

Apostle 13

Mike Ferrigno

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To My Daughters

"Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old."

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Poetry



The House of Mourning

(07.01.95)

In the House of Mourning,
The men are God adoring,
Not for wealth and fame,
But for a tongue that's tame,
Boys will be boys,
But men don't play with toys,
The man to give your trust,
Is sitting in the dust,
The man who asks you for a drink,
Is a prophet or a fink,
The man who says I cannot cook,
Is like a sneaky little crook,
The man who says I hate to clean,

Is ugly nasty and obscene,
The man who says but I am tired,
Is selfish lazy and a liar,
The man who says I like to work,
Is sure to be a real jerk,
For in the House of Mourning,
The men are God adoring,
Not for wealth and fame,
But for a tongue that's tame,
Boys will be boys,
But men don't play with toys,
The man to give your trust,
Is sitting in the dust,
The man who says to me be true,
Will always want to cheat on you,
The man who says it's not my fault,

Is bad with kids and cannot count,
For if a man is truly sorry,
His own weight he's sure to carry,
If you're smart then you will listen,
Can't make a man can only pickem,
And if you think that I don't know,
Just ask your mom about her woe.

The Price of Freedom

(07.02.95)

The path we take is long and narrow,
It leads to death it leads to sorrow,
But in the end we're sure to find,
That all the pain we did survive,
Those before us straight and sure,
Showed the way we must endure,
They lived in caves they lived in holes,
They gave their lives to save our souls,
Whipped to death sown asunder,
How does a man do such wonder?
They paid a price I'm sure to say,
And if you're smart you won't delay,
The path we take is long and narrow,

It leads to death it leads to sorrow,
But in the end we're sure to find,
That all the pain we did survive,
They'll shed our blood be not surprised,
First take our homes then call us liars,
For to a camp we all must travel,
To reeducate us with their babel,
Cuz our peace they hate with passion,
All our food they're sure to ration,
In the end our heads will roll,
Be not afraid it's in the scroll,
The path we take is long and narrow,
It leads to death it leads to sorrow,
But in the end we're sure to find,
That all the pain we did survive,
I know that life is but a breath,

To love the world is even less,
To live a lie you must not do,
It's up to you to follow thru,
And if you listen with great care,
You'll hear a trumpet in the air,
But more than that you'll hear a voice,
That says well done you made a choice.

The Seven Year Itch

(07.03.95)

Seven years have come and gone,
My walk with God is still alone,
Night and day I preached the news,
But all who heard just sang the blues,
I looked for fruit but none did find,
Just more excuses of the mind,
I yearned to hear just one amen,
But all of them were worthless men,
So to the women I did turn,
But each of them refused to learn,
Throughout the valley I did search,
But all were busy playing Church,
They hated me without a reason,

Said that I was full of treason,
Thought my wife might want to listen,
But she was busy in the kitchen,
Told my daughters the big surprise,
But dreams of boys had filled their eyes,
Mom and dad I tried to show,
But all they said was no no no,
How many times I told my brother,
Not again I'll waste God's power,
So now I pray the wind does blow,
To tell the one who wants to know,
That Christ is risen from the dead,
The debts are paid if you'll repent.

The Harvest

(07.04.95)

In ninety-one the seed was sown,
Just seven years the fields well grown,
In ninety-eight a drought with sorrow,
For seven years no one can borrow,
Halfway thru the pain will double,
Time has come for Jacob's trouble,
The day and hour no man does know,
But in October a harvest mowed,
For to a statue all must bow,
"Please take a number" on your brow,
And if the beast you must refuse,
Do not expect to be let loose,
The camps are old and sometimes brrrrr,

A military base foreclosure,
For those who run it will be worse,
But if you do don't take a purse,
Don't dial the phone or they'll be there,
There is a code for those who D.A.R.E.,
For just two days is all you'll have,
To sell the house the car and scram,
Jesus Joseph Mary it's time to go,
To the place you first did grow,
Family is so important,
Bring the kids just for enjoyment,
Take two bags but leave the pets,
Pack only clothes or have regrets,
While you're there attend the classes,
Reeducate just like the masses,
Guards are few but they are friendly,

Watch the lines cause they are deadly,
Don't try to run don't try to hide,
The safest place will be inside,
To be left out would be a shame,
When all the world is in such pain,
The time has come you must decide,
To wait will end in suicide,
Don't be a fool just be the best,
Prayer with fasting is the rest.

The Facts of Life

(03.21.96)

I learned a lesson long ago,
From a town called Jericho,
That seven seals can take place,
One per year is all it takes,
First comes peace then a sword,
Famine third and death a fourth,
Five is always full of grace,
Martyrs die to save the race,
Six does shake and rattle and roll,
But seven is the one that blows,
Trumpet one burns like a fire,
Sixty days and then another,
Two will make a great big splash,

And three will happen in a flash,
Four will make a grown man cry,
But five will make you want to die,
Six is more than just a woe,
One of three will have to go,
Seven stands for seven plagues,
Just one month is all it takes,
As we rise the pain does grow,
Five days more the oceans go,
Three is sure to make you drink,
And four is sure to leave a stink,
Five they get what they deserve,
Six they gather round the earth,
Seven is the way to go,
Hail the size of buffalo,
Birds are ready for a feast,

Forty-five days without cease,
Then the wedding bells will chime,
And Christ will reign for all of time,
A millennium is just a day,
For a devil locked away,
Gog is sure the perfect name,
For a land so full of shame,
Seven months to bury dead,
Seven years the fires fed,
Look to heaven you may see,
Something sweeter than Aunt Bea,
Jerusalem all dressed in stone,
Gold and pearls and gems and more,
Trees of healing line the streets,
Twelve per year the fruit we eat,
Here a lion there a lamb,

A safer world for little hands,
Can you see how far I've gone,
Even sang for you a song,
All my children always know,
The Father's voice behind the show.

The Dirty Dozen

(01.11.99)

When Hyakutake came to thee,
The biggest house I ever did see,
I entered in for you and me,
So all the world could plainly see,
That it was forty-five right from the start,
Now thirty-three is the count,
The West was won without a gamble,
The East is ours but in a shambles,
Ben is in Puerto R.I.C.O., he says high,
I'll leave him there I'll not deny,
This dirty dozen wants a bride,
If they don't get one it's my Hyde,
So be advised, pay attention,

Let no man separate,
God's good intentions.

The Mule Train

(06.21.99)

Kansas City can prophesy,

Toronto can laugh,

Pensacola can shake,

But Mesa is flat.

For to us a child is born,

Who can bear the hurtful scorn,

Not for love or hope or faith,

Just because of conscience sake,

Thirteen Apostles knows the key,

To being grateful on their knees,

The government is more than rules,

It rests on shoulders of the mules,

So go to church sing and dance,

Don't mind us don't take a chance,

Just ignore us we don't exist,

Its ok we're used to it.

The Most High

(12.31.99)

Who is like God tell me if you know,

Who can remember your suffering and woe,

Who parts the heavens just to be there,

When all that is left is pain and despair,

Who gave his son to hang on a tree,

Just in the hopes that you might believe,

Tell me his name show me his home,

There I will dwell never to roam,

How can it be that someone so high,

Can bow so low each time I cry,

Why does he care for such men as me,

Tell me his name please let me see,

How does a man pay back a friend,

Who gave everything including his son,
I cannot rest I will not waver,
Until in his eyes I have found favor.

The End Is Nigh

(12.25.19)

The end is nigh,
A poem I'll try,
The road was long,
Lived ten men's lives,
A seed must die,
Before it grows,
Broke every bone,
Except my nose,
At suffering,
I'm the best,
Was given,
At your behest,
Taught more people,

Than Lu Xiaobo,

Wrote more words,

Than Angelou,

Make the most.

Of my endeavor,

I am the last,

Look no farther.

Stories



The Apostle

(02.11.24)

Welcome! My name is Mike Ferrigno. I am an Apostle, and you are not. I suffer from Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD), Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD), Substance Use Disorder (SUD), and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), but first, a disclaimer:

My work includes videos, memes, emails, blogs, books, essays, poems, short stories, and last but not least, the Keys to the Book of Revelation. Now, if you suddenly find yourself gasping for air, or looking for the exit, do not be alarmed. It's just the devil leaving your body.

Let's begin with the hardest question first, shall we? Why do innocents suffer and die? The answer is obvious. The strong carry the weak. Incredibly, even their sacrifice is not always enough. Sometimes, we need to pay for our sins ourselves. Here is what I do when things go wrong.

First, I look to family and friends. Is anyone having similar problems? If so, I pray God remove their, now our, burden. If

that doesn't work, I assume I am the cause, not the cure. Am I judging someone? If so, I stop it, pray for mercy, and make amends. If that doesn't work, I assume I am breaking the law, covenants I made with God and others. What exactly are my obligations? Are those in charge of me, pleased or displeased? Are those under me, cared for properly? Am I following the spirit of the law or the letter of the law? Am I fulfilling my duties cheerfully or grudgingly? What needs or wants am I overlooking?

Sometimes, the answer is simple. I am not progressing fast enough. What was ok at twenty may not be alright at twenty-five. Sometimes, the answer is complex. I may have to change my entire perspective, be born again. Is there no rain? Is there too much rain? A wise farmer does not blame God, or the devil, or others. He examines himself, changes direction, and asks for forgiveness. In other words, I accept responsibility for everything bad that happens around me, and I thank God for everything good. And that, my friend, is why I am an Apostle, and you are not. Thank You Lord.

Cascade of Mercy

(02.18.24)

Let me tell you a story. It begins where most American stories start, with the savage beating of a woman. She was born in 1911, one of twelve. When the depression hit, her father bought a small dairy farm and waited things out. They barely survived. By 1934, she was off and married. By 1940, the beatings were so severe, her face so disfigured, the authorities granted her a divorce. A few years later, she remarried, and the beatings began again. By 1951, her 16-year-old son lied about his age and went to Korea. They made him a cook. When things went south, he saved his friends. They gave him a silver star and purple heart. In Germany, he married a girl, and they had children. As they made plans to come to America, word came down: she had TB. After her death, he left, and the children were raised by her sister. The horrors of war, the childhood tortures, her death, sent him over the edge. Like both his fathers, he descended into madness. It began with chain gangs and ended on Skid Row. Every few years, he would come home and dry out. The screams would last a week. He was the humblest man I ever met, a cook for the Salvation Army. Like all her descendants, he had the face of an angel. Speaking of angels, her daughter, a daddy's girl, spent her days chasing her older

brothers and their friends. By 15, she was pregnant. After a shotgun wedding and a shaky birth, my father headed west. We didn't meet again for 18 years. My birth, like everything else, came early. I was small and weak and wouldn't feed. Thanks to nuns' prayers, goat's milk, and a case of paregoric, I recovered, sort of. Hey, it could have been worse. Thalidomide was still legal. By the time my withdrawals ended, she was married and pregnant again. A few months later, I met my brother. Like me, he was sick and weak and almost died, but they had a different cure for him: kidnapping. My stepfather sent him to Italy to force my mother to continue to work. I didn't see him again until he was one. This is where things get interesting. Think Jungle Book. Rather than walk, he scurried. Rather than jump, he pounced. Rather than talk, he snarled. It's not every day you meet a 5-year-old junkie and a 1-year-old dog boy walking down the street. The point is, suffering leads to prayer, and prayer leads to a cascade of mercy. Today, by the grace of God, I have a degree in theology, and my brother has a degree in music.

I Am Number Six

(02.27.11)

It was late August 1966, my first day of kindergarten at George Washington Elementary. Grey clouds darkened the early morning sky. The wind chill was near freezing. I remember thinking there was not going to be an Indian Summer this year. On August 1st, Charles Whitman wounded 31 and killed 16 at the University of Texas. On August 5th, Martin Luther King Jr. was stoned with rocks in Chicago. On August 22nd, the Beatles arrived in New York. Nuclear testing was routine. We finally reached Mars. Think Watchmen and you get the picture. My parents dropped me at the curb. They could not go in. Father was wary of La Migra and government buildings. Mother was still recovering from the previous night's beating. Her arm brace was new, but other than that, I didn't have a care in the world. For all practical purposes, we were equals.

My class had sixty students, half black and half white. We also had three teachers, all white, middle class, women, fresh out college, the crème de la crème of the Great Society. "Raise your hand when I call your name!" one said. On cue, we all raised our hands, then burst into laughter. I was mildly intrigued. An hour later, they called, "Mike!" Six of us raised our hands. The class

roared. A quick huddle and they decided to give us numbers. I am number six. One by one they figured out who is who. Eventually, one name is left, Mike Seeton, and one student, me. I assure them my name is Mike Ferrigno. Another huddle and one of them runs to the office. When she returns, she barks, "You are wrong! You are Mike Seeton! You better raise your hand or else!" Being Italian, I politely said, "Go @%\$# yourself!" The class began to dance like Woodstock.

It took a few seconds, then it dawned on them. Their bright JFK careers were in jeopardy. They were at my desk in an instant, hovering, railing accusations, casting dispersions on my birth. Little did they know, it was just like my home, only prettier, softer. I let them continue, until one of them made a mistake, a lesson not taught at Northwestern University. They bumped into me. I was up in a flash, I was almost their height, and years of acting out made me wiry. They were in shock. Slowly, their memories returned, and they remembered their little brothers and knew what to do. No longer educators, no longer liberals, they became themselves, daughters of WWII! To hell with nap time. They were going to show me who was boss. Together, they managed to drag me to the back room. The world never heard, nor will ever hear again, the kind of things I called them. Their solution? Wash my mouth out with soap. Long story short, in my parent's quest for the American Dream, they forgot to mention dad was not dad. Some other guy was.

As I walked home that day, I was a different man. It was like I was awake for the first time. The clouds were magnificent. The trees were alive. The sun was soothing. I could hear the wind. Maybe, I was poisoned, maybe not. Either way, I was enlightened and the stark contrast between creation and those running it was obvious. Clearly, the adults were not in charge. Like my missing father, someone else was, and that was a good thing. In other words, I found God. The bad news is, even though I learned the truth by dinner, I never once answered their roll call, and they never once missed an opportunity to torture me. By Christmas, they grew weary of it all and never called my name again. To this day, I still hate the smell of Ivory Soap.

Fast Track

(02.25.24)

By the end of Kindergarten, my parents were working 24/7. I spent my days being paddled by the nuns at Saint Nicholas Catholic School. I spent my nights playing behind the bar in my parents' restaurant. By January my mother was abused one too many times and we fled to Chandler to live with her best friend. I spent my days at Galveston Elementary School with 20 Native Americans, 6 Mexicans, and 3 whites. I spent my nights in a small trailer with seven people. By July my father's enormous black Bonneville appeared in the driveway. A chill ran down my spine. They were back together, again. We headed to Chicago. Like Forest Gump, we arrived during the Democratic Convention Riots. The car died on Michigan and Wilson. We spent the night in a gas station. It was God awful hot. A few weeks later I was back at my alma mater, George Washington Elementary School. This time things were better. My second grade teacher, Mrs. Flag, saw my potential and the hellscape I was living in and tried desperately to adopt me. My mother wasn't having any of it, and started looking for another school. Eventually, she came across an ad for a scholarship for poor kids and signed me up. Roycemore College Preparatory School in Evanston offered one scholarship a year. They served Pre-K through Grade 12. There

were 240 students. The place looked like Hogwarts. That summer, I took the test. I had the highest score in Cook County. They gave me a free ride through high school. My class had 3 girls, 10 boys, all white, all filthy rich. My teacher was British. They just rolled out their brand new, color coded, work at your own pace, experimental program. I finished high school at age eleven. Rather than enroll me in college, my parents moved to the boonies where "special programs" were still called Communism. I took the 6th Grade Standardized Test. I had the highest score in Lake County. They praised my teacher and gave me a cheeseburger. I already knew every answer to every question on every test, so I turned my attention to sports. By seventeen, I was captain seven times, had 32 inch thighs, a 44 pulse, and could run a 4:15 mile. Mostly I came in second, but I was second in every event. Bruce Jenner was my next target. Then I met alcohol. It only took 30 seconds on the slopes to pick up enough speed to completely shred my leg. Talk about the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat! It was game over. I turned my attention to religion.

The Omen

(03.06.11)

On June 25, 1976, the movie “The Omen” was released. I was fifteen. I liked science fiction. So, I bought a copy of the book. The story was interesting, but what really caught my attention was the last page which read, “Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast; for it is the number of a man; and his number is 666 (Revelation 13:18). I had never read the Bible before, but I was curious. So, I dug out my mother’s giant black leather catholic edition, dusted it off, and started reading the Book of Revelation. I could not understand a word of it. So, I started over at the beginning. After a few chapters of “he begat this” and “he begat that” I gave up.

