WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?

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Dedication:
To my wife, Christine, who has been my best friend and co-laborer in Christ.
She was the first to encourage me to write again after reading my last book.
Actually, she might be the only one who has now that I think about it….

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Introduction…

Matthew 22:41 – 42 – "While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, Saying, WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST? whose son is he? …"

Having just recently received the printed copies of the last book I finished, *The Gospel of the Kingdom*, I was contemplating the idea of writing another book for the next year. For the past three years, our church has distributed copies of books into our community for our anniversary services as part of a canvassing effort to reach our community with the gospel of Jesus Christ. At the time, I had several ideas rolling around in my head. The past two books I had written came easily, although both were a lot of work. I mean they came easily in that I felt compelled to write about things the Lord had laid heavily on my heart and mind in my own study and preaching. As such, the act of putting it down on paper was an easy thing to find the strength to do.

The idea for this book came one particular afternoon in a conversation with my wife. As I spoke with her, I recalled a discussion that I had earlier that day, and a question that had been posed to me that had to do with our service to Christ. The question that I had been asked was put to me exactly this way, "**Where is it clear that we are striving to please and serve (singularly) the Lord Jesus Christ?**". Interestingly, the question was posed to me by a man professing the Christian faith. I saw in that question a great opportunity, and immediately gave a joyful and sincere response. That experience left me wondering though, "How many Christians today have not yet fully grasped the truth of the gospel in this way?". This is not an inconsequential thread of finely woven theological arguments but is the very foundation of our Christian faith. This is the foundation of our confession and the mustard seed of faith from which springs all virtue and knowledge. Is there an understanding that the gospel gives that directly answers this question? Is there a plain response to this inquiry in scripture? If so, what form of gospel have we believed that would leave us asking this question?

As I relayed my response to this man's question to my wife, she said "Maybe that's the idea for your next book?". I was a little taken back actually. I had not discussed the idea of writing again with anyone, but I had already been thinking that very same thing on the way home from work that day. From that conversation was born the idea to commit to writing the gospel truths concerning

the Lord Jesus Christ that we see in Scripture that speak to this question. Building on the previous books of *The Promise of Salvation* and *The Gospel of the Kingdom*, we will attempt here to add another piece of gospel understanding that speaks to the very foundation of the Christian faith.

Revelation 12:10 - And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come SALVATION, and strength, and THE KINGDOM OF OUR GOD, and THE POWER OF HIS CHRIST: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

This verse is nearly an outline of the books I have been writing, which was unintentional on my part, but I realized it myself when beginning this book. We have in previous books discussed *Salvation* and *the Kingdom of our God*, and now we hope to set forth the truth of the Christian faith that speaks of ***the power of His Christ***. The power of Jesus Christ is something attested to by God in Scripture but is not yet manifest openly to all men.

Acts 10:41 – 42 - Him God raised up the third day, and SHEWED HIM openly; NOT TO ALL THE PEOPLE, BUT UNTO WITNESSES CHOSEN BEFORE OF GOD, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead.

It is essential to the Christian faith to grasp the scope of the answer to the question "***Where is it clear that we are striving to please and serve (singularly) the Lord Jesus Christ?"***. If we are serving the Lord Jesus Christ, we need to be able to understand at least three fundamentals. Firstly, we need to understand WHO we are serving. Secondly, we need to be able to explain WHY we are serving Him. Thirdly, we need to understand HOW we are to serve Him. The apostle Paul cautions us against those who *do not* serve Jesus Christ, which in itself speaks to these three elements of the question that has been posed to us.

Romans 16:17 – 19 - Now I beseech you, brethren, MARK THEM which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. FOR THEY THAT ARE SUCH SERVE NOT OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple. For YOUR OBEDIENCE is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil. And THE GOD OF PEACE SHALL BRUISE SATAN UNDER YOUR FEET SHORTLY. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

As we proceed through this brief study, we will be examining the very foundation of the gospel message itself. If we are to have repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, we need to understand these gospel realities. My hope is that you will profit from this brief presentation in your own study, faith, and walk in the truth of God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. For those who are concerned with knowing the truth, it is concerning that in our modern world that the term "Christianity" has become one that seemingly represents an increasingly eclectic set of beliefs. Rather than an understanding of truth that is based on the teachings of Christ, which would make someone a Christian, there are numerous voices weighing in on the subject of truth these days that are at odds with Christ.

As we begin this study, we invite the reader to consider that just as the old covenant had laws, commandments, statutes, and ordinances, so too the new covenant. The old things were given by Moses and the new things were given by the Son of God, Jesus Christ. His doctrine was committed first to the apostles by our Lord, both during "the days of His flesh" and after His resurrection.

Acts 1:3 – TO WHOM ALSO HE SHEWED HIMSELF alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:

The Lord then sent these apostles to teach and preach all of the things that He had committed unto them.

Matthew 28:19 – 20 – GO YE therefore, AND TEACH all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER I HAVE COMMANDED YOU: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

These apostles committed Christ's teachings unto others who had believed the truth:

Luke 1:2 - Even as THEY DELIVERED THEM UNTO US, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word;

2 Timothy 2:2 - And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same COMMIT THOU TO FAITHFUL MEN who shall be ABLE TO TEACH others also.

These messengers sent by the Lord Himself are the ones who gave us the testimony, commandments, and ordinances that He now commands us to receive and obey by faith.

John 13:20 - Verily, verily, I say unto you, HE THAT RECEIVETH WHOMSOEVER I SEND RECEIVETH ME; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.

John 17:20 - Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which SHALL BELIEVE ON ME THROUGH THEIR (the apostles) **WORD;**

Luke 10:1 & 16 - After these things THE LORD APPOINTED other seventy also, AND SENT THEM two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come…….. He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.

Acts 26:15 – 17 - And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, TO MAKE THEE A MINISTER AND A WITNESS both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; Delivering thee from the people, and from THE GENTILES, unto whom now I SEND THEE, To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

The Lord ordained these men to be witnesses to the truth and sent them into the world with His holy things to be taught unto others.

Mark 16:19 – 20 - So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, THE LORD WORKING WITH THEM, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

These holy things of Christ form the basis of our obedience to Him and our walk with Him as we by faith acknowledge the truth of the Lordship of Jesus Christ over our lives.

1 Corinthians 14:37 - If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that THE THINGS THAT I WRITE UNTO

YOU ARE THE COMMANDMENTS OF THE LORD.

These teachings of Christ are given to every believer for obedience to the faith.

Jude 1:17 - But, beloved, REMEMBER YE THE WORDS WHICH WERE SPOKEN BEFORE OF THE APOSTLES of our Lord Jesus Christ;

They are also proclaimed to every unbeliever as a warning.

Hebrews 2:3 - How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;

Hebrews 12:25 - See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven:

In this little book, we hope to examine the beginnings of all these things and the holy observance of the commandments given unto us by God through Jesus Christ our Lord. We need to seek the Lord in His Word and ask for His wisdom in understanding the things He has given unto us by these messengers of His own choosing.

Acts 10:39 – 41 - And WE ARE WITNESSES of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; Not to all the people, but unto witnesses CHOSEN BEFORE OF GOD, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead.

As an example, you may have heard of some today who, while claiming the name of Christ, play loose with the apostle Paul's teachings. Often, they may take liberty with his epistles under the guise that they suppose Paul to have been sharing personal biases, preferences, or cultural dispositions. The reality is that Jesus chose Paul and sent Him with authority to teach the gentiles of the things of Christ.

Acts 22:19 – 21 - And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee: And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him. And he said unto me, Depart: for I WILL SEND THEE far hence UNTO THE GENTILES.

The purpose of this sending with authority is identified in scripture, and speaks to us today:

Romans 15:16 - That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, THAT THE OFFERING UP OF THE GENTILES MIGHT BE ACCEPTABLE, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.

Could such a cavalier attitude towards the messenger(s) of Christ have disastrous eternal consequences? The Bible answers with a resounding "YES".

Luke 10:16 - He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you (the apostles) **despiseth me** (Jesus Christ)**; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me** (God)**.**

Among the apostles, Christ specifically called and set apart Paul to be His apostle, or authoritative messenger, to the gentiles. He sent him to us to teach the Word of the Lord and to instruct us in the way of the Lord, and we need to remember the words of Christ to us concerning those whom He sent to bring His words to our ears:

John 12:48 - He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.

Chapter 1 – What Manner of Man Is This?

Mark 4:41 - And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another WHAT MANNER OF MAN IS THIS, that even the wind and the sea obey him?

The gospel record is full of various accounts of the controversies that swirled around the man Jesus of Nazareth. Everywhere He went, it seems that there was no small dissension and disputation about Him. The mystery of this man was perplexing even to those who believed in Him and acknowledged Him as the Christ, the Son of God. All of these same controversies that surrounded Christ during the days of His flesh, continued and heightened throughout the first century as the Apostles of the Lamb labored to teach the way in Truth. There were controversies about where Jesus had come from:

John 7:26 – 27 - But, lo, he speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ? Howbeit we know this man whence he is: but WHEN CHRIST COMETH, NO MAN KNOWETH WHENCE HE IS.

There were controversies about where Jesus had gotten His wisdom:

Matthew 13:54 - And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, WHENCE HATH THIS MAN THIS WISDOM, and these mighty works?

There were controversies about Jesus' identity:

Mark 8:27 – 28 - And Jesus went out, and his disciples, into the towns of Caesarea Philippi: and by the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, WHOM DO MEN SAY THAT I AM? And they answered, John the Baptist: but some say, Elias; and others, One of the prophets.

There were controversies about why Jesus had come:

Matthew 10:34 - THINK NOT THAT I AM COME TO SEND PEACE ON EARTH: I came not to send peace, but a sword.

Jesus was surrounded by mystery and controversy throughout His earthly ministry. To a great extent, all of these controversies, and more, are with us to this day. Every controversy about His identity, His work, and His teaching

continues with us for now. The gospel of Jesus Christ is God's message that was sent to men to declare the truth of Jesus Christ, yet we find among professing believers there is a great diversity of thought on that subject alone. Jesus Christ taught that His church, that is to say His body, would be founded upon the truth of who He is.

Matthew 16:16 – 18 - And Simon Peter answered and said, THOU ART THE CHRIST. THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and UPON THIS ROCK I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Peter, which means "a stone", was to be one of the many stones in this building that was being built by God upon the Rock of His Son, Jesus Christ. The mustard seed of scriptural faith as it were, is the acknowledgment and affirmation of this truth: the identity of Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ, the Son of God. In order for us to make sense of that confession for ourselves, we must have some knowledge of the God that is the Father of Jesus Christ. It stands to reason that if we are to confess with Peter that Jesus is the Son of God, then there must be some substance and proof to the truth of this God who is His Father. There must be a divine revelation that shows us His nature, character, and likeness. Similar to the way we may identify a son to be of his father by his likeness, mannerisms, way of speaking, and so on. In that way, when Peter states that he knows Jesus to be the Son of God, he is rightly identifying Jesus as the Son of the God he knows about from the revelation of scripture. In fact, the gospel of grace, which is the power of God unto salvation, rests entirely on this foundation of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. In order for us to make right sense of the Christian faith at all, we must first believe the confession of Peter, which is the truth of who exactly Jesus Christ is revealed to be. Peter's understanding of the true identity of Jesus had been revealed to Him by the Father in heaven. Peter may have not yet understood the fullness of the gospel, but having known the truth of God in Christ would be the essential confession that provided for his growth in knowledge and in grace.

1 John 4:15 - Whosoever SHALL CONFESS that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

The confession spoken of in scripture goes beyond saying something

with your mouth. The meaning of "confession" in this sense is that we are agreeing together with God concerning what He has spoken about His Son. Not everyone who SAYS unto Jesus "Lord" will enter the

Not everyone who SAYS unto Jesus "Lord" will enter the kingdom of God, but those who AGREE with God that Jesus Christ is Lord will enter.

kingdom of God, but those who AGREE with God that Jesus Christ is Lord will enter. This is perhaps a seemingly fine distinction, but an eternally important one to make. It is easy to get a person to say things, especially so if they believe it will benefit them to say it. It is another challenge altogether for them to be convinced of the truth of a thing and brought into agreement.

Matthew 7:21 – "NOT EVERY ONE THAT SAITH unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven…"

A proper understanding of what Christ accomplished on earth during the days of His flesh rests in the truth of properly understanding His identity. Throughout history, there were other men who did miracles, other men who gave prophecies, many men were scourged by Romans, many died on crosses, many were buried, and some men were even resurrected from death. But what is it about THIS MAN that places Him in a class all by Himself and why is it impactful to us? We must first understand and believe the truth of this mystery. All of the same questions that swirled around Jesus' during His earthly ministry, we must answer for ourselves. What is His true identity? Where did he come from? Why did He come? If we are brought to know who He is, then what he did and what He teaches can be properly known as well. Peter, having been convinced of the identity of Jesus, resisted the temptation that befell so many others who walked away from Christ because they had been offended by His teachings.

John 6:68 – 69 - Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.

The first question to be answered is necessarily the one of personal identity. Peter knew to walk away from Jesus was to walk away from life itself

and to guarantee death as a result. Why should the testimony and commandments of Christ solicit such a serious consideration from men? In Peter's testimony, it was rooted in a conviction of truth that, regardless of how difficult the teachings of Christ seemed to be, the fact remained that Jesus was the only one able to save His soul. He reiterates this in his preaching of the gospel years later.

Acts 4:12 - Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

We can see that this fundamental truth, that is the reality of Jesus identity, is at the heart of the Christian faith throughout the New Testament. It is, after all, because of who He is that we can understand the value of His work and the truth of His testimony. As we have already seen, Peter was brought to a sound understanding of the identity of Jesus of Nazareth. This truth continued to be proclaimed by Peter after the ascension of Jesus.

Acts 2:36 - Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that GOD HATH MADE THAT SAME JESUS, whom ye have crucified, both LORD AND CHRIST.

This is the same faith of the Ethiopian Eunuch.

Acts 8:37 - And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I BELIEVE THAT JESUS CHRIST IS THE SON OF GOD.

And in numerous accounts of the missionary work accomplished by the Apostle Paul, we find him heralding these things to men.

Acts 17:3 – OPENING AND ALLEGING, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and THAT THIS JESUS, whom I preach unto you, IS CHRIST.

Acts 18:5 - And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and TESTIFIED TO THE JEWS THAT JESUS IS CHRIST.

Acts 18:28 - For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publickly, SHEWING BY THE SCRIPTURES THAT JESUS WAS CHRIST.

The truth that Jesus is in fact the Christ, or the Anointed One of God, is

the very foundation of all else in the Christian faith. Jesus Himself underscores the importance of rightly understanding the identity of the Christ in His dialogue with the Pharisees.

Matthew 22:41 – 45 - While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, Saying, WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST? whose son is he? They say unto him, The Son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?

This question continues to resound throughout history. **What think ye of Christ?** This mystery of the Christ, whereby God united Himself to man in taking upon Himself our likeness in the body of His flesh, was a mystery to the saints of the Old Covenant. It was to be revealed in time in the person of Jesus. We will not here seek to expound all of the truths about Emmanuel, another name for Jesus which means "God with us", other than to reveal in brief the truths that God bare record of concerning His Son. This record is what we know as "the gospel".

If you had to define the gospel in the most concise way possible, what would it be? The gospel, in its' simplest form, can be defined in this way: "The record that God gave concerning His Son". What must one believe to receive eternal life? You must believe the record that God gave of His Son. The condemnation of wicked men is that of unbelief. Men are condemned for failing to believe about Jesus the very things which God the Father and God the Holy Spirit have told us are true of Him. Conversely, any man who has received the witness of God concerning His Son Jesus Christ is born of God.

1 John 5:10 - He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not THE RECORD THAT GOD GAVE OF HIS SON.

Paul, in His tremendous opening statement to the saints in Rome, presents His readers with a powerful declaration of the gospel in this same way.

Romans 1:1 – 4 - Paul, A SERVANT OF JESUS CHRIST, called to be an apostle, separated unto THE GOSPEL OF GOD, (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) CONCERNING HIS SON JESUS CHRIST our Lord, which was made of the seed of David

according to the flesh; And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:

The gospel of God, which is to say the message itself, is authored by Him and belongs to Him. It is the good message from God about His Son. By Paul's own testimony, he sees himself as a servant of Christ because he has confessed (he has agreed with God) that Jesus Christ is Lord. If Jesus is the master, then those who have believed the record of that witness confess themselves to be servants. That is the necessary consequence and nature of the relationship we have with the one God has made to be Lord. Many people have, in our own day, made the "good news" of the gospel many things. Some say the good news is that "God loves you". That may be good news, but it is not the gospel. We can know this is not the gospel because believing it does not guarantee the imputed righteousness of Christ to us, nor does believing it guarantee that we are made partakers of the grace that is in Christ. If we can properly define the gospel, we can know that believing it does both of those things and more. This is a simple truth test of the gospel. The gospel of God is the power of God unto salvation. Some may tell us that the good news is that "God has a wonderful plan for your life". That may or may not even be true, but regardless, it's not the gospel either. The plan of God for the wicked is their eternal damnation and is exactly what seems good to Him, but we may not think it to be very good at all, using our definition of good. Some will tell us that the gospel is surely that "Jesus died for our sins", which again, may or may not be true. He certainly died for the sins of those who are His sheep, follow Him, believe Him, and receive His words.

Romans 5:8 - But God commendeth his love TOWARD US, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

How do we know if we are among those toward whom God commended His divine love and for whom His Son Jesus Christ died? Who is the "us" in view in this verse? Is the love of God commended towards every man that has ever lived? If I get up in front of a group of wicked men and tell them that Jesus died for their sins, I have likely misrepresented the work of Christ and the gospel message itself. If I tell them He died for those WHO WILL BELIEVE the gospel (i.e. the record that God gave of His Son) and have come to acknowledge the truth in faith, then I have given them the truth. The "us" and "we" and "our" in all of these verses speak to a certain and definite group taken from among all men, specifically those who have faith like Abraham. The opening verse of

chapter 5 defines the group of which Paul is speaking in the rest of the chapter.

Romans 5:1 - Therefore being JUSTIFIED BY FAITH, <u>WE</u> have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

The "we" are those who are of faith like Abraham. Those who are of faith are those who are justified in the sight of God. Those are the men for whom Christ died and the men towards whom the divine and redeeming love of God has been commended.

Romans 4:23 – 24 - And therefore it *(faith)* **was imputed to him** *(Abraham)* **for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; But for us also, to whom IT (***righteousness***) SHALL BE IMPUTED, IF WE BELIEVE on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences and was raised again for our justification.**

As we see all throughout the scriptural record, the gospel bears record to the truth of who Christ is and what He has done. For those who have believed the truth of the gospel of God concerning His Son, they are given assurance as partakers of the promises of God. The true gospel brings to our ears the knowledge of God's only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, and declares to us the identity of Christ, the work of Christ, and the testimony of Christ. These are built up in our hearts by faith ***in this order*** such that those who believe the record of who He is, also understand the work He has done to fulfill the testimony He has promised. A living faith starts with this confession in the person of Christ. In reality, the entire portion of scripture we call the "New Testament" could rightly be called "The Testimony of Jesus" and the "Old Testament" could be viewed as "The Testimony of God". The question for us is, "are the teachings and testimony of Jesus as authoritative as the testimony of God Himself?". The gospels are a record of Jesus' life, work, and teaching. The epistles are written by those who were His disciples and were commissioned by Him. The book of Revelation is given to us from the Lord Jesus Christ. The only reason to give credibility to any of these writings is that the witnesses of the identity of Jesus Christ are legitimate and credible themselves. Can we trust Jesus' word and testimony as fully as we trust God's word and testimony? As Christians, we know that we can.

