaven to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years,”** tell us that God created the light between the heavenly bodies and earth at the

same time He created the heavenly bodies, otherwise we would not even know that most of them were there (Genesis 1:14). The words, “**And God said, Let the waters team with living creatures that have life, and let birds fly above the earth in the open expanse of heaven,**” tell us that God created sea creatures and birds before He created land creatures (Genesis 1:20). The words, “**And God said, Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind, cattle, and creeping things, and beasts of the earth after their kind: and it was so,**” tell us that God made land animals (Genesis 1:24). And, God created man on the sixth day, the same day that He created the land animals (Genesis 1:26-31).

It should be obvious that the order of creation taught in Scripture is totally incompatible with the evolutionary scenario. According to the Bible the land was created under water, not in a molten state. The earth and plants were created before the sun. Birds and whales were created before land animals, and man was created on the same day that land animals were created. Furthermore, because it is God, not man, who decides what is true and what is not true, the words, “**To the law and to the testimony: if they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them,**” tell us that all truth will agree with the written Word of God (Isaiah 8:20). In other words, **the opinions of men may contradict what the Bible says, but the facts never do.**

The Bible tells us that, “**The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked,**” and one way Satan uses the deceitfulness of the human heart to blind people to the truth of God’s Word is by causing them to confuse their own fallible opinions with fact (Jeremiah 17:9). And, glaring confusion is obvious when it comes to the evolutionary delusion. When Darwin observed that different finches had different beak sizes, that was observable fact. When he assumed that given enough time small differences (such as beak size) could change one kind of animal into an entirely different kind of animal, that assumption was science fiction, not observable science. When Darwin observed warm ponds full of bacteria, that was observable fact. When he assumed that life originated from non-life in a warm little pond, that was science fiction, not observable science. In fact, **the entire evolutionary scenario consists of science fiction, not fact.** Evolutionists simply interpret the facts to make them fit their science fiction scenario in the same way that cult people interpret the words of Scripture to make them fit their cultic beliefs. So forget the interpretations and stick to the facts.

The assumption that life could originate from non-life has been tested experimentally and rejected. Experiments by Francesco Redi (1660), and Louis Pasteur (1859) coupled with the invention of a dust-free box at the end of the nineteenth-century, convinced the scientific community that life does not come from

non-life. Likewise, research into genetics has shown that the amount of change possible in any living organism (such as change in beak size) is limited by the genes. Nevertheless, those who have made evolutionary science fiction their religion could care less about the facts. When Atheist professor Richard Dawkins (who knows that life does not come from non-life) was interviewed by Ben Stein for the movie “Expelled,” he attempted to get around the scientific evidence by suggesting that space aliens brought life to earth (more science fiction), and that interview is in the film. Therefore, do not be intimidated by the assertiveness of those who reject the Bible. Their entire worldview is a house of cards, consisting of one assumption stacked on another, and their seeming confidence is the result of satanic delusion.

### **3. THE SIX DAYS (HEXAEMERON)**

The words, **“In six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and everything that is in them, and rested on the seventh day, for that reason the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and made it holy,”** tell us that in six days God made “heaven and earth, the sea, and everything that is in them” (Exodus 20:11). The words of Genesis chapter one, **“The evening and the morning were the first day,”** (verse 5) **“The evening and the morning were the second day,”** (verse 8) **“The evening and the morning were the third day,”** (verse 13) **“The evening and the morning were the fourth day,”** (verse 19) **“The evening and the morning were the fifth day,”** (verse 23) and, **“The evening and the morning were the sixth day,”** define the word “day” by telling us that each of those six days had an evening and a morning (verse 31). And, the words, **“God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw that the light was good: and God separated the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and called the darkness Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day,”** tell us that “the evening and the morning” consisted of a period of darkness and light (Genesis 1:3-5).

I have just summarized what God’s Word plainly says about creation, and therefore, what God wants His church to believe and teach. However, Satan wants just the opposite, and one way Satan blinds people to the truth of God’s Word, is by causing them to regard the plain meaning of the words as nothing more than an interpretation. Furthermore, those who treat the Biblical account of creation as an interpretation are not being honest, because they are not trying to teach what the Bible says, but trying to make it agree with atheist ideas.

Evolution proper is atheistic and immoral, while theistic evolution is neither in accord with Scripture nor with the basic principles of evolution proper. To deny the inspired character of the Book of Genesis means to contradict the



testimony of the divine, omniscient Christ, who accepted also this book as canonical. (Dr. John Theodore Mueller, "Christian Dogmatics," page 181)

#### **4. THE SIX DAYS OF CREATION CONSIDERED IN DETAIL**

##### **The First Day**

Holy Scripture describes the first day in these words, **"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and empty; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw that the light was good: and God separated the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and called the darkness Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day"** (Genesis 1:1-5).

The expression "in the beginning" refers back to the moment this world began to exist. There was no "beginning" before that moment, because God does not have a beginning. And, there was no pre-existing matter before that moment, because nothing outside of God existed. The words, **"God separated the light from the darkness,"** tell us that when God created light He caused it to shine on one side of the earth, so that there was an, "evening" and "morning". And, God specifically tells us that "the evening [dark] and the morning [light] were the first day," because He wants us to know that the first day was the same kind of day as any other day with an evening and morning.

Note: The words, **"He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens,"** describe the dwelling place of God as being "far above" what was created on the first day (Ephesians 4:10). As it is written, **"Lord... Before you brought the mountains into existence, or formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, you are God"** (Psalm 90:1-2).

##### **The Second Day**

Holy Scripture describes the second day in these words, **"And God said, Let there be an open expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the expanse, and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters above the expanse: and it was so. And God called the expanse Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day"** (Genesis 1:6-8).

Moses describes the expanse above the earth in two ways. When he writes, **"Let birds fly above the earth in the open expanse of heaven,"** he is describing the lower expanse as it appears during the day (Genesis 1:20). When he writes, **"Let there be lights in the expanse of the heaven to separate the day from the night,"**

he is describing the higher expanse that contains the moon and stars as well as the sun, and is best seen at night (Genesis 1:14). For that reason, I understand the words, “God... separated the waters that were under the expanse [atmosphere] from the waters above the expanse [atmosphere]” in terms of the expanse as it appears during the day. That tells me that the earth was originally covered with fog, and that God separated the water below the atmosphere [water in the sea] from the water that is above the atmosphere [water in the clouds]. The idea that there may have been a vapor canopy above the atmosphere at that time is possible, but highly speculative.

### **The Third Day**

Holy Scripture describes the third day in these words, **“And God said, Let the waters under heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let dry land appear: and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters He called Seas: and God saw that it was good. And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, plants yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after its kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, and plants yielding seed after their own kind, and trees bearing fruit, in which is their seed, after their kind: and God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the third day”** (Genesis 1:9-13).