A few months later, I tried again. This time I noticed the footnotes, which led me to the prophets, which led me to Jeremiah 31:33, “I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.” Now, I had said a thousand Our Fathers and Hail Marys, but until that second it never occurred to me God might respond. I decided to put my theory to the test. I looked up and said, “God, if you are there, please talk to me.” Instantly, I heard a voice say, “What do you want?” My heart froze. I blurted out

the only thing I could think of, "Is Evolution real or not?" Without hesitation, He said, "Why do you think I gave you the age of every patriarch?" I sure had no answer. So, I said, "Thank you," hoping it would all end soon. Calm as day, He said, "You're welcome." I ran outside into the snow gasping for air.

After a few weeks, I found the courage to try it again and the results were the same. I was never alone again. A few months later, I stumbled across a Christian radio station, which led me to a Christian bookstore. Apparently, I was not the only one talking to God. When I entered the store, I could hear two men arguing in the back. It did not sound very Christian, so I asked God what to do. He said, "Go talk to them." One man was short and dirty and dressed like a biker. The other man was tall and clean and handsome. The biker kept yelling, "You're in a cult." The yuppie kept saying, "Come and see for yourself." To me the answer was obvious. We should see both churches. The short guy was not having any of it and stormed off yelling, "You're both going to Hell." Little did I know then, just how right he was.

Later that night, I attended my first meeting of the Way International. I was so excited. I was finally going to meet some Christians. The group had thirty adults and ten children. They all lived together in beautiful mansion on the rich side of town. Everyone was well dressed and well spoken. A little girl with blonde pigtails passed around a wicker basket shaped like a horn of plenty. We sang a few songs. Then the children left the room. Then an older man read from John Chapter One. Then a

younger man explained how the Trinity was really a Catholic hoax. I had no idea what he was talking about. So, I asked, "What do you think John 1:1 really means?" He ignored me. So, I asked again, "What exactly does it mean? "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God?" As the words left my mouth, the lights started to flicker on and off and a faint wind began to howl. Suddenly, they all stood up and just stared at me.

Being a teenager, I said it again, only louder, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Instantly, their faces started to twist and turn. Then their eyes rolled back in their heads and something evil began to peer out. Naturally, I said it again, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." This time they started to swing at me like some giant evil octopus. When they moved closer, I stood up. Then one of them knocked my Bible to the floor. Another ripped it to pieces. Another tore my shirt open. Another tore my sleeve. Right then, God says to me, "Why don't you just tell them to stop in the Name of Jesus?" My first thought was "Ya right, they'll never listen to me." My second thought was, "Well, demons do have to obey Jesus." A second later they rushed me, so I yelled, "Stop in the name of Jesus." What I saw amazed me. It looked like a flock of birds hitting a windshield. They gnashed their teeth and growled. I repeated John 1:1. They wailed and moaned. I repeated John 1:1. They giggled and drooled. I repeated John 1:1. They cried,

"You can't tell us what to do." And "You have no power here." After a few more verses and few more howls, I slowly backed out of the room and left. They never moved an inch.

A Gold Crown

(03.13.11)

After the death of our son Danny, my wife and I were desperately searching for some way or somewhere to begin again. When a friend mentioned he and his wife were moving to Kansas City to help start a church, we jumped at the chance to get away from it all. So, in the spring of 1983, we left Chicago and joined the now infamous church movement known as the Kansas City Prophets led by Mike Bickle.

About fifty families all came to live in a three-block area known as the "duplexes." Most of us were in our early twenties, married, and with newborns. We worked together, prayed together, laughed together, and cried together. Bob Jones and his wonderful wife Viola would go from house to house teaching us little brats the things of God. Within a few months, the church exploded to 10,000 people. Everyone wanted to hear from Bob. Meetings were held day and night, in our homes, and at a nearby industrial park.

On Sunday night, March 18, 1984, they held a special meeting to choose 400 new leaders to handle the growing work. Needless to say, I was not invited. As Bob used to put it, "You are the worst sinner in the church!" Nevertheless, something

called me to the church that night and I went. When I arrived, everyone was singing, so I went to the front, knelt down, and began to pray. After about thirty minutes, I just happened to look up and what I saw changed my life forever. The ceiling above my head disappeared and I could see the stars. Then the sky rolled away like a scroll, and I could see into Heaven. In the center was a throne and from it gold crowns began to rain down upon the earth. Some landed on our assembly. One came to rest on my head. It was extremely heavy and fit like a glove. I was afraid to move or speak, so I just kept praying.

Within minutes, Bob ran to the stage, grabbed the microphone, and calmly said, "Many of you have just received golden crowns of leadership." As the words left his mouth, the power went out and a fierce wind began to howl. They quickly canceled the meeting, and we all raced outside into a thick eerie fog. There was wind and rain and snow and ice. There was lightning and thunder and hail. As we drove the few miles back to the duplexes the storm seemed to follow us and grew worse. Trees and power lines and cars were scattered everywhere.

When I arrived home, it was quite a sight. Only four or five families had gas stoves and when the storm hit everyone quickly moved in with us. People were crammed in every corner of every room, babies were screaming, candles were burning, and sleeping bags and blankets covered the floors. After finding my wife and daughter, I went outside to check on our tree. I knew if it fell, it would kill all of us. As I looked up something

inside me said, "Why don't you just tell it to stand up?" I thought about it for a second. Then pointed my finger at the tree and yelled, "Stand up in the name of Jesus."

The next day it looked like a war zone. Huge oak branches covered the streets. All the cars were smashed and trapped in the driveways. Thick ice covered everything, and the temperature dropped to near zero. It took three days to get the cars out. It took eight days to restore the power. The only bright spot was one very large very lonely tree next to my door. Not a single branch had fallen off. Not even a twig!

The last word I heard in K.C. was from John Paul Jackson, who said, "A prophet is like an old oak tree surrounded by saplings or wannabes. Only the seeds that are carried away by the wind and rain to a place free of its shade will take root and grow." They never did pick their leaders that night, but God sure did. Within a few months, one sin led to another until I was swept away in a whirlwind of pain and suffering. Bottom line, I was called to the Office of Prophet on October 19, 1991, in sunny Mesa, Arizona, and to the Office of Apostle on May 30, 1995, in sunny Las Vegas, Nevada.

Go West Young Man

(03.20.11)

The falling snow was thick and heavy the way it only gets at sundown in Chicago. "Lake Effect" was the technical term, but every kid knew what it meant. It was Christmas! I drop off my angel at the ballet studio and look for a parking spot. It was a small suburban farm town about sixty miles outside the city, Main Street USA. At last, a spot finally opens up. I park the car. Turn the ignition off and wait.

The class is on the second floor. Christmas lights decorate the windows. I can just make out my daughter all dressed in pink as they start their exercises. I sure needed the break. It was tough getting through the blizzard and I hadn't played father in a long time. This time the separation lasted two years. Who was I kidding? I was still in shock. Outside I was all smiles, but inside I was just plain scared. My fears fade away as I watch the children dance. After a few more precious moments of peace and quiet, I do the fatherly thing and go inside to gloat. What a beautiful town. What a beautiful family. It reminded me of a scene from "It's a Wonderful Life." For a second, I had hope, but deep down inside of me, I knew life was never that easy. When she finished, I packed her back in the car, and we hurried back

home. I was late for work. I kissed them all goodbye and headed for the door.

I was at work for only an hour when my wife called. "She can't breathe!" she screamed into the phone and hung up. I quickly dialed her back. It rang a few times and she yelled, "We're on our way to the hospital!" I mumbled, "I'll be there," then the phone went dead again. My legs gave out beneath me. I grabbed the counter to keep from falling. This couldn't be happening again. We already lost one kid. I scrambled to my feet and burst back into the blizzard. I arrived just in time to see them rolling my baby down the hall. My wife was running next to her. The medics were pushing and pulling. They all seemed scared. My daughter was grey as the sky outside with tubes dangling all around her. I grasped her cold weak hand and said, "Everything will be alright." They tucked her into bed, and we all went outside to talk. There I learned a new word - Asthma! She was alive for now, but no one seemed too sure about her future.

As I sat with my wife and talked, I could see she was rattled and that scared me even more. She was the real parent here. I was just along for the ride. I tried to man up and act like an adult, but it wasn't long before I was tested again. I heard a faint scream from down the hall, then another, and another. I ran to my daughter. She lay there terrified and bleeding and the nurse kept stabbing her with a needle. My daughter begged me over and over to make them stop. I was determined to act calm and reassured her it would all be over soon. After five or six more

attempts, it became clear to me even if you paid her, this person could not get blood from a mosquito's ass. My daughter cried out, "Why don't you make it stop daddy?" That was all I needed to hear. I saw red. The next thing I knew, I was being escorted from the hospital and threatened with jail time. It was not very mature, but it was fatherly. I was on the right road at last.

After a few more months of flurries, we went in for a final consultation. The Doc checked our daughter, then calmly informed us we had two choices. We could keep her on enough meds to kill a horse or we could move somewhere more conducive for recovery. "Where?" we asked. "Out west" he said. "Where?" we asked again. He said, "You know, out west, like New Mexico or Southern California." Like all good immigrants, we said, "Oh" and left.

After a few more weeks of delirious behavior we couldn't take it anymore. We loaded up my wife's 76 Corolla with holes in the floorboard and headed west. It was Easter! It was Spring! We were getting away from our parents! We had no idea where we were going! It took a week to make Albuquerque. It took fifteen minutes to leave. We tried Flagstaff, but it was too cold. As we came down I-17, it grew hotter and hotter, and we grew quieter and quieter. The air seemed to stick to the roof our mouths. But there was something, something in the air, the warmth, the sun, the stillness, that gave me hope and there we stayed. In time my daughter's health improved. We even had another son.

Sadly, the marriage didn't make it. Sometimes, the road is just a bit too long. Nevertheless, we all still love each other, and they are as beautiful as the August rains.

Will Work for Food

(03.03.24)

In 1988, the Valley was a ghost town. Everything was for sale, and no one was hiring. Somehow, I managed to stay sober until I didn't. Eventually, I met a guy who knew another guy that needed a cook for a bar and grill. I called, and the owner told me to meet him there at seven.

I arrived on time. The bartender informed me that the owner was running late and asked me to wait. One hour turned into two, two into three, and three into four. Finally, I gave up and had a drink. By midnight, I was in blackout mode. I only remember flashes.

First, I was at a Circle K yelling at people. Then at another Circle K, crashing my car into dissenters. Then another Circle K and then another. The last thing I remember is speeding down a lonely dark highway, sparks flying everywhere and then nothing.

As I slowly gained consciousness, I looked down. My shoes were gone. I looked to the side. The seat was covered in broken glass. I looked up. The windshield was gone. I looked around. All the windows were missing. I looked out. A strange mist and a red glow enveloped the car. I stepped out to refocus. All four

rim were burning like a furnace and melting into the blacktop. I followed the steam upward to another red glow. Slowly, it dawned on me. A Circle K sign! In a split second, I realized two things. First, I was not dead. Second, I was in serious trouble. I ran for my life.

Fast forward six months and I am a full-blown crack addict headed to, you guessed it, Circle K, with a loaded 357. Lucky for me, there was a park next to the store. As I passed by the playground, the children all started to scream. I spun around to look for the assailant, then realized it was me! I can tolerate a lot of things, but a man who terrorizes women and children isn't one of them. I died instantly. Without breaking a step, I marched straight to the store, dropped the gun in the garbage, and walked home to my wife.

I could barely talk, and that was probably a good thing. She said I couldn't stay unless I got help. She had a list with three names on it. She called the first one, Teen Challenge. A few hours later, they picked me up and took me to Phoenix. I told them my story, and they asked me if I was willing to turn myself in. I agreed. They drove me back to Mesa to the Police Station.

I told the officer at the front desk I wanted to turn myself in. He told me to wait. Fifteen minutes later, he comes back and says there are no outstanding warrants, and I was free to leave. We arrive back at Phoenix, and we discuss sending me to a camp in Idaho for two years. I agree. That night I couldn't sleep, so I

went outside to look for a butt. Somehow, I ended up at the Phoenix Bus Terminal. I asked one of the drivers about Mesa. He said get in. I said I didn't have any money. He said don't worry about it.

An hour later, I was knocking on my wife's door again. She took out her list and called the second number, a marriage counselor, Eldon Post. He agreed to see us, and she let me stay. A few weeks later, I received a court date in the mail. I was charged with 9 hit-and-runs. Three months later, we went to court. The DA offered me a plea bargain, 3 hit-and-runs, 9 years in prison, and a \$10,000 fine. I declined. The judge scolded me for not having a lawyer and gave me 2 hit-and-runs, 15-days work release, and no fine.

Open Windows

(03.17.24)

On December 1, 1991, I delivered my first prophecy. I called the leaders to the stage, told each of them their sins, and asked them to repent. They denied everything. Within hours, reports of dreams and visions surfaced, accusing me and my wife of everything from witchcraft to possession. The next time we came to church, the entire congregation moved to the other side. A few days later, I was banned.

On January 1, 1992, at work, I came across a badly deformed tree. I made a few cuts, but nothing helped. I asked God what to do. Instantly, a loud voice boomed down from heaven, "Cut it down!" The force of it knocked me to the ground. Needless to say, I obeyed. The next day, the church closed its doors. A few of us banded together and we started a home church.

On July 1, 1995, after 500 sermons. God unlocked the Book of Revelation. Within days, we were decimated, scattered to the wind, our meeting place burned to the ground. But it was too late. Our job was done.

On December 25, 1995, we presented our findings. To date, there has been no positive feedback.

From Rags to Riches

(03.27.11)

I groan as we strain under the weight of the heavy cart. "Just a little further," I exclaim. "Ok, dad," he mumbles. His weary eyes peek out from the rags that wrap his head. Suddenly, I hear a loud blare. "Get down!" I yell, and we both hit the dirt. The noise grows louder and louder. Slowly, I begin to recognize the sound. It is my alarm clock. Thank God! What a relief! My name is not Vigo, and the world did not just end! It is 5:30 am – time to train. I quickly find my pants, shirt, sweater, socks, shoes, and jacket. Then I find my wallet, keys, and phone, and I'm out the door. I start the car, hit the lights, turn on the heat, and off I go. As I drive, I pray. By the time I get to Quick Trip, I'm finished. I buy some gas, a donut, and a drink.

I arrive at my ex's house at 5:54. I ring the doorbell. I can hear the dog shuffle and the alarm code deactivate. She opens the door. We both say "Hi." I climb up the stairway to my son's room. I turn on the light, tap him on the shoulder, and say, "Good morning, son." He grunts, "Why, dad?" and rolls over. "Get up, son," I yell. He pulls the covers over his head and mumbles, "I hate you, dad." I say, "Of course you do, son." Then I pull the covers off the bed. "Go away," he yells. "Don't make me get the

water," I say. That seems to work, and he starts to move. I tell him, "I'll be downstairs waiting," and leave the room. I go outside and wait in the car. A few minutes later, he comes out, and we leave. As we drive to the track, we share the donut and the drink. "Not too much now," I warn. "I know, dad," he says.

We arrive at the school at 6:09. We can hear the delivery truck unloading the lunch food at the back of the school. We take one last sip of our drink and head for the track. It is 44 degrees and no moon. As we walk, I give him the details for today's workout. He reminds me that he hates me, and we laugh. We reach the starting line, and I tell him to start when he is ready. Click goes the stopwatch, and off he goes into the darkness. I drag my crippled leg across the field to the other side, where I can just make out his form as it rounds the curve. As he passes, I read off his time and give him a few instructions. I walk back to the start and do it again. We repeat the process three more times, and we're done. He asks for his time, and I tell him, "Not bad." I say. "Thanks," he says. We walk another lap to cool off. We talk about his temperature, his pulse, and his clothing. We discuss aerobics and what's next for the rest of the week. As we walk back to the car, the sun comes up. He asks if we can go to McDonald's. I agree. "Big Breakfast?" he asks. "Big Breakfast," I say. We laugh.

We arrive back at his house at 6:54. He eats the hotcakes and hash browns. I eat the eggs and biscuit. We split the sausage with the dog. We turn on the T.V. and check out Robin Meade

for a while. "Nice," I grunt. "Oh yeah," he says. We laugh. He gets lost in his phone. I watch the rest of "Married with Children." The irony is not lost on me. Around 7:30, he takes a shower, and I make his lunch. By 7:45, it's time to leave.

We arrive at his school at 7:50. "Fly check," I say. "Check," he says. We laugh. "Pray for me," he says. "God bless you, son," I say. "I love you, dad," he says. "I love you too, son," I say. Then he pulls out the biggest backpack I ever saw and heads for class. I watch him go inside, and then I leave.

I arrive back home at 8:00. I check the mail, do a load of laundry, wash the dishes, and take out the trash. Then I head to A.A. The meeting starts at 8:30. Someone receives a 9-month chip. We applaud. I put my dollar in the basket. When it is my turn, I say, "Hi, my name is Mike. I am an alcoholic and an addict." I pass. The meeting ends at 9:30. We say a prayer. As I leave, I remind myself, "One day at a time Mike, one day at a time."