John 14:1 - Let not your heart be troubled: YE BELIEVE IN GOD, BELIEVE ALSO IN ME.

Jesus was delivered for “us” who believe and raised for “us” who believe. But believe what? Was Jesus Christ crucified and raised for those who believe He was crucified and raised? Hardly… The devils know that Jesus was crucified and that He was raised. The devils know He has all power in heaven and in earth. What then distinguishes a saint from a devil?

Jesus was delivered for “us” who believe and raised for “us” who believe. But believe what? Was Jesus Christ crucified and raised for those who believe He was crucified and raised? Hardly…

James 2:19 - Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: THE DEVILS ALSO BELIEVE, and tremble.

As we can see from Scripture, actually in the very next verse, devils ***do not submit to the revelation of God’s divine will*** and ***do not serve Him in love***.

James 2:20 - But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

Devils know all the same things about Jesus, but oppose Him in His office, mission, purposes, and work. This is important to understanding the “working of faith” in those who are the children of light.

2 Thessalonians 1:11 - Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and THE WORK OF FAITH WITH POWER:

The gospel, as Scripture defines it, is not about us but rather about God’s Son. Certainly, the gospel announcement is FOR men, but it is not ABOUT men. Too often today the gospel is preached in terms that are man-centric in their aim. These portrayals of the gospel often aim at teaching men that **they ought to believe**, or conveying the **benefits of believing**, or trying to help them know **how to believe** rather than declaring to men **what must be believed**. The gospel revelation from God is a message that brings to the ears of men the truth that they must believe to be saved from their sins and the wrath of God. The gospel of God is about one man, Jesus Christ the righteous. The gospel declared in Scripture is God’s good message about His beloved and only begotten Son,

Jesus Christ. As Paul teaches in Romans, the gospel concerns the Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Romans 1:1 – 3 - Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto THE GOSPEL OF GOD, (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) CONCERNING HIS SON JESUS CHRIST our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh;

The gospel conveys to men the truth about God and His dealings with men and declares both the goodness and the severity of the Lord God.

Romans 11:32 – BEHOLD THEREFORE THE GOODNESS AND SEVERITY OF GOD: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.

Towards those who repent and believe, goodness, and on those who are disobedient and rebellious, wrath and indignation.

2 Corinthians 5:10 – 11 - For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. KNOWING THEREFORE THE TERROR OF THE LORD, WE PERSUADE MEN; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.

The gospel does not shy away from the righteous judgment of God, nor does it deny His love, mercy and goodness. The gospel declares the whole counsel and will of God, and there is truth in it for every man. That includes truth for the believer and the unbeliever. There is truth for those who are the children of God through faith and those who are the children of unbelief. There is truth for the vessels of mercy and truth for the vessels of wrath.

Colossians 3:5 – 6 - Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which things' sake THE WRATH OF GOD COMETH ON THE CHILDREN OF DISOBEDIENCE:

All of God’s dealings with men have to do with His only begotten son, the Word made flesh, whom He had promised to send among men from the

beginning. He, the Word of God, is the One with whom we have to do as our Maker, Lord, and Judge.

Hebrews 4:12 – 13 - For THE WORD OF GOD is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in HIS SIGHT: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him WITH WHOM WE HAVE TO DO.

Here is where we need to pay close attention. God did not leave us to wonder who among men was the Son of God. The Christ was promised to come from the woman and bear the likeness of men, which poses a singular question that God answers in thunderingly clear terms. The question can be framed in this way: "How are we to know the Christ, the promised Heir, Deliverer, and Holy One of God, when He appears"? Since He is to be found in fashion as a man, how will we be able to discern Him? Paul touches on this in 1 Corinthians 15 when teaching about the gospel he had received and which he preached.

1 Corinthians 15:1 – 8 - Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you THE GOSPEL WHICH I PREACHED UNTO YOU, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.

The gospel ***is not*** just the record of the things Jesus accomplished, but rather ***these events speak as witnesses*** to the truth of the identity of Jesus as the Christ and promised heir. Paul develops the gospel that he preached by **calling witnesses**. THE Christ, the Son of God, was witnessed to by THE SCRIPTURES, was also witnessed to by THE WORKS He did in fulfilling the Scriptures in His death, burial, and resurrection, and he was SEEN of EYEWITNESSES after His bodily resurrection. All of these things are called to

serve as witness to the gospel of God's Son. The resurrection itself was a witness to the One who is heir, who is the sinless one. This is brought out particularly in view of the fact that immortality had been promised to the heir by God through the law.

Leviticus 18:5 - Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which IF A MAN DO, HE SHALL LIVE in them: I am the LORD.

Who is this man in view here? He is the Lord's Christ. The only man who never fell short of the glory of God. Immortality was the promise of God to the one who would keep all of His statutes and judgements. In this way, the law served as a filter through which the Christ would be revealed to men as the Son of God and as the promised seed who was to be heir of all things. Jesus references this Himself when speaking with a lawyer in His own day.

Luke 10:25 – 28 - And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, WHAT SHALL I DO TO INHERIT eternal life? He said unto him, WHAT IS WRITTEN IN THE LAW? how readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. And he said unto him, THOU HAST ANSWERED RIGHT: THIS DO, AND THOU SHALT LIVE.

The topic was immortality and the lawyer wanted to know how He could have it. The question posed to Jesus was "How can I inherit?". The answer from Christ was, in essence, you would have to be the heir to receive the inheritance. The law described the glory of the one who is the heir and conversely showed the rest of us that we fall short of that glory. This was the two-fold purpose of the law; to prophetically testify of the identity of the sinless Christ, and to manifest to man our own sinfulness.

Luke 24:44 - And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that ALL THINGS must be fulfilled, which were WRITTEN IN THE LAW OF MOSES, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, CONCERNING ME.

In Leviticus 18:5, the promise of immortality was given by the Father to the Holy One who would be heir. Thus, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is a witness of WHO HE IS, according to the Spirit of Holiness.

Romans 1:3 – 4 - Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; And DECLARED TO BE THE SON OF GOD with power, ACCORDING TO THE SPIRIT OF HOLINESS, BY THE RESURRECTION from the dead:

The sinlessness of the Lord's Christ was witnessed to by the Spirit of Holiness through the resurrection as a fulfillment of God's promise in Leviticus 18:5. Paul speaks to us of the purpose of the law in these two respects as well.

Galatians 3:19 - Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added BECAUSE OF TRANSGRESSIONS, TILL THE SEED SHOULD COME TO WHOM THE PROMISE WAS MADE; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.

The law was to serve ***until the seed came*** to whom the promise of inheritance was given. The obvious reason for this is that Christ fulfilled the law's purpose of identifying Him as the heir.

Matthew 5:17 - Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I AM not COME to destroy, but TO FULFIL.

The law had served its' purpose for men in revealing the Christ to them as a witness to Him. Once the righteousness of the Holy One was revealed by the means of the law, of which the resurrection was a witness, the law of Moses was then fulfilled and abolished. The identity of Jesus as the Heir, the promised Seed, the Christ, and the Son of God was revealed to men in this special way.

The baptism of John was a ministry given for the same express purpose that the law was to serve. Just as the law gave witness to Christ through the promise of resurrection, so too the baptism of John gave witness to Him for the purpose of manifesting Him to the nation of Israel. Some make the ministry of baptism about the nation of Israel in that they needed to be washed from their sin, which is true, but that is not the primary purpose of John's ministry. His ministry was not **about the nation** of Israel, it was **to the nation** of Israel. The nation knew to be expecting the Christ around the time that He appeared. The prophet Daniel had foretold with great accuracy the time of Christ's appearing. In order that Christ be revealed to the nation, God gave John the Baptist the ministry of baptism. We are told this explicitly in scripture.

John 1:31 - And I knew him not: BUT THAT HE SHOULD BE MANIFEST to Israel THEREFORE AM I COME BAPTIZING with water.

John baptized person after person after person who were obedient to God through his ministry. However, only one of them would be the Lord's Christ. It had been revealed to John that by performing this ministry of baptism, he would be used of God to reveal Christ to the nation. Accordingly, when Jesus was baptized, there was an unfolding of special events that accompanied His baptism as a witness to His identity.

Matthew 3:16 – 17 - And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

All of these witnesses were employed by God to bear record of His Son, seeing that there was no beauty in Jesus that we should desire Him.

Isaiah 53:2 - For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and WHEN WE SHALL SEE HIM, THERE IS NO BEAUTY THAT WE SHOULD DESIRE HIM.

To look upon Christ in the flesh would be to see him in appearance as any other man. How then do we know Him to be more than any other man? As it was stated by God in the days of the Exodus, the idea of witnesses is an extremely important one. Christ uses this principle when talking of Himself to the people. They were accusing Jesus of making Himself equal with God in what He claimed and taught. Many refused Him because they claimed His witness of Himself could not be received as true.

John 8:13 - The Pharisees therefore said unto him, THOU BEAREST RECORD OF THYSELF; THY RECORD IS NOT TRUE.

When we begin discussing what we believe about Jesus, we need to understand the law of God as it relates to bearing witness.

Deuteronomy 19:15 - One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: AT THE MOUTH OF TWO WITNESSES, or at the mouth of three witnesses, SHALL THE MATTER BE ESTABLISHED.

There is in this passage a reference to the Godhead and the act of

witness-bearing that shows up throughout Scripture. This reaches a pinnacle at the appearing of Christ on earth. As it relates to the true identity of Jesus, we have not been left without witnesses to the truth. God has not asked us to be credulous or gullible. He has commanded us to believe in faith. Would God command us to believe without bearing Himself witness as to the truth? He has certainly borne witness to the truth that we are to receive. Our faith is one that is rooted in substance and evidence. The question is whether or not we have received the witnesses and believed the record that God gives through His Word and Spirit.

1 John 5:10 - He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not THE RECORD THAT GOD GAVE OF HIS SON.

The communication of the gospel begins with a witness to the truth of who Jesus is. This is the thrust of faith for the Christian – Is Jesus the Son of God? Does Jesus have the authority to speak and teach as He did? Does He have the authority to make and abolish (Render inoperable) divine laws? Does He have the authority and power to fulfill the old and bring in the new? Does He have power to forgive sins? After all, there is only one lawgiver and judge.

James 4:12 – THERE IS ONE LAWGIVER, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?

In the words of Christ, He does in fact have the authority to do all these things.

John 5:22 - For THE FATHER judgeth no man, but HATH COMMITTED ALL JUDGMENT UNTO THE SON:

John 13:34 – A NEW COMMANDMENT I GIVE unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

Christ does these things by HIS OWN AUTHORITY, which is given to Him of the Father. The gospel of Jesus Christ revolves around the very practical understanding of authority and whether or not Christ has the authority He claimed to have. Jesus claimed to have all power in heaven and in earth. He exercised authority over evil spirits, nature, disease, and claimed to have authority to execute judgment upon men. In many ways, authority is one of the chief doctrines of scripture. It could be said that to know God is to know authority and to have no God is to know no authority.

Psalm 53:1 - The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God……..

Jesus certainly was a man of authority and after His resurrection claimed to have all authority. As we will see, the Christian faith is built upon a faith that acknowledges this fundamental truth. All through the gospel record, Jesus is shown to be the only prophet that never said "Thus saith the Lord". Still, Jesus spoke with prerogatives that belong to God alone and stated that the words He spoke were the very words of God.

John 12:49 - For I have not spoken of myself; but THE FATHER which sent me, he GAVE ME a commandment, WHAT I SHOULD SAY, and what I should speak.

John 6:63 - It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: THE WORDS THAT I SPEAK unto you, they ARE SPIRIT, and they are life.

John 14:6 - Jesus saith unto him, I AM the way, THE TRUTH, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

Rather than the familiar refrain from Scripture "thus saith the Lord", Jesus simply declares, "Verily, I SAY unto you". This is significant in its meaning and application. We are required to accept this authority, not as those who are gullible or credulous, but by faith. This faith is rooted in the witness of the Father and the Spirit. The question of His identity, the place where He came from, His authority, and the witness to Him concerning these things, generated no small controversy among the people during His earthly ministry and is spoken of throughout the gospel record. He speaks with His own authority and yet speaks with prerogatives that belong to God alone. The people alive in the days of Jesus' earthly ministry knew this very well and accused Him of blasphemy.

Mark 2:7 - Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? WHO CAN FORGIVE SINS BUT GOD ONLY?

It is beyond the scope of this book to delve into the particulars of the mystery of Christ, but we will give a brief overview of the record of Scripture concerning Him before we move into our next chapter.

Jesus Christ, the second Person of the Trinity is the Word made flesh.

John 1:1 - In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with

God, and the Word was God.

John 1:14 - And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

1 John 5:7 - For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

Jesus Christ, the Word, has revealed the testimony of the Father in heaven to men on earth.

John 1:18 - No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

Luke 10:22 - All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.

As God, He possesses all the divine excellencies, and in these He is coequal and coeternal with the Father.

John 10:30 - I and my Father are one.

John 14:9 - Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?

God the Father created all things according to His own will, through His Son, Jesus Christ, by whom all things continue in existence and in operation.

John 1:3 - All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

Colossians 1:16 – 17 - For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

In the incarnation, the eternal Son, the second Person of the Trinity, without altering His divine nature or surrendering any of the divine attributes, made Himself of no reputation by taking on a full human nature consubstantial with our own, yet without sin.

Philippians 2:5 – 8 - Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

He was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the virgin Mary.

Luke 1:35 - And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

And was thus born of a woman.

Galatians 4:4-5 - But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

And was from very conception the same eternal God who is absolute in nature, perfect in His attributes, and holy in character.

Matthew 2:11 - And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

By this great and mysterious act of God, two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the divine and the human, were joined together in one person, without confusion, change, division, or separation. He is therefore very God and very man, yet one Christ, the only mediator between God and man.

1 John 4:2 - Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:

1 Timothy 2:5 - For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

In His incarnation, Christ fully possessed His divine nature, attributes, and prerogatives.

Colossians 2:9 - For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead

bodily.

However, in the state of His humiliation, He did not always fully express the glories of His majesty, concealing them behind the veil of his genuine humanity.

Matthew 17:2 - And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.

Philippians 2:8 - And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

According to His human nature, He acts:

- In submission to the Father **– John 6:38 - For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.**
- By the power of Holy Spirit – **John 3:34 - For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.**

While, according to His divine nature, He acts by His authority and power as the Eternal Son.

John 2:11 - This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.

1 John 5:11 - And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

Chapter 2 – The Will of the Father

Matthew 7:21 - Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but HE THAT DOETH THE WILL OF MY FATHER which is in heaven.

Entrance into the kingdom of God is the hope of the saints and the promise of God to those who believe. It is important then to raw a clear understanding from scripture as to how exactly we are to understand what it is to "believe". Many today profess to believe in Jesus and the gospel, but the proof of that faith seems to be lacking in comparison to the definition of the belief we find on display in the Bible. Interestingly, in the verse above, the Lord seems to say that there is something we must "do" to enter the kingdom, but we all know that entrance into the kingdom of God is given by grace, so how are we to understand the words of the Lord and to make application of this truth.

The promise of entrance into the kingdom of heaven is here given to those who do the will of the Father. This is an explicit promise of Jesus, who is the truth incarnate. Knowing this promise to be true, we should earnestly desire to do the Father's will, but the question then becomes "What is the Father's Will?". We will hope in this chapter to illuminate this further by looking at two specific instances of scripture that reveal this to our minds. These two instances involve the testimony of Jesus declaring to us the Father's will and an occasion with His disciples when the Father spoke from heaven and revealed His will as well. Firstly then, Jesus speaks to the will of His Father in the book of John.

John 6:40 - And THIS IS THE WILL OF HIM THAT SENT ME, that every one which SEETH THE SON, and BELIEVETH ON HIM, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

The will of the Father is that everyone who sees the Son and believes on the Son be given everlasting life. This necessarily requires that we have some understanding of the person of the Father since He is the One who sent the Son. It seems very difficult to think we could rightly believe in the Son of God and not know the truth of the God who is the Father of that Son. For our purposes here, we simply need to know that the true and living God has revealed Himself to be infinitely powerful, infinitely wise, infinite in knowledge, infinitely holy, everywhere present, righteous, just, unchanging, loving, merciful, and gracious.

This true and living God, who has revealed Himself generally in nature and especially in His Word of Truth, has also revealed to us that He has a Son. As we know, the nature of the Son is the same as His Father. Therefore, we come to know God the Son in the person of Jesus Christ as it relates to His Father. To develop our understanding of the will of the Father who sent this Son, I would recommend to you a passage from the gospel record that gives us a commandment from the Father to men that clearly communicates the will of the Father very concisely and brings home the idea of this seeing and believing that we have just read. This event occurs as Jesus has taken Peter, James, and John up into a mountain to see an event that is commonly referred to as the transfiguration of Christ. At this time, the Lord reveals His majesty and glory to these three disciples, and as they witness His majesty, a voice speaks from heaven, which is of interest to us who desire to know the will of the Father.

Mark 9:7 - And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, THIS IS MY BELOVED SON: HEAR HIM.

On the record, the Father speaks for Himself from heaven with these words: "This is my beloved son", which is the Father's witness concerning Jesus, and "Hear Him", which is His command concerning men.

On the record, the Father speaks for Himself from heaven with these words: "This is my beloved son", which is **the Father's witness and record concerning Jesus**, and "Hear Him", which is **the Father's command concerning men**. The revelation of the Father's will in John 6:40 is the same statement in essence that we read in Mark 9:7.

Today, the men who "see" the Son for who He truly is, do so by faith.

Hebrews 11:27 – BY FAITH he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as SEEING HIM WHO IS INVISIBLE.

Faith is the sight of the believer. Not a gullible kind of superstition, but a belief and confidence that is rooted in the substance and evidence of the witness God has given to men. These men of faith in Christ come to understand

the truth of Jesus' identity as the Son of God. Commandments from God, or anyone for that matter, are a revelation of that person's will. With the voice of the Father speaking from heaven as Almighty God, we have in clear terms the manifestation of His Divine will for those who are to enter the kingdom of God. The will of the Father according to the gospel record is that we believe Jesus Christ is His Son and that we Hear Him. God the Father clearly directs us to God the Son with this command to "hear Him". Expressly, we are to listen to Jesus, hear what Jesus says, believe the testimony of Jesus, and obey the commands of Jesus in faith. The one who acknowledges the will of the father in this, is the one who has done the Father's will and can rightly hope in the promise of entrance into the Kingdom.

2 Peter 1:10 – 11 - Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so AN ENTRANCE SHALL BE MINISTERED UNTO YOU ABUNDANTLY INTO THE EVERLASTING KINGDOM OF OUR LORD and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The Son has been given **all authority** from the Father, the purpose of which is that all men should honor the Son just as they honor the Father.

John 5:22 – 23 - For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: That ALL MEN SHOULD HONOUR THE SON, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.

The men who come to see this truth by faith and obey the holy command of God to hear the Son, do so to the Father's honor and glory. These men have honored the Father by affirming the truth and goodness of His will. This is made clear by Paul as he labors to communicate this gospel truth.

Philippians 2:9 – 11 - Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that EVERY TONGUE SHOULD CONFESS THAT JESUS CHRIST IS LORD, TO THE GLORY OF GOD THE FATHER.

You can agree with God the Father concerning His Son now, by faith, or you will acknowledge the truth of it when you see Him in glory at the judgment. The promise of eternal life is given to the former and denied to the latter.