The words, **“let dry land appear,”** tell us that the entire earth was originally under water. All of that water rushing off of the earth in just one day would have stirred up a lot of sediment, and that sediment may account for those layers of the earth’s crust that do not contain any fossils — there could not be any fossils at that time because living things had not yet been created. The words, **“Let the earth bring forth,”** are not saying that plants just appeared, but that they **“sprouted forth,”** growing very rapidly. In fact, on the very day they were created they were **“yielding seed,”** and **“bearing fruit”**.

### **The Fourth Day**

Holy Scripture describes the fourth day in these words, **“And God said, Let there be lights in the expanse of the heaven to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: And let them be lights in the expanse of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: He made the stars also. And God set them in the expanse of the heaven to give light upon the earth, And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the fourth day”** (Genesis 1:14-19).

The words, **“He made the stars... to give light upon the earth,”** tell us that when God created the stars He created the **light from the stars**. And, because God wanted that light to accurately reveal the stars He had created, Adam and Eve would have seen the stars exactly as they were at that time.

The Bible plainly tells us that God created both the earth and light before He created the sun, and all of the actual data agrees with what the Bible says. Foolish men may claim that the earth was originally a molten blob, but the earth’s continents rest on granite, and granite only forms in the presence of water. In fact, if granite is melted it reforms as rhyolite. Furthermore, the earth’s granite contains trillions of microscopic radiohalos caused by the breakdown of polonium 218. Since polonium 218 atoms break down in less than three minutes there is no way that granite could have formed slowly. It had to be hard within three minutes of the time it formed or the radiohalos would not be there. To quote Dr. John Theodore Mueller, “We know so little concerning astronomical data that it is both foolish and unscientific to supplement, correct, or criticize Scripture on the basis of human speculative systems.” (“Christian Dogmatics,” page 183) **The opinions of men may contradict what the Bible says, but the facts never do.**

### **The Fifth Day**

Holy Scripture describes the fifth day in these words, **“And God said, Let the waters team with living creatures that have life, and let birds fly above the earth in the open expanse of heaven. And God created great whales, and every living creature that moves, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after its kind: and God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth. And the evening and the morning were the fifth day”** (Genesis 1:20-23).

Not only did God create the whales and birds before He created the land dwelling animals, He created them all in one day, a day that had an evening and a morning. Furthermore, the words, **“God saw that it was good,”** tell us that His creative process did not involve suffering and death — because suffering and death are evils, and what is evil can never be called good. (See Deut. 31:17) The words, **“Sin entered the world by one man, and death by sin,”** tell us that suffering and death is in the world because of man’s sin, not because God made it that way (Romans 5:12). And, because Satan was behind Adam’s sin, he is the one who is to blame for suffering and death. Therefore, those who worship a god who used evolution to create are worshipping the one who caused suffering and death, not the God of the Bible.

### **The Sixth Day**

Holy Scripture describes the sixth day in these words, **“And God said, Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind, cattle, and creeping things, and beasts of the earth after their kind: and it was so. And God made the beasts of the earth after their kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creeps upon the earth after its kind: and God saw that it was good. And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, over the cattle, over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth. So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. And God blessed them, and God said to them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth. And God said, Behold, I have given you every seed bearing plant, that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, with seed in its fruit; to be your food. And to all the animals of the earth, and to all the birds of the air, and to every living creature that creeps upon the earth, I have given every green plant for food: and it was so. And God saw every thing that He had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day”** (Genesis 1:24-31).

Scripture then focuses on the creation of man with the words, **“And the LORD God formed man from the dust of the earth, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul... And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and He took one of his ribs, and filled up its place with flesh; And out of the rib, which the LORD God had taken from the man, He made a woman, and brought her to the man“** (Genesis 2:7,21,22).

When the Bible describes man as being made of clay, such as when it says, **“O LORD, you are our father; we are the clay, and you are our potter,”** it is using a metaphor (Isaiah 64:8). However, whenever the Bible describes what we are made of without using a figure of speech, it uses the word “dust”. The word “dust,” in the Hebrew language, denotes the smoke-like wisps of dust stirred up by the feet when walking on a dry dirt road. Since many individual particles of that smoke-like dust are too small to be seen without magnification, if we had to translate the word, “molecules” into ancient Hebrew, we would translate it as “dust”. Understood that way, the words of Genesis 2:7 are telling us that, **“The LORD God formed man from the molecules of the earth,”** and the words, **“Let the earth bring forth living creatures,”** could be understood as telling us that God created land animals from the molecules of the earth (Gen. 1:24). That has led some to wonder if all matter was created on the first day, and everything else, including the sun, moon and stars, then created from that matter. But, that is speculation, not something the Bible says.

The words, **“The LORD God... breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul,”** tell us that man consists of two parts, body and soul (Gen. 2:7). Some regard spirit as a third part (Compare 1Thess. 5:23 with Gal. 3:2). And, the Bible does speak of both “soul” and “spirit,” but it also uses those terms as synonyms (See Job 7:11, Isaiah 26:9, Matthew 10:28, Luke 1:46-47, compare 1Peter 3:19 with Rev. 6:9).

God’s words to Adam, after he sinned, **“Cursed is the ground for your sake... Thorns also and thistles will it bring forth to you,”** tell us that animals and plants which are harmful to man only became so after the fall (Genesis 3:17). The Bible does not tell us if the corruption of sin caused certain plants and animals to develop poison, or if man (and animals) lost their immunity to that poison. However. The words, **“God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good,”** tell us that harmful characteristics were not present before the fall (Genesis 1:31).

The fall of man is closely related to the creation account. And, the fall of man, along with the results of that fall, is the reason Christ came into the world. For that reason the Biblical record of creation and the fall lies at the very heart of the Gospel. For, **“Just as sin entered the world by one man, and death by sin... even so through the righteousness of one the free gift abounds to all men bringing justification and life”** (Romans 5:12,18). I am not saying that a person cannot be saved unless he believes that God created the world in six days, but I am saying that **rejection of what the Bible says about creation is inconsistent with faith in Christ, and destructive to faith.** And, if it does not destroy a person’s faith, it is only because his thinking is inconsistent. That is why Jesus said, **“Had you believed Moses, you would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe what he wrote, how will you believe my words?”** (John 5:46-47).

The words, **“If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples,”** tell us that those who are truly Christ’s disciples will not reject what His Word says, look outside of that Word for the truth about Creation, or interpret His Word in the light of ideas that come from outside of His Word (John 8:30). The words, **“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me,”** and the words, **“Those who know God accept what we say,”** tell us that Christ’s sheep will accept what the Bible says (John 10:27, 1John 4:6). (See Luke 24:25.)