Sojourner

(04.03.11)

Recently, I gathered with my family to celebrate my 50th birthday. It was the first time in 20 years we were all together. We rented a cabin in Prescott and got snowed in for a week. Since I had a captive audience, I decided to ask them what they called "home" and write about it.

One of them said home was a boyfriend. Another said home was a secure business. Others said home is family. Some called home happiness. Some called their house home. I was struck by how different their views were from my own. To me, home is not a place I have been to. Home is a place I am going to. Although I have never been to my home, I know many of the people who live there. My grandfather and grandmother are there, my uncle and cousin too. If I look hard enough, I can see them waiting with open arms and tears of joy.

My home has many rooms and one of them is mine. It was made just for me and it is just the way I like it. My room is almost finished now. I can see it when I dream. It is always 75 degrees in my room and a cool breeze always blows through it. The only furniture is a small cot in the corner made of white

linen and tan wood. There are no lights because it is always daytime.

Through my window, I can see a light in the distance. It is more than a mile, but less than two. It is set on a hill, three maybe four hundred feet high. It shines like a green Aurora in every direction. In the center is a throne and the light comes from the one who sits on it. To his right is another throne where a plain man sits quietly. In front of them stand seven angels facing outward. They are the seven eyes of God. Across from them sit twenty-four elders dressed in white. Gold crowns litter the floor. Behind them are endless fields of green grass. In front, an endless lake of still blue water.

There is always a great commotion around the throne, but it has little effect on me. I spend most of my time resting, watching, and praying. Like my room, my life is as I want it. I visit with friends from time to time, but mostly I just rest. There are still a few things I want to do, but they can wait until later. The quiet man comes first. Until he gets what he deserves, my desires mean nothing. He is the reason I have a home. He is my home.

How do I know all this? I began to see when I was five years old, and the closer I get to the end, the clearer the picture becomes. Heaven is where my heart is. Heaven is where my home is. I can see the future. I can see the past. What do you see when you look up?

Worldview



The Nature of Things

(07.13.14)

This essay answers the age-old question, "Where do fundamentalists go when they retire?" Apparently, they go to an Evangelical University. Here is what I've learned so far. First, a worldview matters. Second, a worldview must be correct to be effective. Third, Christianity has some serious problems. Most of our teachings are not based on scripture or sound judgment. They are based on Greek philosophy, Catholic tradition, and European colonialism. Make no mistake about it, the Gospel does not succeed because it is appealing. The Gospel succeeds because it tells the truth. Therefore, the future of Christianity depends on us finding new models based on humility and common sense. The first millennium gave us the Bible. The second millennium translated it. Our job, the job of the third millennium, will be to explain it. Here are some issues that need to be dealt with.

First, the idea that the universe is eternal is misleading. Hebrews 11:3 says, "The worlds were framed by the word of God." Therefore, the universe has a beginning. 2 Corinthians 4:18 says, "The things which are seen are temporary." Therefore, the universe has an end. 2 Corinthians 12:2 says,

Paul was "caught up to the third heaven." Therefore, we live in a multiverse.

Second, the idea mankind evolved is misleading. When God said, "Let there be light," creation rushed forward to produce life (Genesis 1:3). This is confirmed by every theory from the Big Bang to the Survival of the Fittest. Is Evolution more than a blueprint in the mind of God and man? No. The name and age of each Patriarch says otherwise. Simply put, the chicken came before the egg.

Third, the idea we are born slaves to sin is misleading. Consider the following.

Pelagius, born in 354 AD, wrote: "I believe that Adam's sin injured only himself, and not the human race. That the law, no less than the gospel, leads us to the kingdom. That newborn infants are in the same condition that Adam was before he fell. That, on the one hand, the entire human race does not die owing to Adam's death and transgression; nor, on the other hand, does the whole human race rise again through the resurrection of Christ. That infants, even if they die unbaptized, have eternal life. That rich men, even if they are baptized, unless they renounce and give up all, have, whatever good they may

seem to have done, nothing of it reckoned to them; neither shall they possess the kingdom of heaven."¹

Charles Finney, born in 1792 AD, wrote: "But perhaps you say in excuse, 'I cannot change my own heart.' Cannot? Suppose Adam had made this excuse when God called him to repent after his first sin. 'Make you a new heart and a right spirit,' said the Lord to him. 'I cannot change my own heart myself,' replies Adam. Indeed, responds his Maker, how long is it since you changed your heart yourself? You changed it a few hours ago from holiness to sin, and will you tell your Creator that you can't change it from sin to holiness? The sinner should consider that the change of heart is a voluntary thing. You must do it for yourself or it is never done. True, there is a sense in which God changes the heart, but it is only this: God influences the sinner to change, and then the sinner does it. The change is the sinner's own voluntary act."²

¹ Schaff, Phillip. Saint Augustine's Anti-Pelagian Writings. Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1886.

² Finney, Charles. Sermons On Gospel Themes. Classics Ethereal Library, 1836.

Nationalism

(07.20.14)

Must Christians obey the law? The answer is not as easy as it sounds. On the one hand, we are told to obey all authority. On the other hand, our leaders, the apostles and prophets, often clashed with those in power. What are we to think? One thing is clear: All authority is established by God (Romans 13:1). It is a fundamental principle of scripture. Clearly, we have no right to disobey authority without permission from a higher authority. In other words, obey the King, but fear God!

Should Christians hide the Jews if the state calls it a crime? Should Christians kill the Nazis because the state declares war on them? At some point, each one of us must decide for ourselves just how far we are willing to go to please the state. As for me, I will obey every authority. I will cooperate with every authority. I will not resist any authority. On the flip side, I will not worship them or their gods. I will not let them mark my body. I will not kill for them. I will not serve in their military. I will not own a gun. I will not harm another person even if they harm me.

All things considered, Christians have a higher calling than the rest of the world. We are not called to give ten percent. We are called to give one hundred. We are not called to be soldiers. We

are called to be priests. We are not called to dispense justice eye for an eye. We are called to turn the other cheek. We are not called to kill evildoers. We are called to love our enemies. We are not called to die for our country. Our Kingdom is not even of this world. Therefore, let us love as Christ loves (John 15:12). Let us be perfect as He is perfect (Matthew 5:48). Let us lay down our life, not take life. Let us follow the example of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego who said, ""If our God, the one we serve, is able to rescue us from the furnace of flaming fire and from your power, Your Majesty, then let him rescue us. But if he doesn't, know this for certain, Your Majesty: we will never serve your gods or worship the gold statue you've set up" (Daniel 3:16-18).

A Role Model

(07.27.14)

Martin Luther King Jr., a Baptist preacher from Atlanta, Georgia, will long be remembered for translating his Christian worldview into action. King served the Church by promoting Civil Rights. King served the world by promoting Human Rights. King served God by promoting nonviolent resistance. As King said, "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character."³ King's emphasis on social issues and the nature of God made him one of the most influential role models of our time.

King believed, "God is the Father of us all" (1 Corinthians 8:6). According to King, "A voice out of Bethlehem 2000 years ago said that all men are equal."⁴

King believed in "true religion" (James 1:27). According to Lewis Baldwin, "Martin Luther King Jr. urged the Church to 'make the Gospel relevant' to 'the economic life of man' while using its

³ King, Martin. "I Have A Dream." *Reconstructionist* 29, no. 11 (1963): 22.

⁴ King, Martin Luther Jr. The American Dream. Speech at Lincoln University, Pennsylvania, June 6, 1961.

own vast resources to help improve the quality of life for millions who 'are undernourished, ill-housed, and shabbily clad."⁵

King believed in the "Golden Rule" (Matthew 7:12). According to King, "Love is the key to the solution of the problems which we confront in the world today – love, even for enemies."⁶

In conclusion, Martin Luther King Jr. practiced what he preached. He was a servant because he saw a need and filled it. He was a prophet because he said, "Naive and unsophisticated though we may be, the poor and despised of the twentieth century will revolutionize this era."⁷ Looking back now, I can still see my mother crying when Bobby Kennedy died, but no one cried for King. They never even mentioned his name. It was not until years later that I found out who King was and what he stood for. Overall, Martin Luther King Jr. taught me Christianity is more than going to Church. Christianity is following God directly. And for that, I will always be grateful.

⁵ Baldwin, Lewis. *Revisioning The Church: Martin Luther King, Jr. As A Model For Reflection*. *Theology Today* 65, no. 1 (2008): 28.

⁶ King, Martin. "Love Your Enemies." *Journal of Religious Thought* 27, no. 2 (1970): 31.

⁷ King, Martin Luther, Jr. *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?* Beacon Press, 1967.

A Christian Worldview

(08.03.14)

It is important that we understand our worldview because our belief system affects every area of our life. It determines where we live, where we go to school, where we work, and how we treat each other. A Christian worldview makes certain assumptions: First, God exists. Second, God created mankind. Third, God communicates with mankind. As John 14:26 says, "The Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things."

Who is God and what are His characteristics? The term "god" refers to angels, demons, and humans because all three have a measure of power over creation. The term "God" refers to the Creator, the Father, the Most High God. As Daniel 4:25 says, "The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will." Now, Psalm 110:1 says, "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Therefore, the Father gave the Son all authority over mankind.

What is a human being and what happens when one dies? It has been my experience that humans are created for one reason – to serve Christ. We are given a conscience, free will,

and the ability to reason, and we will be held accountable for our actions. Those who acknowledge the Son and act accordingly will be rewarded. Those who do not will be punished. As Jude 1:14-15 says, "The Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him."

How do you know what is true? To discuss truth, we must agree on a framework. First, truth exists. Second, we can know the truth. Third, we can understand the truth. According to Solomon, truth is screaming from the rooftops (Proverbs 1:20). In other words, truth is obvious. He also compared it to hidden treasure (Proverbs 2:20). In other words, truth is hidden. What does it all mean? It means we are so arrogant we have to dig deep just to find common sense. No wonder Christ told us to "Turn the other cheek." How else could we get saved?

What is right and wrong? Now that we can find the truth, the question becomes, "How do we obey it?" Step One is Psalm 110:10, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; sound understanding belongs to those who practice it." Step Two is there is no step two.

Is life pointless or is there purpose? According to Jesus, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" (John 6:29). In other words, listen to Him. What does He say?

"Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. Love thy neighbor as thyself." (Matthew 22:37, 39). Either way, the meaning of life is service.

What about Science? Reconciling science and religion is problematic. Religion opposed every major scientific breakthrough. Science regards Religion, History, and Literature as inferior. Religion must learn to respect the world's best and brightest. Science must concede three things. First, the Bible is the most accurate historical document of its kind. Second, the Bible is the most scrutinized piece of literature ever written. Third, the Bible contains verifiable prophecies which classifies it as physics (time travel).

In conclusion, Mark Cosgrove wrote, "A sound worldview agrees with science, is consistent, and is livable." As far as consistency, my worldview demands integrity. As far as livability, my worldview demands love. Neither is negotiable. Science and Religion search for the truth." Therefore, science should verify religion and religion should verify science. If not, something is missing, or someone is mistaken.

Old Testament



A Sinful Heritage

(09.07.14)

The history of mankind is a trail of men and women looking to rid themselves of God. First, there was Adam who wanted to be like God. When that failed, he tried to cover his shame with fig leaf religion (Genesis 3:7). Next, there was Cain with his system of good works that ultimately led to murder (Genesis 4:8). By the seventh generation, God was so displeased He removed Enoch from the earth entirely (Genesis 5:22). By the tenth generation, the sons of Seth were marrying the daughters of Cain causing God to issue one final warning. One hundred and twenty years later, God destroyed them all except for Noah and his family (Genesis 6:3). Within one generation, one of sixteen, was cursed again (Genesis 9:25). Within four generations they were building a tower to heaven to take things into their own hands (Genesis 10:25). And God scattered them to the four corners of the earth (Genesis 11:8). Any way you look at it, the entire prehistory of mankind is filled with sin which set the stage for the Abrahamic Covenant.

To understand our need for a Savior, we first need to understand the nature of sin. Paul Jewett wrote, “Since

Augustine, sin is pride; since Spurgeon, sin is unbelief.⁸ Personally, I disagree with both observations. In my opinion, sin is rebellion, nothing more and nothing less. Pride may come before the fall and unbelief may come after, but rebellion is the point of no return. Like the Garden of Eden, our way is blocked forever, and no one can see God again until they are holy, and holiness requires a sacrifice, a pardon, and true repentance to be had. Therefore, the sin lay not in the temptation to eat the fruit, nor in the eating of it. The sin lay in the decision to be free of God's constraints.

In conclusion, man may free himself from other men and man may even free himself from the confines of earth, but as long as there is a throne in Heaven, man is subject to the One who sits on it. Therefore, man is not condemned because he does not know the truth. Man is condemned because he hates the truth (John 3:14-21). Rather than have his deeds wrought in God or subject to God's approval, man pursues a different course – complete autonomy. In the end, sin is nothing more than rebellion and salvation is nothing more than submission.

⁸ Jewett, Paul. "Original Sin And The Fall Of Man." *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 19, no. 1, (1976): 22.

The Abrahamic Covenant

(09.14.14)

The Abrahamic Covenant gave the nation of Israel all the lands between the Nile and the Euphrates, established regional customs like marriage and primogeniture, and gave us concepts like the voice of God, the call of God, the covenant of God, altars, sacrifices, tithing, circumcision, the laying on of hands, dreams, visions, prophecy, angelic visitations, and the promise of a Messiah. Keith Essex wrote, "The Abrahamic Covenant undergirds the totality of the biblical revelation."⁹ It fulfills the Old Testament by establishing a messianic lineage (Genesis 3:15). It fulfills the New Testament by showing "not all Israelites are true Israelites" (Romans 9:6-8). In other words, "The just shall live by faith" (Hebrews 10:38).

By faith, Abraham moved his father's household from Ur to Haran (Acts 7:4). By faith, Abraham moved his own household from Haran to Canaan (Genesis 12:5). By faith, Abraham moved from Canaan to Egypt knowing full well he would lose his wife Sara (Genesis 12:13). By faith, Abraham let Lot leave and then

⁹ Essex, Keith. "The Abrahamic Covenant." Master's Seminary Journal 10, no. 2, (1999): 212.

rescued him by defeating four kingdoms with three hundred and eighteen men (Genesis 14:14). By faith, Abraham waited fifteen years for the birth of his son Ishmael and then sent him into the desert with a bottle of water and some bread (Genesis 21:9-21). By faith, Abraham waited twenty-five years for the promise of Isaac and then offered him up to be sacrificed (Genesis 22:1-14). By faith, Abraham circumcised and blessed Isaac who by faith did the same for Jacob (Genesis 27:1-29).

By faith, Jacob worked fourteen years to marry his wife Rachel (Genesis 29:1-30). By faith, Jacob wrestled with an angel to get the blessing (Genesis 32:24-32). By faith, Jacob raised seventy descendants and then led them into Egypt when he was one hundred and thirty years old (Genesis 46:26). By faith, Joseph followed his dreams and was sold into slavery for it (Genesis 37:1-36). By faith, Joseph served his master faithfully and was imprisoned for it (Genesis 39:1-23). By faith, Joseph rose to the second highest position on earth (Genesis 41:1-46). By faith, Joseph saved his family and the entire Middle East from the Seven Year Famine (Genesis 47:1-27). By faith, Joseph promised his brothers they would return to Canaan and made them swear to bury his bones there (Genesis 50:24-26).

In conclusion, the Abrahamic Covenant was an agreement between God and Abraham and both parties voluntarily agreed to fulfill certain vows irrespective of the other's actions. In essence, they joined forces. John Walvoord wrote, "There may be delays, postponements, chastisements, and blessings apart

from these promises, but the ultimate purpose of God will be fulfilled only by the accomplishment of the promises."¹⁰ As Genesis 22:16-18 says, "By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice."

¹⁰ Walvoord, John. "The Fulfillment Of The Abrahamic Covenant." *Bibliotheca Sacra* 102, no. 405 (1945): 27.

The Nation of Israel

(09.21.14)

According to Exodus 1:7, "The children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them."¹¹ In 430 years, the Hebrews grew from 55 men to 600,000 (Exodus 12:37). To put it into perspective, in 400 years, the Pilgrims grew from 73 men to five million. All things considered, Pharaoh's fears were justified. Sadly, he resorted to genocide, torture, and slavery to solve his problems, and that set the stage for the greatest display of God's power in history: the Exodus.

The Ten Plagues include turning water into blood, frogs, lice, flies, cow disease, boils, hail, locusts, darkness, and the death of the firstborn. Even after Pharaoh was forced to free the slaves, he could not resist the temptation to hunt them down again. Of course, God used the opportunity to destroy the only thing Pharaoh had left: his soldiers. In only a few short months, God completely decimated the most powerful kingdom on earth. In a few short months, God showed the world that He, not

¹¹ Rice, Doyle. "Was One Of Your Ancestors On The Mayflower? You Can Find Out Now." USA Today. June 13, 2018.