Imagine if an earthly King sent an ambassador to those of his realm ahead of His Son's arrival declaring that His Son is fully authorized to act on his behalf. Those subjects would certainly be expected to honor that decision from the Father and failing to do so would likely amount to rebellion and certain punishment. Conversely, giving honor to the son would be to honor the Father Himself who chose to send the Son to act in His stead. In the gospel of Jesus Christ, the apostles are the ambassadors, Jesus is the Son and He has been fully authorized to act as God in the entirety of His dominion. Have we responded accordingly?

This confession of which Paul speaks in Philippians, that Jesus is Lord, is one that is anticipated by Paul as he discusses a future time when every creature in heaven and earth will acknowledge the will of the Father that His Son Jesus should have the dominion. When this confession is made in the future, it will be made "to the glory of God the Father", because all creation will be brought to acknowledge the fact that it was the Father who ordained that His Son Jesus Christ be heir of all things. You can agree with God the Father concerning His Son now by faith, or you will acknowledge the truth of it when you see Him in glory at the judgment. The promise of eternal life is given to the former and denied to the latter. Accordingly, **the gospel announcement** of the apostles throughout the New Testament is one that declares the lordship of Jesus Christ. This lordship is given to Jesus by the Father and is exercised over the entire dominion of God.

Acts 2:36 - Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that GOD HATH MADE THAT SAME JESUS, whom ye have crucified, both LORD and Christ.

Acts 10:36 - The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (HE IS LORD OF ALL:)

At this point, even though we are very early on in this study, it should be

becoming clearer what exactly the Christian faith is founded upon. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has been given the kingdom of God from His Father, and as such, men are commanded to acknowledge the truth of the Father's will in this matter. Through the gospel, we have been introduced to the heir of God, Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 1:1 - 2 - God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom HE HATH APPOINTED HEIR OF ALL THINGS, by whom also he made the worlds;

Jesus Christ has been exalted by the Father and all things have been placed under His feet, which is a familiar refrain of the New Testament.

Ephesians 1:21 – 23 - Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And HATH PUT ALL THINGS UNDER HIS FEET, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

Jesus Christ makes a point of teaching this very clearly to His apostles. It is the Father who has given all things to Christ.

Matthew 11:27 – ALL THINGS ARE DELIIVERED UNTO ME OF MY FATHER: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.

John 3:35 - The Father loveth the Son, and HATH GIVEN ALL THINGS into his hand.

John 16:15 – ALL THINGS THAT THE FATHER HATH ARE MINE: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

For Jesus to claim that everything the Father has is His is quite a claim to make. All the realms of dominion of the Father are his. The glory His Father has is His. The Power His Father has is His. All the divine excellencies and prerogatives are His. Since His Father is God, we need to wrap our minds around this statement. The prerogatives to make laws are His. The authority to forgive sins, pass judgement, exercise power over nature, principalities, and powers is all in His hand. The reason that this truth has not yet been revealed to

men should be obvious to those of you who understand the definition of faith. In our previous books, we focused on the first half of that definition – the substance of things hoped for. The substance of things hoped for speaks directly to the testimony of the Son, who by the Spirit of prophecy announces to men things in advance by foretelling us of them. The second half of the definition deals with the testimony of the Father – the evidence of things not seen.

Hebrews 11:1 - Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, THE EVIDENCE OF THINGS NOT SEEN.

We can know from the record of the Father in Scripture that His Son, Jesus Christ, has all power in heaven and earth, is Lord of All, and is the heir of all things. All of these testimonies are true of Jesus right now, but as men we cannot see them apart from faith. The gospel record bears witness to the heir, Jesus Christ, and the authority He has been given from the Father. Witness has been borne to this reality by the Scriptures themselves, the Father, the resurrection, and by the Holy Spirit who was sent by Christ after His ascension to bear witness to His glorification.

John 7:39 - (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for THE HOLY GHOST WAS NOT YET GIVEN; BECAUSE THAT JESUS WAS NOT YET GLORIFIED.)

The arrival of the Holy Spirit was a witness to the reality of the risen and glorified Lord Jesus, who was now seated at the right hand of the Father. In this place of honor, Jesus was given authority from the Father over all things. Who is it that has the authority and power to send the Holy Spirit? The Son of God has that power.

John 15:26 - But when the Comforter is come, WHOM I WILL SEND unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:

When the Spirit was sent, it bore witness to the truth that Jesus had in fact ascended into the heavens to receive the kingdom from His Father and was now seated at the right hand of the majesty on high. The apostles and disciples of Christ were given to understand that, when the Spirit came, the Holy Spirit was bearing witness to the truth of the Christ and the power and authority that Jesus had been given from the Father.

Acts 2:33 - Therefore BEING BY THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD

EXALTED, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, HE HATH SHED FORTH THIS, which ye now see and hear.

The Spirit was a witness on earth to the glory and power of Jesus Christ in heaven. As Peter states, Jesus received the Holy Spirit as a promise of the Father and had now revealed His own power and authority by pouring out the power of the Spirit in the earth upon men.

Luke 24:49 - And, behold, I SEND THE PROMISE OF MY FATHER UPON YOU: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be ENDUED WITH POWER FROM ON HIGH.

For Jesus to send the power of the Spirit from on high to endue the apostles, he must be on high and have that very power Himself. He could not have the authority to do so otherwise.

Matthew 8:9 – 10 - For I AM A MAN UNDER AUTHORITY, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I HAVE NOT FOUND SO GREAT FAITH, no, not in Israel.

For the Christian, this is the faith we have concerning Jesus Christ as witnessed to in the New Testament Scriptures. We ***do not yet see*** all things put under Christ, but we have believed the witness and record concerning Him based upon the evidence and witness of the Father and the Spirit. The will of the Father has, in fact then, been revealed to men concerning His Son. His will is that Jesus, His only begotten Son, should reign over all things. The power, authority, majesty, blessing, and honor are already Christ's, which He received from the Father, but we have yet to see that reality manifested in the earth to men.

1 Corinthians 15:27 – 28 - For HE HATH PUT ALL THINGS UNDER HIS FEET. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And WHEN ALL THINGS SHALL BE SUBDUED UNTO HIM, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

And as faith is EVIDENCE OF THINGS NOT SEEN, we have the reality of Christ's authority being witnessed by the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit in the

earth today to give men opportunity for faith.

Hebrews 2:8 – THOU HAST PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But NOW WE SEE NOT YET all things put under him.

All things being put under Christ is a present reality, but we do not yet see it. The reign of Christ is a present reality but is hidden from view to men. Paul came to this realization when he heard the Lord speaking from heaven, which is also a prerogative of God. Paul heard the voice and correctly identified the One speaking as Lord, only to discover it was Jesus! The same Jesus that Paul had been persecuting other men and women for believing in and calling upon was now speaking to Paul from heaven. Paul "was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision" and went on to obey the commands that Christ laid upon Him. By faith, we walk before God in obedience to the Father's will concerning His Son in this same way.

1 Peter 3:22 - Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being MADE SUBJECT UNTO HIM.

The Scripture tells us that whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed. Ultimately, everyone will come to know the truth of this announcement made by the gospel. Faith is exercised towards God in submitting to this revelation of the will of the Father before it is revealed to all men in the fulness of time.

Mark 14:62 - And Jesus said, I am: and YE SHALL SEE the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

Isaiah 45:23 -I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW, every tongue shall swear.

Someday, everyone will see. By faith, some see it now. God has chosen and ordained that Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, should be the heir that reigns. The only person exempted from this subjugation of all things to the Son of God is God the Father Himself, who put all things under the Son's feet.

1 Corinthians 15:27 - For he hath put all things under his feet. But

when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that HE IS EXCEPTED, WHICH DID PUT ALL THINGS UNDER HIM.

1 Corinthians 11:3 - But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and THE HEAD OF CHRIST IS GOD.

To bring some context and clarity to this point, I would like to share one of the most famous teachings of Jesus Christ and hope that it will be clarifying in our review of this gospel truth.

Matthew 11:28 - 29 - Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. TAKE MY YOKE UPON YOU, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

This verse is often quoted by those of the Christian faith, and as such I am confident that it is likely familiar to many of you as well. What I want to draw attention to is the truth that it teaches from a Scriptural perspective. If we look at the broader context of the verse, we will find something very important and illuminating. The verse that ***immediately precedes*** these two is most often left unaddressed when this passage is recalled but is actually the key to understanding the entire passage correctly. Based on what we have been discussing so far, it may strike you more clearly. Look closely at this preceding verse.

Matthew 11:27 – 29 - ALL THINGS ARE DELIVERED UNTO ME OF MY FATHER: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. TAKE MY YOKE UPON YOU, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

*I believe we will see that this gospel call is not given to teach that we are yoked **with Christ** but rather we are yoked **by Christ**.*

Does anything particular stand out to you? Notice the opening statement of Jesus Christ in the verse: “All things are delivered unto me of my Father.” After

stating this claim, **He then goes on** to speak the famous invitation to come unto Him. Specifically in view is the idea of taking His yoke upon you. I have sometimes heard this represented as a yoke that we share with Christ, and that as the stronger of the two who are yoked together, He is doing all the work, teaching us how to live like Him, etc… Upon further investigation however, I believe we will see that this gospel call is not given to teach that we are yoked **with Christ** but rather we are yoked **by Christ**. In plain terms, He is the Lord and we are the servants. For the Jews, the idea of a yoke had special significance, and should not be lost on us as students of Scripture. To better understand, we need to look to the Old Testament scriptures. There is another king who had been chosen by God that the people of Israel had been commanded to receive and to obey. This image of a yoke, as used by Christ, brings us right back to that story, and Christ even draws the comparison for us by prefacing His comments with the statement "All things are delivered unto me of my Father". Let's go back in history to the prophet Jeremiah and the King of God's own choosing whom all nations would serve, Nebuchadnezzar.

Jeremiah 27:1 – 5 - In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah came this word unto Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, Thus saith the LORD to me; MAKE THEE bonds and YOKES, and put them upon thy neck, And send them to the king of Edom, and to the king of Moab, and to the king of the Ammonites, and to the king of Tyrus, and to the king of Zidon, by the hand of the messengers which come to Jerusalem unto Zedekiah king of Judah; And command them to say unto their masters, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Thus shall ye say unto your masters; I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are upon the ground, by my great power and by my outstretched arm, and HAVE GIVEN IT UNTO WHOM IT SEEMED MEET UNTO ME.

Before we proceed, let's get the picture of what is happening in this account. God, who tells us here that He had made all things, told Jeremiah to make yokes and send them to these kings and their nations with a message. The message involved a man whom God had chosen to reign over all of these lands, men, and beasts which he had made. God makes it clear that He had made all these things, and He would give them to **whomever He chose** since they all belong to Him. The message was sent to give the opportunity to these kings and their people to receive God's announcement, to willingly acknowledge and

submit to the revelation of God's will concerning who should have the dominion over these things, and to do service to the man He had chosen. Let us read a little further together.

Jeremiah 27:6 – 8 - And now have I HAVE GIVEN ALL THESE LANDS INTO THE HAND OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR the king of Babylon, MY SERVANT; and the beasts of the field have I given him also to serve him. And ALL NATIONS SHALL SERVE HIM, and his son, and his son's son, until the very time of his land come: and then many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of him. And it shall come to pass, that THE NATION AND KINGDOM which will not serve the same Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, and THAT WILL NOT PUT THEIR NECK UNDER THE YOKE of the king of Babylon, that nation WILL I PUNISH, saith the LORD, with the sword, and with the famine, and with the pestilence, until I have consumed them by his hand.

For the sake of time and space I don't want to print the entirety of the chapter here, but it is worth reading. The announcement concerning Nebuchadnezzar is a picture of the Lord's Christ and the gospel of our own day. When Jesus Christ makes the statement that all things are given to Him from the Father and then commands us to take His yoke upon us, the picture becomes all the clearer. The result of obedience to this gospel command is rest and peace. The commandment from God to men is to acknowledge His will in this matter by submitting to the man He has chosen as king. The Lord God clearly says ALL NATIONS SHALL SERVE HIM. The Lord then announces the consequence of disobedience to the revelation of His Divine will in verse 8 – destruction by famine, pestilence, and the sword. The Lord then goes on to pronounce the blessing of those who would enjoy His divine favor by serving the king He had chosen.

Jeremiah 27:11 – 12 - But THE NATIONS THAT BRING THEIR NECK UNDER THE YOKE OF THE KING of Babylon, AND SERVE HIM, those WILL I LET REMAIN still in their own land, saith the LORD; and they shall till it, and dwell therein. I spake also to Zedekiah king of Judah according to all these words, saying, BRING YOUR NECKS UNDER THE YOKE of the king of Babylon, and serve him and his people, AND LIVE.

The choice is a clear one it would seem. You can bring your necks under the yoke of the man that I have chosen and live, or you can rebel against my will

and perish under the will and authority of that same man. One is a light yoke made of wood, and the other is a heavy yoke of iron. That is the gospel of Jesus Christ in a nutshell. Life is promised to those who receive the truth of this announcement and submit to it in faith. Death is promised to those who oppose the Lord's Christ and refuse His reign. This is also the testimony of Jesus Christ as He commands us to come to Him, the one who has been given all things by the Father, and to take His yoke upon us. We are to submit to Him. We are to serve Him. The Father has chosen and ordained that man of His own choosing, Jesus Christ, to reign over all things that He has made. Accordingly, Jesus has been given all the power to exercise this authority.

John 17:2 - As THOU HAST GIVEN HIM POWER OVER ALL FLESH, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.

Matthew 28:18 - And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, ALL POWER IS GIVEN UNTO ME in heaven and in earth.

Those who hear this proclamation of the will of God concerning His Son are commanded to submit to the revelation of the Father's will or they will perish like those who refused to serve Nebuchadnezzar. It is in this light that we can understand the phrase the apostle Paul uses regarding those who will not "obey the gospel".

2 Thessalonians 1:8 – IN FLAMING FIRE TAKING VENGEANCE ON THEM that know not God, and THAT OBEY NOT THE GOSPEL of our Lord Jesus Christ:

Many such verses speak to the obedience of the faith and the gospel of Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 4:17 - For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that OBEY NOT THE GOSPEL of God?

Hebrews 5:9 - And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal SALVATION UNTO ALL THEM THAT OBEY HIM;

The gospel is sent into the world to announce the truth of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Those who oppose the truth of this announcement, oppose the Father Himself and justly receive the reward of the wicked. Paul had received the truth of this destruction of wicked men as part of the gospel he preached and

as the testimony of Jesus Christ concerning what was to be done to all men who oppose His reign. These are the enemies of God who are never reconciled to Him through His Son. They never submit to the revelation of the Father's will. The Son is never acknowledged for the truth of what God has declared Him to be.

Luke 19:27 - But those MINE ENEMIES, WHICH WOULD NOT THAT I SHOULD REIGN OVER THEM, bring hither, and SLAY THEM before me.

We can also see why the promise of salvation is spoken of for those who obey the Lord Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 5:9 - And being made perfect, he became THE AUTHOR OF ETERNAL SALVATION UNTO ALL THAT OBEY HIM;

It takes faith in God's witness and testimony to submit to this King that He has chosen and whom we have never seen.

1 Peter 1:7 – 8 - That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: WHOM HAVING NOT SEEN, YE LOVE; in whom, THOUGH NOW YE SEE HIM NOT, YET BELIEVING, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:

John 20:28 – 29 - And Thomas answered and said unto him, MY LORD AND MY GOD. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: BLESSED ARE THEY THAT HAVE NOT SEEN, and YET HAVE BELIEVED.

Those who have never yet seen Jesus, but by faith believe Him to be our Lord and God, are blessed of the Father indeed. Jesus is to reign until all His enemies are put down. The reason His enemies still have a kingdom and power today is that God is longsuffering for the sake of His own and is allowing a period of time to elapse before He puts down all His enemies - so that these men can be reconciled to Him by faith during this gap of an acceptable time. Jesus will take His power unto Himself and reign to put down all authority and power that lies in rebellion against Him at the appointed time of the Father, in scripture called the end, which we also see announced in Revelation.

Revelation 11:15 – 17 – "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. And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because THOU HAST TAKEN TO THEE THY GREAT POWER, and HAST REIGNED."

Revelation 12:10 - "And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, NOW IS COME SALVATION, and strength, AND THE KINGDOM OF OUR GOD, and THE POWER OF HIS CHRIST: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night."

Christ has the power already now to subdue all things unto Himself, and is sovereign over all of creation.

Philippians 3:20 – 21 – "For our conversation is in heaven; From whence we also look for the Saviour, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, ACCORDING TO THE WORKING WHEREBY HE IS ABLE EVEN TO SUBDUE ALL THINGS UNTO HIMSELF."

We simply have not yet seen Him take this power unto Himself in the sense of putting down His enemies because it is not yet time. Faith calls us to believe, yield, and be reconciled before we see this fulfilled. This promised reconciliation of creation unto God by Christ in putting down these dominions and powers who oppose Him is in our near future. It is promised to take place after those who are living in the faith and expectation of His appearing have been rescued from the earth. This is why Paul says in Romans that the time of salvation for the Elect of God is drawing nearer with each passing day.

Romans 13:11 – "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for NOW IS OUR SALVATION NEARER THAN WHEN WE BELIEVED."

While in some ways I feel that we have adequately answered the question first posed to us at the outset of our study, for the sake of being more complete in the knowledge of Christ we will continue to examine the substance of the issue further. The initial question of "**Where is it clear that we are**

striving to please and serve (singularly) the Lord Jesus Christ?" has been spoken to by Scripture in thunderingly clear terms. We can see the revelation from Scripture that we are COMMANDED by the Father to serve the Son. In doing so, we have fulfilled the Father's will concerning His Son and concerning ourselves as His creatures. What is still unclear at this point is HOW we are obedient to the command of the Father. We now know that the Son is worthy of our full attention and allegiance, but now that He has our attention, what is He saying? What are we to hear?

Luke 9:35 - And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: HEAR HIM.

If we want to serve the true and living God, we must do so by serving His Son. It is impossible to serve God by any other way than the One who is The Way…

1 Thessalonians 1:9 - For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols TO SERVE THE LIVING AND TRUE GOD;

Colossians 3:24 - Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for YE SERVE THE LORD CHRIST.

Chapter 3 – Hearing the Son

We know from scripture that there are promises to be had for the one who hears. The one who hears the Son will enter the kingdom, having heard the Father and done His will. By this point, we have established two important things. Firstly, that the Father has borne witness to men that Jesus is His Son. Secondly, that the Father has appointed His Son heir of all things and commanded men to hear the Son. If we by faith receive the witness of the Father and desire to heed His holy command, we should now be listening to Jesus. Since we know that we are listening to the Anointed One who has the authority and power of God over us, what is it that the Son is saying that the Father has commanded us to hear? Actually, there are two things. They are both necessary but must come in order.

1 Corinthians 14:33 – "For God is NOT THE AUTHOR OF CONFUSION, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints."

In this chapter we will briefly discuss these two aspects of hearing the Son. It is clear from Scripture that we must receive what He has to say in its' due order, or all manner of mischief and ungodliness will doubtless follow. Firstly, we must hear Jesus' TESTIMONY, which is declared to men concerning things to come. Hearing this prophetic testimony is of utmost importance as it speaks to our faith. Secondly, we must hear His COMMANDMENTS, which are given for the perfecting of our faith and for growth in grace and knowledge. We will see from scripture that this order is abundantly evident. Without faith it is impossible to please God. Even in our previous chapter we have observed this order. Concerning the Father we must believe His record about the Son, which is faith towards the Father, and then we are to obey the Father's command to hear the Son. As we now come to the Son, the order is the same. We must believe His

> *If we refuse to hear Jesus concerning His commands, it reveals that we do not truly believe His testimony, which means we have not done the will of the Father which can only mean we do not believe the record of the father about His Son Jesus Christ.*

testimony and then by faith heed His holy commands.