## **5. THE UNITY OF THE HUMAN RACE**

The words, **“The LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no man to till the ground,”** describe the earth as it was just prior to God’s creation of Adam (Genesis 2:5). And, those words tell us that there were **no people**

on the earth before Adam and Eve. The words, **“Adam called his wife’s name Eve; because she was the mother of all living,”** tell us that there were no people prior to God’s creation of Eve, and that she is the mother of every human who has ever lived, or will live (Genesis 3:20). And, the words, **“God who made the world and everything in it... has made of one blood all nations of men to live on all the face of the earth,”** tell us that all the “nations of men” are descendents of Adam and Eve (Acts 17:24,26). In other words, there were no people before Adam and Eve, and there never were people that were not fully human (half animal, or half angel). [Regarding angels, compare Heb. 1:13-14, Luke 24:39, Matt. 22:30.]

The words, **“It is not good that the man should be alone,”** tell us that Adam was alone before God’s created Eve (Genesis 2:18). The words, **“Adam was first formed, then Eve,”** tell us that Adam was the first human formed (1Timothy 2:13). And, the words, **“The LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and He took one of his ribs, and closed up its place with flesh; And of the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, He made a woman, and brought her unto the man,”** tell us that God took living tissue from Adam, and that the life of Eve was derived from Adam, just as the life of a child is derived from its parents (Genesis 2:21-22)

## 6. SPECIAL QUESTIONS REGARDING THE CREATION

While the Bible does not explicitly tell us when the angels were created, the words, **“In six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and everything that is in them,”** the words, **“All things in heaven and earth, both visible and invisible, were created by Him,”** and the words, **“Thus the heavens and the earth, and everything in them, were finished,”** tell us that “everything” was made during the six days of creation, and that would include angels (Exodus 20:11, Colossians 1:16, Genesis 2:1).

Just as the life of a child is derived from its parents, so the soul of a child is derived from its parents through propagation. The words, **“On the seventh day God ended His work,”** tell us that God is not creating more souls, just as He is not creating more animals (Genesis 2:2). Instead all that is born comes from what was originally created. Likewise, the words, **“Behold, I was shaped in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me,”** tell us that David’s mother conceived him, not just a body that he later occupied (Psalm 51:5). Those who claim that God creates a new soul for each body, have God corrupting souls by placing them into sinful bodies, and into homes where they are taught idolatry. And, the false claim that an unborn child does not yet have a soul has been used to justify murder (abortion).

The words, **“Our God is in the heavens: He has done whatever He has pleased,”** tell us that God did not have to create the universe, and it is not some sort

of emanation from Him as pantheists imagine, but He created all things for His glory just as His Word says (Psalm 115:3).

The words, **“God saw every thing that He had made, and, behold, it was very good,”** tell us that none of the evil we now see in the earth, death, suffering, calamity, hardship is in the world because God created it that way (Genesis 1:31). In short, God created a perfect world. However, that does not mean that this world is the best of all possible worlds. The new heavens and new earth that God has promised will be far better. As it is written, **“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man, the things that God has prepared for those who love Him”** (1Corinthians 2:9).

## **7. CREATION AN EXTERNAL ACT OF GOD**

In theology a distinction is made between the **internal** and **external** acts of God. For example, when God forgives our sins, that forgiveness takes place in God’s heart, so it is an internal act. In contrast, when God made water come out of a rock (after Moses hit it, Exodus 17:6) that was something God did that was external. In the same way, God’s decision to make and sustain the universe was an internal commitment, while His actual work of creation was external.

**Because the Father Son and Holy Ghost are one God, all three were equally involved in the work of creation.** The words, **“Don’t we all have one father? Hasn’t one God created us?”** tell us that the Father is our Creator (Malachi 2:10). The words, **“All things in heaven and earth, both visible and invisible, were created by Him [Christ],”** tell us that the Son is our Creator (Colossians 1:16). And, the words, **“The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty has given me life,”** tell us that the Holy Spirit is our Creator (Job 33:4). However, because the Bible plainly says, **“There is one God // No God was formed before me, and none will be after me,”** we do not have three Creators, but only one, **“These three are one”** (Matthew 12:32, Isaiah 43:10, 1John 5:7).

**“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been His counselor? Or who has first given to Him, that it might be paid back to Him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen”** (Romans 11:33-36).

## **8. THE DOCTRINE OF THE AGE OF THE EARTH**

The delusion that grips our present age is so virulent that instead of answering the skeptics with a resounding **“Thus saith the Lord,”** many turn on Scripture in a

vain attempt to make its words agree with the ignorance of man. They act as if God did not know what He was doing when He caused the words of Genesis to be written, and try to make the Bible say what it clearly does not say, and never was intended to say. Nevertheless, God knew from the beginning what the skeptics would be saying. He knew they would claim that the earth is millions of years old. And because of His love for us, because He did not want us to be deceived, He designed the book of Genesis to exclude any possibility of “millions of years”. Furthermore, He wants us to believe and teach exactly what His Word says, not what men think. As it is written, **“If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them”** (Isaiah 8:20).

The words, **“In six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and everything that is in them, and rested on the seventh day: for that reason the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and made it holy,”** tell us that **the seven days of Genesis were one week in length** (Exodus 20:11). However, God did not stop with just telling how long it took to make the heavens and earth. He included a detailed lineage of each generation from Adam to Abraham. And, that lineage gives us a record of the age of the earth that brings us right up to the era of recorded history.

#### Genesis Chapter 5:1-32

- 1 ¶ This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, he made him in the likeness of God;
- 2 Male and female He created them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, on the day when they were created.
- 3 And **Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and fathered a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth:**
- 4 And the days of Adam after he had begotten Seth were eight hundred years: and he begat sons and daughters:
- 5 And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died.
- 6 ¶ And **Seth lived one hundred and five years, and begat Enos:**
- 7 And Seth lived after he fathered Enos eight hundred and seven years, and fathered sons and daughters:
- 8 And all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years: and he died.
- 9 And **Enos lived ninety years, and begat Cainan:**
- 10 And Enos lived after he begat Cainan eight hundred and fifteen years, and begat sons and daughters:
- 11 And all the days of Enos were nine hundred and five years: and he died.
- 12 And **Cainan lived seventy years, and begat Mahalaleel:**
- 13 And Cainan lived after he begat Mahalaleel eight hundred and forty years, and begat sons and daughters:
- 14 And all the days of Cainan were nine hundred and ten years: and he died.