Pharaoh, was God, and that Israel, not Egypt, was the apple of his eye. The entire region would have to think twice before attacking Israel.

The Crossing of the Red Sea includes a pillar of fire by night, a cloud by day, the parting of the Red Sea, the destruction of Egyptian forces, the healing of the waters of Marah, Manna and quail, water from a rock, and the defeat of Amalekites. Clearly, Israel belonged to God. All that was left was to make it legal.

The Sinai Covenant includes God's agreement with the descendants of Jacob. According to Exodus 19:5, "If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people." Three days later, the nation of Israel was born. It was a nation unlike any other. God would be their King, and they would be His people.

The Mosaic Law includes new rules to govern the new kingdom. First, the Decalogue or Ten Commandments dealt with moral issues (do not lie, do not covet), rules of worship (make no graven images, remember the Sabbath, have no other Gods before me), and family (honor your father and mother, do not commit adultery). Second, the Code of Laws dealt with everything else from restitution to hospitality to witchcraft. God left no room for confusion.

Instructions for the Tabernacle include specifications for the Ark of the Covenant, the Tabernacle or Tent of Meeting, its furniture and utensils, and the priestly garments and priestly

duties. Israel was now ready to enter the Promised Land. Unfortunately, their hearts were not ready, and it cost them another forty years.

In conclusion, the making of a nation is a complex process. For the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, it was even more difficult because they were a nation of slaves. They not only had to free themselves from bondage, but they also had to conquer the lands they wanted to live in. Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy bridge the gap between those two worlds.

The Judges

(09.28.14)

The Judges of Israel played a major role in the development of the nation. The settlement phase was a lot like the pioneering days of our own wild west. The land was wide open, and before any kind of centralized government could be formed, it needed to be tamed. According to Eugene Merrill, the rule of law was largely dependent on local tribal leaders or regional heroes.¹² Israel had eleven such heroes: Othniel, Ehud, Barak, Gideon, Tola, Jair, Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, Abdon, and Samson. Each man was different. Some were leaders, some were wise men, some were warriors.

According to Judges 2:10, the generation after Joshua "knew not the Lord." As a result, they were unable to finish the conquest of Canaan. The remaining enemies became a thorn in their side. One by one, they oppressed Israel, and one by one, God sent a deliverer to deal with them. After each Judge died, the country sank back into chaos until a new Judge arose. Without these lone warriors, the nation of Israel would not exist.

¹² Merrill, Eugene. *A Historical Survey Of The Old Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1991.

They stood in the gap between the Law and the Prophets. Considering what was at stake, what was available, and what was accomplished, the Judges must be considered the greatest servants of the Old Testament.

In conclusion, the Book of Judges reveals two principles. First, God uses everyday men and women to accomplish His goals. Second, these chosen ones know what to do and how to do it. Unlike the old, they can spring into action. Unlike the young, they can see clearly. Unlike everyone else, they have no choice. The stark contrast between good and evil compels them to act. Like Phinehas, son of Eleazar, son of Aaron, they see the danger, rise up, attack it, and save their people (Numbers 25:1-16). Lee Martin wrote, "The indispensable Pentecostal testimony is that God never ceases to be intensely active; that is, he continues to speak and work through and among his people for the sake of his kingdom in the world."¹³

¹³ Martin, Lee. "'Where Are All His Wonders?': The Exodus Motif In The Book Of Judges." *Journal Of Biblical And Pneumatological Research* 2 (2010): 107.

Judges of Israel

0		Moses	40
40	0	Joshua	55
95	55	Othniel	40
135	95	Ehud	80
215	175	Barak	40
255	215	Gideon	40
295	255	Tola	23
318	278	Jair	22
340	300	Jephthah	6
346		Ibzan	7
353		Elon	10
363		Abdon	8
371		Samson	20
391		Anarchy	5
396		Saul	40
436		David	40
476		Solomon	4
480		Temple	7
487		Palace	13
500		Dedication	-

David and Solomon

(10.05.14)

'The Great Literary Works of Solomon' refer to the songs and sayings compiled during the reign of Solomon. According to 1 Kings 4:32, "He spake three thousand proverbs: and his songs were a thousand and five." For whatever the reason, few writings have survived. They include Psalms, Proverbs, Song of Solomon, and Ecclesiastes.

Psalms has 150 chapters. Proverbs has 30 chapters. Half of the Psalms are attributed to David, a shepherd warrior king. Most of the Proverbs are attributed to Solomon, a complex scholarly prince. Psalms are songs. Therefore, they are also prayers. Proverbs is a book of wise sayings. Psalms is robust and passionate. Proverbs is cold and calculating. Psalms records the trials and tribulations of one man. Proverbs reads like a handbook in humility.

Despite their differences, David and Solomon agreed on one thing. Wisdom depends on humility, a revolutionary concept in a world dominated by Egyptian superstition and Greek logic. Under the Mosaic Law, crime, punishment, and redemption were not a mystery. Everyone knew the truth, and everyone was held accountable. All that was needed was obedience. Psalm

111:10 says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth forever." Proverbs 1:7 says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction."

In conclusion, Psalms and Proverbs are the fruit David's labor. Solomon may have been the smartest man alive, but no one had more experience than David. He knew both the perils of war and the temptation of peace. James Mays wrote, "The David in the psalms is the king of the Lord, the servant of the Lord, the chosen one, the anointed one (messiah), with whom the Lord has made covenant by solemn oath that his dynasty will last forever. The future of all those related to God through David is based on God's sworn promise to David."¹⁴

¹⁴ Mays, James. "The David Of The Psalms." Interpretation 40, no. 2 (1986): 153.

Isaiah and Jeremiah

(10.12.14)

According to Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, "God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets...since the world began" (Luke 1:67-75). This reveals two things. First, God speaks to mankind. Second, God speaks to mankind through people. Who are these spokesmen for God? The two most famous prophets are Isaiah and Jeremiah. What was their message? According to 2 Kings 17:13, "The Lord testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, and by all the seers, saying, 'Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets.'"

So, prophets do more than just deliver the law. They enforce it. Isaiah and Jeremiah were more than just teachers. They were ministers of repentance. They delivered indictments, pronounced judgments, and offered redemption. On the one hand, they called for change. On the other hand, they called for justice.

According to Merrill, Isaiah came from the upper echelons of society and was well educated.¹⁵ James Sanders wrote, "Five hundred and ninety references, explicit or otherwise, from sixty-three chapters of Isaiah are found in twenty-three New Testament books."¹⁶ Jeremiah rose through the ranks of the monastic priesthood (Jeremiah 1:1). Louis Stulman wrote, "The book of Jeremiah unmasks illusions of power and reveals God's solidarity with exiles of old and exiles today."¹⁷

Unlike the shepherd prophets before them and the fishermen prophets after, Isaiah and Jeremiah were not afraid or in awe of the ruling class. Like Christ, they understood the times they lived in. It is one thing to call for repentance. It is quite another to dismantle a whole nation with your words. The Twelve Tribes of Jacob were on trial for their life and Isaiah and Jeremiah were there to get results. In other words, the prosecution of Israel and Judea took time, effort, and precision.

God v Israel.

According to 2 Kings 17:21-23, God rejected Israel because they allowed Jeroboam to rebel against the House of David. Isaiah prophesied, "The riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria

¹⁵ Merrill, Eugene. *A Historical Survey Of The Old Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1991.

¹⁶ Sanders, James. "Isaiah In Luke." *Interpretation* 36, no. 2 (1982): 144.

¹⁷ Stulman, Louis. "Jeremiah As A Messenger Of Hope In Crisis." *Interpretation* 62, no. 1 (2008): 20.

shall be taken away before the king of Assyria" (Isaiah 8:4). The prophecy was fulfilled when Shalmaneser, King of Assyria, conquered Hoshea, King of Israel (2 Kings 17:1-6).

Nevertheless, God kept His promise and Israel became the home of the Messiah. For it is written, "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light" (Isaiah 9:1-2).

God v Judea.

According to 2 Kings 21:1-15, God rejected Judah because they allowed Manasseh to desecrate the temple. Jeremiah prophesied, "I will make Jerusalem heaps, and a den of dragons; and I will make the cities of Judah desolate, without an inhabitant" (Jeremiah 9:11). The prophecy was fulfilled when Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, conquered Jehoiachin, King of Judah (2 Chronicles 36:8-10). Nevertheless, God kept His promise and Judea became the home of the King. For it is written, "I will raise unto David a righteous Branch" (Jeremiah 23:5).

In conclusion, words alone do not produce divine intervention. Judgment and revival are the result of obedience. Isaiah and Jeremiah were not chosen because they could write or speak well. They were chosen because they could follow orders. Who better to send to the disobedient, then the obedient? Who better to lead, then one who can follow?

The Restoration

(10.19.14)

The restoration of Israel is yet another story of how God separates or makes holy His people. It is a story of independence from Babylon and dependence upon God. The Decree of Cyrus, King of Persia, reads as follows: "The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah" (Ezra 1:2). According to Ezra 2:64, forty-two thousand Jews returned home to rebuild the temple.

Phase One fell to Ezra and Nehemiah. When they arrived, Israel was still suffering from a weak central government, a weak priesthood, a weak civil code, and a weak foreign policy. Ezra and Nehemiah took immediate action. Ezra reformed the priesthood and religious life. Nehemiah reformed the government and community life. Ezra called for the expulsion of all foreigners (Ezra 10:10). Nehemiah rebuilt the city walls in fifty-two days (Nehemiah 6:15). Martin Leeseberg wrote, "The sequence of events would be as follows: Nehemiah arrived first, built the wall, governed for twelve years, and returned to the king. During this time, it is quite likely that he enforced no great changes in the religious life of the people. All the notices of

religious reform in the text occur after he came to Jerusalem the second time. Ezra arrived in the period of Nehemiah's absence and was faced immediately with the necessity of reforming the spiritual life of the people, particularly in the area of marriages with foreign women.¹⁸

Phase Two fell to Joshua and Zerubbabel. They rebuilt the altar and made burnt offerings. Once again, Zion called upon the God of Abraham. According to Merrill, they appeared sixteen years after the work began and the temple was finished six years later.¹⁹ To put it into perspective, Solomon had a million men at his disposal, and it took him seven years to build the first temple (1 Chronicles 21:5). According to Haggai 2:3, when construction began, Zerubbabel had no hope of recreating Solomon's glory. According to Zechariah 4:7, by the time the cornerstone was laid, Zerubbabel had enough faith to just say the word "grace," and the temple was finished. According to Zechariah 4:9, Zerubbabel started the work, and Zerubbabel finished it. According to Haggai 2:9, the second temple was even greater than the first. According to Zechariah 4:6, the temple was built "not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit,

¹⁸ Leeseberg, Martin. "Ezra And Nehemiah: A Review Of The Return And Reform." Concordia Theological Monthly 33, no. 2 (1962): 85.

¹⁹ Merrill, Eugene. A Historical Survey Of The Old Testament. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1991.

saith the Lord of hosts." Once again, the God of Abraham blessed Zion.

Prophetically speaking, Christianity mirrors Judaism. There are two captivities. First, we are delivered from the slavery of sin (Egypt). Second, we are delivered from the bondage of false doctrine (Babylon). How did we backslide? Steven Lawson wrote, "The basic reason for this gloomy condition is obvious. That which imparts the glory has been taken away from the center of so much of our modern preaching and placed on the periphery. The Word of God has been denied the throne and given a subordinate place."²⁰

In conclusion, it is not the world's fault. It is not the devil's fault. The guilt lies with us. Therefore, let us return to the God of Israel. Therefore, let us prepare our hearts to seek the Lord. Therefore, let us seek the Law of the Lord. Therefore, let us do the Law of the Lord. Therefore, let us teach the Law of the Lord (Ezra 7:10). For it is written, "And now, O ye priests, this commandment is for you. If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the Lord of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings: yea, I have cursed them already because ye do not lay it to heart" (Malachi 2:1-2).

²⁰ Lawson, Steven. "The Pattern Of Biblical Preaching: An Expository Study Of Ezra 7:10 And Nehemiah 8:1-18." *Bibliotheca Sacra* 158, no. 632 (2001): 452.

New Testament



Political Background

(10.26.14)

The Babylonian Captivity and subsequent release created an uneasy environment for Israel. Long-standing traditions were shattered and replaced with new models. The Mosaic Law was now open for discussion and interpretation. The Priests and Scribes now shared power with the Sadducees and Pharisees. The Sanhedrin, modeled after the Greeks, was now the center of power. When it comes to this time period, I must defer to the experts.

Louis Finkelstein wrote, "The Sadducees were a political party, the party of the Hasmonaeans, the priests, and the reigning nobility. They stood strongly for Jewish independence and were the bitterest opponents of Herod and the Romans. The Pharisees, on the other hand, could hardly be called a political party, for they did not believe in political action. As a religious sect, their loyalty was given first to the law and secondly to the nation."²¹

²¹ Finkelstein, Louis. "The Pharisees: Their Origin And Their Philosophy." Harvard Theological Review 22, no. 3 (1929): 186.

Donald Carson wrote, "Two recent discussions of the Sanhedrin summarize the evidence and conclude, rightly, that the Sanhedrin was made up of Pharisees (most of whom were scribes), Sadducees (most of whom were priests), and elders. The 'elders' were not distinguished so much by theological position as by social position: They were respected community leaders, 'nobility,' and normally neither priests nor scribes but 'laymen' (though some priests may have used this designation as well). The best evidence, however, seems to indicate that the leadership of the Sanhedrin lay with the chief priests (and therefore with the Sadducees) but that within this context, the Pharisees were very influential members."²²

Isaac Kalimi wrote, "The Sadducees were predominant for many generations and exerted great influence on the Temple and its cult. Josephus Flavius and Rabbinic sources all describe high priests as belonging to the Sadducees."²³

Like all politicians, Israel's leaders, wanted to stay in power. This meant having to deal with extremists. On one side, anarchists wanted to leave everything behind and start over someplace else. On the other side, nationalists wanted to overthrow Rome

²² Carson, Donald. "The Jewish Leaders In Matthew's Gospel: A Reappraisal." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 25, no. 2 (1982): 166.

²³ Kalimi, Isaac. "The Day Of Atonement In The Late Second Temple Period: Sadducees' High Priests, Pharisees' Norms, And Qumranites' Calendars." *Review of Rabbinic Judaism* 14, no. 1 (2011): 73.

altogether. This brings us to the real problem: Rome! Unlike the Greeks, the Romans were here to stay. The rise of both Augustus and Herod left Israel with no hope of independence. Their once great nation was now reduced to a vassal state. The Hellenization process was complete. The solidification of the Roman Empire marked the fullness of times, the end of Israel, and the start of the Church.

In conclusion, by rejecting the Messiah, the Priests lost their Temple, the Sadducees lost their power, the Pharisees lost their chance to lead, and the Zealots missed the greatest revolution in history. Within forty years, the nation of Israel and with it the Church were scattered to the four corners of the globe.

The Kingdom of God

(11.02.14)

According to Daniel 2:36-45, five kingdoms will rule the earth: Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, and the Kingdom of God.

According to Luke 3:1, the Kingdom of God started in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar when Christ was baptized. According to Revelation 20:4, the Kingdom of God is fully established at the first resurrection when Christ returns. So, the Kingdom of God begins with the Anointing of Christ and ends with the Coronation of Christ.

The message of the Kingdom of God is just as simple. John the Baptist preached, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:1-2). Jesus preached, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 4:17). The Twelve Apostles preached, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mark 6:12). No wonder they had three thousand converts the first day. They had the right message. Douglas Petersen wrote, "The Holy Spirit baptism and empowerment, available to all believers after the Day of Pentecost, equipped the disciples

and the entire community of believers to do and teach all that Jesus did and taught."²⁴ Imagine the possibilities!

To better understand the Kingdom of God, let us examine three stories from the life of Christ. The first story is when Jesus cleansed the temple (Matthew 21:12-13). Angered by the selling of wares, Jesus drove out the merchants with a whip. The message was clear. There wasn't going to be an economic recovery. The second story is when Jesus silenced the leaders with a simple question, "If David called the Messiah his Lord, how can the Messiah be a son of King David?" (Matthew 22:41-46). Again, the message was clear. There wasn't going to be a religious reformation. The third story is when Jesus was arrested and tortured (Mark 14-15). Each crack of the whip, each beating, each insult, sent a clear message. There wasn't going to be a political revolution. Within hours, they traded Him for a murderer. Every sign, wonder, and teaching was specifically designed to reach a target audience, inform them of their guilt, and offer them a way out. In the end, Israel was left with nothing but their conscience. In other words, they killed the Messiah because they could no longer bear to look at themselves.