An exercise in His holy commands proves whether we have heard His testimony or not and serves as a witness of the truth of our profession of faith. As James would tell us, the obedience vindicates our faith.

James 2:22 - Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?

If we refuse to hear Jesus concerning His commands, it reveals that we do not truly believe His testimony, which means we have not done the will of the Father, which can only mean we do not believe the record of the father about His Son Jesus Christ. Conversely, if we do indeed believe the record of the Father that Jesus is Christ the Lord, we will be compelled by that faith to hear the Son. If we truly believe Christ's testimony concerning things to come and the future which He has revealed to us, it is only reasonable that we will obey His commands. It is important to realize that the commandments of Christ are for the household of faith.

Hebrews 11:6 - But WITHOUT FAITH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PLEASE HIM: for he that cometh to God MUST BELIEVE THAT HE IS, and that HE IS A REWARDER OF THEM THAT DILIGENTLY SEEK HIM.

Commandment keeping without faith is a fool's errand. Faith without commandment keeping is pure foolishness. We can strive to keep God's laws or teach others to observe them properly, but unless these laws are kept in faith it is a fruitless endeavor and of no eternal value whatsoever. It is important to know we cannot seek Christ by virtue of the commandments alone, trusting that Christ will be pleased with works of love and generosity done in His name. These works must be done by those who are in faith to be pleasing to Christ Jesus. The heart of the individual who is offering this service to God must be purified by faith and cleansed by the blood of Christ for these works to be received by God. Faith is the necessary condition of those who are sealed by the Holy Spirit, and without the regenerating power of the Spirit in bringing forth a new creature, there is no profit to a man in his attempts to keep the law of Christ any more than there is in keeping the law of Moses.

John 6:63 - It is the spirit that quickeneth; THE FLESH PROFITETH NOTHING: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit,

and they are life.

Faith is the hallmark of God's work in men and is a spiritual attribute of the new creature who has been quickened from their state of being dead in sins and trespasses. The faith worked in those who are born of God by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit is the victory that overcomes the world.

1 John 5:4 - For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and THIS IS THE VICTORY that overcometh the world, EVEN OUR FAITH.

Those that are in the flesh cannot have faith and, as such, are unable to please God. As the Lord states, the flesh profits nothing. It can only produce fleshly things. The carnal mind cannot obey the commands of God because it is enmity with God and not able to be subject to His divine laws. The conclusion then is clear. We must first be brought to faith and then we are given the law of Christ.

Romans 8:7 - 8 - Because THE CARNAL MIND is enmity against God: for it IS NOT SUBJECT TO THE LAW OF GOD, neither indeed can be. So then THEY THAT ARE IN THE FLESH CANNOT PLEASE GOD.

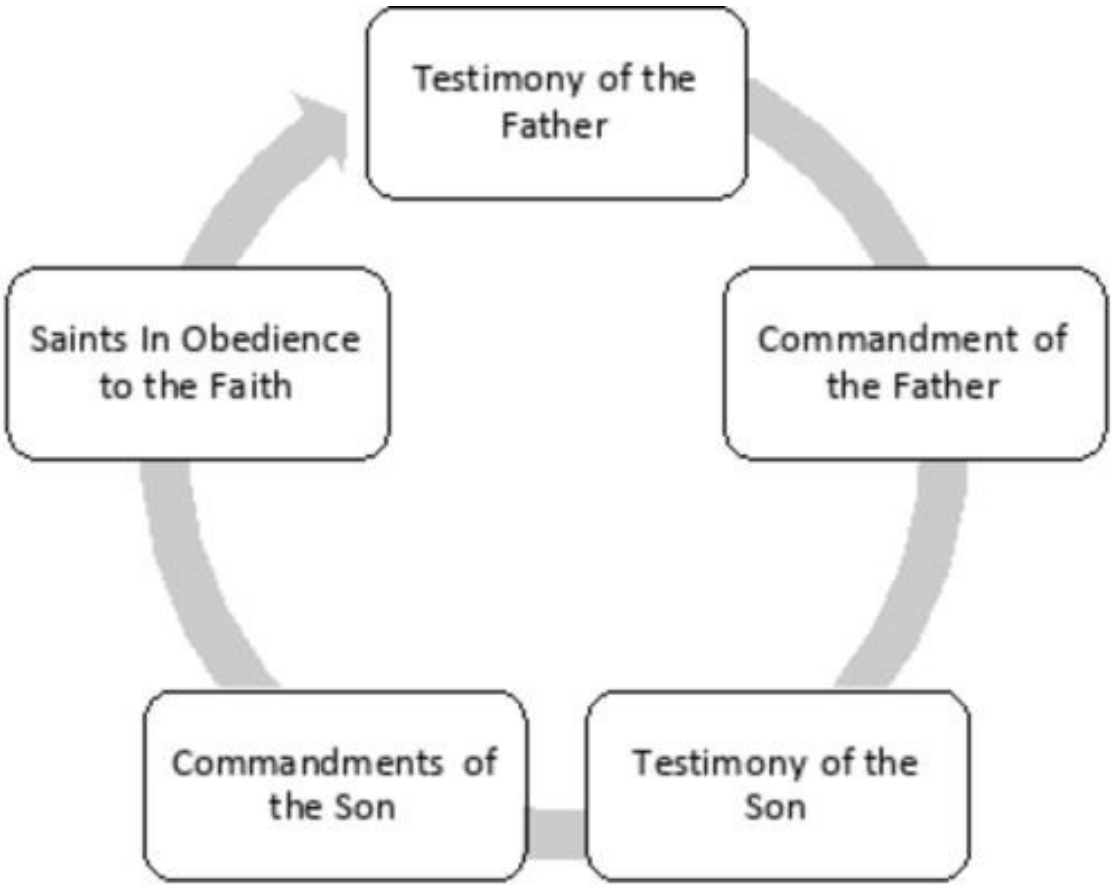
The carnal mind cannot be subject to the laws of God, nor can those who are in the flesh please Him. That is to say, those in the flesh cannot have faith towards God. As Jesus taught, "ye must be born again". A new creature is what is necessary. A creative act of almighty God working in us by the power of His Spirit through His Son must first regenerate the man before that man is able to serve Christ. Those who have faith are in the Spirit, not the flesh, and are given the commands of Christ to exercise the new man in "faith which worketh by love". As such, the orderliness in the purposes of God in drawing men to Himself through the power of His Son is evident.

1 Chronicles 15:13 – "For because ye did it not at the first, the LORD our God MADE A BREACH UPON US, for that we SOUGHT HIM NOT AFTER THE DUE ORDER."

A man must first come to faith and then that man is given the commands of Christ to fulfill the purposes of Christ in his life as a saint. Firstly, as a test of that saint's own faith for the furtherance and purification of it. Secondly, for the growth of that saint in knowledge and grace. Thirdly, for a witness by which other men are drawn to the truth and reconciled to God in Christ. Fourthly, that

Jesus Christ might be glorified in the life of that saint by making the power of the resurrected and glorified Christ a present reality in their life and consequently bearing witness to the world.

When taken together, the effectual working of the preaching of the gospel is that a man believes the record of the Father in coming to the Son, places his faith in Christ by hearing the prophetic testimony of Jesus, and obeys that faith in listening to Christ's holy commands. This is the due order of those who truly seek God. We could represent this same principle from the texts of scripture in the following way:



In the life of the saint, this is the growth cycle of our faith. This pictures the life of one who is doing the will of the Father and is living in promise of entrance into the kingdom of God. This is a life of repentance and faith. This is the life of one who is abiding in the love of Christ. This is the examination of our faith. This is the examination of our claim that we believe Jesus loves us. Christ's love for us is reflected in His loving commands that keep us and guide us in the way. If we reject His rule and His commandments, haven't we actually revealed that we do not believe He loves us? Further, we have not only rejected His love for us, but we have betrayed the fact that we love ourselves more than we love Him. Taken another way, we could show from scripture this same working of faith in this way:



John 15:10 - If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

Paul speaks of this work in us as repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Acts 20:21 - Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, REPENTANCE TOWARD GOD, and FAITH TOWARD OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

"What we are basically saying is that knowing the future is an advantage. That's all."

Given that we have covered faith in the testimony of Christ at length in previous books, I don't want to labor the point here beyond what is necessary. The prophetic testimony of Christ gives men light in their lives by teaching what is to be the end of all the things we currently see and experience around us.

Revelation 19:10 – And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS IS THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY.

What we are basically saying is that knowing the future is an advantage, that's all. And that is exactly the whole point. God has desired men to know the TRUTH. The truth about what is and about what is to come. There are adversaries to the truth on every hand. Our own imagination, the world in which we live, and the adversary of God, Satan himself, with all of his agencies and devices, all oppose the truth. Peter uses this argument regarding the removal of this present world to demonstrate the working of faith in his second epistle.

2 Peter 3:11 – 12 – "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, WHAT MANNER OF PERSONS OUGHT YE TO BE in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?"

It's not about having an emotional experience necessarily, although you may and that is fine. I've been filled with all manner of emotions from time to time as the Lord reveals the Truth to me.

There are clear implications of faith in these things. The direction and choices of our lives ought to be informed and controlled by faith in what Jesus has told us is coming in the future. Coming to faith is not about having an emotional experience necessarily, although you likely may and that is fine. I have been filled with all manner of emotions from time to time as the Lord reveals the Truth of His Word to me. At times, it has been overwhelming to be honest. What is at issue is our acknowledging of the truth. We are commanded to believe Him. The truth of things has been declared by the record of the Father and by the testimony of Christ even though we have

not seen them fulfilled yet. It is through our belief of the truth, the Word of God, that we are set apart by God unto salvation.

2 Thessalonians 2:13 – "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning CHOSEN YOU TO SALVATION through sanctification of the Spirit and BELIEF OF THE TRUTH:"

The truth has been declared by God in His Word, but not yet entirely fulfilled and made evident to men. The reason for this should be clear at this point if you have read *The Promise of Salvation* and *The Gospel of the Kingdom* – God will justify His children by faith, and they must have opportunity for faith if they are to be justified. Salvation is promised to those who have received Christ's witness and testimony of the truth rather than believing the lie of the Devil and his vision for our future. If you think about it for a minute our first parents, Adam and Eve, made a choice between two versions of the future they were given. Of course, they made a sinful choice, but nonetheless the testimony of Christ and the lie of the Serpent both offered man different versions of a future. One turned out to be a lie. The other turned out to be the perfect truth. Those who have believed the truth, receiving the testimony of Christ concerning all things, are chosen to salvation which will be revealed in the last time. The fact that being "in faith" is the same thing as "the acknowledgement of the truth" is made clear by Paul.

Titus 1:1 – "Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, ACCORDING TO THE FAITH of God's elect, and THE ACKNOWLEDGING OF THE TRUTH which is after godliness;"

Receiving Christ's testimony necessarily means we are "in the faith". When we start talking about the truth, there is an expectation in scripture that those who hear and receive Christ's testimony by faith will be obedient to what it declares concerning things unseen and things to come. Some of these things can be briefly comprehended, as Paul says, in a few words.

Romans 13:9 - For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is BRIEFLY COMPREHENDED IN THIS SAYING, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

It is for our sakes that these things are taught in more detail and fullness so that we can learn in patience how to apply obedience to the faith in our lives in a practical way. If all we needed to know was "Love thy neighbor as thyself", then that is all we would have in Scripture. An infinitely wise God saw to it that we had more instruction than that because it is profitable and necessary. The epistles in the New Testament are largely written to instruct the followers of Christ in HOW to love in a way that honors Christ and pleases God.

Titus 2:9 – 10 – "Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again; Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that THEY MAY ADORN THE DOCTRINE OF GOD OUR SAVIOUR IN ALL THINGS."

Let's take a closer look at the first and greatest of all the laws we are given in this age of the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom. The first and greatest commandment to men of this age will be very familiar to us from the Old Covenant days. The Lord Jesus was asked which commandment was the greatest and had this response.

Mark 12:29 – "And Jesus answered him, The FIRST OF ALL the commandments is, HEAR, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord:"

Does that command sound familiar from the voice of the Father on the mount of transfiguration? What was His holy command to men? This is my beloved Son. HEAR HIM! God had already commanded Israel to Hear the Lord their God, and now a voice from heaven confirms that this commandment, which speaks of the Lord God, is to be observed by men as it relates to Jesus Christ! If someone asks, "Where is it clear that we are striving to please and serve (singularly) the Lord Jesus Christ?", just show them Deuteronomy 6:4 -5.

Deuteronomy 6:4 – 5 - HEAR, O Israel: THE LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

And then take them to Mark 9:7.

Mark 9:7 - And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: HEAR HIM.

Which is why Paul clearly says in Colossians 3:24:

Colossians 3:24 - Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the

reward of the inheritance: for YE SERVE THE LORD CHRIST.

The first and greatest commandment given to men for obedience is to HEAR. Kind of like we tell our children, "OK listen up!". Until they are listening, they will never be able to know our will. This is the first step of obedience to God – to hear. Sounds straightforward enough but is by itself an act of obedience. Kind of like when your kids settle down from their own ideas and activities so that they can listen to what you want to say to them. This commandment from the Old Covenant days is the first and greatest commandment concerning the kingdom of God as well.

Now, you may be thinking the first commandment is to love God, which is spoken as well. However, until we HEAR Him we cannot LOVE Him – which He already knows. What is necessary for a man to hear the Son? Well, Scripture tells us that hearing comes by the Word of God.

Romans 10:17 - So then faith cometh by hearing, and HEARING BY THE WORD OF GOD.

If we hear Christ, we WILL love Christ. If we do not love Christ, then we have not heard Christ. Remember, God fulfills His own Word. Man CANNOT FULFILL the Word of testimony. We can't even come close actually, but He fulfills it IN US by His Spirit.

If we hear Christ, we WILL love Christ. If we do not love Christ, then we have not heard Christ.

Romans 8:4 – "That the righteousness of the law might be FULFILLED IN US, who walk not after the flesh, but AFTER THE SPIRIT."

The love of God is a gift of His Spirit, and not something performed out of man's will. When men love, we love those who bring good things into our life. That means we are actually "loving" who? If you answered "Ourselves", that would be correct. Rather than loving those who need our love, we typically love those who add good things to our life and enrich our lives because we love ourselves by nature. Clearly, this is not a Godly love, but a carnal love.

Matthew 5:46 – "For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?"

The first and greatest commandment is to HEAR and then He says THOSE WHO DO HEAR SHALL LOVE. If you heed the command to hear, then you will love also. Let's read the full commandment as found in Scripture and look to understand which part is commanded and why.

Mark 12:29 – 30 – "And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, HEAR, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: AND THOU SHALT love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment."

This much we should know by now, God doesn't say "Thou Shalt" and things not happen……. There is ALWAYS a fulfillment of His Word. He is forever faithful. When He says "Thou shalt love", it is a promise to those who hear. The command for men is to HEAR. God, who always fulfills His Word, will keep the promise end of the deal.

The promise of this law is that we shall love the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our mind, and with all our strength. If we HEAR Jesus, we will love Him. This is the law of God. Laws describe the workings of creation. If we listen to someone else, a deceiver perhaps, who also knows how the creation works, we could get into trouble and love the wrong master…….. Men will love the one they HEAR. As the divine law states, men will serve the one they love. Who are we listening to? Mankind functions according to this basic law by God's design.

2 Peter 2:19 – "…of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage."

The battle is taking place in the hearts of men over who they will hear. The battle is one of words and promises spoken into our hearts. According to this law, whoever's testimony we receive, we will be bound by love to the author of that testimony. We will serve that master with all devotion and affection. Satan understood this law when He spoke to man of a future he had in mind. Made it sound really good too. However, men were, and are, deceived. The only purpose He had in telling the lie was to cause men to believe him instead of the truth, and to bring them into captivity. This law describes how man was created to function and demonstrates the attempts of the adversary of God to be "like the most high". It is this fundamental truth of man's design by the creator that is at work. Do we "love" what Satan offers and has promised, or do we

"love" what God has promised to us by the word of Truth in Christ? Listen closely……. Take heed how you hear……

1 John 2:15 – "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

Why would a man love the world? It can only be because he is listening to the god of this world. We will love the one we listen to, or rather perhaps we will listen to the one we love. We are servants. That is the purpose of this creature called man. However, we can only serve one master – as we know from Jesus Christ.

Matthew 6:24 – NO MAN CAN SERVE TWO MASTERS: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

Satan has brought forth his own children from among the seed of men who oppose God and serve his own interests and will. He accomplished this by overthrowing their hearts with his own word of testimony. He knew what was possible if he supplanted the Word of God with his own words.

John 8:44 – YE ARE OF YOUR FATHER THE DEVIL, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

The law is clear. You will hear and then you will love your Lord and your God. When Satan used this law to his advantage by preaching his lie to men, what was the consequence? The law states that the one a man hears, a man will love and states that the one being heard is the Lord and God of that man. Satan's use of the law makes him "Like the Most High" in this attempt, but changes the law to lower case letters - lord and god. Satan is the master of his own congregation and made himself a god in this rebellion. By telling men "ye shall be as gods", he was really making an attempt of being like God himself.

2 Corinthians 4:4 – "<u>the god</u> OF THIS WORLD hath blinded the minds of them which BELIEVE NOT, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

There is a war between these spirits in heaven. It is a spiritual war of words spoken into the air being carried about in the winds to the ears and hearts

of men.

2 Corinthians 10:4 – "(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)"

Who rules the air on this earth?

Ephesians 2:2 – "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the PRINCE OF THE POWER OF THE AIR, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:"

The Devil, or Satan, is the prince of the power of the air. There is a reckoning to this war coming. Interestingly, the final vial of God's righteous judgment will be poured out "into the air" on the dominion of the adversary of God.

Revelation 16:7 – "And the seventh angel POURED OUT HIS VIAL INTO THE AIR; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done."

The one we listen to in our heart is our Lord. If we repent and turn to Him to listen to His voice and hear His Word, then this law, works for us and not against us. His law can-not be broken, which is our hope – He will keep His Word.

The hope for man lies in the fact that God's law cannot be broken. It states that those who hear the Lord Thy God, will love Him and serve Him. The question is which God/god are we listening to? Who is our Lord/lord? Our affection and service shows us the answer to that question. This is the crux of repentance in the heart of man. Being turned in our hearts away from the lie and towards the Lord God to hear Him. Which God/god says things that delight you, or are appealing to you, or provoke a zeal in your life and efforts? The one we listen to in our heart is our Lord/lord. If we repent and turn to Christ and hear His voice and Word, then this law works for us and not against us. His law cannot be broken, which is our hope – He will keep His Word. His Word still stands, and He will always ensure that it is kept – HE fulfills His Word because he is faithful. The very law that was used by our adversary to defeat us and bring us into bondage, still rests

on the power of the One who made the decree. In His wisdom and infinite understanding, He had prepared the remedy before the deception entered the world. Satan's best laid scheme to use God's law for himself, cannot circumvent or overthrow the wisdom of God.

Just as natural men use the laws of nature to devise inventions that will serve their purposes and ends, so too does Satan. He can only operate within the laws of creation that are given by God. Just as the natural world operates on laws of God, so too does the spiritual realm. We saw the children of the Devil act out this same character of their father when they attempted to use God's law to have Jesus put to death. The children show the traits of their father. They are the servants of the one to whom they are listening in their hearts.

John 8:43 – "Why do ye not understand my speech? even because YE CANNOT HEAR my word."

John 8:45 – 46 – "And BECAUSE I TELL YOU THE TRUTH, YE BELIEVE ME NOT. Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God."