- 15 And **Mahalaleel lived and sixty-five years, and begat Jared:**
- 16 And Mahalaleel lived after he begat Jared eight hundred and thirty years, and begat sons and daughters:
- 17 And all the days of Mahalaleel were eight hundred and ninety-five years: and he died.
- 18 And **Jared lived an hundred and sixty-two years, and he begat Enoch:**
- 19 And Jared lived after he fathered Enoch eight hundred years, and begat sons and daughters:
- 20 And all the days of Jared were nine hundred and sixty-two years: and he died.
- 21 And **Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah:**
- 22 And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters:
- 23 And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years:
- 24 And Enoch walked with God: and he *was* not; for God took him.
- 25 And **Methuselah lived one hundred and eighty-seven years, and begat Lamech:**
- 26 And Methuselah lived after he begat Lamech seven hundred and eighty-two years, and begat sons and daughters:
- 27 And all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred and sixty-nine years: and he died.
- 28 And **Lamech lived one hundred eighty and two years, and begat a son:**
- 29 **And he called his name Noah**, saying, This *one* will bring us relief from our work and *from the* toil of our hands, because of the ground which the LORD has cursed.
- 30 And after he begat Noah Lamech lived five hundred and ninety-five years, and begat sons and daughters:
- 31 And all the days of Lamech were seven hundred and seventy-seven years: and he died.
- 32 And **Noah was five hundred years old: and Noah fathered Shem, Ham, and Japheth.**

[Comment: You will notice that this lineage is carefully worded to preclude any claim that some generations may have been omitted. The key factor in determining the amount of time which transpired is the number of years that passed between the birth of each patriarch and the birth of his son. Therefore, we have an exact record of the time, and when we add up the years, these verses tell us that **Noah was born one thousand and fifty six years after the creation of Adam, and his sons were born five hundred years after that.**]

- 10 These *are* the generations of Shem: **Shem was one hundred years old, and begat Arphaxad** two years after the flood:
- 11 And Shem lived after he begat Arphaxad five hundred years, and begat sons and daughters.
- 12 And **Arphaxad lived thirty-five years, and begat Salah:**
- 13 And Arphaxad lived after he begat Salah four hundred and three years, and begat sons and daughters.
- 14 And **Salah lived thirty years, and begat Eber:**
- 15 And Salah lived after he begat Eber four hundred and three years, and begat sons and daughters.
- 16 And **Eber lived four and thirty years, and begat Peleg:**
- 17 And Eber lived after he begat Peleg four hundred and thirty years, and begat sons and daughters.
- 18 And **Peleg lived thirty years, and begat Reu:**
- 19 And Peleg lived after he begat Reu two hundred and nine years, and begat sons and daughters.
- 20 And **Reu lived thirty-two years, and begat Serug:**
- 21 And Reu lived after he begat Serug two hundred and seven years, and begat sons and daughters.
- 22 And **Serug lived thirty years, and begat Nahor:**
- 23 And Serug lived after he begat Nahor two hundred years, and begat sons and daughters.
- 24 And **Nahor lived twenty-nine years, and begat Terah:**
- 25 And Nahor lived after he begat Terah an hundred and nineteen years, and begat sons and daughters.
- 26 And **Terah lived seventy years, and begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran.**  
[Comment: A comparison of Genesis 5:32, 7:6 and 11:10 tell us that Noah was five-hundred and two years old when Shem was born. This chapter tells us that there were three hundred and twenty years between the birth of Shem and the birth of Terah, the father of Abram (Abraham, Gen. 17:5). So **Terah was born one thousand, eight-hundred, and seventy-eight years after the world was created.**]

Genesis Chapter 11:32 and 12:1-4

- 32 And **the days of Terah were two hundred and five years: and Terah died** in Haran.
- 1 Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Depart from your country, and from your kindred, and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you:
- 2 And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and you will be a blessing:

3 And I will bless those who bless you, and curse him who curses you: and in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.

4 So Abram departed, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him: and **Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.**

[Comment: Since Terah was two hundred and five years old when he died, and Abram (Abraham) was seventy five years old at that time, we know that Terah was about one hundred and thirty years old when Abram was born. Therefore, **Abraham was born approximately two thousand and eight years after the world was created.**]

Genesis 21:5 And **Abraham was one hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born** unto him.

Genesis 25:26 And after that his brother came out, and his hand took hold on Esau's heel; and his name was called Jacob: and **Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them.**

[Comment: These verses tell us that Isaac was born when Abraham was one hundred years old, and Jacob (Israel) was born when Isaac was sixty years old. **Thus Jacob was born approximately two thousand one hundred and sixty-eight years after the world was created.**]

Genesis 47:28 And **Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years: so the whole age of Jacob was one hundred and forty-seven years.**

[Comment: **Thus Jacob died in Egypt approximately two thousand three hundred and fifteen years after the world was created. And, if he entered Egypt seventeen years earlier, he entered Egypt about two thousand two hundred and ninety-eight years after the world was created.**]

The words, “**Now the time the children of Israel dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years. And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, on that very day, all the LORD'S people marched out of the land of Egypt,**” tell us that the Children of Israel left Egypt about **two thousand seven hundred and twenty-eight years after the world was created** (Exodus 12:40-41).

The words, “**In the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel came out of the land of Egypt,** in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month Zif, which is the second month, **Solomon began to build the house of the LORD,**” tell us that Solomon began to build the temple 480 years after the children of Israel left Egypt (1Kings 6:1). Now some other dates given in Scripture may indicate that this 480 years does not include the forty years wandering in the wilderness, or the years under Joshua. However, if we just add the 480 years to

what we have, that would mean that **Solomon began to build the temple three thousand two hundred and eight years after the world was created.**

The words, “And the temple was finished throughout in all its parts according to all its specifications in the eleventh year [of Solomon’s reign], in the month Bul, which is the eighth month. So he [Solomon] was seven years in building it,” (1Kings 6:38). **That brings us up to 3215 years after the world was created.**

Now as to recorded history, **the dedication of Solomon’s Temple is generally dated at or around 970 BC. Jewish sources tell us that Temple stood for 410 years. The date given for the siege and fall of Jerusalem is 588-586 BC.** The captivity of most of Judah began twenty years prior to that. And, **the date given for the return of the Jews to Israel is 536 BC.** Those dates leave some questions. However, **Adding the 3215 years to the date when Solomon’s temple was dedicated would mean that the world was created in the year four thousand one hundred and eighty-five BC.**

#### Some Other Dates

As I mentioned, because of some other dates given in Scripture, and those contained in some ancient translations, we cannot be absolutely certain of the exact age of the earth. However, **there is no room in Scripture for millions of years.** The Septuagint translation adds one hundred years to the ages of some of the Patriarchs, but that would not make the world much older. Here are a few other dates.