The Kingdom of God does more than offer salvation. It also brings judgment. Privately, Christ gave credit where credit was

²⁴ Petersen, Douglas. "Kingdom Rules: Upside-Down Discipleship." *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 16, no. 1 (2013): 48.

due, like the Centurion with the sick servant (Luke 7:1-10) and the Canaanite woman with the possessed daughter (Matthew 15:21-28). Publicly, Jesus spoke in parables to confuse and confound the establishment (Matthew 13:13). He appeared and disappeared at will to keep them off balance. The point is, Jesus controlled the battlefield. His goal was to tear down principalities and spiritual wickedness in high places long enough and legally enough to bring down the nation. The Church does the same thing. We continue the process, one nation at a time, until the Fifth Kingdom, the Kingdom of God, replaces the Fourth Kingdom, the Kingdom of the Antichrist. As such, the end can only come when the last martyr is killed.

The Kingdom of God is more than just a realm. The Church has the keys to Heaven and Hell. Their shadow fills the air with power. Their hands heal the sick. Their words bring deliverance. Their prayers are answered, their desires met. Those who honor them will be given a place of honor. Those who try to harm them are already judged because they ignored their only hope of salvation. Robert Recker wrote,

“To enter the kingdom therefore is not to enter a realm but to submit to and to recognize a relationship in which God and Christ have an authoritative claim over us. It is to take the posture of obedience, to capitulate to a reality which can no longer be rejected, to recognize valid claims which can no longer be denied. Those who do thus are the great in the

kingdom of heaven; such are the responsive subjects of the King."²⁵

In conclusion, the Kingdom of God is many things to many people. Richard Mayhue calls it "the unifying theme of Scripture."²⁶ The Kingdom of God is also a two-edged sword. One side brings salvation. The other brings judgment. It is good news for the poor, but bad news for the rich. It is good news for those who suffer, but bad news for those at ease (Matthew 5-7). It is good news for those in prison, but bad news for those who are free. In the end, the Kingdom of God is the Church, and our sacrifices establish justice.

²⁵ Recker, Robert. "The Redemptive Focus Of The Kingdom Of God." Calvin Theological Journal 14, no. 2 (1979): 168.

²⁶ Mayhue, Richard. "The Kingdom Of God: An Introduction." Master's Seminary Journal 23, no. 2 (2012): 167.

The Four Gospels

(11.09.14)

The Life of Christ

Jesus was born during a worldwide tax, when Herod was King of Judea, Cyrenius was governor of Syria, and Augustus was Emperor of Rome (Matthew 2:1, Luke 2:1).

Jesus began preaching at age thirty, when Tiberius was Emperor of Rome, Pontius Pilate was governor of Judaea, Herod, Philip, and Lysanias were tetrarchs, Annas and Caiaphas were high priests, and John the Baptist was a prophet (Luke 3:1, 23).

The Ministry of Christ

Jesus preached four years (Luke 13:6-9).

Jesus was the King of Israel (Luke 1:69)

Jesus was the Lamb of God (John 1:29)

Jesus sanctioned the Apostles (Mark 6:7).

Jesus blessed the Church (Matthew 16:18).

The Teachings of Christ

Beware the hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees (Matthew 5:20).

Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged (Matthew 7:1).

Whatever you wish that they would do to you, do also to them (Matthew 7:12).

The Audience of Christ

The message to the public is the Sermon on the Mount, found in Matthew 5-7.

The message to the religious leaders is the Seven Woes found in Matthew 23:13-39.

The message to the disciples is the Olivet discourse found in Matthew 24:1-25:46 and the Farewell Discourse found in John 14-17.

The Followers of Christ

We believe Jesus was God (John 1:1).

We believe Jesus was human (John 1:14).

We believe we are lost (John 3:3).

We believe we are found (John 14:23).

The Tenets of Christ

Humility (John 15:6).

Love (John 15:12-13).

Perseverance (John 15:20).

Wisdom (John 16:13).

Faith (John 16:28).

Good Versus Evil

(11.16.14)

According to Joel Green, Rome "systematically eradicated" public threats with public executions.²⁷ Therefore, crucifixion was a statement set at the crossroads that read, "Troublemakers will be dealt with!"

Green also says torture and execution are institutional norms for large, organized social structures, especially political and religious groups that "actively work to perpetuate a worldview."

Now, absolute power corrupts absolutely. Therefore, in time, the Church and State become similar. The State comes to see torture and execution as divine rights. The Church begins to see them as civic duties. That is why even bitter enemies like the Jews and Romans could agree to kill the Christ. From Rome's point of view, Christ was dangerous. Morality undermined their system of patronage. Christ also elevated the role of the servant and rewarded unrestrained giving. Neither did Rome any favors. Clearly, Israel had problems with Christ. According

²⁷ Green, Joel. "The Death Of Jesus And The Ways Of God: Jesus And The Gospels On Messianic Status And Shameful Suffering." *Interpretation* 52, no. 1 (1998): 27.

to Green, Luke 23:2 shows the leaders thought Jesus was trying to pervert the nation, opposed taxation, and claimed to be King.

In conclusion, murderers base their actions on invented lies. The conflict between Jesus and His enemies was not ideological. It was a matter of good versus evil. The Jews did not kill Christ because He claimed to be God. They killed Him because He said they were not God. The Romans did not kill Jesus because He was a threat. They killed Him because He was not threatened by them. The point is martyrdom is not a political conflict or a theological debate. It is a reminder good and evil are at war, and the war is won by those who lay down their lives. Zorodzai Dube wrote, "As a cultural trauma story, the retelling of the story about the death and resurrection of Jesus was a shocking reminder of their own experiences, yet a strong identity marker that through suffering they were truly a community of Jesus."²⁸

²⁸ Dube, Zorodzai. "Jesus' Death And Resurrection As Cultural Trauma." *Neotestamentica* 47, no. 1 (2013): 120.

The Missionary

(11.23.14)

The works of Paul secured the future of the Church. Bruce Metzger wrote, "Paul's confidence in the fulfillment of this daring dream is grounded in the eternal and enabling will of God."²⁹ In other words, Paul knew God. Kenneth Berding wrote, "The fruit of ministry is determined by the power of the Holy Spirit and the conviction and character of the one ministering."³⁰ In other words, God knew Paul.

Saul, born in Tarsus of Cilicia (Acts 22:3), a Roman citizen (Acts 22:28), a Jew (Acts 22:3), a Pharisee (Philippians 3:5), a student of Gamaliel (Acts 22:3), a willing participant in the stoning of Stephen (Acts 8:1), a violent persecutor of the Church (Acts 8:3), was also known as Paul, a Prophet of the Church of Antioch (Acts 13:1) and an Apostle of Jesus Christ (Galatians 1:1).

Paul led three missionary journeys and authored six congregational letters which established Christianity in Turkey,

²⁹ Metzger, Bruce. "Paul's Vision Of The Church: A Study Of The Ephesian Letter." *Theology Today* 6, no. 1 (1949): 63.

³⁰ Berding, Kenneth. "At The Intersection Of Mission And Spiritual Formation In The Letters Of Paul." *Journal of Spiritual Formation & Soul Care* 6, no. 1 (2013): 22.

Greece, and Italy.³¹ Richard Oster wrote, "The Apostle Paul attempted to build his churches upon the twin pillars of the unalterable truth of the Gospel and the unlimited freedom of the Gospel."³²

Paul's First Journey (47-48 AD), recorded in Acts 13:1-14:28, included Barnabas and John Mark, covered 1400 miles, with stops in Antioch (Syria), Seleucia, Salamis (Cyprus), Paphos (Cyprus), Perga, Antioch (Pisidia), Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, Antioch (Pisidia), Perga (Pamphylia), Attalia, and Antioch (Syria).

In Paphos, Paul blinded a false prophet named Elymas. In Antioch (Pisidia), Paul converted a deputy named Sergio Paulus and was persecuted and expelled. In Iconium, Paul escaped an assassination attempt. In Lystra, Paul healed a man born with crippled feet, was stoned to death, and resurrected by the brethren. On his return trip, Paul strengthened the believers and ordained elders in each city.

Paul's Second Journey (49-53 AD), recorded in Acts 15:36-18:22, included Silas, Timothy, Priscilla, Aquila, and Luke, covered 2800 miles, with stops in Syria, Cilicia, Derbe, Lystra, Galatia, Phrygia, Troas, Samothracia, Neapolis, Philippi,

³¹ Niswonger, Richard. *New Testament History*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992.

³² Oster, Richard. "Congregations Of The Gentiles" (Rom 16:4): A Culture-Based Ecclesiology In The Letters Of Paul." *Restoration Quarterly* 40, no. 1 (1998): 52.

Amphipolis, Apollonia, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, Cenchrea, Ephesus, and Antioch (Syria).

In Lystra, Paul added Timothy. In Troas, Paul had a vision telling him to go to Greece. In Corinth, Paul had a vision telling him to stay there. In Philippi, Paul baptized the house of Lydia, delivered a woman soothsayer, was arrested, tortured, imprisoned, freed by an act of God, and converted the jailor. In Thessalonica, Paul was persecuted and escaped.

Paul also spent eighteen months in Corinth where he wrote Galatians (50 AD), 1 Thessalonians (51 AD), and 2 Thessalonians (52 AD). Galatians reminds us we are free in Christ, First Thessalonians is a letter to new believers, and Second Thessalonians tells us to persevere until Christ returns.

Paul's Third Journey (53-57 AD), recorded in Acts 18:23-21:16, included Timothy, Luke, and others, covered 2700 miles, with stops in Galatia, Phrygia, Ephesus, Macedonia, Achaia, Macedonia, Philippi, Troas, Assos, Mitylene, Samos, Trogyllium, Miletus, Cos, Rhodes, Patara, Tyre, Ptolemais, Caesarea, and Jerusalem.

In Ephesus, Paul's touch filled twelve disciples with the Holy Ghost, his handkerchiefs healed the sick and cast out devils, a riot was quelled, and magic books were burned. In Troas, Paul resurrected Eutychus. In Jerusalem, Paul was arrested and sent to Rome.

Paul also spent two years in Ephesus where he wrote 1 Corinthians (54 AD) and 2 Corinthians (55 AD) and Romans (56 AD). First Corinthians addresses Church life, Second Corinthians warns against false teachers, and Romans is a systematic look at salvation.

In conclusion, the Acts of Paul are more than dates and places and the Letters of Paul are more than rules and regulations. All of his work is an expression of his relationship with God. On the one side, we have Paul's extraordinary record of service. 2 Corinthians 12:24-28 says, "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." On the other side, we have God's extraordinary commitment to Paul. Acts 19:11 says, "God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul," and 2 Corinthians 12:4 says he "heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter." Together, God and Paul convey a clear message to the Church that faith works by love and love never fails.

The General Epistles

(11.30.14)

Scholars classify non-Pauline Letters addressed to the general public as General Epistles. They do not include letters to a specific congregation like Corinthians. They do not include letters to individuals like Timothy. Some letters provide the author's name like Peter 1, 2, James, Jude, and Revelation. Some do not, like John 1, 2, 3, and Hebrews.

First Peter begins, "To the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia" (1 Peter 1:1). Therefore, First and Second Peter were written after the Fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD. First Peter concludes, "The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you" (1 Peter 5:13). Therefore, Peter was in Rome when he wrote the letters (Revelation 17:9).

Scholars debate the author of Hebrews. Consider the following: The author was in Italy (Hebrews 13:24). The author was waiting for Timothy (Hebrews 13:23). The author had no love for Judaizers (Hebrews 13:9). The author mentioned faith a record thirty-four times. Clearly, Paul was the author.

Scholars debate the identity of James and Jude. Here is one version: Two Apostles were named James (Acts 1:13). The first James was the brother of John, the son of Zebedee (Matthew 4:21). He was killed by Herod (Acts 12:1-2). The second James was the brother of Judas, the son of Alphaeus (Acts 1:13). He was the Lord's brother (Galatians 1:18-19). Matthew 13:55 says Jesus had four brothers: James, Joses, Simon, and Judas. To summarize, James and Jude were apostles, James and Jude were brothers, James and Jude were the sons of Alphaeus, and James and Jude were the brothers of Christ. Quite a family.

Scholars debate the purpose of James. Some argue James was written to counter Paul's faith message. Roy Ward wrote, "Since the time of Martin Luther, no one has been able to write on the Epistle of James without considering its relationship to Paul."³³ Here is another point of view: James wrote, "Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness" (James 2:23). Paul wrote, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness" (Romans 4:3). Not much controversy there.

First John is the Gospel of Jesus Christ: "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and

³³ Ward, Roy. "James And Paul: Critical Review." *Restoration Quarterly* 7, no. 3 (1963): 159.

do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:5-7).

Second John is a friendly reminder: "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house" (2 John 1:10).

Third John simplifies things even more: "He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God" (3 John 1:11).

John also wrote, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass" (Revelation 1:1). So much for the no man can know theory. Just for the record, Revelation 17:10 says, "And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space." Therefore, Revelation was written during the reign of Titus between 69 AD and 79 AD.

Kings of Rome

1	Julian	Augustus	27 BC – 14 AD
2		Tiberius	14 AD – 37 AD
3		Caligula	37 AD – 41 AD
4		Claudius	41 AD – 54 AD
5		Nero	54 AD – 68 AD
6	Flavian	Vespasian	69 AD – 79 AD
7		Titus	79 AD – 81 AD
8		Domitian	81 AD – 96 AD

Ethics



The Greeks

(01.11.15)

The question "Why be moral?" has been asked since the Garden of Eden, but by the time of Plato, the question no longer had much meaning. Greece seemed content with the status quo, a kind of paternal capitalism which allowed them the luxury of discussing everything under the sun except how to save the gadfly of Athens, Socrates. Enter Plato, a student of Socrates who created play-like versions of the Socratic Method to show us right from wrong.

Plato believed humans have three parts. We have the rational part, which loves the truth and rules over the other two; the spirited part, which loves honor and victory; and the appetitive part, which loves food and sex.

Plato believed society has three classes. There is the ruling class, which seeks justice for all; the military class, which fights heroically to enforce justice; and the working class, which supports the physical needs of a just society.

Plato believed morality has three components. James Duerlinger wrote, "The pursuit of the divine life, then, essentially consists of three paths: the path of moral training, which is

traversed with the help of the practical wisdom of the community leader; the path of dialectic, which is traversed with the help of the theoretical wisdom of the accomplished philosopher; and the path of contemplation, which is traversed with the help of one's own innate love of God."³⁴

According to Plato, morality is achieved when a majority of the people do their job well. In other words, morality is a social construct, not a divine construct. The truth is, morality is both. It is a social construct because we have a common creator. It is a divine construct because we are only stewards.

In conclusion, like all good teachers, Plato believed we can be more than we are, but he was confused about how to get us there. From Plato's point of view, a balanced social structure and a good education should produce right-minded individuals. He failed to understand that goodness is not a product of the mind, but of the heart. When it comes to spirit, Plato imagined the courage and honor of soldiers. He mistook spirited emotion for spirituality. That is not to say courage and honor are not spiritual. It is to say emotion is secondary to the spirit or will. It was the will of Adam that chose to defy God, and it was the will of Adam that had to change direction to be pardoned. That is

³⁴ Duerlinger, James. "Ethics and the divine life in Plato's philosophy." *Journal of Religious Ethics* 13, no. 2 (1985): 321.

not to say the heart cannot be educated. It is to say a spiritual education is more like boot camp than college.

Nonresistance

(01.18.15)

The article entitled “Nonresistance and Litigation” was written by Paul Erb and published in the April 1939 edition of the Mennonite Quarterly Review. The premise of the article is ethical behavior is not a social, economic, or political pursuit. It is a way of life for Christians. The ethic of nonresistance dictates we abstain from every kind of evil like coarse behavior, anger, litigation, and war. The ethic of nonresistance compels us to reconcile our differences and to pursue peaceful solutions. Paul Erb wrote, “If I am nonresistant at all, I must be nonresistant in all.”³⁵

Erb’s first point was God is love and as representatives, we should display that love. Litigation may be legal, but it is also unseemly. Therefore, except for criminal cases, litigation should be avoided.

³⁵ Erb, Paul. “Nonresistance and litigation.” Mennonite Quarterly Review 13, no 2 (1939): 75.

Erb's second point was taken from 1 Corinthians 6:1-8 which says litigation is an in-house affair. In other words, we should display the wisdom of God by resolving our issues privately.

Erb's third point was we are ministers of reconciliation. Therefore, we should lay down our lives for peace rather than conflict, for good relations rather than the collection of debts.

Now, by arguing successfully against bad behavior and litigation, Erb also demonstrates Christians have a moral obligation to abstain from military service and war. Here are four reasons why.

First, war is a product of disobedience. Under the Mosaic Law, the Blessing brings peace and the Curse brings war (Leviticus 26:6). Shaul Bar wrote, "Death in war was unnatural, hence it was considered a punishment."³⁶

Second, our battle is with Satan, not mankind. Madison Pierce wrote, "Christians have been given much more efficient weapons than swords or guns."³⁷ And Ephesians 6:12 says, "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

³⁶ Bar, Shaul. "The Curse of Death in War." *Jewish Bible Quarterly* 40, no. 4 (2012): 231-237.