Question: What is the one thing a child of the Father of Lies will not believe? Answer: the Truth. This is at the heart of all of man's troubles – refusal to HEAR, which is the first and greatest commandment. If you read the law, all of the rest of the law is prophetic beyond the command to hear. It is full of "thou shalt" phrases that speak of the promise of God for those who hear. The command is to hear, and the rest is prophetic testimony of Christ. A promise wrapped up in one little command – amazing. The rest of the law is the work God does as a Father might work to train his children to ride a bike or to learn anything else. We may stumble and fall, but He is there to pick us up and help us go at it again. The sin working in our flesh has been dealt with on the cross by the blood of Christ. The command to hear is where the truth of faith lies for the hope of salvation. We must be in fellowship with Christ, who is the truth, to have the blood applied to our hearts.

1 John 1:6 – 10 - If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and 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. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."

The price has been paid for redemption. For those who are obedient to His will and command, we will find true freedom and liberty in Him as the Sons of God. If we hear Him, He will be our Lord and God and will fulfill His Word in us by giving us His Spirit and His love so that we can love Him and others as the law says – it is the spirit of prophecy. If we choose to listen to another voice, then that one becomes the lord and god to us, and we will love and serve him.

Matthew 6:24 – "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

Faith starts very small but grows as knowledge of God increases by studying His Word. The Lord is patient and longsuffering with us to help us grow by degrees. We cannot expect or even handle the change if we were to be changed all at once. Line is upon line. Precept upon precept. We are being changed from one degree of glory to another.

2 Corinthians 3:18 – "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, ARE CHANGED into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

James 4:8 – "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you…."

Chapter 4 – A Gospel Distinction

The gospel is sent into the world as a witness to the truth of the Son of God, Jesus Christ. I want to briefly discuss a significant distinction of the gospel that is important to grasp as it relates to this announcement of God to men concerning His Son. That distinction has to do with not only what we affirm to be true about Jesus Christ, but how we understand and make application of that affirmation.

Mark 9:7 – "And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: HEAR HIM."

The Father here isn't only giving advice to men. The things He commands and speaks are law.

Hebrews 12:25 – "SEE THAT YE REFUSE NOT HIM THAT SPEAKETH. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven:"

The Lord God has been revealed to us in the person of Jesus the Son of God, and we are to HEAR HIM. Who are we to hear? The Lord thy God He says. Who are we to love? Also, the Lord thy God. The Father from heaven commands men to Hear the Son, who is God in the flesh.

Colossians 1:15 – "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:"

The Son must be acknowledged as God by men if they are to be saved. Period. This is God's commandment to men.

The Son must be acknowledged as God by men if they are to be saved. Period. This is God's commandment to men. Belief in the revelation of the triune God is a requirement for believer's baptism after all.

Matthew 28:19 - Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

This is the thrust of the gospel of the kingdom – that the Father has given all authority to rule His kingdom, the kingdom of God, to His Son Jesus Christ. Christ, while teaching His disciples of the mystery of the kingdom of God, told His apostles a parable in Luke 19.

Luke 19:12 – "He said therefore, A CERTAIN NOBLEMAN WENT into a far country TO RECEIVE FOR HIMSELF A KINGDOM, and to return."

Luke 19:15 – "And it came to pass, that when HE WAS RETURNED, HAVING RECEIVED THE KINGDOM, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading."

And He also continually told them concerning the kingdom of God, which He was preaching and was promised to come, that he was given the kingdom from His Father.

Matthew 11:27 – "ALL THINGS ARE DELIVERED UNTO ME OF MY FATHER: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him."

John 3:35 – "The Father loveth the Son, and HATH GIVEN ALL THINGS INTO HIS HAND."

Here we come to the distinction we need to set forth concerning Jesus Christ. The gospel does not only declare **the Deity of Jesus**, as that is commonly discussed and debated in our time as a necessary affirmation of the faith, but goes further in that it declares **the authority of Jesus** of Nazareth who now reigns exalted in glory at the right hand of the Father. These affirmations are similar representation of the same truth perhaps, but distinctly different and importantly so. In the affirmation of Jesus Deity, while an important truth claim made in the gospel record, too much is left to be implied and not explicitly taught. In regard to the authority that Jesus has been given to exercise as the Son of God, we teach the gospel as it has been revealed in Scripture more fully. Specifically, that all the power, authority, and prerogatives of God are now fully vested in and exercised by the Son in the person of Jesus. The truth that this man, Christ Jesus, now reigns over the entire dominion of God with the glory and power of the Father Himself must be known and believed. That is why the

Father's testimony from Heaven was to HEAR the Son. Good news for His friends, to whom He has revealed the truth of what He is doing.

John 15:15 - Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you FRIENDS; for all things that I have heard of my Father I HAVE MADE KNOWN UNTO YOU.

Bad news for those who oppose Him, who are alienated in their minds and are His enemies by opposing the truth.

Luke 19:27 – "But those MINE ENEMIES, which WOULD NOT THAT I SHOULD REIGN OVER THEM, bring hither, and SLAY THEM before me."

The revelation of this mystery is prevalent throughout the New Testament and must be brought out to bring the fulness of the gospel to bear. The preaching of what God has done by His Son Jesus Christ is now sent into the world by ambassadors of Christ who have been given the ministry of reconciliation for this purpose: that men might have faith towards God in obedience to the gospel of this mystery of the kingdom of God **before** Jesus is revealed from heaven. Men are expected to hear this truth, count the cost so to speak, and respond in faith.

Luke 14:31 – 33 - Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

Any man who considers the reality of the risen Lord and Christ, will come to understand that he is unable to come against the power of Christ with any measure of success, given the power that Jesus possesses. Well, that is if they are not maddened by their own corrupt nature into a delusion of their own power…

Revelation 17:12 – 14 - And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. THESE SHALL MAKE WAR WITH THE

LAMB, AND THE LAMB SHALL OVERCOME THEM: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.

As such, those who are persuaded of the power and coming of Christ desire conditions of peace. Peter tells us that the gospel he preached communicated these two truths concerning Jesus to men: The power of Jesus Christ and the coming of Jesus Christ.

2 Peter 1:16 - For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when WE MADE KNOWN UNTO YOU THE POWER AND COMING OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

The terms and conditions for peace are expressly stated for us by Christ in His statement "**he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple**." The terms are nothing less than a full surrender of self and all those possessions belonging to self. This is in keeping with the Father's will that the Son reign. Once the truth of Christ's promised kingdom comes to earth and is seen of men, the hope for salvation is passed and His enemies are to be destroyed. That is why Paul pleaded with men to be reconciled to God by making peace with Him through Jesus Christ now.

2 Corinthians 5:18 – 20 – "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and HATH GIVEN TO US THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then WE ARE AMBASSADORS for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

This ministry of reconciliation is carried out by the preaching of the gospel according to the command and will of the Father, by the power and authority of Jesus, through men that He has placed into local congregations and called and appointed to declare these things. Since the command of the Father is to HEAR, He has also ordained PREACHING. Preaching is the appointed means by which God brings men to faith. A moving worship service cannot impart the knowledge of God unto men. A well-choreographed drama will not bring men unto repentance and faith. No, it is preaching that must be heeded to obey the first and greatest commandment. In our journey of obedience to faith,

we must start by heeding the command of the Father in hearing the Son - the testimony of Christ. This is to be found in preaching. This is why preaching, although not highly esteemed by most men, is of prominent value and use in God's eyes. If we value our eternal soul and desire to obtain the life that is in Christ, we should value the declaration of His testimony – preaching. Jesus didn't start His congregation with 12 worship leaders – they were preachers! Jesus Himself was the example and his disciples did what disciples do – they followed His teaching and example.

Luke 4:18 – 19 – "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me TO PREACH THE GOSPEL to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, TO PREACH deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, TO PREACH the acceptable year of the Lord."

The result of preaching the gospel is healing. The result of preaching is deliverance and recovery of sight. Preaching is clearly a priority of the Lord. The apostles were preachers because they were disciples of the Lord and the Lord was a preacher.

Luke 4:43 – "And he said unto them, I must PREACH THE KINGDOM OF GOD to other cities also: for THEREFORE AM I SENT."

If we have no appetite for PREACHING, we are still in unbelief. Preaching is the appointed means under the law of Christ by which men are called to obey this first and greatest commandment.

The natural man has no desire to sit under preaching, which is both a condemnation of His natural lusts in the flesh and a righteous token of the judgement of God.

1 Corinthians 1:21 – "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God BY THE FOOLISHNESS OF PREACHING TO SAVE THEM THAT

BELIEVE."

God ordained this method because it looks foolish to men. The natural man has no desire to sit under preaching, which is both a condemnation of His natural lusts in the flesh and a righteous token of the judgement of God against Him in that he chooses the things of men above the things of God. Those who will not be saved have no excuse before Him because by their own behavior and testimony they had no appetite for His holy things. Preaching serves as a safeguard in preserving the assembly, provides a tool of self-examination for those professing to know God, and ministers grace to the humble who will heed this holy command to HEAR.

2 Timothy 4:3 – "For the time will come when they will not ENDURE SOUND DOCTRINE; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;"

We need to be careful that our appetite for church services is not driven by music, programs for children, and preachers who are just good storytellers.

2 Timothy 4:4 – "And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and SHALL BE TURNED UNTO FABLES."

Today, we do not need men in authority who are accommodating the carnal appetites of men with unregenerate hearts. What is needed is sound doctrine, testimony, promises, commands, ordinances, and every other sound thing given for the household of faith by the law of Christ. To the faithful in Christ, there is a holy appetite for these. For those who heed the preaching and are obedient to the faith, they are reconciled to God by Christ and are no longer enemies.

Colossians 1:21 – "And you, that were sometime ALIENATED AND ENEMIES in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in his sight: IF YE CONTINUE in the FAITH grounded and settled, and BE NOT MOVED AWAY FROM THE HOPE of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;"

As this passage also teaches, the reconciliation is already paid for by Christ. We are made partakers of that salvation by faith – true faith that continues to the appointed time in obedience. The appointed time for us is

called in Scripture, the end. Christ's appearing. The time is short. There are still many adversaries, and the only true hope is to yield to the will of the Father and acknowledge the truth.

1 Corinthians 16:9 – "For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and THERE ARE MANY ADVERSARIES."

Paul teaches of these enemies of Christ, knowing by faith of their end.

Philippians 3:18 – 19 – "(For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even WEEPING, that THEY ARE THE ENEMIES of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)"

Paul was not sorrowing only because these guys were giving him a hard time. Paul was weeping because He had seen the end of those who remain alienated from Christ as His enemies. Their end is destruction and misery. The sorrow he had in his heart is because He had the mind and Spirit of Christ and not of the world. Likely, the weeping was a joyful sorrow of knowing he too was delivered from an awful fate by God's grace towards him. He had once been just as injurious to the Lord Jesus Christ, and His disciples, but had come to the truth. This Godly joy, that no man can take from us, is mixed with Godly sorrow for those who still do not acknowledge the truth.

Matthew 5:44 – "But I say unto you, LOVE YOUR ENEMIES, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;"

Christ did not command this love apart from the doctrine of the faith – in other words, it cannot be observed in the flesh by the will of man. Our faith gives us the ability to see the end from the beginning, and we would weep as well if we could believe the truth concerning their end. The goodness and mercy of God is proven in the end to all of creation by the good gifts He has given to all men.

Matthew 5:45 – "That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."

Even the unbelieving children of the Devil who hate and mock God and His Son, will have the gift of good memories from the life they lived – this will

be the only source of comfort in their torment. Men may say what they will of God now, but in the end, everyone will confess that He has been good. Rebellious angels and men are the creatures that have been evil.

Luke 16:25 – "But Abraham said, Son, REMEMBER that thou IN THY LIFETIME RECEIVEDST THY GOOD THINGS, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented."

The only reason they have any good things to remember is by God's gift and grace to them. Paul teaches that God's witness of His goodness has been clearly manifest to men.

Acts 14:17 – "Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that HE DID GOOD, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."

David left the same witness in the Psalms by the Holy Spirit when He gave testimony to these things.

Psalm 17:14 – "From men which are thy hand, O LORD, from MEN OF THE WORLD, which HAVE THEIR PORTION IN THIS LIFE, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure:…"

This is the reward of this life to those whose portion is here: Memories. Even those who serve their own belly, fill it with the good things God has made available to them. This is their portion. A distant memory is all that will be left when He has brought this age to an end – which is why Paul says destruction is the end of those who are enemies of the preaching of the cross of Christ. They are carnally minded, lacking faith in the testimony of Jesus Christ. For those who are in Christ, we are told we will never remember these days, because they will be forgotten in the glories of His fellowship in the world to come. The best days an enemy of Christ ever has to cling to in remembrance, are the worst days a believer will ever see. Those whose inheritance is in this life will be clinging in desperation to memories. Those whose inheritance is in the world to come will not be able to recall these grievous days. So are the days of this life.

Proverbs 20:21 – "An inheritance may be gotten hastily at the beginning; but the end thereof shall not be blessed."

Paul presses on in preaching the truth in hope that these enemies of Christ will repent and believe while there is still hope in this acceptable time.

2 Timothy 2:24 – 25 – "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; IF GOD PERADVENTURE will give them REPENTANCE to THE ACKNOWLEDGING OF

Jesus Christ, now glorified, reigns as LORD OF ALL.
The Father has vested all of the authority and power
to govern His kingdom in Jesus Christ His Son.

THE TRUTH;"

Jesus Christ, now glorified, reigns as LORD OF ALL. The Father has vested all of the authority and power to govern His kingdom in Jesus Christ His Son. This was spoken BY PROMISE while Christ was on the earth and was FULFILLED in time when He ascended back to the Father as the risen Savior to receive the promise of the Father. Jesus Christ has already received the kingdom from the Father, and has the authority, power, and dominion of the Father given to Him.

1 Peter 3:22 – "Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being MADE SUBJECT UNTO HIM."

All those who are at peace with God, have acknowledged the will of the Father that the Son should reign!

Hebrews 1:6 - And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And LET ALL THE ANGELS OF GOD WORSHIP HIM.

Revelation 5:11 – 12 - And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; Saying with a loud voice, WORTHY IS THE LAMB that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

The fundamental theme of the book of Revelation is that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is being revealed to all creation for who He is. Jesus Christ is exercising all of the power of God in judgment throughout the book. It is

interesting to note how many times in the book that we read about power being given to principalities and powers to carry out the judgments of God against unrighteous men.

Revelation 6:4 - And there went out another horse that was red: and POWER WAS GIVEN to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.

Revelation 6:8 - And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And POWER WAS GIVEN unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

Revelation 9:3 - And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them WAS GIVEN POWER, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

Revelation 11:3 - And I WILL GIVE POWER unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.

In this final showdown of human history, power is being exercised by many angels, devils, men, spirits, kingdoms, and every other thing that is made that has power. Who is it that is sovereignly superintending over this arena of powers? It is the Lord God omnipotent that reigneth.

Revelation 16:9 - And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed THE NAME OF GOD, WHICH HATH POWER OVER THESE PLAGUES: and they repented not to give him glory.

The power that is given to all these is power that is given from above.

John 19:11 - Jesus answered, THOU COULDEST HAVE NO POWER AT ALL against me, EXCEPT IT WERE GIVEN THEE FROM ABOVE: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.

The Lord Jesus Christ, who is above all these created beings in power, is sovereignly dispatching the righteous judgments of God against wicked and ungodly men. The truth of the statement of Jesus as spoken to His apostles before His ascension regarding the power He had been given is finally revealed to all men in a grand display of His awesome power.

Matthew 28:18 - And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, <u>ALL POWER</u> IS GIVEN UNTO ME in heaven and in earth.

The same Word that created all things and upholds all things will be revealed in Jesus Christ as the One who has power over all things in the fulness of time. This is one of the primary requirements of faith in Christ Jesus and belief of the gospel of God. By acknowledging the Son, we are doing the will of the Father. We know from the witness of Scripture that Jesus is the Lord God, and the commandment of the Father is to HEAR Him - to listen to Him and obey Him as God. If we fulfill the will of the Father in this first commandment, we can live in hope of some promises. The glory is God the Father's, and now rests upon the Son as the one whom the Father has appointed heir of ALL THINGS. He reigns. He is God. He is Judge. He is Savior. He is King. He is Lord. The Father has declared His will to men concerning His Son and sent the message of this decree into the world through preaching. We, by faith, are required to HEAR the decree concerning the will of the Father and honor the Son.

Psalm 2:7 – "I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee."

As we know from our study here, the purpose of God in sending the preaching of these things into the world before the manifestation of the fulfilled Word is that men might believe and have faith in Him before the fulfillment is brought to pass in time. Preaching occurs in the gap where faith must be exercised to be in the acceptable time. The thing is, we have not SEEN it yet…… which is good for us. It requires faith to believe it. The acknowledgement of this truth is what is in view when we are told to "call upon the NAME of the Lord."

Romans 10:13 – "For whosoever shall CALL UPON THE NAME of the Lord shall be saved."

This is not a prayer that we say to "get saved". This is an acknowledgement of the truth in faith towards God concerning His testimony of His Son. We call upon the name of the risen Lord – Jesus.

Acts 9:5 – "And he said, WHO ART THOU, LORD? And the Lord said, I AM JESUS whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks."

Jesus is the Lord upon whom we now call having known the will of the

Father and having believed his testimony by Faith. Those who received the truth of the will of the Father concerning the Son, now call upon Jesus Christ as their God and are the children of faith spoken of in the scriptures.

Romans 10:13 – "For whosoever shall CALL UPON THE NAME of the Lord shall be saved."

We know from the testimony of scriptures that this is the condition of a heart that has faith towards God concerning His Son, rather than a prayer that can be said to "get saved".

1 Corinthians 1:2 – "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, WITH ALL THAT IN EVERY PLACE CALL UPON THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD, both theirs and ours:"

This was understood by the Jews of the day who were persecuting Christians because of the blasphemy they perceived this to be! This was the source of Saul's (Also Paul) anger and zeal to persecute those who were "of this way".

Acts 9:1 – 2 – "And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any OF THIS WAY, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem."

Which "way" was it that people were worshipping God that had Saul so riled up in anger? It was by THE WAY – Jesus. And those who were "in this way" were known because they worshipped and served the Son, Jesus Christ, as Lord – by calling upon Him by name. It was of course on this trip to Damascus that Paul met the Lord Himself, who spoke from heaven.

On the other side of things in that same story, we have a man named Ananias, who was "of that way" and guess whose name He was calling upon? In His conversation with the "Lord", he makes this statement concerning the knowledge he had of the commission Saul had received to visit Damascus.

Acts 9:13 – 14 – "Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind ALL THAT CALL

ON THY NAME."

As you can see, those identified as being "of this way" were those "calling upon His name". This calling was a testimony that they had received the truth by faith. They now knew Jesus to be the Son of God who had received the very dominion of God from the Father. If they are to be saved when He appears in His kingdom, they must accept this witness, believe the testimony of the Son, and worship the Son. The calling is from a heart of faith which has accepted the witness of God concerning things that they have not yet seen but know to be true by His witness.

1 Peter 1:7 – 8 – "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, THOUGH NOW YE SEE HIM NOT, YET BELIEVING, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls."

Take heed how ye hear…….. There is a good reason that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, gives more than testimony to men by His Word.

Luke 8:18 – "TAKE HEED therefore how ye HEAR..."