Genesis 15:13 And the Lord said to Abram, Know with certainty that for **four hundred years** your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them; and they will afflict them.

Acts 7:6 And God told him this, That his descendants would be strangers in a foreign land; and that they would enslave them, and mistreat them for **four hundred years.**

Acts 13:19-21 After He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He divided their land to them by lot. And after that He gave them judges for about **four hundred and fifty years**, until Samuel the prophet. And afterward they asked for a king: and God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for **forty years.**

2Samuel 5:4 David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned **forty years.**

Galatians 3:17 The covenant *concerning faith in Christ*, that was confirmed by God at the time of Abraham, cannot be nullified by the law, which came **four hundred and thirty years** later, so as to make the promise of no effect.

In his massive work, "THE ANNALS OF THE WORLD" James Ussher correlates the Biblical timeline with recorded history, and in so doing has calculated the year of Jacob's death at 1689 BC. and the date of creation as 4004 BC. That differs a little from the date given above, which calculate the year of Jacob's death at 1863 BC. which is at least 174 years earlier. And, if the 480 years mentioned in the words, "In the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel came out of the land of Egypt," began at the time Israel finished coming out of Egypt, instead of the date they left, the date of Jacob's death could have been forty to eighty years earlier than that. See Joshua 24:29.

"The question is not: Is this or that doctrine clearly stated in the Confessions? But: Is this or that doctrine set forth in God's Word? If it is set forth in Holy Writ, it is for this reason a church dogma, even though not a word is said about it in the Confessions of the church. The reason for this is not difficult to perceive. The Christian Church is not the lord of God's doctrine, but only its servant. Its paramount purpose is not to create new doctrines but to preach the doctrines which its Lord has revealed. The dogmatician who draws his teachings from any other source than Holy Scriptures perpetrates an inexcusable fraud upon the Church... Christian ministers, teachers, and missionaries must proclaim to their hearers God's Word, not their own, so that... not one doctrine is taught that is not in agreement with Holy Scripture." (Christian Dogmatics, by John Theodore Mueller, pages 62, 63.)

Christians should not be troubled by claims that the earth is millions of years old. Careful measurements of earth's magnetic field reveal that it is growing weaker. Since there is a limit to how strong a magnetic field can be, if the earth was millions of years old its magnetic field would have disappeared ages ago. The earth's rotation speed is also slowing down, and the moon is moving away from the earth. This cannot have been going on for more that a few thousand years. And, the presence of vertical tree trunks in the sedimentary layers of the earth's crust show that those layers were formed rapidly. More could be said, but **no matter how ardently the opinions of men disagree with what the Bible says, the facts never do.**

## 9. THE ULTIMATE END OF CREATION

The words, "**The heavens declare the glory of God; and the sky displays his handiwork,**" and the words, "**Who has known the mind of the Lord?... For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever,**" tell us that the ultimate end of all creation is the glory of God (Psalm 19:1). However, the glory that belongs to God is not the egotistic glory sought by sinful men, but the

glory deserved by the one who created all things “very good,” and has provided salvation for those who were by nature “hostile to God” (Gen. 1:31, Rom. 8:7)

The words, **“The LORD has made all things for Himself” // “Our God is in the heavens: He has done whatever He has pleased,”** tell us that God created all things for Himself (Psalm 16:4 and 115:3). The words, **“The heaven of heavens, belongs to the LORD: but He has given the earth to the children of men,”** tell us that even though God created man for Himself, the world is for man’s benefit (Psalm 115:6). And, the words, **“Not to us, O LORD, not to us, but to your name give glory, because of your mercy and truth,”** tell us that God is to be glorified not only because He made us, but also because of His mercy in Christ Jesus (Psalm 115:1).

**“Praise the LORD. Sing to the LORD a new song, and His praise in the congregation of saints. Let Israel rejoice in Him who made him: let the children of Zion be joyful in their King. Let them praise His name with dancing: let them sing praises to Him with the tambourine and harp. For the LORD takes pleasure in His people: He glorifies the humble with salvation. Let the saints rejoice in this glory: let them sing aloud on their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth”** (Psalm 149:1-6)

## THE DOCTRINE OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE

### 1. THE GUIDING HAND OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE

God not only created the world, He is actively involved in it, like a hand in a glove guiding, sustaining and directing the course of events. If sin had never entered the world, all things would work together perfectly. However, because of sin God withdrew some of His sustaining power. And, even that was an act of His love, aimed at making us aware of our sin, and need of His mercy.

The words, **“Cursed is the ground for your sake,”** tell us that the struggle for survival that we now endure is for our “sake” or benefit (Genesis 3:17). And, the words, **“In the sweat of your face you will eat bread, till you return unto the ground; for out of it you were taken: for you are dust, and to dust you will return,”** tell us that the struggle for survival should be a constant reminder of our mortality, and need for God’s mercy (Genesis 3:19).

The words, **“You [God] sustained them [Israel] for forty years in the wilderness, so that they lacked nothing; their clothes did not grow old, and their feet did not swell,”** give us an idea of how much better the world would be if man had never sinned (Nehemiah 9:21). While the words, **“Your Father who is in heaven... causes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous,”** tell us that God has not withdrawn entirely, but is still at work in the world, providing food and water for all, even those who hate Him (Matthew 5:45). And, the words, **“He did not leave himself without witness, in that He has shown kindness, and given us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, satisfying our hearts with food and gladness,”** should remind us that no matter how hard we work to provide food, if God did not create the plants and give rain there would be no food (Acts 14:17).

The words, **God “Has made of one blood all nations of men to live on all the face of the earth, and has determined their appointed times, and the boundaries they live in; So that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him, and find Him, although He is not far from any one of us: For in Him we live, and move, and have our being,”** tell us that God, by His providence, has determined the boundaries of the nations, in the hope that they might seek Him and find Him (Acts 17:26-28). The words, **“You make springs send water into the valleys that run among the hills. They provide drink for every beast of the field: the wild donkeys quench their thirst. Beside the waters nest the birds the air, who sing among the branches. You water the hills from your palace: the earth is satisfied with the fruit of what you do. You cause the grass to grow for the cattle, and plants for man to cultivate: so that he may get food from the ground; And wine to make the heart of man cheerful, and oil to make his face**

**shine, and bread which strengthens him,”** tell us that many of the things that we take for granted, and assume just happen, only continue because God is at work (Psalm 104:10-15). And the words, **“The king’s heart is in the hand of the LORD, like the rivers of water: He turns it whichever way He wants,”** should remind us that God is in control (Proverbs 21:1).