³⁷ Pierce, Madison. "War: Fighting the Enemies of God, not Man." *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 43, no. 2 (2013): 81.

Third, Christ told His disciples to follow Him and let the dead bury the dead (Matthew 8:21-23). In other words, Christians have a higher calling.

Now, I have heard it said pacifism leaves the dirty work to others. In truth, Christians are no different than other first responders. They follow orders. Besides, even the military knows Romans 13:1-2, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation."

Fourth, false leaders lie (2 Peter 2:1). Rather than end slavery, they legitimized it. Rather than end torture, they endorsed it. Rather than end war, they lead the charge. As David Barker wrote, "Christians view the international interests of the United States as divinely inspired, and the hawkish pursuit of those interests as not only justified but perhaps demanded by God."³⁸ These false prophets love to point to Old Testament warriors like Joshua and David and to the New Testament Return of Christ. Yet, these clouds without water somehow forget Christ was here once before and He came not as a conquering hero, but as homeless felon nailed to a tree. That He did not fight the Roman Empire. He was led to the slaughter like a lamb. That He

³⁸ Barker, David. "Of Crusades And Culture Wars: "Messianic" Militarism And Political Conflict In The United States." *The Journal of Politics* no. 2 (2008): 307.

did not hunt for evildoers. He searched for the lost. That He did not legislate morality. He lived a life worth following. That He did not endorse candidates. He washed feet.

In conclusion, nonresistance is an extension of love and love does not prosecute its own or others. Christ did not come to imprison, torture, and kill, but to be imprisoned, tortured, and killed. Therefore, let us make peace because Christ descended. Therefore, let us make peace because Christ ascended. Therefore, let us make peace because Christ shall come again.

Church and State

(01.25.15)

My field of study is Christian Studies. My vocation is a non-ordained minister. My guide is the American Association of Christian Counselors Code of Ethics. The subject at hand is the separation of Church and State. Clearly, government has no right to interfere with religion, but does religion have a right to interfere with government? Should Christians be involved in politics or not?

Legally speaking, the answer is simple. Nothing in the Constitution compels us to participate in democracy.

Philosophically speaking, tyranny has many forms. On the one hand, we have the tyranny of majority rule over the minorities, whereby voting is an act of oppression. On the other hand, we have the tyranny of silence, whereby inaction creates a conspiracy of violence. Both arguments are valid.

Morally speaking, Christ said, "In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets" (Matthew 7:12). The problem is, some people want us to participate in politics and some do not, and some want us to help them win and not the other guy. Immigration is

a good example. So is abortion. Ultimately, the question is, "What is love?" Paul wrote, "All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any" (1 Corinthians 6:12). Therefore, freedom alone does not dictate our actions. Christ said, "The rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you" (Matthew 20:25-26). Therefore, we are not called to dominate anyone, let alone an entire political system, and for good reasons. The church cannot afford to not pay taxes and legislate morality upon those who do.

Ethically speaking, AACC says ministers have a duty to defend the code, the law, the government, the church, the clients, the community, and our family. The truth is we are governed by our conscience. Not surprisingly, the Code makes provision for that too. Section 5-210 says, "Christian counselors support their right to elect nonadherence to those ethics and rules that offend the way of Christ." Therefore, I respectfully disagree with those who teach Christians to participate in politics. In my opinion, it's inappropriate for us to influence candidates or policies. Think of it this way. Can you imagine Martin Luther King Jr. opposing individual rights based on sexual preference? Can you imagine Mother Teresa picking up a gun to defend her country? Can you imagine Jesus Christ voting for the death penalty?

In conclusion, let us shun the unseemly business of politics and let us return to the glorious ministry of reconciliation. The

official confession of faith of the Southern Baptist Convention, *Baptist Faith and Message*, says, “The Church should not resort to the civil power to carry on its work. The Gospel of Christ contemplates spiritual means alone for the pursuit of its ends.”³⁹ Bravo, Baptists!

³⁹ Gaskins, Mark. “Cracks in the wall?: changing attitudes toward the separation of Church and state among Southern Baptists.” *Baptist History and Heritage* 43, no. 3 (2008): 96.

Polarization

(02.01.15)

Liberalism emphasizes the teachings of Christ, while conservatism emphasizes the narratives of Christ. Liberalism argues that reason does not demand a God, while conservatism argues that God does not demand reason. Neither thought is very enlightened.

Liberalism is right because it teaches us to love mankind. Kenneth Grasso wrote, "Indeed, Christians must acknowledge that as far as the injustice and bankruptcy of the ancient régime and the social and political implications of the sacredness of the human person are concerned, the proponents of liberalism often displayed a vision and courage that they lacked."⁴⁰

Liberalism is wrong because it does not rely on a God in heaven (Father), a sacrifice on earth (Son), miracles (The Holy Spirit), or the scriptures (Fivefold).

In truth, liberalism cannot defend its doctrines without taking a conservative stance. Therefore, it cannot lead.

⁴⁰ Grasso, Kenneth. "Christianity, Enlightenment Liberalism, and the Quest for Freedom." *Modern Age* 48, no. 4 (2006): 301.

Conservatism is right because it teaches Biblical Inerrancy.

Conservatism is wrong because it is built upon the liberal Nicene Creed rather than the conservative teachings of the Apostles. Jerry Weinberger wrote, "Ben Franklin, the most widely read in theology of all the Founders, said the following about the doctrines of his Presbyterian neighbors: The doctrine of original sin was an absurd 'bugbear set up by Priests (whether Popish or Presbyterian I know not) to fright and scare an unthinking populace out of their senses, and inspire them with terror, to answer the little selfish ends of the inventors and propagators.' The idea that one person can be subject to punishment for the guilt of another was monstrous, said Franklin, and made God cruel, arbitrary, and unjust. The doctrines of justification by faith alone and salvation by means of the merits and satisfactions of Christ were antinomian, said Franklin, and comprised 'the most impious doctrine that was ever broached... [with] a natural tendency to make men act as if Christ came into the world to patronize vice, and allow men to live as they please.'"⁴¹

In truth, conservatism cannot defend its doctrines without taking a liberal stance. Therefore, it cannot lead.

⁴¹ Weinberger, Jerry. "Benjamin Franklin: Philosopher of Progress." *Good Society Journal* 17, no. 1 (2008): 20.

In conclusion, conservatism believes in inspired revelation, and liberalism believes in inspired interpretation, and one without the other is useless. In the words of Christ, "they be blind leaders of the blind" (Matthew 15:13-14).

Outline for Recovery

(02.08.15)

James I – Patience

- a. You will fall into temptations.
- b. When you fall, ask for help.
- c. Be thankful for the suffering.
- d. You fell because you were arrogant.

James II – Love

- a. This time do not show favoritism.
- b. This time love your neighbor.
- c. This time do good works.
- d. Abraham believed God!

James III – Self-Control

- a. The tongue controls everything.
- b. It can be used for good or evil.
- c. This time control your tongue.
- d. This time use it to make peace.

James IV – Humility

- a. The chaos was caused by adultery.
- b. Don't you know God is jealous?
- c. Cling to God and the chaos ends.
- d. This time let God be the judge.

James V – Prayer

- a. Remember, there will be justice.
- b. Judgement is already nearby.
- c. This time pray for each other.
- d. Prayer will prevent temptation.

History



The Early Church

(03.01.15)

When did the Church start? When did God invent the plan of salvation? (John 3:16). When did Christ accept the plan? (Philippians 2:7). When did the Holy Spirit carry out the plan? (Luke 1:35). Was it the birth of Christ (Matthew 1:25), the baptism of Christ (Matthew 3:16), the betrayal of Christ (John 13:2), the death of Christ (Matthew 27:50), the Resurrection of Christ (Matthew 28:1-9), or the ascension of Christ? (Luke 24:51). Was it the first miracle, the first message, the first disciple? Was it the first convert or the last? Some say the Church began with the words, "Upon this rock..." (Matthew 16:18).

Officially, the Church began on the Day of Pentecost. Acts 2:1-4 says, "When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly, a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them." When Peter preached, three thousand people were converted (Acts 2:41). When Peter

prayed, two thousand more were added (Acts 4:4). By the time Ananias and Sapphira dropped dead, people were lining the streets just to touch Peter's shadow (Acts 5:15). Truly, the Church was "built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets" (Ephesians 2:20).

Unofficially, the Church began the day Stephen was stoned at the feet of Paul (Acts 7:57-60). What I mean is this: before Paul, the Church had no real identity. It was just another Jewish sect (Acts 5:34-40). Paul single-handedly established the Gentile Church we all know today (Romans 11:13). Even the term Christian came from Paul's base in Antioch (Acts 11:26). It was Paul, not the Twelve, who turned away from the synagogues (Acts 18:6). It was Paul, not the Twelve, who called for an end to the Mosaic Law (Acts 15:2). It was Paul, not the Twelve, who developed the concept of faith (Romans 10:8-10). It was Paul, not the Twelve, who explained the resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:52). There have been many outpourings of the Holy Spirit, but none shone brighter than the light which blinded Paul's eyes (Acts 9:3). Truly, "strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Like Christ, the Church had three enemies: the Priesthood, Herod, and Rome, otherwise known as the local, state, and federal government. It was not long before the Pharisees arrested believers in other cities (Acts 8:1, 9:1). Within a decade, Herod killed James (Acts 12:1). Within a generation, the Romans were feeding Christians to the lions. The Church had

other problems as well. According to 2 Corinthians 12:24-28, they were attacked by bandits, local merchants, and religious groups. To make matters even worse, there was a worldwide famine (Acts 11:28). The famine not only caused great poverty, it led to more persecution because the Christians refused to participate in the political and religious efforts to appease the Gods. The last straw was the Jewish rebellion. Rome's response paid little attention to the doctrinal differences between Jews and Christians. To the Romans, all Jews were a threat and that included the Early Church. Mark Noll wrote, "The Apostles Peter and Paul were probably martyred in Rome under the emperor Nero about the time that Titus and Vespasian were advancing on Jerusalem."⁴²

In conclusion, God used the Fall of Jerusalem to cut the apron strings. In one swift blow, Judaism was fragmented, the Gentile Church took center stage, and Christianity spread throughout the empire. In hindsight, Paul's hurried efforts to establish the Church outside of Israel were justified even divine.

⁴² Noll, Mark. *Turning Points: Decisive Moments In The History Of Christianity*. Grand Rapids MI: Baker Academic, 2012.

The Holy Scriptures

(03.08.15)

The Bible has sixty-six books, forty authors, and was written from 1421 BC to 79 AD. When was the Old Testament completed? One theory, the Ezra Legend, says it was completed sometime after the Decree of Cyrus in 453 BC. When was the New Testament completed? The first King James Bible without the Apocrypha was published in 1666. According to Bruce Shelley, the writings were chosen for three reasons: they were transformational, they were well known to the Early Church, or they were somehow related to the Apostles.⁴³

The canonization process also excluded unorthodox writings like the Acts of Paul and the Epistle of Barnabas, orthodox writings like Didache and Shepherd of Hermas, the writings of the Apostolic Fathers like Clement, Ignatius, and Polycarp, the Greek Fathers like Irenaeus, Origen, and Athanasius, and the Latin Fathers like Tertullian, Cyprian, and Ambrose. By 100, the writings were popular; by 200, the writings were considered

⁴³ Shelley, Bruce. Church History In Plain Language. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013.

divine; by 300, the list was widely agreed upon, and by 400, the list was well-established.

The first step was the creation of the writings. Paul began the process by writing letters to the Gentile Churches. Eventually, other leaders followed suit. Some wrote letters. Some wrote Gospels. As the Church spread, so did writings.

The second step was the confirmation of the writings. The letters confirmed the members and the leaders. The Gospels revealed the calling of the Apostles. The Book of Acts chronicled the ministry of the Apostles. Paul's letters confirmed the leadership of Peter, James, John, and Jude. John's letters elevated the status of the Seven Churches. Peter's letter endorsed Paul's teachings, etc.

The third step was the acknowledgment of the writings. As the Apostles died off, their writings took center stage. Members began to copy, share, and recite the writings during meetings. The Early Church Fathers began using the writings in their sermons. In 150, Polycarp referred to at least eight letters of Paul. In 160, Justin Martyr referred to the memoirs of Paul. In 180, Irenaeus called the Gospels fourfold.

The fourth step was the organization of the writings. Church leaders began to group the writings into lists. In 140, Marcion canonized ten letters of Paul and a version of Luke (Gospel of Marcion). The oldest list is from the Muratorian Fragment written in 190. It contained the names of twenty-two books

currently found in the New Testament. The first completed list is from Bishop Athanasius of Alexandria in 367. This same list was also used by the Council of Hippo in 393 and the council of Carthage in 397. The first formal declaration was made by the Second Council of Trullan in 692.

In conclusion, canonization was a two-edged sword. On the one hand, it preserved the Old Testament, the teachings of Christ, and the authority of the Apostles. On the other hand, it weakened the authority of prophecy, the Gifts of the Spirit, and the Fivefold Ministry. According to Tertullian, "The Holy Spirit was chased into a book." All things considered, the canonization process was a reaction against Marcionism which dismissed the Father, Gnosticism which dismissed the Holy Spirit, and Montanism which dismissed the Son. In other words, it was compiled to silence free speech. Nevertheless, what man meant for evil, God used for good.

The Papacy

(03.15.15)

In 380, Emperor Theodosius, while in Milan, ordered the death of five thousand rioters in Greece. In response, Ambrose, the Bishop of Milan, refused to give him communion unless he did penance for the massacre. Eventually, Theodosius complied, which established the idea that the Church has power over political institutions.

A generation later, Pope Leo the Great used these newfound powers to negotiate with Attila the Hun and Gaiseric the Vandal when they attacked Rome.

Next came Gregory the Great, a former prefect of Rome, who created monasteries across Europe, which added new properties and new converts. It also centralized power in Rome because monks, unlike priests, had no allegiance to the bishops.

The papacy reached its zenith on Christmas morning 800 when Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire (not to be confused with the Roman Emperor, the title used in Constantinople). Charlemagne united the Germanic peoples, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Germany,

reformed the Church, and converted the captives to Christianity. This marriage of Church and State sparked the Carolingian Renaissance.

By 1054, we have the Great Schism. By Christmas night 1075, Pope Gregory VII was kidnapped. Upon his release, he excommunicated Henry IV, Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. The controversy was over who would control the appointment of Bishops because they controlled who would be Pope. In the end, Gregory VII won the battle but lost the war. From that point forward, Papal powers declined.

By 1302, Pope Boniface VIII issued a final writing, *Unam Sanctam* (one holy), which declared, "it is absolutely necessary for salvation that every human creature be subject to the Roman Pontiff." Philip IV, King of France, responded by having Boniface beaten and locked up for three days. He later became ill and never recovered, and neither did the Papal powers.

The Reformation

(03.22.15)

The term Reformation is misleading. The Catholic Church was not reformed. Battle lines were drawn, blood was shed, and thousands were persecuted and killed. More than anything else, the Protestant Reformation was a product of modernization. The Gutenberg Press was invented around 1455. The first book printed in English was in 1475. By the end of the century, twenty million books were printed, setting the stage for the Reformation.

On October 31, 1517, the German reformer Martin Luther delivered his 95 grievances. In 1518, Pope Leo X asked Luther to retract 41 of them. Luther responded by rejecting the authority of the Papacy completely. In 1520, Emperor Charles V offered Luther one last chance to change his mind at the Diet (Assembly) of Worms, Germany. Luther responded by writing "To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation," "Prelude on the Babylonian Captivity of the Church," and "Freedom of a Christian." Soon after, Luther was denounced by Henry VIII and excommunicated by Pope Leo X.

In 1522, Luther translated the New Testament into German. In 1526, William Tyndale translated the New Testament into

English. In 1529, Luther met with Swiss Reformer Ulrich Zwingli and agreed to fifteen of his sixteen tenets. Luther refused to give up on transubstantiation, the Catholic notion that during Mass bread and wine become the literal body and blood of Christ. In 1530, Emperor Charles V asked the Lutherans to provide a formal summary of their beliefs, which is now known as the Augsburg Confession. In 1531, Ulrich Zwingli died.

In 1533, Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, also defied the Papacy by voiding the marriage of Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon, so Henry could marry Anne Boleyn. On July 11, 1533, Pope Clement VII excommunicated the King and the Archbishop. In 1534, Parliament passed the Acts of Supremacy, making Henry VIII the Head of the Church of England. Shortly thereafter, Henry VIII executed Thomas More and William Tyndale for opposing the Church of England. The Papacy countered with the Jesuit Order: priests dedicated to reclaiming Protestant converts.

In 1536, French reformer John Calvin created a systematic theology for the Reformation called "The Institutes of the Christian Religion." In 1546, Martin Luther died. In 1547, Henry VIII died. In 1564, John Calvin died. In 1572, Scottish reformer John Knox died. In 1590, the Geneva Bible was published. In 1611, the King James Version was published.