We are easily deceived in heart. Everyone on this earth that I talk to is seemingly "going to heaven". That outlook of the gospel is a problem in itself. Faith says, Christ is coming for those who look for Him, not only that we are going to heaven when we die. Remember, the true gospel introduces us to a person and not a place. Christ, who is good to His saints, has given us another gift of His grace beyond His testimony. That is the important truth we will attempt to set forth in our next chapter…

Matthew 16:27	For the Son of man shall come IN THE GLORY OF HIS FATHER with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.
Matthew 11:27	ALL THINGS ARE DELIVERED UNTO ME OF MY FATHER: and no

	man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.
Mark 8:38	Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh IN THE GLORY OF HIS FATHER with the holy angels.
Luke 10:22	ALL THINGS ARE DELIVERED TO ME OF MY FATHER: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.
Luke 19:27	But those mine enemies, which would not that I SHOULD REIGN over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.
John 3:35	THE FATHER loveth the Son, and HATH GIVEN ALL THINGS INTO HIS HAND.
John 13:3	Jesus knowing that THE FATHER HAD GIVEN ALL THINGS INTO HIS HANDS, and that he was

	come from God, and went to God;
John 16:15	ALL THINGS THAT THE FATHER HATH ARE MINE: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.
Acts 10:36	The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (HE IS LORD OF ALL:)
1 Corinthians 15:25	For HE MUST REIGN, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.
1 Corinthians 15:27 - 28	For HE HATH PUT ALL THINGS UNDER HIS FEET. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.
Ephesians 1:22	And HATH PUT ALL THINGS UNDER HIS FEET, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,
Hebrews 2:8 -	Thou hast PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET. For in

	that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him.
Philippians 3:21	Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby HE IS ABLE EVEN TO SUBDUE ALL THINGS unto himself.
Colossians 1:16 - 17	For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: ALL THINGS WERE CREATED BY HIM AND FOR HIM: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.
Hebrews 1:2	Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed HEIR OF ALL THINGS, by whom also he made the worlds;

Chapter 5 - The Law of Christ

John 13:34 - A new commandment I give unto you, THAT YE LOVE ONE ANOTHER; AS I HAVE LOVED YOU, that ye also love one another.

The law of Christ is given to those who have come to Him in faith and is the arch principle of all our obedience to Him. However, we can show from Scripture that this commandment is not given to the household of faith as if there were no particulars set forth to graciously accompany that command. We have not been left to ourselves in determining what the love of Christ seeks to accomplish in us, nor have we been left with no distinct mandates as to the application of this law, as we will prove shortly. As an example, we could look to many commandments given by Christ that are to be observed in faith.

Matthew 28:19 – GO YE therefore, AND TEACH all nations, BAPTIZING THEM in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

The “going” of the believer is a commandment of Christ that flows from obedience to the law to love one another. This is also true of the command to teach as we are called to speak the truth in love. Further, the command to be baptized falls upon the ear of the one who has come to believe the truth as a command from Jesus Christ. These commands would not necessarily be immediately discovered to the mind of the saints from the command to love one another alone. They are taught explicitly as the law of Christ, and they flow from the command He has given us to love one another. The same is true of the law of Moses. There were many specific commands given to the nation of Israel, and each carried the full weight of any other and demanded obedience. However, all of these commands hung on the single greatest command that was given to them. The law of Christ is given to those who have come to profess faith in that gospel of Christ which declares the truth of His Lordship.

1 Corinthians 6:19 – 20 - What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and YE ARE NOT YOUR OWN? For YE ARE BOUGHT WITH A PRICE: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

Jesus did not say "this thing" I command you. He said "these things" I command you. Loving one another is not a one thing we do; it is the body of everything Christ taught that we are commanded to do

Christ has commanded that those who believe in Him observe these things. Again, there are many particular commands that are enumerated for us in the gospel record and epistles, such as children obeying parents, wives obeying husbands, husbands giving themselves for their wives, forgiveness, modesty, humility, and so on. All of these are taught particularly for our profit and to exercise our faith in the one who commanded them, and they all stem from the law Christ gave to love one another.

John 15:17 – THESE THINGS I command you, that ye love one another.

Jesus did not say "this thing" I command you. He said "these things" I command you. Loving one another is not a one thing we do; it is the body of everything Christ taught that we are commanded to do.

Matthew 28:20 – TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE ALL THINGS whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

All of the "things" Christ commanded are the body of law that constitutes our love for Him as shown by our love for one another. Each one individually carries the weight of His authority and is just as much a Christian duty as the supreme command to love one another. Christ commanded the assembly to meet together. Christ commanded service to each other. Christ commanded forgiveness, compassion, mercy, preaching, teaching, kindness, and every other good thing that becomes His sound doctrine as shown in the scriptures. The commandment to love one another is abundantly shown to be the law on which every other command hangs. Beginning with this command, Christ continues to unfold, to those who follow Him, the fullness of His will throughout the pages of the New Testament.

John 15:12 - This is my commandment, That ye love one another, AS I HAVE LOVED you.

Here we have additional context to the law that was given by Christ. This context is given by the words “as I have loved you”. There is an example that has been set and a standard defined by which the love for one another, that we are called to exercise, will be measured, and a form of it given by which it can be known.

1 John 3:16 - Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

If we are commanded to love as HE loved, then we will give ourselves. Steven was fulfilling this law as he laid down his life for a brother that was yet unconverted in Acts 7. His example of divine love was deemed very instrumental by the apostle Paul in his own conversion and ministry. This is the meaning and sense of the law of Christ. Our brothers may even be yet in their ignorance and alienated from God in their minds, yet by the love of Christ for them, demonstrated through us, they will be reached to the glory of His grace. The law of Christ is not non-descript in its meaning or application. For the Christian to fulfill the law that Christ gave to love, we must know HIS definition of love and not our own. Paul brings this to bear in many places in His writings to draw out the fullness of the practice of that divine gift we have been given in Christ by the indwelling Spirit. Loving one another is something God teaches to His children.

1 Thessalonians 4:9 - But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for YE YOURSELVES ARE TAUGHT OF GOD TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER.

As it relates to the gospel, we see the meaning of the Father as spoken from the mount very clearly in this sense. “This is my beloved Son. Hear Him.” Compare this to John’s summary in 1 John 3:23 as discussed previously.

1 John 3:23 - - And this is his commandment, THAT WE SHOULD BELIEVE ON THE NAME OF HIS SON Jesus Christ, AND LOVE ONE ANOTHER, as he gave us commandment.

To hear the Son, in this case, carries us all the way through the command of the Father to bring us to obedience to the Son who commanded us to love one another. While it is beyond the scope of this book to show the fullness of the

exercise of this love in obedience to Christ in all its' respects, we will here show that the abundance of teaching from Christ in all of His commands are given to expound the extent of this one great command.

Galatians 6:2 - Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

By reason of exercising ourselves in the Spirit according to the law of Christ, we are being perfected in love. The truth is, that if we loved God perfectly, we would not sin against Him.

1 John 4:17 – 18 - Herein is OUR LOVE MADE PERFECT, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

God's love **for us** is not being made perfect, seeing that it is not lacking in any part. His love is being perfected **in us**. It is our love for Him that is being perfected as we are conformed into the image of His Son.

Ephesians 1:4 - According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, THAT WE SHOULD BE HOLY AND WITHOUT BLAME BEFORE HIM IN LOVE

Christ has given commands and ordinances to the household of faith, namely His churches. If we know and believe the truth of what He has declared to be true concerning things to come, we must go on to obey from the heart that form of doctrine that has been delivered unto us.

Romans 6:17 - But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have OBEYED FROM THE HEART THAT FORM OF DOCTRINE which was delivered you.

This law is given (the revelation of Christ's Will) to those who have acknowledged the truth of His identity as the Son of God who is Lord of All, and who have, as such, received the Word of Testimony that He has declared concerning things to come.

R**evelation 12:17 – "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS of God, AND HAVE the TESTIMONY OF JESUS CHRIST."**

The struggle between flesh and spirit will remain until our Lord's appearing, but we can see the power of Christ at work as we study the commandments that He gave to those who have professed faith in Him. These commands further enable those who profess faith to make examination of themselves, which is a hard thing to do. We cannot know our own hearts, but Christ sees them perfectly. He has ordered this step of obedience to serve as a divine instrument in performing this examination.

Just as in the Old Covenant, there were tables of stone with commandments as well as ordinances of divine service in the tabernacle of witness, the New Testament also holds commandments and ordinances as well.

The Father's will is that we hear the Son and believe His testimony – to the glory of the Son. The Son's will is that we keep His commandments - to the glory of the Father.

By these means, the work of God is furthered and accomplished in His children through the sanctification of the Spirit. The law of Christ is the way in which those who have been drawn by the truth of the Father's testimony will be sanctified. Those who will not endure these commands will manifest that they did not come to Him by faith.

John 8:31 - Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, IF YE CONTINUE IN MY WORD, then are ye my disciples indeed;

The work of sanctification by the Word and Spirit teaches us that the order of God's work in the hearts of men is full of perfection and purpose. The knowledge to be gained through the application of these commandments and ordinances is not to prove anything to Christ, but that a man can by them assure his own heart before Christ and be persuaded of the faith he has professed in the hope of God's promises.

1 John 3:18 - 19 – "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but IN DEED and in truth. And HEREBY WE KNOW that we are of the truth, and shall ASSURE OUR HEARTS before him."

The love of God, which is a gift of the Spirit, is exercised in this way to

manifest its truth and presence in the life of a believer. These also serve to prove the hearts of men whether they have acknowledged the truth of Christ's authority over them. If they have, and have heard him concerning His prophetic testimony, the Spirit given them by Christ for obedience to the faith will manifest a desire for hearing from Him more. If these commandments are burdensome or grievous and drive away the professor of faith, then he can know He is yet in unbelief. This is the experience recounted to us of some in John's own day who would not abide in the things of Christ.

1 John 2:19 - They went out from us, but they were not of us; for IF THEY HAD BEEN OF US, THEY WOULD NO DOUBT HAVE CONTINUED with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

The dissonance between what a man says and what he does proves the sincerity of his own faith or proves him to be a liar. For example, Christ commands us to love one another. An examination of the presence of this love proves the sincerity and truth of the one who professes to be a believer.

1 John 4:20 – IF A MAN SAY, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

Oftentimes in Scripture men are challenged to examine the profession of their mouth with the confession of their hearts. We are often tempted to excuse ourselves from these indictments against us, but we would do better to allow them to work in us as a reproof than to excuse them away.

1 John 1:6 – IF WE SAY that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

1 John 2: 4 – 5 – HE THAT SAITH, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.

1 John 2:9 – 10 – HE THAT SAITH he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.

Saying the truth doesn't make us the children of God. **Doing the truth**

is the hallmark of Christ's workmanship in us.

James 1:22 - But BE YE DOERS OF THE WORD, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.



This work of faith with power that results in our "doing" is ordained of God in the life of a believer. Can you imagine God ordaining anything that does not actually come to pass? That is incomprehensible to any mind that is enlightened to the truth of the being of the One who is worthy of the title God.

Ephesians 2:10 - For WE ARE HIS WORKMANSHIP, created in Christ Jesus unto GOOD WORKS, which GOD HATH BEFORE ORDAINED THAT WE SHOULD WALK IN THEM.

In this humble walk with Christ during the days of our flesh, while we are still encompassed with the infirmity of the flesh through sin, we are to continue walking in the fellowship of His light. When we stumble, we have confidence that the blood of Christ is sufficient to cover our sins and that He is faithful to forgive us when we confess.

1 John 3:24 – "And he that KEEPETH HIS COMMANDMENTS dwelleth in him, and he in him. And HEREBY WE KNOW that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us."

The keeping here does not imply that we will not fall, but it means we will not cast away His commandments. That is because we are exercising faith in Him – we know that He has given them to us for our good to prove our faith, and to grow us in grace and knowledge. Those who endure unto the end in this relationship of faith, are those who are the heirs of the promise of eternal life and the gift of salvation. Not as a reward for works, but as a reward of the grace of God reckoned by the living faith of a new creature.

Romans 4:4 - 5 - Now to him that worketh is the reward *(the inheritance of the saints)* **not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is**

counted for righteousness.

We believe that it is by the grace of Jesus Christ that we who are ungodly shall be justified. We are saved by faith – a faith that endures to the end in the keeping of His commandments is a true Godly faith. Not sinless keeping, but faithful observance.

Psalm 37:22 – 24 – "For such as be blessed of him SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH; and they that be cursed of him shall be cut off. The STEPS of a good man ARE ORDERED BY THE LORD: and he delighteth in his way. THOUGH HE FALL, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD UPHOLDETH HIM with his hand."

Amen! That Psalmist knew some things about walking with His God in faith and hope of the promises. Being exercised by His law until the time appointed. Walking in the steps that have been ordered by the Lord and communicated to us through His Word and His Spirit. We are no longer under the law of Moses with its' customs and ordinances, but we do have the law of Christ with His ordinances. Jesus Christ fulfilled the old law for those who believe in Him and has committed some new things to those believers. Remember, the law is a manifestation of will. Jesus Christ has manifested His will through His law for His household.

Hebrews 3:6 - But CHRIST AS A SON OVER HIS OWN HOUSE; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.

As the divine Son, Christ has the authority to rule His own house, and He does so through the commands He has given. The apostle Paul appeals to the authority of Christ when exercising his office as apostle and assumes the obedience of the saints will naturally follow for those who are in the faith and have the Spirit of Christ.

1 Corinthians 14:37 - If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are THE COMMANDMENTS OF THE LORD.

Someone who is spiritual is someone who has experienced the new birth, possesses the Spirit of Christ, and by faith is walking in obedience to Him as risen Lord. The authority the epistles rest upon is nothing short of the authority of Christ as He chose His holy apostles to teach us these things. As

such, these epistles appeal to our faith in their teachings of obedience.

John 13:20 - Verily, verily, I say unto you, HE THAT RECEIVETH WHOMSOEVER I SEND RECEIVETH ME; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.

Paul was commissioned by Jesus Christ as His personal authoritative messenger to the Gentiles. As Christ's authoritative messenger, Paul was sent to teach with the authority of Christ Himself, and we are commanded to receive the Lord's messenger who speaks on His behalf. Those who receive these messengers are those among men for whom Christ intercedes with His Father and who are born again by the Spirit through faith.

John 17:20 - Neither pray I for these alone, but for THEM ALSO WHICH SHALL BELIEVE ON ME THROUGH THEIR WORD;

That which is born of God overcomes the world.

1 John 5:4 - For WHATSOEVER IS BORN OF GOD OVERCOMETH THE WORLD: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even OUR FAITH.

The living faith of which Christ is the author endures to the end. It brings forth fruit. It remains steadfast. This life is a trial of faith for those who profess to know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent. The faith that comes by way of the Father through the testimony of Christ does not "walk no more with Him".

John 6:66 - From that time many of his disciples went back, and WALKED NO MORE WITH HIM.

Neither does it "go out from among us".

1 John 2:19 – "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, THEY WOULD NO DOUBT HAVE CONTINUED with us: but they went out, that they might be MADE MANIFEST that they were not all of us."

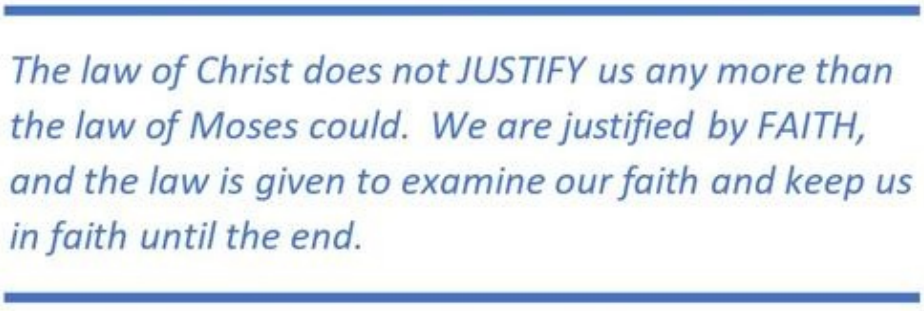
No, sir. The children of God are manifest by this testing of endurance by way of the law of Christ – and they delight in it!

Psalm 40:8 – "I DELIGHT TO DO THY WILL, O my God: yea, THY LAW IS WITHIN MY HEART."

Psalm 119:77 – "Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live: for THY LAW IS MY DELIGHT."

Romans 7:22 – "For I DELIGHT IN THE LAW OF GOD after the inward man:"

For those who have the Spirit, the Law of Christ is a light and easy yoke, but for those who come in their own strength it is just a bridge too far for men. Let me explain what the law of Christ is – the "law" was reformed after the fulfillment of the law of Moses.



Hebrews 7:12 – "For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity A CHANGE also OF THE LAW."

This reformation was affected as it relates to the carnal ordinances and customs that accompanied the law of Moses. The moral law of God has always been, and continues to be, in effect for all His creatures.

Hebrews 9:10 - Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, IMPOSED ON THEM UNTIL THE TIME OF REFORMATION.

The law of Christ reformed all of these customs and ordinances of the law; however, the law of Christ does not JUSTIFY us any more than the law of Moses could. We are justified by FAITH. The law of Christ is given to examine our faith and keep us in faith until the end. This constitutes walking in the way of the Lord. That is why He gave us His Word, His Testimony, His Commandments, and His Ordinances. Walking in faith before God is to adhere to the commandments and ordinances of the New Testament, not the Old Covenant, that are given to us in Christ, just as the Old Covenant days for the household of faith.

Luke 1:6 - And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

The commands of Christ are perfectly tailored for men to use in making examination of our faith by proving our own hearts……. Just in case, because it is possible that we have deceived ourselves. The Lord has promised to continue the work He started in us. As for men, we can easily not understand the value of His law, see it as legalistic, content ourselves with our own version of "faith", and live as we please……. Who are we listening to in all this? Certainly not to Him that calleth us.

2 Timothy 3:13 – "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived."

Once we believe on Christ as Lord and receive His perfect testimony concerning things to come, as every other saint who was ever justified by faith was ordained to do, we are then committed things that we are to be stewards of in obedience to "the faith". Yes, just like all the other saints who are our great cloud of witnesses.

Romans 16:26 – "But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the OBEDIENCE OF FAITH:"

It is time to DO SOMETHING with our faith!

Chapter 6 – Commandments and Ordinances

The commandments of Christ are a perfect display of God's wisdom and knowledge. They are both simple and profound. They are given to the household of faith for exercising and demonstrating their faith and not for righteousness of the justifying kind. There is error on both sides of this narrow way. Some say we must keep the law to be saved, which is a fatal error, and some say there is no law and only faith which is equally dangerous to our souls. What we want is the truth. The misconception is often that there is no law under Christ beyond our own definition of love, which is an error we must avoid if we are to be found in him as faithful stewards when He appears.

1 Corinthians 9:21 - To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but UNDER THE LAW TO CHRIST,) that I might gain them that are without law.

Christ has, by His own authority as Son, delivered some things unto His servants.

Matthew 25:14 & 19 – "For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and DELIVERED UNTO THEM HIS GOODS."……." After a long time THE LORD of those servants COMETH, AND RECKONETH with them."

And He intends, by His own perfect testimony, to return and reckon with His servants concerning their service to Him as it relates to the things of His household, that is to say, His church.

John 12:26 - If any man serve me, let him follow me; and WHERE I AM, THERE SHALL ALSO MY SERVANT BE: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.

Christ has put His name in His churches, His temple, His house, and those who are following Him are called to do service to Him as stewards of His household. We see examples and teaching on this truth all through the New Testament scriptures, such as this example in Antioch:

Acts 13:1 – 2 - Now there were IN THE CHURCH THAT WAS AT ANTIOCH certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been

brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. AS THEY MINISTERED TO THE LORD, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

These teachers and prophets who were serving in the church, that is to say the Lord's house, were doing their service to the Lord. So we find in every case in the New Testament. Those who are the servants of Christ are serving Him where He is: In the churches.