## **2. THE OBJECTS OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE**

The words, **“All things in heaven and earth, both visible and invisible, were created by Him [Christ]... and by Him all things have their [continuous] existence,”** tell us that God’s providence is not limited to His care for mankind, but includes all that God has created, down to the smallest detail (Colossians 1:16-17).

In reference to the verse just quoted, R. C. H. Lenski — whose commentary on the New Testament is widely regarded as the best in dealing with the Greek — has this to say:

Two additional statements complete the immense thought so far expressed: “and he [Christ] is before all things whatever (no article), and all the things that exist (again the article) have their permanence in connection with him,” in connection with whom they were created in the first place. Creation and preservation naturally go together. The latter is highly pertinent here. No created being in the universe is independent of Christ. All are “through him and for him so that he is before them,” and **all of them have their continuous existence only “in connection with him.** (“The Interpretation of St. Paul’s Epistles to the Colossians, to the Thessalonians, to Timothy, to Titus and to Philemon” page 58.)

The words, **“Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they do not labor, or spin: Yet I am telling you, That even Solomon in all his splendor was not dressed like one of these... if that is how God clothes the grass of the field, that is here today, and is thrown into the fire tomorrow, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?”** tell us that God cares for the plants (Matthew 6:28-30).

The words, **“Look at the birds of the air: for they do not sow, or reap, or gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?”** tell us that God cares for the animals (Matthew 6:26).

The words, **“God... has made of one blood all nations of men to live on all the face of the earth, and has determined their appointed times, and the boundaries they live in; So that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him, and find Him, although He is not far from any one of us,”** tell us that He cares for all men (Acts 17:24,26,27).



The words, **“Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD; and the people whom He has chosen for His own inheritance. The LORD looks from heaven; He beholds all the sons of men. From His dwelling place He looks upon all the inhabitants of the earth. He sees the hearts of them all; He is aware of all they do,”** tell us that God cares about His people, and watches over them (Psalm 33:12-15). And, the words, **“The curse of the LORD is on the house of the wicked: but He blesses the home of the just,”** tell us that God’s people are those who are justified by faith, for that is the only way to be just in the sight of God (Proverbs 3:33).

The words, **“O LORD, I know that a man does not control his own way: and no one who walks directs his own steps,”** // **“A man’s steps are ordered by the LORD; so how can a man understand his own way?”** tell us that God is in control of our life whether we realize it or not (Jeremiah 10:23, Proverbs 20:24). The words, **“In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths.”** // **“All things work together for good for those who love God, for those who are called according to His purpose,”** tell us that God’s hand of providence is at work guiding and watching over His people (Proverbs 3:6, Romans 8:28). And, the words, **“To which of the angels has He ever said, Sit on my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool? Are they not all spirits who serve Him, and are sent forth to help those who will be heirs of salvation?”** tell us that God cares for us and sends His angels to help us (Hebrews 1:13-14).

The words, **“That is the foundation upon which I will build my church; and the gates of hell will not prevail against it,”** tell us that nothing Satan devises to thwart the work of the gospel will prevail (Matthew 16:18). And, the words, **“The very hairs of your head are all numbered,”** // **“Not a hair of your head will perish,”** and, **“Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies, yet not one of them is forgotten by God?”** tell us that God is interested, and pays attention to, the smallest details of our existence (Matthew 10:30, Luke 21:18, Luke 12:6).

### **3. DIVINE PROVIDENCE AND SECONDARY CAUSES**

Just as God uses His angels, He uses secondary causes, or intermediaries to carry out His will. The words, **“Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain: unless the LORD guards the city, the watchman stays awake in vain,”** tell us that God uses watchmen and builders as part of His providential care, and all of their efforts would be in vain without that care (Psalm 127:1). In short, **all who have honest and godly employment are serving the Lord,** and God is working through them to care for us. The plumber serves God by

installing and fixing our pipes, The farmer and baker serve God by providing us with food etc.

The words, **“The LORD raised up judges, who delivered them out of the hand of those who plundered them,”** tell us that God used judges to deliver His people (Judges 2:16). The words, **“Be careful what you do: for you judge not for man, but for the LORD, who is with you in the judgment,”** warn judges not to pervert justice, because they are working for God (2Chronicles 19:6). And, the words, **“He who listens to you listens to me; and he who rejects you rejects me; and he who rejects me rejects Him who sent me,”** tell us that those who heard the Apostles were hearing Christ because He spoke through them (Luke 10:16).

The words, **“Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or to governors, as those sent by Him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of those who do right,”** tell us that God uses earthly rulers to punish criminals and suppress crime (1Peter 2:13-14). And, the words, **“Can the throne of iniquity have fellowship with you, when he uses the law to mask evil? They band together against the life of the righteous, and condemn the innocent to death. But the LORD is my defense; and my God is the rock of my refuge. And He will turn their own iniquity back on them, and will wipe them out by means of their own wickedness,”** assure us that even when human government turns evil, **masking evil by making it legal and condemning the innocent to death,** God is in control (Psalm 94:20-23). And, **when Christians work within the system, as did Joseph, Daniel and Esther the hand of God will be with them** to protect His people and carry out His will.

#### **4. DIVINE CONCURRENCE IN GOOD AND EVIL ACTIONS**

The words, **“The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men,”** tell us that God opposes and condemns all of the evil done by men (Romans 1:18). It is man, not God, who brought evil into the world, and all of the bad that happens is in the world because of sin (Rom. 5:12).

Because of sin, believers make foolish decisions that sometimes get them into a predicament. One such predicament is described in the words, **“Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She is my sister: and Abimelech king of Gerar sent, and took Sarah. But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, Behold, you are a dead man, because of the woman that you have taken; for she is a man’s wife. But Abimelech had not come near her: and he said, Lord... in the integrity of my heart and innocence of my hands have I done this. And God said to him in a dream, Yes, I know that you did this in the integrity of your heart; and I also kept you from sinning against me: for that reason I did not allow you to touch her”** (Genesis 20:2-6). In this case, God stepped in to protect

Sarah and prevent an evil act from occurring. And, we pray for such protection when we pray, **“lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil”** (Matthew 6:13).

However, even though God does not cause men to do evil, He sometimes controls it, using it to bring His will to pass by causing all things to **“Work together for good for those who love God”** (Romans 8:28). One example of that is seen in the way God controlled and guided the brothers of Joseph. The words, **“Judah said to his brothers, What do we gain if we kill our brother, and conceal his blood? Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let our hand not harm him; for he is our brother and our flesh. And his brothers agreed,”** tell us that the brothers of Joseph had planned to kill him (Genesis 37:26). However, the words, **“You planned evil against me; but God meant it for good, to bring about that many people should be kept alive, as they are to this day,”** tell us that God prevented them from killing Joseph, yet used their anger to send Joseph to Egypt (Genesis 50:20). And, God’s words to Jacob, **“Do not be afraid to go down into Egypt; for there I will make of you a great nation,”** tell us that God used the sojourn of the children of Israel in Egypt to weld them into a nation (Genesis 46:2-3). A nation through which He would provide a Savior.