To summarize, the Reformation included justification by faith, the priesthood of all believers, the authority of the Word, the

nature of the sacraments, the separation of Church and State, ecclesiastical continuity, and the Great Commission. The main point of contention was the sale of indulgences. The Papacy offered salvation for acts of loyalty, acts of contrition, and money. The Protestants attacked the problem in three ways.

First, they argued scripture has more authority than the Pope. The truth is if a minister is called by God, his words are equal to scripture. Like it or not, that includes the Pope. The idea that Apostolic writings carry more weight than the Apostles themselves is foolishness. Is the Pope a Fivefold Minister? It would depend on the Pope, wouldn't it?

Second, they argued that men are saved by faith, not by works. The truth is sanctification is not the result of justification. Justification is the result of sanctification. For it is written, "I will not justify the wicked" (Exodus 23:7).

Third, they disavowed the sacraments. The problem is, it is hypocritical to disavow the sacraments but keep Baptism and Communion. Sacraments, by their very nature, are rituals, and rituals fall under the Law. Therefore, Baptism and Communion are no different than Circumcision. Say Amen or Ohme.

Theology



God the Father

(02.14.16)

If a Creator does exist, He could only prove His existence in a limited number of ways. He could come down here Himself and explain things to us. He already did that. He could suspend natural laws and perform miracles. He already did that. He could traverse time and space and tell us the future. He already did that. He could send His Son to prove He cares. He already did that. He could document all this information for future generations. He already did that. Need more proof? Alexander the Great was born in 356 BC. Julius Caesar was born in 100 BC. Daniel predicted the rise of both empires in 520 BC (Daniel 2:39-40). Need more proof? Columbus discovered the earth was round in 1492 AD. Isaiah wrote God "sits above the circle of the earth" in 650 BC (Isaiah 40:22). Need more proof? Wasaburo Ooishi discovered the four jet streams in the 1920's. In 70 AD, John wrote, "After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth to prevent any wind from blowing on the land or on the sea or on any tree" (Revelation 7:1). So, the question is not, "Does God exist?" but "Who is like God?"

God the Son

(02.21.16)

The life of Christ is the most famous story ever told. His teachings sparked the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, and the Human Rights Movement. He is the master of the parable, the author of the golden rule. He is the light that shines in the darkness and He was hated for it. His birth marked the slaughter of innocents. His death marked the destruction of a nation. His return marks the apocalypse itself. Those who hate Him ought to be afraid. Those who love Him ought to be like Him. He is the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords. He is our Captain, our Savior, the First Born Raised from the Dead. He is the Head of the Church. The teachings of Christ outline a shift in morality from the Letter of the Law to the Spirit of the Law. With the words "Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us" Jesus made each of us directly responsible for our destiny (Matthew 6:12). There are no more excuses, no more sacrifices, the veil has been removed. "God is a Spirit and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). In other words, be honest (truth) with yourself (spirit). This is good news for the poor. We no longer need ministers or institutions to save us. Today, everyone can know God for themselves. The point is, Jesus is more than a teacher, more

than a prophet, more than a king. Jesus is an example of a man who obeys God. The Most High gave us many good gifts including His Son, but the greatest gift of all is the power to change. Those who deny power exists to live holy lives, deny Christ Himself.

God the Holy Spirit

(02.28.16)

Revelation and interpretation both require inspiration. The scriptures were written by humans, but the Holy Spirit was the author and only He can explain them. This begs the question, "Exactly how many biblical examples do you need to believe prophets and apostles still exist today?" There were prophets in the Old Testament (Numbers 11:25). There were prophets in the New Testament (Ephesians 4:11). Moses was a prophet (Deuteronomy 34:10). David was a prophet (Acts 2:30). Daniel was a prophet (Matthew 24:15). Jesus was a prophet (Luke 24:18). The Church in Jerusalem had prophets (Acts 11:27). The Church in Antioch had prophets (Acts 13:1). Now, some will argue the creation of the Bible, a book of prophecy written by prophets, somehow makes prophecy and prophets obsolete. That is like saying the Bible, a book written by a nation of ex-slaves, somehow supports slavery. Dear brothers and sisters, the idea God no longer speaks, because God no longer writes, is just plain silly and the idea God still has leaders, just not the kind found in the Bible, is even worse. Think of it this way. John 1:14 calls Jesus "The Word of God." Revelation 19:10 calls Jesus "The Spirit of Prophecy." Therefore, scripture and prophecy are the same thing. Clearly, God is still writing, and

God is still speaking. Therefore, the reader or listener, will need faith to proceed.

Babylon the Great

(03.06.16)

Dare a Protestant still protest? I did not leave Catholicism to become a Protestant. I left to follow Christ. If that means leaving Protestantism behind as well, so be it. As much as it grieves me to say this, without the truth and without the spirit, Protestants are nothing more than left wing Catholics. Perhaps, the 34,000 denominations, 1,200 in the U.S, are the same tree. Consider the following. Both Catholics and Protestants confess the Nicene Creed. Both believe in the Trinity. Both have rituals like communion and baptism. Both perform ceremonies like weddings and funerals. Both hire ordained ministers. Both pay ministers. Both receive tithes. Both are tax exempt. Both own properties. Both sell paraphernalia. Both give less than 10% away. Both meet on Sunday mornings. Both begin their meetings with worship followed by a sermon. Both pay lip service to prophecy. Both ignore the authority of the Fivefold. They do not meet in homes. They do not meet daily. They do not share all things in common. In short, they are a business. In conclusion, Babylon is an evil mixture of political aspirations, traditional values, and religious extremism. Whether deluded by desire or pride, Jesus understood their true nature. "The time is coming when anyone who kills you will think they are offering a

service to God" (John 16:2). What should be our response? "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Revelation 18:4).

The Body of Christ

(03.13.16)

May I suggest the Church is like Christ? Jesus said, "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father" (John 14:12). What are the works of Christ? John the Baptist called Jesus, "The Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world." (John 1:29). And Paul wrote, "The Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you" (1Corinthians 11:23-24). Clearly, Christ was a sacrifice. How did Christ pay for the sins of the world? With his body. And who is the body? We are! This is confirmed by Paul who said, "I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church" (Colossians 1:24). So, the Church not only shares the rewards of Christ's sacrifice. We are the sacrifice! As Christ said, "Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with" (Matthew 20:23). As Paul said, "If we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him" (2 Timothy 2:11-12).

The Gift of Salvation

(03.20.16)

Salvation begins with revelation that leads to enlightenment and ends with sanctification that leads to perfection and somewhere in the middle, lies the gift of Godly sorrow, that split second when a man changes direction once and for all.

Knowing this fact, God can then forgive and justify the man. Let us begin at the beginning. Clearly, Adam had plenty of grace. If ever a man was predestined for salvation, it was Adam. If ever a man was created in God's image it was Adam. No one had better genes. No one had a better environment. Adam also had free will. In other words, he had a choice. Now, some choices are a matter of taste. Genesis 2:9 says, "Out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food." Other choices are a matter of life and death. Genesis 2:17 says, "Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." So, where did Adam go wrong? Adam was not cursed for lying or stealing or murdering. Adam was not cursed because he drank, or smoked, or did drugs. Adam was not cursed because he was a fornicator or an adulterer or a homosexual. Adam was cursed for disobeying a simple command. In conclusion, all the freedom and grace in

the world could not stop Adam from sinning and all the freedom and grace in the world could not save Adam until he surrendered. Rebellion is the disease. Sins are the symptoms. Cure the symptoms, the disease produces more. Cure the disease, the symptoms fade away. In the words of Christ, "First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean" (Matthew 23:26).

Prophecy



The Hebrew Timeline

(12.25.95)

Sons of God

Adam

"This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him" (Genesis 5:1).

Therefore, Adam was created in 0001.

Seth

"And Adam lived 130 years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth" (Genesis 5:3).

Therefore, Seth was born in 0131 ($1+130=131$).

Alias: Sheth.

Enos

"And Seth lived 105 years, and begat Enos" (Genesis 5:6).

Therefore, Enos was born in 0236 ($131+105=236$).

Alias: Enosh.

Cainan

"And Enos lived 90 years, and begat Cainan" (Genesis 5:9).

Therefore, Cainan was born in 0326 ($236+90=326$).

Alias: Kenan.

Mahalaleel

"And Cainan lived 70 years, and begat Mahalaleel" (Genesis 5:12).

Therefore, Mahalaleel was born in 0396 ($326+70=396$).

Alias: Maleleel.

Jared

"And Mahalaleel lived 65 years, and begat Jared" (Genesis 5:15).

Therefore, Jared was born in 0461 ($396+65=461$).

Alias: Jered.

Enoch

"And Jared lived 162 years, and he begat Enoch" (Genesis 5:18).

Therefore, Enoch was born in 0623 ($461+162=623$).

Alias: Henoch.

Methuselah

"And Enoch lived 65, and begat Methuselah" (Genesis 5:21).

Therefore, Methuselah was born in 0688 ($623+65=688$).

Alias: Mathusala.

Lamech

"And Methuselah lived 187 years, and begat Lamech" (Genesis 5:25).

Therefore, Lamech was born in 0875 ($688+187=875$).

Noah

"And Lamech lived 182 years, and begat a son: And he called his name Noah" (Genesis 5:28-29).

Therefore, Noah was born in 1057 ($875+182=1057$).

Alias: Noe.

Flood

"And Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters was upon the earth" (Genesis 7:6).

Therefore, the Flood occurred in 1657 ($1057+600=1657$).

Shem

"And Noah was 600 years old when the flood of waters was upon the earth" (Genesis 7:6).

"These are the generations of Shem: Shem was 100 years old, and begat Arphaxad 2 years after the flood" (Genesis 11:10).

So, Noah lived 600 years before the flood and Shem lived 98 years before the flood.

Therefore, Noah lived 502 years before Shem was born (600-98=502).

Therefore, Shem was born in 1559 (1057+502=1559).

Alias: Sheth, Sem.

Arphaxad

"These are the generations of Shem: Shem was 100 years old, and begat Arphaxad 2 years after the flood" (Genesis 11:10).

Therefore, Arphaxad was born in 1659 (1559+100=1659).

Salah

Arphaxad was born in 1659. And Arphaxad lived 35 years, and begat Salah" (Genesis 11:12).

Therefore, Salah was born in 1694 (1659+35=1694).

Eber

"And Salah lived 30 years, and begat Eber" (Genesis 11:14).

Therefore, Eber was born in 1724 (1694+30=1724).

Alias: Heber.

Peleg

"And Eber lived 34 years, and begat Peleg" (Genesis 11:16).

Therefore, Peleg was born in 1758 (1724+34=1758).

Alias: Phalec.

Reu

"And Peleg lived 30 years, and begat Reu" (Genesis 11:18).

Therefore, Reu was born in 1788 ($1758+30=1788$).

Alias: Ragau.

Serug

"And Reu lived 32 years, and begat Serug" (Genesis 11:20).

Therefore, Serug was born in 1820 ($1788+32=1820$).

Alias: Saruch.

Nahor

"And Serug lived 30 years, and begat Nahor" (Genesis 11:22).

Therefore, Nahor was born in 1850 ($1820+30=1850$).

Alias: Nachor.

Terah

"And Nahor lived 29 years, and begat Terah" (Genesis 11:24).

Therefore, Terah was born in 1879 ($1850+29=1879$).

Alias: Thara.

Abram

"And the days of Terah were 205 years: and Terah died in Haran" (Genesis 11:32).

"So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was 75 years old when he departed out of Haran" (Genesis 12:4).

So, Terah lived 205 years before dying in Haran and Abram lived 75 years before leaving Haran.

Therefore, Terah lived 130 years before Abram was born ($205-75=130$).

Therefore, Abram was born in 2009 ($1879+130=2009$).

Alias: Abraham.

Isaac

"And Abraham was 100 years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him" (Genesis 21:5).

Therefore, Isaac was born in 2109 ($2009+100=2109$).

Jacob

"And after that came his brother out, and his hand took hold on Esau's heel; and his name was called Jacob: and Isaac was 60 years old when she bare them" (Genesis 25:26).

Therefore, Jacob was born in 2169 ($2109+60=2169$).

Alias: Israel.

Enter Egypt

"And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are 130 years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage" (Genesis 47:9).

Therefore, Jacob entered Egypt in 2299 ($2169+130=2299$).

Kings of Judah

Exit Egypt

"And it came to pass at the end of the 430 years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt" (Exodus 12:41).

Therefore, Israel exited Egypt in 2729 ($2299+430=2729$).

Solomon

"And it came to pass in the 480th year after the children of Israel were come 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, that he began to build the house of the Lord" (1 Kings 6:1).

Therefore, Solomon was crowned 476 years after the Exodus ($480-4=476$).

Therefore, Solomon was crowned in 3205 ($2729+476=3205$).

Rehoboam

"And Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel 40 years" (2 Chronicles 9:30).

Therefore, Rehoboam was crowned in 3245 ($3205+40=3245$).

Abijah

"So king Rehoboam strengthened himself in Jerusalem, and reigned: for Rehoboam was 41 years old when he began to reign, and he reigned 17 years in Jerusalem, the city which the Lord had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, to put his name there. And his mother's name was Naamah an Ammonites" (2 Chronicles 12:13).

Therefore, Abijah was crowned in 3262 ($3245+17=3262$).

Alias: Abijam.

Asa

"Now in the 18th year of king Jeroboam began Abijah to reign over Judah. He reigned 3 years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Michaiah the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah. And there was war between Abijah and Jeroboam" (2 Chronicles 13:1-2).

Therefore, Asa was crowned in 3265 ($3262+3=3265$).

Jehoshaphat

"And Asa slept with his fathers, and died in the one and fortieth year of his reign" (2 Chronicles 16:13).

Therefore, Jehoshaphat was crowned in 3306 ($3265+41=3306$).

Jehoram

"And Jehoshaphat reigned over Judah: he was 35 years old when he began to reign, and he reigned 25 years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Azubah the daughter of Shilhi" (2 Chronicles 20:31).

Therefore, Jehoram was crowned in 3331 ($3306+25=3331$).

Ahaziah

"Jehoram was 32 years old when he began to reign, and he reigned 8 years in Jerusalem" (2 Chronicles 21:5).

Therefore, Ahaziah was crowned in 3339 ($3331+8=3339$).

Athaliah

"Forty and two years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Athaliah the daughter of Omri" (2 Chronicles 22:2).

Therefore, Athaliah ruled in 3340 ($3339+1=3340$).

Joash

“But Jehoshabeath, the daughter of the king, took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him from among the king's sons that were slain, and put him and his nurse in a bedchamber. So Jehoshabeath, the daughter of king Jehoram, the wife of Jehoiada the priest, (for she was the sister of Ahaziah,) hid him from Athaliah, so that she slew him not. And he was with them hid in the house of God six years: and Athaliah reigned over the land” (2 Chronicles 22:11-12).

Therefore, Joash was crowned in 3346 (3340+6=3346).

Alias: Jehoash.

Amaziah

“Joash was 7 years old when he began to reign, and he reigned 40 years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Zibiah of Beersheba” (2 Chronicles 24:1).

Amaziah was crowned in 3386 (3346+40=3386).

Uzziah

"Amaziah was 25 years old when he began to reign, and he reigned 29 years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jehoaddan of Jerusalem" (2 Chronicles 25:1).

Therefore, Uzziah was crowned in 3415 ($3386+29=3415$).

Alias: Azariah.

Jotham

"Sixteen years old was Uzziah when he began to reign, and he reigned 52 years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Jecoliah of Jerusalem" (2 Chronicles 26:3).

Therefore, Jotham was crowned in 3467 ($3415+52=3467$).

Ahaz

"Jotham was 25 years old when he began to reign, and he reigned 16 years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Jerushah, the daughter of Zadok" (2 Chronicles 27:1).

Therefore, Ahaz was crowned in 3483 ($3467+16=3483$).

Hezekiah

"Ahaz was 20 years old when he began to reign, and he reigned 16 years in Jerusalem: but he did not do what was right in the sight of the Lord, like David his father" (2 Chronicles 28:1).

Therefore, Hezekiah was crowned in 3499 ($3483+16=3499$).

Alias: Ezekias.

Manasseh

"Hezekiah began to reign when he was 25 years old, and he reigned 29 years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Abijah, the daughter of Zechariah" (2 Chronicles 29:1).

Therefore, Manasseh was crowned in 3528 ($3499+29=3528$).

Amon

"Manasseh was 12 years old when he began to reign, and he reigned 55 years in Jerusalem" (2 Chronicles 33:1).

Therefore, Amon was crowned in 3583 ($3528+55=3583$).

Josiah

"Amon was 22 years old when he began to reign, and reigned 2 years in Jerusalem" (2 Chronicles 33:21).

Therefore, Josiah was crowned in 3585 ($3583+2=3585$).

Jehoahaz

"Josiah was 8 years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem 31 years" (2 Chronicles 34:1).