2 Peter 3:4 – "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, BE DILIGENT that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and BLAMELESS."

As faithful stewards while He is away, we are to be diligent in keeping His things as faithful stewards of His words, His commandments, and His ordinances.

John 14:23 - Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will KEEP MY WORDS: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

John 14:21 – "He that HATH my commandments, and KEEPETH THEM, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."

1 Corinthians 11:2 – "Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and KEEP THE ORDINANCES, as I delivered them to you."

So, the commandments we have are from the Son, whom the Father tells us we are to hear. If we have been obedient to the Father and heard the testimony of the Son, then these commandments will serve as proof that we are willing to hear the Son and as proof that we have been obedient to the will of the Father. That is why these are essential to us as those who are "in the faith", as a testimony in the earth of the witness of the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ. There are reasons why Christ asks the question of finding any faith on earth when He returns.

Luke 18:8 – "I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, SHALL HE FIND FAITH on the earth?"

This question of finding faith on the earth is not a question of will He find people who believe they are saved. It is a question of obedience to the faith as He commanded.

This question of finding faith on the earth is not a question of whether He will find people who believe they are "saved" or "Christian". It is a question of obedience to the faith as He commanded. You see, the law of Christ is given so that we can know if we love Him or not. It is a test of the affections of the heart. It tries our spirit to know the certainty of our faith.

1 John 5:2 – "BY THIS WE KNOW that we love the children of God, when we LOVE GOD, and KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS."

"Keep" in observance as the things that test the true faith of a man in his heart – where the new creature now dwells by the power and working of the Spirit. The things He has commanded are a delight to those who have come to Him by the drawing of the Father. They are not grievous to those who have believed the prophetic hope declared by the Father through the Son.

1 John 5:3 – "For THIS IS THE LOVE OF GOD, that we KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS: and his commandments are not grievous."

The love of God, that the Holy Spirit gives, manifests itself through the keeping of the law of Christ. Not the law of Moses mind you, but the law which Christ commanded of those who believe Him in faith.

1 John 3:10 - In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

This is a help to discern Truth from error and there are many adversaries and deceivers in the world to be sure. The law of Christ delights the new creature dwelling within each one who has received His prophetic testimony and delights in the hope of God, but it is grievous to the old man which is carnal in nature and hopes in this present world. It is by this test we can know who is of God and who is not – by their fruit.

Matthew 7:16 – "Ye shall KNOW them BY THEIR FRUITS. Do

men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?"

The creature who delights to do the will of Christ in hearing Him through preaching, assembling with His body, giving freely to support His purpose, being generous to others while we live in hope of His promise, and any other thing that becomes the gospel of God is a creature that is born of God. The difference is that today the law is not on tables of stone as it used to be. Today, the law is written on the hearts of those who receive the testimony of Christ by the Spirit. The law was not committed in the same written way of former times in the old covenant, it was sealed in the hearts of those who are in Christ by faith.

Isaiah 8:16 – 17 – "Bind up the testimony, SEAL THE LAW AMONG MY DISCIPLES. And I will wait upon the LORD, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I WILL LOOK FOR HIM."

OK, so you should really go read this whole chapter. Whew! Good stuff! It basically foretells of the age in which we now live – prophetic testimony. This chapter is dealing with the fact that the testimony and the law is bound in our hearts while the Lord has hidden Himself from Jacob for their disobedience to the command to hear Him. Is it the law of Moses that is written on our hearts? No, that was a pattern of heavenly things fulfilled by Christ, but we have the law of Christ.

If you ask most people what the first step of obedience for a new Christian is, they will say, "Baptism!", which would of course be a correct answer. Keeping the first and greatest commandment to hear the Son of God brings us to faith. Then we are to continue walking in the way of faith from there as a new creature in Christ. Now, baptism, which is a command of Jesus Christ, is for those who are in FAITH. Those in faith have understood the truth and made profession of their acknowledgement of faith in Christ Jesus concerning His authority and His testimony of things to come. When we look at baptism, we immediately encounter a question that the law of Christ answers. Who is supposed to baptize me now that I believe the truth and am living in hope of salvation? Can my dad baptize me? Can I baptize myself? Can my friend who led me to Christ baptize me? What is baptism for anyway? Ah, there's the rub. The local church, the New Testament temple, which the old covenant foreshadowed in a type, has been ordained by the will of Christ to be sufficient to fulfill His will.

You may have heard the common belief that God worked corporately in the Old Testament and that He works individually in the New Testament. I can see why some may think that way, but it is an incomplete understanding of the things of God. The Lord has always dealt on an individual basis as it relates to justification and the corporate basis as it relates to worship and service. In Old Testament times, the tabernacle of witness was given corporately, but the exercise of worship in it was commanded individually. It is the same for us in the New Testament.

Many people today may not have realized that the New Testament church is the house of God for our time and was established by Christ as a part of the New Testament law of Christ – in other words, it is commanded by Christ as a revelation of His will. In the same way the first house of God was commanded, so is the local church in our time. Just as all of the service to God was oriented around the house of God, so too the New Testament believer's worship is oriented around the local assembly of believers – the body of Christ. Also, there is a pattern to be followed as it relates to the law of the house. We need to spend a little time knowing these things if we are to be obedient to the faith.

When the children of Israel finished setting up the house of God, the Holy Spirit bore witness to the work by filling the tabernacle with His presence.

Exodus 40:33 – 35 – "And he reared up the court round about the tabernacle and the altar, and set up the hanging of the court gate. So Moses finished the work. Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and THE GLORY OF THE LORD FILLED THE TABERNACLE. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle."

Same with the temple of Solomon as well.

Just as the tabernacle of witness was assembled each time the latches, skins, boards, and furniture were brought together and assembled, so too in our time each time the congregation assembles with all of the various members in their particular place of service, the presence of Christ is there meeting with the congregation.

1 Kings 8:10 – 11 – "And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the LORD, So that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for THE GLORY OF THE LORD HAD FILLED THE HOUSE OF THE LORD."

As it pertains to the New Testament "house of God", the local church, we read in the scriptures of a unique event that was foreshadowed by these Old Testament events. Just as the tabernacle of witness was assembled each time the latches, skins, boards, and furniture were brought together and assembled, so too in our age each time the congregation assembles with all of the various members in their particular place of service, the presence of Christ is there meeting with the congregation. The "tent" is then taken down and the members go about their separate ways of wandering as pilgrims in the land until the next appointed time for assembly.

In the New Testament, however, there is more than one tabernacle of witness. We know this from the book of Acts. There are three separate times when congregations were assembled, and the Spirit bore witness to the inauguration of the house after the pattern of the glory of the Lord filling the house.

Acts 2:1 – 3 – "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and IT FILLED THE HOUSE WHERE THEY WERE SITTING. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

Acts 8:14 – 15 - Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost:

Acts 10:44 - While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.

These instances in Judea, Samaria, and Caesarea, teach us that we now live in a time when there are many local congregations in the earth that serve as tabernacles of witness for their respective nations, tongues, and peoples. These churches are the bodies that have been given the corporate aspects of the New Testament covenant for obedience to the faith, and through which the congregation is to carry out the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Just as circumcision was required as a seal of faith in order to be counted among the Old Testament congregation, so too, in the New Testament, baptism is required to be counted among the congregation. This is for doctrinal reasons, as the law of Christ will show – meaning it teaches us a heavenly counterpart. I discuss these in more detail in *The Gospel of the Kingdom* and will not labor here to reflect all those things. What is important here is to understand that the local assembly exists because it is a law of Christ for obedience to the faith. We see this as almost a side note in many of the scriptures where it is inferred.

Philippians 1:27 - 29 – "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye STAND FAST in one spirit, with one mind STRIVING TOGETHER FOR THE FAITH OF THE GOSPEL; And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God. For unto you IT IS GIVEN in the behalf of Christ, NOT ONLY TO BELIEVE on him, but ALSO TO SUFFER for his sake;"

It is easy to read across many passages like this and not realize what is being said. There are more things committed to us than just believing, as Paul here points out. Paul was writing to the church, the local assembly at Philippi, when he commanded them to "**STAND FAST in one spirit, with one mind STRIVING TOGETHER FOR THE FAITH OF THE GOSPEL"**.

This law of assembly is, in fact, a commanded law from scripture. As the gospel was sent out into the world, those who came to faith in the testimony, were given the law of Christ with its' commandments and ordinances. Churches were established, believers were then placed into these assemblies through baptism, and bishops and deacons were ordained. This was the fulfillment of the law as Christ had given it to His disciples.

Just as the tabernacle of witness was the instrument that enabled the observance of the law in obedience to the faith of a coming redeemer, we in our time have the same pattern of example. That was a shadow. It was an example. The tabernacle was replaced with an earthly temple (also a type), but both were referenced as the House of God.

Exodus 23:19 – "The first of the firstfruits of thy land thou shalt bring into THE HOUSE OF THE LORD thy God."

1 Kings 8:20 – "And the LORD hath performed his word that he spake, and I am risen up in the room of David my father, and sit on the throne of Israel, as the LORD promised, and have BUILT AN HOUSE FOR THE NAME OF THE LORD God of Israel."

This "house of God" on earth was to represent the coming Christ who would be among the people as the Lamb of God. We also have the House of God as the central institution of obedience to the faith in our time as well. The example it is to set in the earth is not in accordance with the law of Moses and the coming Lamb, but in accordance of the gospel of the kingdom and our gathering unto Him in the heavens as King. The house of God we represent in the local assembly today is a heavenly temple that shows the truth of the hope we profess – we are going to be with Him where He is.

The House of God is the central institution by which we are to obey the faith. It is central to our service to Christ, the keeping of the commandments, and the observance of the ordinances. It is set forth in the earth as a witness (like

Like the tabernacle of witness, each congregation is a representation of the temple that is to follow in the fulness of times – when we are done wandering in tents as pilgrims and finally are established in the place the Lord our God has chosen – New Jerusalem.

the tabernacle of witness) of both the presence of Christ on the earth today and of what Christ will do when He fulfills the Word of Promise that has been committed to us in the faith. Like the tabernacle of witness, each congregation is a representation of the temple that is to follow in the fulness of times – when we are done wandering in tents as pilgrims and finally are established in the place the Lord our God has chosen – New Jerusalem. For now, this tabernacle gathers "wherever there are two or three" that are gathered in His name.

The law of Christ teaches us this is not a universal body, but enough members to exercise obedience to the faith – which requires at least two to have an "overseer" or bishop. There are thousands of these tabernacles of witness all over the earth at this time. In the fulness of time, the saints of God are to be built together into one place. Universal church ideas attempt to take this future promised assembly and install it now in the earth – and we know when you take the Word of promise and preach it as fulfilled before its' time, it leads to ungodliness and destroys "the faith".

The church of our times is not a universal institution of which every believer is a part. There is a body of which all the saints WILL BE a part in the fulness of time, but today we are members of that body BY FAITH (which means it is something hoped for but yet unseen). We are placed into local congregations by baptism to represent the truth of that promise by FAITH. The local church is the House of God in our age and is central to all of the commandments and ordinances of this age – the age in which the body of doctrine is not the law of Moses, but the gospel of the kingdom of God.

It is interesting that there are so many scriptures in the New Testament about the local congregation being the temple of God, and yet many people are more familiar with the idea of the New Testament believer being the temple. Peter says we are each lively stones and are built up together as a house.

1 Peter 2:15 – "Ye also, AS LIVELY STONES, are BUILT UP A SPIRITUAL HOUSE, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."

He later refers to this group of lively stones as The House of God.

1 Peter 4:17 – "For the time is come that judgment must begin at THE HOUSE OF GOD: and if it first begin AT US, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?"

That makes sense so far. Spiritual stones that each have the Holy Spirit are built into one building as a local body of believers, of which each member is a part. Paul says this House of God has a high priest.

Hebrews 10:21 – "And having an high priest OVER THE HOUSE OF GOD; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us HOLD FAST THE PROFESSION OF OUR FAITH without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)

Now this is an interesting passage for us to view considering all we have learned in this book so far. Here we are told that if we have professed faith, then we are to hold it fast without wavering. We have professed a belief in the promises of God that are yet unseen, but we must endure to the end having full assurance. This is obedience to the faith in full assurance and hope of the fulfillment of the Word we have believed – notice the next few verses considering what we are seeing about the House of God in New Testament doctrine…

Hebrews 10:24 – 25 – "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: NOT FORSAKING THE ASSEMBLING OF OURSELVES TOGETHER, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."

We are told under the law of Christ that we are not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together in the body, because we are to be considerate of one another! You are not called to assemble with the church for your own sake. You are assembling out of a holy love for Christ and His body. The apostle then addresses those who fall away from this call to obedience in the faith.

Hebrews 10:26 – 31 – "For if we SIN WILLFULLY after that we

have RECEIVED the KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised MOSES" LAW died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of HOW MUCH SORER PUNISHMENT, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people."

This is crystal clear for anyone with ears to hear. Assembling with the local body is the law for those who are in the faith – the law of Christ. If this delights you, that is a good witness of your spirit. If it is a grievous burden, then the law did what it is intended to do – show you the sin of your heart and call you to repentance. Paul was admonishing these believers to endure in the faith until the end, in obedience, because Christ will judge all men. Paul did not seem to be too casual about this point. Like we have seen, the Lord will JUDGE His people. He is looking for FAITH in His people. Paul clearly here correlates the abandonment of the assembly as a transgression of the commandment under the New Covenant! This must be understood by people today as we observe the many who are destroying the faith with their errors.

There is no universal church in the earth today. It is a future promise. We are come unto it by faith.

There is no universal church in the earth today. There are only individual churches – plural. The future assembly is a promise to the saints`. We are come unto it by faith. The churches today in many ways resemble the tabernacle of witness in the times before the temple at Jerusalem was built. That tabernacle had no certain home until the Lord God chose a place and built a permanent home for it in Zion by the Son of David. Any true hope of being a member of the House of God, that we foreshadow in a type, rests with those who are of a faith that is holding fast!

Hebrews 3:6 – "But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, IF WE HOLD FAST the confidence and the rejoicing of the HOPE

firm unto THE END."

Christ is a son over His own house, and we will be partakers of the promises spoken of in the Word of God that teach us of the great congregation of saints in the world to come IF, mind you, IF we are among those who KEPT THE FAITH!!!! If we are steadfast unto the end. If we are not moved away from the hope of the gospel by the trials and allure of the world. If we are not offended for the name and testimony of Christ. These are the overcomers of the world by the victory that is ours through faith in Christ.

Our future could not be more certain if we are in Christ by faith and have His Spirit. The question is, are we? Our theology won't save us. Only Christ can do that. If we don't have the Spirit, we aren't of His body. However, if we do possess the seal of the Spirit, we will by faith delight in being a part of His body. That is what the law of Christ teaches us.

Eternal security is a wonderful doctrine, and I used to teach it as "once saved always saved", until I began to see the doctrine of salvation more clearly. Now it is clear to me that true faith will be separated from false professors and pretenders of the faith. The difference is that those who have true faith have His Spirit – which is the only promise we can receive NOW. More accurate to me is the statement "Once you receive His Spirit, He will be with you until the end". These laws of Christ, given for obedience to the faith, examine the spirit of a man so that WE CAN KNOW if we have His Spirit or not. We are better to acknowledge the truth now and get on with the examination from God's Word than to comfort our hearts with vain words and theories about theology. If you are not interested in faithfulness to the institution of the local church at a bare minimum, Paul clearly says you ought to be concerned when you stand before the judge as one who has willingly violated His commandment that was sent to teach you of His will.

Carrying this idea of the New Testament temple forward, we continue to see how the apostles taught of these things. They taught that the Lord is building Himself a house, something men cannot do.

Acts 7:48 – "Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet,"

We who are of faith are joined to local assemblies by baptism as we live in obedience to the faith, waiting for the promise. This doctrine of the New

Testament temple being the center of obedience and service to Christ, was clear to these men who taught all those who believed the testimony of Christ concerning the coming kingdom of God.

1 Timothy 3:15 – "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in THE HOUSE OF GOD, WHICH IS THE CHURCH of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."

In 1 Corinthians 3, Paul is addressing the church at Corinth – a specific assembly of believers that had elders ruling over the members to teach them in obedience to the faith. He has this to say.

1 Corinthians 3:9 & 16 – 17 – "For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, YE ARE GOD'S BUILDING…… Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."

Here we see also that the building is the House of God, and that the individual believers are members of that structure. Paul was speaking to a specific body of members – the church at Corinth. We are to partake of the obedience to the faith by taking the place to which Christ has called us as members in a local body. A body that has the authority to carry out His work. A body that is properly instituted on authority from His Word, being the child of another church. A body made up of members who are the lively stones that make up the structure of that building which is God's house. A body that has overseers and a body whose head is Christ Himself, not another agency, board, convention, or committee. Each local congregation, which He will govern by His Word and His Spirit, is to rest under the authority of Christ Himself,.

There is the spiritual house being built over time in the heavens and spoken of by promise, and there is ALSO, Yes, ALSO the habitation of God now in this time, which the tabernacle of witness of old times were patterned after.

This is the

building process that Christ has prescribed for the obedience to the faith. That is because it is intended to serve as witness to this world of what He has promised to do in the time to come – just exactly like the congregation of old under the law of Moses. We portray an image of the heavenly things we profess by faith through our observance of the ordinances and commandments given to the local church.

Ephesians 2:19 - 22 – "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord In whom YE ALSO ARE BUILDED TOGETHER FOR AN HABITATION OF GOD through the Spirit."

There is the spiritual house being built over time in the heavens and spoken of by promise, and there is ALSO, yes, ALSO the habitation of God now in this time. The believers at Pentecost were added by the Lord to this spiritual building at Jerusalem as the first congregation of New Covenant believers were being assembled by the Holy Ghost.

Acts 2:41 – "Then they that gladly RECEIVED HIS WORD were BAPTIZED: and the same day there WERE ADDED UNTO THEM about three thousand souls."

Those who believed the testimony of the kingdom (declaring that it is Jesus who was made Lord over all things and that we are to be delivered from this generation by faith in Him) were added to the congregation of believers by baptism in obedience to the faith they now possessed.

Acts 2:32 – 33 – "THIS JESUS hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore BEING BY THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD EXALTED, and HAVING RECEIVED OF THE FATHER THE PROMISE OF THE HOLY GHOST, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear."

The sending of the Spirit according to His promise affirmed the truth of the gospel of the kingdom to the apostles and served as witness that Christ had, in fact, ascended to the heavens and was now seated at the right hand of God with all power and authority. This was a down-payment on the rest of the

prophetic testimony they had received by faith.

Ephesians 1:13 – 14 – "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is THE EARNEST OF OUR INHERITANCE UNTIL the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."

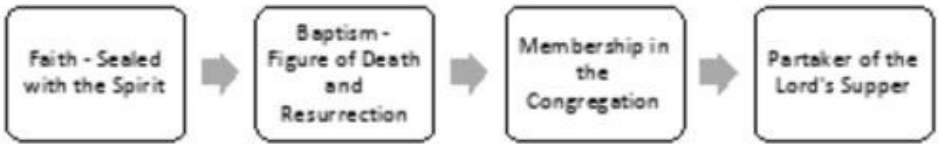
The joint-heirs are given this down payment to preserve them and seal them unto the day when the inheritance is to be received. We are heirs of eternal life, the kingdom of God, salvation, the grace of life, all by the grace of God and the working of Faith in us by His Word and the Holy Spirit.

Romans 8:17 – "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."