If man had never sinned, everything that God created and pronounced “very good” would work together in harmony (Genesis 1:31). The words, **“God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually,”** reflect the fact that the sin of Adam destroyed that harmony (Genesis 6:5). From God’s point of view, He gave Adam and Eve exactly what they wanted; the freedom to act contrary to His will. But, from our point of view, that freedom has brought untold suffering into the world.

The words, **“His [God’s] work is perfect: for all His ways are just: a God of truth without iniquity, just and right is He,”** // **“The LORD is just: my rock, in whom there is no unrighteousness,”** tell us that even though God sometimes makes the evil that men do work to accomplish His will, He is not the cause of that evil (Deuteronomy 32:4, Psalm 92:15). And, in many cases God causes an evil act to bring about the opposite of what the evildoer intended. We see one example of that in the account of Joseph and his brothers. Those brothers sold Joseph into slavery in order to prevent him from ruling over them, but what they did led to his rise to power, and put him in a position to rule over them.

"There are two consequences in history; an immediate one, which is instantly recognized, and one in the distance, which is not at first perceived. These consequences often contradict each other; the former are the results of our own limited wisdom, the latter, those of that wisdom which endures. The

providential event appears after the human event. God rises up behind men. Deny, if you will, the supreme counsel; disown its action; dispute about words; designate, by the term, force of circumstances, or reason, what the vulgar call Providence; but look to the end of an accomplished fact, and you will see that it has always produced the contrary of what was expected from it, if it was not established at first upon morality and justice." (From Chateaubriand's Posthumous Memoirs, quoted in "That Which Is Seen, And That Which Is Not Seen", By Frederic Bastiat".)

The words, **"You are not a God who has pleasure in wickedness: nor will evil dwell with you. The foolish will not stand in your sight: you hate all who do evil. You will destroy those who tell lies: the LORD will detest the bloody and deceitful man,"** tell us that even though God does not always punish evildoers immediately, that punishment is coming (Psalm 5:4-6). The words, **"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is patient with us, not wanting anyone to perish, but all to come to repentance,"** tell us that God is not tolerant of sin, but is giving us time to repent. (2Peter 3:9). Therefore, the words, **"The living God... Who in the past allowed all nations to go their own way,"** are not telling us that God permitted those nations to sin, or condoned their sin, but that He refrained from destroying them so that millions could later be brought to repentance (Acts 14:15-16). At the same time, the words, **"God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves: For they changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creation more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up to vile affections: for even their women exchanged the natural use for that which is contrary to nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men doing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error that was fitting. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things that are not right,"** tell us that even though God does not immediately destroy a nation that rejects Him, that rejection does have consequences (Romans 1:24-28). As long as a nation worships God He works to bring its people to repentance, but once they reject Him their own innate depravity is unrestrained. As it is written, **"They did not want any of my advice: they rejected all my correction. Therefore they will eat of the fruit of their own way, and be fed with their own schemes"** (Proverbs 1:30-31).

## 5. DIVINE PROVIDENCE AND FREE WILL

One question that theologians struggle with has to do with the fact that God is fully in control, yet He does not approve of sin, or cause men to sin. In dealing with that question **it is important to never contradict or go beyond what the Bible plainly says**. Our mind is like the mind of an ant in comparison to God. Therefore, instead of professing ourselves to be wise, we need to faithfully teach what the Bible says, while acknowledging our own ignorance and limitations. As it is written, **“What we now see is like a dim reflection on a glass... Now I know in part; but then I will know even as I am known”** (1Corinthians 13:12). [See Jer. 17:9, Rom. 1:22.]

The words, **“O LORD, I know that a man does not control his own way: and no one who walks directs his own steps,”** tell us that God is fully in control (Jeremiah 10:23). At the same time, the words, **“Do not let anyone say when he is tempted, I am tempted by God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, nor does He tempt anyone: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed,”** tell us that God does not cause us to sin (James 1:13-14). When Adam and Eve sinned, they chose to ignore God’s direction. And, the words, **“They did not want any of my advice: they rejected all my correction. Therefore they will eat of the fruit of their own way, and be fed with their own schemes,”** apply to what they did (Proverbs 1:30-31).

The words, **“A man has many plans in his mind; nevertheless the LORD’S plan will stand,”** tell us that nothing can stop what God has determined to bring to pass (Proverbs 19:21). The words, **“Whoever commits sin is the servant of sin,”** tell us that sin has placed the human race in bondage (John 8:34). The words, **“Don’t you know, that when you yield yourselves to someone to obey him as servants, you are the servants of the one you obey”** tell us that by obeying Satan, Adam and Eve became slaves of Satan (Romans 6:16). And, the words, **“But thanks be to God, you who were the slaves of sin, have obeyed from the heart the form of doctrine that was delivered to you. And having been freed from sin, you became the servants of righteousness,”** tell us that God’s plan has, from the beginning, been to free us from that bondage through faith in Christ (Romans 6:16-18).

The words, **“I am deeply distressed; but should I pray, Father, save me from this hour? No, for this hour is the reason I came,”** tell us that it was God’s plan from the beginning for Christ to die (John 12:27). And, the words, **“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief,”** tell us that Christ came into the world to die for our sins (1Timothy 1:15). However, the words, **“You are of your father the devil, and you will do what your father desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and did not abide in the truth, because there is no truth in him,”** tell us the Pharisees murdered Christ because they were under the control of Satan, not

because God caused them to (John 8:44). Furthermore, Satan was not trying to do the will of God, but trying to thwart it. Satan thought that by killing Christ he could defeat Him. But, God caused the evil that Satan planned to bring about the opposite result; the result that God wanted.

The fact that God is in control should be a great comfort to those who trust in Christ. Having been freed from Satan's Control, we still need to struggle against the flesh. As it is written, **"I buffet my body, and bring it under my control: lest there be any way that I, after having preached to others, might be rejected"** (1Corinthians 9:27). And, the words, **"The flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and they are opposed to each other: so that you cannot do the things that you would,"** then tell us that when we trust in Christ the Spirit of God is at work within us, helping us to resist the flesh (Galatians 5:17). Moreover, when we pray **"Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,"** we are praying **"Order my steps in your word: and do not allow any sin to have dominion over me"** (Matthew 6:13, Psalm 119:133). Therefore, God's assurance that, **"The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and He delights in his way,"** should be a great comfort to us (Psalm 37:23). **"A man's heart devises his way: but the LORD directs his steps"** (Proverbs 16:9).