Therefore, Jehoahaz was crowned in 3616 ($3585+31=3616$).

Alias: Shallum.

Jehoiakim

"Jehoahaz was 23 years old when he began to reign, and he reigned 3 months in Jerusalem" (2 Chronicles 36:2).

Therefore, Jehoiakim was crowned in 3616
($3616+90\text{days}=3616$).

Alias: Eliakim.

Jehoiachin

"Jehoiakim was 25 years old when he began to reign, and he reigned 11 years in Jerusalem: and he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord his God" (2 Chronicles 36:5).

Therefore, Jehoiachin was crowned in 3627 ($3616+11=3627$).

Alias: Jeconiah, Jechoniah, Coniah, Jechonias.

Enter Babylon

"Jehoiachin was 8 years old when he began to reign, and he reigned 3 months and 10 days in Jerusalem: and he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord. And when the year was expired, king Nebuchadnezzar sent, and brought him to Babylon, with the goodly vessels of the house of the Lord, and made Zedekiah his brother king over Judah and Jerusalem" (2 Chronicles 36:9-10).

Therefore, Israel entered Babylon in 3627
($3627+100\text{days}=3627$).

Exit Babylon

"For thus saith the Lord, That after 70 years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place" (Jeremiah 29:10).

Therefore, Israel exited Babylon in 3697 ($3627+70=3697$).

The Messiah

"Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be 69 weeks" (Daniel 9:25).

Therefore, the Messiah arrived 483 years after the Release ($69 \times 7 = 483$).

Therefore, the Messiah arrived in 4180 ($3697+483=4180$).

Jesus Christ

Luke 3:1-23 says Jesus was baptized in "the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar."

Wikipedia says Tiberius was crowned 09.17.14 AD.

Therefore, the Messiah arrived about 30 AD.

Therefore, 4180 Hebrew is about 30 AD ($15+15=30$).

Therefore, Creation was about 4150 BC ($4180-30=4150$).

Sons of God

0001	Adam Created	130
0131	Seth Born	105
0236	Enos Born	90
0326	Cainan Born	70
0396	Mahalaleel Born	65
0461	Jared Born	162
0623	Enoch Born	65
0688	Methuselah Born	187
0875	Lamech Born	182
1057	Noah Born	502
1559	Shem Born	98
1657	Flood	2
1659	Arphaxad Born	35
1694	Salah Born	30
1724	Eber Born	34
1758	Peleg Born	30
1788	Reu Born	32
1820	Serug Born	30
1850	Nahor Born	29
1879	Terah Born	130
2009	Abram Born	100
2109	Isaac Born	60
2169	Jacob Born	130
2299	Enter Egypt	430

Kings of Judah

2729	Exit Egypt	476
3205	Solomon Crowned	40
3245	Rehoboam Crowned	17
3262	Abijah Crowned	3
3265	Asa Crowned	41
3306	Jehoshaphat Crowned	25
3331	Jehoram Crowned	8
3339	Ahaziah Crowned	1
3340	Athaliah Ruled	6
3346	Joash Crowned	40
3386	Amaziah Crowned	29
3415	Uzziah Crowned	52
3467	Jotham Crowned	16
3483	Ahaz Crowned	16
3499	Hezekiah Crowned	29
3528	Manasseh Crowned	55
3583	Amon Crowned	2
3585	Josiah Crowned	31
3616	Jehoahaz Crowned	90d
3616	Jehoiakim Crowned	11
3627	Jehoiachin Crowned	100d
3627	Enter Babylon	70
3697	Exit Babylon	483
4180	Jesus Baptized	30 AD

Daniel's 70th Week

(12.25.95)

The 360 Day Calendar

The 360 Day Calendar is revealed in Revelation 12:1-17.

Revelation 12:6 says the Woman is protected for 1,260 days.

Revelation 12:14 says the Woman is protected for 3.5 years.

Therefore, 1,260 days equals 3.5 years.

Therefore, 1 year equals 360 days.

The 360 Day Calendar is confirmed in Genesis 8:3-4.

Genesis 8:3 says the flood receded after 150 days.

Genesis 8:4 says the flood receded after 5 months.

Therefore, 150 days equals 5 months.

Therefore, 1 year equals 360 days.

The 7 Year Framework

The 7 Year Framework is revealed in Revelation 11:1-13.

Revelation 11:3–8 says the 2 Witnesses prophesy for 1,260 days, or 3.5 years, before they are killed.

Revelation 11:8–13 says the 2 Witnesses lie dead in the street for 3.5 days, meaning 3.5 years, before they are resurrected.

Hence, 7 years remain.

The 7 Year Framework is confirmed in Daniel 9:24–27.

Verse 24 says the prophecy lasts 490 years.

Verse 25 says the Messiah arrives after 483 years.

Verse 26 says the Messiah is killed.

Verse 27 says 7 years remain.

The prophecy stops when the Christ arrives (Baptism).

The prophecy resumes when the Antichrist arrives (Treaty).

The 7-Fold Pattern

The 7-Fold Pattern is revealed in Joshua 6:3–5.

Verse 3 says Israel marched around Jericho once every day for 6 days.

Verse 4 says, on the 7th day, Israel marched around the city 7 times.

Verse 5 says, on the 7th trip, Israel blew the trumpets, gave a loud shout, and the walls collapsed.

Prophetically speaking, Jericho foreshadows the Return of Christ.

In other words, Jesus conquers the Earth the same way Joshua conquered Jericho.

Consequently, 1 Seal is opened every 360 days, for 7 years.

Now, Revelation 8:1–2 says, “And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets.”

Therefore, the 7th Seal starts the 7 Trumpets.

Therefore, 1 Trumpet is sounded every 60 days, during the 7th year.

The White Horse

The 1st Seal, or white horse, marks the start of Daniel's 70th Week, the rise of the Beast, and the return of the 2 Witnesses.

Revelation 6:1–2 says, “And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see. And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.”

Clearly, the rider of the white horse is Christ.

This is confirmed by Revelation 19:11, “And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.”

The Last Trump

The 7th Trumpet, or last trump, marks the end of Daniel's 70th Week, the Return of Christ, the First Resurrection of the Saints, and the Start of the Millennium.

Revelation 11:15 says, "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever."

Clearly, the 7th Trumpet is the rapture.

This is confirmed by 1 Corinthians 15:52, "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

The 7 Plagues

Revelation 11:15–19 says, when the 7th angel sounds, the temple in heaven opens.

Revelation 15:5–6 says, when the temple in heaven opens, the 7 Plagues begin.

Therefore, the 7th Trumpet starts the 7 Plagues.

Now, Revelation 13:5 says the Beast will reign for 42 months.

But Daniel 12:11 says the sacrifices stop for 1,290 days, or 43 months.

Therefore, the 7 Plagues last 30 days.

Therefore, 1 plague is poured out every 5 days, during the 43rd month.

This is confirmed by Zechariah 11:8, “Three shepherds also I cut off in one month; and my soul loathed them, and their soul also abhorred me.”

Namely, Satan, the Antichrist, and the False Prophet.

So, Christ returns at the end of the seventh year, but the Beast is not removed for another thirty days.

The 3 Woes

In conclusion, the 3 Woes confirm the timeline.

Revelation 8:13 says, "And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabiters of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound."

Therefore, the 3 Woes are the 5th, 6th, and 7th Trumpets.

Revelation 9:1–12 says the 5th Trumpet releases locusts that torment humanity for 5 months.

Revelation 9:13–21 says the 6th Trumpet releases 4 angels that kill 33% of the population.

Revelation 11:15–19 says the 7th Trumpet is the 7 Plagues.

Now, there are 2 months between the 5th and 6th Trumpets, 2 months between the 6th and 7th Trumpets, and the 7th Trumpet is the 7 Plagues, which last 1 month.

Therefore, the 3 Woes last exactly 5 months.

Therefore, the timeline is correct.

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

Week 70	1		Seal 1		
	2		Seal 2		
	3		Seal 3		
	4		Seal 4		
	(Middle)	0001	666		
	5	0180	Seal 5		
	5	0540	Seal 6		
	7	0900	Seal 7	Trumpet 1	
		0960		Trumpet 2	
		1020		Trumpet 3	
		1080		Trumpet 4	
		1140	Woe 1	Trumpet 5	
		1200	Woe 2	Trumpet 6	
Millennium	Resurrection 1	1260	Woe 3	Trumpet 7	Plague 1
		1265			Plague 2
		1270			Plague 3
		1275			Plague 4
		1280			Plague 5
		1285			Plague 6
		1290			Plague 7

Ministry



End Times

(04.15.20)

How should believers view the end times? Let us pray. Father grant us the wisdom to know the truth and the power to obey the answers. My writings indicate five tips for survival. No sin! No politics! No guns! No church! No escape! Clearly, the Rapture, or Last Trump, or 7th Trumpet, is the First Resurrection. Therefore, the Saints will go through the Great Tribulation. And although most of us will be martyred, some of us will still be alive when the Lord appears. Whether alive or dead, all of us will be instantly changed and meet Him in the sky as He returns to earth. Let no one deceive you. These are the facts. Now that we understand the times, let us examine the preparations. It has been said that faith works by love. Therefore, great faith, the kind that saves whole households, requires even greater love. The question is, are you willing to lay down your life to save your family? Are you willing to pick up your cross? Are you willing to be honest with yourself? Just how much do you care about your family? Do you care enough to examine yourself to see whether you are in the faith or not? And if the answer is, you are a liar, you do not love God, you do not love your family, you are a hearer of the word, not a doer, you are deceived, will you change direction? Will you be born

again? Will you follow Christ's example and lay down your callings, your visions, your dreams, your revelations, your gifts, your doctrines, your understandings? Do you care about your family that much or not? Only you can answer these questions. I can tell you one thing. I cannot save my family. Only God can. Therefore, I had better get His approval. You want mercy? You want favor? You want God to save, to heal, to deliver? Then you will need to find a way to please Him, one that doesn't require killing His son twice.

Apocalypse

(05.15.20)

The good news is the religious establishment is disintegrating. Simply put, "The Chiefs won!" The bad news is we are facing an apocalypse. On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared the corona virus a pandemic. The death toll is 100,000. Unemployment is 40 million. This might be a good time to reflect. Let's see... Martin Luther King Jr, dead. Billy Graham, dead. Oral Roberts, dead. Kenneth Hagin, dead. Lester Sumrall, dead, Jerry Falwell, dead. W A Criswell, dead. Paul Cain, dead. Bob Jones, dead. John Paul Jackson, dead. David Wilkerson, dead. At best, their teachings were 50% correct and that is being generous. All things considered, it is time that we begin to think for ourselves. Ephesians 4:11-13 says, "Christ Himself gave Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers... until we all reach unity." In other words, when the truth becomes obvious, the fivefold becomes obsolete. Therefore, I say, "Stand up on your own two feet!" Therefore, I say, "Come out of Babylon!" Therefore, I say, "Prepare to meet your maker!" In case you are wondering, that would be 100% truth.

Minority Report

(06.15.20)

Even the see nothing prophets can tell you that 2020 stands for 20/20 Vision and that clarity leads to revival. Additionally, Romans 1:20 says, "the invisible things... are understood by the things that are made" Therefore, the natural world mirrors the spiritual world. So, reality is more than current events. Reality is a theater that provides a glimpse into the spirit world. The question is not do black lives matter, but what does the movement represent? Consider the following.

Song of Solomon 1:6 says, "Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me: my mother's children were angry with me; they made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept." Therefore, black represents the Bride of Christ or true believers.

Matthew 23:27 says, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whitened sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness." Therefore, white represents hypocrites or false leaders.

What does it all mean? When God gave Israel the law, there was lightning and thunder and trumpets and shaking. Basically, a whole lot of ruckus. The same is true today. Exodus 20:20 says, "Don't be afraid. These powerful manifestations are God's way of instilling awe and fear in you so that you will not sin."

Final Thoughts

(07.15.20)

As we gaze steadfastly into the light that is the life of Christ, a number of things become clear. First, good and evil are at war. For it is written, "The Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8). Second, war is serious. Heart alone will not win the battle. It requires thought. Matthew 21:28-32 says,

What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work today in the vineyard.' 'I will not,' he answered, but later he changed his mind and went. Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, 'I will, sir,' but he did not go. Which of the two did what his father wanted? 'The first,' they answered. Jesus said to them, 'Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him.'

The idea that the Human Rights Movement is not a fruit of Christ's labor is foolishness. We are called to be a light on a hill.

Clearly, we failed. The world picked up the slack. The least we can do is support them. In other words, lead, follow, or get out of the way. The idea that it will succeed is equally foolish. The last book of the Bible is not Star Trek. It is a horror show. There will be a backlash. It will be swift. It will be hideous. And we will shine like the stars in heaven. So then, we are to speak the truth in love. So then, we wait to suffer for it. Come Lord Jesus. Come quickly.

The Joshua Generation

(08.15.20)

The Mount St. Helens eruption on May 18, 1980, was no ordinary event. It marked the start of the Charismatic Movement or Faith Movement or Born-Again Movement. I call it the Moses Generation. Fast forward 40 years to May 18, 2020, and currents events begin to make sense. Clearly, things have changed. I call it the Joshua Generation. Unlike the first generation, which failed to enter into the promises, the second generation will not fail. This includes everyone born after May 18, 1960. The rest of you can go back to watching Fox News.

Now, the Joshua Generation has no political or religious affiliation. They do not have traditional values. They are not bound by the rules of society. They obey the rules of the desert, and the desert does not suffer fools. They are not impressed by planes, boats, cars, or quads. They do not need houses, or lands, or businesses. They do not depend on careers, or unions, or pensions. They know better. They are fearless. They have self-control. They are bound by conscience to the truth and to each other. In fact, it is all they have ever known. The rest is self-evident as I'm sure they will tell you. Whoever they forgive will be forgiven. Whoever they don't will not. To reiterate, "I

indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire" (Luke 3:16-17). Selah.

Reign Man

(09.15.20)

Neither exertion, nor education, saved me. Something else was needed. Luckily, I was autistic. According to the United Brain Association, "People on the autism spectrum will say what accurately reflects their feelings, even if it means responding with brutal honesty. This may partially be due to the fact that many autistic people are unaware of or baffled by others' choice to conceal the truth or hide their real intentions."⁴⁴ Try as I might I could not escape the truth and it was the truth that brought me to my knees. In other words, it was a gift. As Zechariah 4:6 says, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the Lord Almighty."

Let's do the math, shall we? Jean-Pierre Bourguignon wrote, "During the course of the 20th century, the mathematical community has undergone a major expansion. From a few

⁴⁴ "The Assets of Autism: An Open Letter to Parents of Children on the Spectrum." The United Brain Association, May 14, 2019.

hundred members in 1900, it has passed to tens of thousands (probably about 80000) members 100 years later."⁴⁵

Now, Toshiko Kaneda wrote, "PRB estimates that by 2050 about 113 billion people will have ever lived on Earth."⁴⁶ For those of you who are not autistic, let me explain. Only 1 out of 100,000 people can even fathom the universe. In other words, Heaven is smaller than San Jose. Require honesty, and Heaven is smaller than Gilligan's Island. Truly, "only a few find it" (Matthew 7:14). Why bother at all? Here are three reasons.

First, there are many galaxies and many stars and many planets. Scientifically speaking, only one planet has life.

Second, life has many levels: kingdom, phylum, classes, order, families, genus, and species. Scientifically speaking, only one species is self-aware.

Third, humanity includes 100 billion members. Scientifically speaking, only one human is you.

No offense, but you may want to raise your expectations. Fear not, I am definitely retiring after this. Definitely.

⁴⁵ Bourguignon, Jean-Pierre. "Chapter 9: Mathematicians In France And In The World." *L'Explosion Des Mathematiques*. (2002).

⁴⁶ Kaneda, Toshiko. "How Many People Have Ever Lived On Earth?" 2020.

Election

(10.15.20)

Who are we kidding? I cannot stop doing good even though I have nothing. You cannot stop doing evil even though you have everything. It's like social media. The first post is last and the last post is first. That leaves Atheists, Asses, Adultery, and Abortion and were done! When it comes to atheists and asses, Abraham had the right idea.

Genesis 22:5-6 says, "Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you." Clearly, atheists and asses do not participate in the sacrifice. When it comes to adultery and abortion, Christ had the right idea.

Matthew 5:27-28 says, "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. " Clearly, the Old Testament says, adultery is punishable by death. Clearly,

the New Testament says, everyone is guilty. Why aren't they held accountable? In a word, mercy. Obviously, the same is true for abortion. No? Why not? Abortion is murder!!!! I see. You want to kill women, not men? No? I see. You want to kill mothers and fathers and doctors? No? I see. You want everyone to die? No? I see. How do you feel about immigrants and blacks? Nothing? I see. Can you hear that sound? It's the sound of demons squealing. Be gone Satan. The elect cannot be deceived (Matthew 24:24). I think that about covers everything. I need a shower.

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