### **Some Questions Regarding Divine Providence**

The words, **"Knowing the judgment of God, that those who commit such things are worthy of death,"** tell us that **God hates sin** (Romans 1:32). And, the words, **"God cannot be tempted with evil, nor does He tempt anyone,"** tell us that God does not lead anyone to sin (James 1:13). Yet the words, **"Herod and Pontius Pilate truly joined together, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, in opposition to your holy child Jesus, whom you anointed, To do everything your hand and counsel long ago decided should be done,"** tell us that Pilate and the Pharisees were doing what God wanted done when they crucified Christ (Acts 4:27-28). How do we explain that?

In answering such questions we must always be willing to admit our own ignorance, and never profess ourselves to be wise. Knowing that **"the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked,"** it would be foolish for us to pass off made up explanations as Bible doctrine (Jeremiah 17:9). Furthermore, any explanation that we tentatively advance must agree with everything the Bible says. As it is written, **"If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."** (Isaiah 8:20).

That being said, one possible answer to the question of how God controlled things to the extent that Pilate and the Pharisees crucified Christ without God causing them to, may lie in the fact that God choose the time and place where Christ would be

put on trial. For example, if that trial had taken place a century earlier, while Rome was still a republic, the cry **“If you let this man go, you are not Caesar’s friend,”** would not have intimidated Pilate (John 19:12). And, far from God causing Pilate to sentence Christ to death, the text itself tells us that Pilate was warned by God, and convinced of Christ’s innocence. The words, **“While he [Pilate] was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent to him, saying, Have nothing to do with that just man: for I suffered much today in a dream because of Him,”** tell us that Pilate was warned (Matthew 27:19). And, the words, **“From that time forth Pilate sought to release Him,”** and **“I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see to it yourselves,”** tell us that Pilate was convinced of Christ’s innocence (John 19:12, Matthew 27:24). So Pilate did what he did out of self-interest, not because God made him do it.

Another question has to do with the fact that God long ago determined the length of our life, yet the Bible sometimes speaks of Him adding or subtracting years on the basis of what we do. For example: the words, **“Seeing his [a man’s] days are determined, the number of his months are with you, you have set limits that he cannot pass;”** tell us that the length of our life is determined by God (Job 14:5). Yet the words, **“Honor your father and your mother: that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God gives you,”** // **“My son, do not forget my law; but keep my commandments in your heart: For they will give you a long good life, and peace,”** and **“Listen, O my son, accept what I say; and the years of your life will be many,”** promise long life to those who do God’s will (Exodus 20:12, Proverbs 3:1-2 and 4:10). Now, reconciling the passages that I have just quoted is not a big problem because God knew from the beginning who would do His will and who would not. However, how do we square this with the fact that the godly often die young?

Here again, the Bible does not give us a direct explanation, so we need to humbly admit our ignorance without professing ourselves to be wise. In dealing with such questions we need to keep in mind God’s plan for world evangelism, and the fact that the death of a believer is not the end, but the beginning of life with Christ. For example: I know of two young Christian girls who died in a car accident. Some saw that as a tragedy, but the words, **“The righteous dies, and no one cares: kind men are swept away, and no one realizes that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come. He will enter into peace,”** tell us that God may have spared those girls much pain and hardship (Isaiah 57:1-2).

The words, **“Er, Judah’s firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD slew him... And the thing that he [Onan] did displeased the LORD: therefore He slew him also,”** tell us that God sometimes shortens the life of those who do evil (Genesis 38:7-10). However, in understanding this we need to

remember that whenever God shortens a life, that changes the world's timeline, and that could make a big difference over the centuries. At the same time, the words, **"A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children: but the wealth of the sinner is stored up for the righteous,"** tell us that when God allows an evil person to prosper He has a purpose that we may not be able to understand (Proverbs 13:22).

The words, **"We believed that we had been sentenced to death, but that kept us from trusting in ourselves, rather than in God who raises the dead: He rescued us from so deadly a peril, and He will deliver us: He in whom we trust will continue to deliver us; As you also help us by praying for us,"** tell us that the hardship Paul endured strengthened his faith, that he was helped by the prayers of the church, and that God delivered him from death (2Corinthians 1:9-11). And, the words, **"I am torn between the two, I desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Yet it is more important for you that I remain in the body,"** suggest that God saved Paul from death for the good of the church — not just then, but to this very day (Philippians 1:23-24).

The words, **"Whoever sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for God made man in His own image,"** and **"He who strikes another, so that he dies, shall be surely put to death,"** tell us that God sometimes works through government to shorten the lives of the wicked (Genesis 9:6, Exodus 21:12). While the words, **"The LORD preserved David wherever he went,"** tell us that God lengthened David's life by protecting him from danger, or possibly assassins (2Samuel 18:14).

The words, **"In those days Hezekiah became sick and was dying. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said to him, The LORD says, Set your house in order; for you will not recover, but will die. Then he turned his face to the wall, and prayed to the LORD, saying, I beseech you, O LORD, remember now how I have walked before you in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done what is right in your sight. And Hezekiah wept bitterly. And before Isaiah had left the inner courtyard, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, Go back, and tell Hezekiah the leader of my people, The LORD, the God of David your father says, I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears: behold, I will heal you: on the third day you will go up to the house of the LORD. And I will add to your days fifteen years,"** tell us that God lengthened the life of Hezekiah in answer to prayer (2Kings 20:1-6). But, God knew from eternity that Hezekiah would pray that prayer. In fact, God may have sent Isaiah to Hezekiah in order to get him to pray that prayer, and if so it was recorded for our benefit. So we have to keep God's eternal purpose in mind.

While keeping our focus on God's eternal plan, and the work of the gospel, we should never forget the fact that the day is coming when God will call all men to



account for their sins. And, on that day only those whose sins have been washed away by the shed blood of Jesus Christ will escape God's eternal wrath. As it is written **"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,"** for **"The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us of all sin"** (Romans 8:7, 1John 1:7).

In contrast, God's warning to the unrepentant is that, **"Neither their silver or their gold will be able to deliver them on the day of the LORD'S wrath; but the whole world will be consumed by the fire of His jealousy: for He will make a quick end of all those who live on the earth."** // **"The earth will tremble at His wrath, and the nations will not be able to endure His indignation"** (Zephaniah 1:18, Jeremiah 10:10). And, the words, **"So man lies down, and does not arise: until the heavens are no more,"** tell us that the final judgment will take place after God has destroyed this universe (Job 14:12).

All Glory to God Alone