The baptism of these believers in adding them to the congregation is an earthly pattern of a heavenly truth – which is why it was committed to them as doctrine. In the congregation of saints in heaven in the fulness of time, only those who have been raised in the resurrection of the just will be members. The ordinance of baptism is given to represent the death of Christ, our death in Him for those who are in Him by faith, and the hope of the resurrection – unfulfilled testimony of promise. In order to be in the resurrection of the just, one must first be in faith towards God. That is the requirement of the law of the Spirit of life in Christ.

Romans 8:1 - 2 – "There is therefore now no condemnation TO THEM WHICH ARE IN CHRIST JESUS, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE IN CHRIST JESUS hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

The earthly pattern was committed to men by the ordinance of baptism to be observed in the way that represents the pattern of truth. An individual must have a testimony of knowledge in fulfilled testimony, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, faith in the promises to come, and then may be baptized by immersion – a type of death, burial, and resurrection. That individual is then considered a member of the local congregation on earth, just as in the



heavenly pattern it represents.

It is by obedience to this law of baptism that we are "added unto" the local congregation of believers. We become members of that body to live in FAITH of the true hope in our hearts of being gathered into the body of saints in the fulness of time. We have come to that heavenly congregation by faith – which means it is not here yet. It is a promise.

Hebrews 12:22 – "But YE ARE COME unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND CHURCH OF THE FIRSTBORN, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel."

How have we come to all these things that are in view in this passage and to Jesus Christ Himself? By faith. We have not seen them yet, but only heard about them by the preaching of the Word and have been persuaded of the truth of them. In the meantime, the law of Christ tells us to be obedient to the faith and to live in hope of them by observing his doctrine.



Once an individual is a member of a local assembly through baptism, they are then allowed to partake of the Lord's supper, which is a type of the coming kingdom and our presence at the Lord's table. All these ordinances must be observed with

an eye to the patterns they represent if they are to teach men doctrine – which is the whole point.

They also cannot be obeyed by believers without submitting to the authority of a local congregation. The ordinances are committed to the local church and not to any individual believer. Being baptized without ordained authority violates the truth of the doctrine of the faith – it violates the pattern of the true heavenly things it was sent to preserve and teach. Taking communion apart from an authoritative local assembly does the same. Just as the service of God was inextricably woven into the temple for the Old Testament congregation, the same is true for New Testament saints. The service to Christ and obedience to the faith carries commandments that are impossible for men to observe outside of the institution God ordained for these things.

Christ also taught these same things in saying that His servants will be where He is and that if any man serve Him, the Father will honor that man. We know that he in fact referenced "servants" here to specifically make the point that this is a reference to this present world and our life in the flesh. That is where the local assembly comes into view. The church is where Christ promises to be on earth in this age. The local assembly is His temple and house ordained to be so by the law of Christ and He gathers together with them in Spirit when they gather unto His name in faith.

The service comes now in this life by faith as we live in hope of the promised honor and glory with Him in the world to come as one of the sons of God – which we are……by faith.

John 12:26 – "If any man serve me, let him follow me; and WHERE I AM, THERE SHALL ALSO MY SERVANT BE: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour."

Our service to Him is rendered now in this life by faith as we live in hope of the promised honor and glory with Him in the world to come as one of the sons of God – which we are……by faith. The fulfillment of that promise waits as well. The day when the sons of God are to be manifest, or brought forth, awaits His appearing. For now, let us serve Him by faith where He is – in

the temple of the local assembly.

1 Timothy 3:15 – "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in THE HOUSE OF GOD, which IS THE CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD, the pillar and ground of the truth."

While the Old Testament congregation used to gather into the temple to meet with God in worship and to do His service, the New Testament congregation gathers unto Him by faith in Spirit. This obedience in the local congregation is obedience to the faith. The gathering of the saints unto Christ on a regular basis is intended to show forth the faith, our hope and expectation, of our gathering unto Christ when He appears. These congregations have been planted all around the world for witnesses to the nations and the world. The ordinances and doctrine committed to them is to preserve the truth of the faith in pictures – like the prophets of old.

Exodus 18:20 – "And thou shalt teach them ordinances and laws, and shalt shew them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do."

It is not that we are without law, but have received the testimony, law, and ordinances of Christ. Disobedience can still take many shapes and forms under the law of Christ, which is why we are yet to lean on Him the more closely and to walk in fellowship of the truth with Him. All disobedience ultimately relates to the command to hear the Son. This is true whether it is a disobedience to believe the testimony in faith concerning Jesus Christ, a disobedience to submit to baptism, a disobedience to faithfully assemble with the body of Christ, a disobedience to submit to the authority of the pastors, elders, and overseers in the local assembly, a disobedience to love our brethren in the church and esteem them above ourselves, a disobedience to make things right with our brethren in love and patience, a disobedience to forsake the love of the things of this world in favor of the world to come and the kingdom of God, a disobedience to pay our tithes unto the Lord, a disobedience to study to shew ourselves approved, a disobedience to obey the faith we have professed before men by giving the glory to Jesus Christ for His goodness towards us. All of these forms of disobedience challenge the saints to examine their faith, repent of their sin, and seek His grace for strength to follow Him in obedience.

1 John 1:8 - 9 – "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."

Our failures in all these areas remind us of the grace He has shown us, by which we are saved. It is not of our works to be saved, but there must necessarily be fruit of that delivering Spirit working in our lives. The ordinances are to be kept and taught by local churches to hold forth the truth while we wait for His appearing. As we exercise obedience to these holy ordinances by faith in Christ, we live out in a picture the faith we have in His Word by promise – just like the saints of old under the law of Moses who did the same. They pictured for us the coming Lamb. We picture the returning King. The church is the pillar and ground that is to hold up the truth as a witness of what God has promised to do by His Son Jesus Christ in the time to come.

The churches are the candlesticks onto which the Lord has placed His light. If you are in the faith and have the light His prophetic testimony gives to men, Christ will place you in a local assembly, His candlestick, where people can see the light.

1 Timothy 3:15 – "….the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."

The churches are the candlesticks onto which the Lord has placed His light. If you are in the faith and have the light which His prophetic testimony gives to men, Christ will place you in a local assembly, His candlestick, where people can see the light. The local church is set forth in the world to show in a pattern the truth of the testimony of Christ concerning His doctrine in the ordinances and commandments we have been given.

Luke 8:16 – "No man, when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth it under a bed; but SETTETH IT ON A CANDLESTICK, that they which enter in may see the light."

Revelation 1:20 – "….The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and THE SEVEN CANDLESTICKS which thou sawest ARE THE SEVEN CHURCHES."

Each assembly is a candlestick, and each believer is placed into it by

baptism through the authority of a local assembly. He has preserved these hopes of His promise concerning things to come in the body of doctrine we practice and preach. Let us be faithful stewards of His things and rejoice with Him at His appearing, as those who have confidence toward Him, that we have been obedient children - children that have been obedient to His will, obedient to His promises, and obedient to the faith.

Jude 1:3 – "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should EARNESTLY CONTEND for THE FAITH which was once delivered unto the saints."

Let us continue in the faith, grounded and settled, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him.

1 John 2:28 – "And now, little children, ABIDE IN HIM; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him AT HIS COMING."

In obedience to the faith, as all the early saints were taught, you ought to find a sound, Christ honoring, Biblically established, authoritative, Bible preaching, New Covenant knowing, prophecy teaching, ordinance observing, regenerate membership requiring, scripture preaching, Holy Spirit ministering, local, physical, and tangible body of assembled believers who are living in the same faith and expectancy of Christ's soon coming kingdom where you can learn obedience to the faith that you now know and profess.

For more on the obedience to the faith as it pertains to our service to Christ, the local assembly is the place to be. The law of Christ teaches us to be in obedience to those who have the rule over us in the Lord. It also teaches those who have the oversight to serve as Christ, for the benefit of the people and not themselves.

In obedience to the faith, as all the early saints were taught, you ought to find yourself as a member of a sound, Christ honoring, Biblically established, authoritative, Bible preaching, New Covenant knowing, prophecy teaching, ordinance observing, regenerate membership requiring, scripture preaching, local, physical, and tangible body of assembled believers who are living in the same faith and expectancy of Christ's soon coming kingdom where you can learn obedience to the faith that you know and profess. That will save me a lot of pages of writing, provide the edification you need, minister grace to the hearts of those who love Jesus Christ and seek His glory, and set your feet on the way that Christ requires to be truly blessed – not as the world counts blessedness, but in the world to come. Such is the world He has promised to His saints - the world over which He will reign with His saints forever. I hope to see you there to the praise of His glory.

May the Lord grant us wisdom in all things as we seek Him in truth, humility, and sincerity. May we by His grace and goodness overcome until the end when we are to receive the hope that He has authored within us by His Word.

Revelation 3:5 – "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels."

And as our Lord lovingly spoke to and warned the churches in Asia almost 2,000 years ago, so He says to all now. Our final word of admonition.

Revelation 3:6 – "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

In Closing…

Nahum 1:2 – 8 - God is jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and is furious; the LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies. The LORD is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked: the LORD hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet. He rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry, and drieth up all the rivers: Bashan languisheth, and Carmel, and the flower of Lebanon languisheth. The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned at his presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein. Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him. The LORD is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him. But with an overrunning flood he will make an utter end of the place thereof, and darkness shall pursue his enemies.

For those who have come to know and love the Lord Jesus Christ, there is an important aspect of His lordship that we should consider in closing. The word "Lord" conveys the meaning of "Master", which is a true and right understanding.

John 13:13 - Ye call me Master and Lord: and YE SAY WELL; FOR SO I AM.

The title Lord in the New Testament is taken from the Greek word "kyrios", which means:

1. he to whom a person or thing belongs, about which he has power of deciding; master, lord
    a. the possessor and disposer of a thing
        i. the owner; one who has control of the person, the master
        ii. in the state: the sovereign, prince, chief, the Roman emperor
    b. is a title of honour expressive of respect and reverence, with which servants greet their master

c. this title is given to: God, the Messiah

Importantly, the relationship that the believer has with the Lord is also expressed in the English word “church”. The church, which is the Lord’s body, is identified in scripture as those of whom Christ is the head, just as the man is the head of the woman in a marriage.

1 Corinthians 11:3 - But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.

The etymology of the word “church” provides us with the same understanding of the relationship that the kyrios (Lord) has with His ekkl ē sia (assembly). The English word for church comes from an old English word “circe”. This is the same word that was in Old Saxon kirika, Old Norse kirkja, Old Frisian zerke, Middle Dutch kerke, Dutch kerk, Old High German kirihha, German Kirche. This word was borrowed from an unrecorded Gothic word in the Greek kyriake (oikia), which is taken from “kyrios” which means "ruler, lord". Thus, the English word for “church” is taken from language that particularly references the “Lord’s people” or the “Lord’s house”.

As seen in the passage from Nahum above, there is a reality to both the goodness and the severity of the Lord God. Both realities find their expression in Christ and are commonly taught throughout scripture. As we have discussed already, those who refuse the lordship and authority that has been given to Jesus by the Father are to be destroyed by Him in severe judgement, and those who acknowledge the Father’s will are to receive His great mercy and goodness. I want to briefly consider the latter of these two realities as it speaks to the relationship that the Lord Jesus Christ has with those who put their trust in Him. Our own human view of lordship has been quite twisted through the flesh, our natural desires and thinking, and bad personal experiences we have had with others in authority who abused the power given to them.

Matthew 20:25 – 27 - But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant:

In our view, the term “lord” typically conjures up the image of someone

who has many people under his command who do his bidding. This is not a bad view or definition on its own, but our human nature tends to introduce a negative connotation with that idea. We are prone to think that the lord will bid people to do things that are exclusively in his own interests and that those interests will not necessarily consider the interests of the servants at all. We are likely prone to think this way because we are often prone to act in this way. The prospect that there is a "lord" who loves his servants as much as himself seems far-fetched to the natural mind, thus we would not necessarily trust their leadership explicitly. This is exactly the problem with our lack of trust in Christ as men. Faith requires that we place our trust in Him in a very practical way: through obedience. Our Lord is One who is infinitely knowing, wise, and good to say the least. We would do well to consider His good counsels. One noticeable fact that continues to present itself when we pursue obedience to the faith is the fact that we cannot obey very well, being oft hindered in the flesh. These failures continue to prove our own need for mercy and grace from the one who we are seeking to follow. They should also keep us at safe distance from the sin of self-righteousness that results from trusting in our own efforts and boastings.

Ephesians 2:8 – 9 - For BY GRACE ARE YE SAVED THROUGH FAITH; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.

The works we have been called to do in obedience are an important exercise and expression of our faith. Salvation is a gift of God to those who believe. The fact is that if we do believe, it is because God has given us that gift and thereby excluded any boasting on our part. The works that have been committed to us are commanded for the exercise of that faith we have been given as we have previously declared and shown.

James 2:18 - Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.

Works are a manifestation of what we believe in the heart. All of these things are given to us to demonstrate a particular relationship that we have with Jesus Christ as our Lord. As we close, the point I want to make is this: The relationship that best demonstrates the lordship that Jesus Christ exercises over those who put their trust in Him is likened in scripture to that of a loving husband. We do not often think of a husband/wife relationship in this way, and

in our own day it is likely viewed as reprehensible to many. The offensive nature of this view to some simply demonstrates the fact that we, as fallen creatures, find the truth to be repugnant to our natural minds and senses. As fallen creatures, we all want to be our own lord, and we find the idea of having a master repulsive. Regardless, the scriptures are plain in their meaning that the husband is the lord of the wife. Apparently, the holy women of old times who trusted in God did not share the popular, modern view.

1 Peter 3:5 - 6 - For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: Even as SARA OBEYED ABRAHAM, CALLING HIM LORD: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.

The term "lord" is used in this way to describe the relationship of a wife to a husband. The question to be asked is not "Is this true?", but rather "Since this is true, what kind of husband do you have?". Paul uses this same type of language in several places to describe the union of the believer to Christ, in which case Christ is the "husband" who is "Lord", and the "wife" is the believer who is joined to Him in spirit.

1 Corinthians 6:16 – 27 - What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. But HE THAT IS JOINED UNTO THE LORD IS ONE SPIRIT.

A marriage is a union of two into one. A joining together of flesh with flesh in marriage of men and women is intended to demonstrate the spiritual union of spirit with spirit for those who are joined to Christ. As a wife is joined to a husband and that husband is then the head of the wife, the relationship we have with the Lord Jesus Christ is the same. I say this to remind us that the relationship we have with the Lord is a loving one. It is of a supremely loving character that finds the husband laying down his own life for the wife. The problem with many marriages today is that carnal husbands do not understand the type of Christ and the call to lay down their own life for the good of their wives. This holy union of love was prefigured in Adam. He is called in scripture "the figure of Him who was to come". Adam died to maintain the union he had been given with his wife. Adam's fall, by joining his wife in her sin and sharing in her death, was a fall of love that prefigured Christ's loving death for His own bride. Contrary to Adam's death however, Christ Jesus has

brought His bride to life by His righteousness that she might be joined to Him in life. This supreme act of love on the part of Jesus Christ is a demonstration of His great love for those who are joined to Him in the Spirit by faith. It is imperative that we conclude this study with a full realization that the Lord we serve, we serve in love. As the apostle John says:

1 John 4:19 - We love him, because he first loved us.

In his epistle to the Romans, Paul is developing this understanding in the minds of those saints as it pertains to the husbandry of Jesus Christ. This is the form of "lordship" that He lovingly exercises over those who trust in Him. As we have seen in Nahum, He is also Lord over the unbelieving, the abominable, the wicked, and faithless. However, the type of lordship He exercises over the wicked who hate Him is that of a king who is putting down a rebellion and insurrection within His realm. In the case of the unrepentant sinner, He is a Lord who punishes the wicked. For those who put their trust in Him, we can have confidence in the goodness of His love. This is the two-fold nature of the lordship of Christ. There are those who love Him and are of His body, and there are those enemies who are under His feet. You are either "of His body" or "under His feet". These are representative of the two eternal destinies of men.

Ephesians 1:22 – 23 - And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

This relationship of husband and wife shows the intimacy of the relationship we have with Christ, the confidence we have in His character and nature, and the loving obedience we render to the one who died for us that we might live unto Him.

Romans 7:4 - Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; THAT YE SHOULD BE MARRIED TO ANOTHER, even TO HIM WHO IS RAISED FROM THE DEAD, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

As believers, we have been joined to Christ in spirit and are now "married" or joined together with Him as a wife is joined to her husband. He is our head. He is our authority. He is our provider, protector, teacher, caregiver, and our beloved. A full-formed view of the lordship of Christ must encompass the understanding of the loving nature that exists between Christ and those who

are joined to Him. Yes, there is obedience, reverence, faithfulness, and every other service due to our Lord, but it is rendered in love as a wife who would seek to serve a husband who had rendered to her every effort of his own service in love. The love for Christ that works in us by faith is the proof of true relationship with Him.

Matthew 12:50 - For WHOSOEVER SHALL DO THE WILL OF MY FATHER which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

There is that phrase again… There is plenty of evidence in our day that these truths need be taught and understood. There are many professed believers who refuse to submit to the truth and teachings of Jesus Christ, and yet insist that they do in fact believe in Him. These things not only ought not to be, but they simply cannot be. It is not possible to be in Christ and not have Him as your head. It is not possible to believe in Jesus and to not believe the truth that He is Lord. It is not possible to have His Spirit and not be drawn into a deeper love for Him. It is not possible to have a love for Him and continue to neglect His will and commands which are given by Him in love.

1 John 2:3 - And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

There are a number of encounters that I have had that come to mind as I conclude this book. I have encountered people living in the most open and fierce form of rebellion to the teachings of Christ that are convinced they will be welcomed into glory with Christ because they have professed to simply believe that “Jesus loves them”. When I point out to them that the promise of eternal glory and delight is not given in scripture to “those whom God loves”, they seem somewhat taken back. The fact is that the eternal glories of the heavens are prepared for “those that love God”.

1 Corinthians 2:9 - But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which GOD HATH PREPARED FOR THEM THAT LOVE HIM.

This form of doctrine is consistently seen throughout scripture:

Romans 8:28 - And we know that all things work together for good to THEM THAT LOVE GOD, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

1 Corinthians 8:3 - But IF ANY MAN LOVE GOD, the same is known of him.

Deuteronomy 7:9 - Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with THEM THAT LOVE HIM and keep his commandments to a thousand generations;

Nehemiah 1:5 - And said, I beseech thee, O LORD God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for THEM THAT LOVE HIM and observe his commandments:

Obviously, we could go on at some length here, but the message to men is clear enough.

Joshua 23:11 - Take good heed therefore unto yourselves, THAT YE LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD.

This, of course, is the posing of a very different question to man. The question is not only "do you believe God loves you?", the question is more precisely "Does your belief in God's love provoke you to love God?". Those whom I have met that put their confidence in a form of knowledge that rests ***only*** upon the notion that God loves them, typically respond with great thoughtfulness and concern when they realize that the promise of God is given to ***those who respond to His love*** and not given to those who only hear about it. Paul is intensely concerned with this reality in his inspired writings:

1 Corinthians 16:22 - If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema (cursed or damned) **Maranatha (**our Lord comes**).**

Those whom I have met that put their confidence in a form of knowledge that rests only upon the notion that God loves them, typically respond with great thoughtfulness and concern when they realize that the promise of God is given ***to those who respond to His love*** *and not given to those who only hear about it.*

The curse of God's damnation rests upon every soul that does not love the Lord Jesus Christ. That is a sobering reality in the modern religious context. How do we know if we love God? Loving God means to love the one that He sent and is begotten of Him, which is Jesus Christ,

1 John 5:1 - Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and EVERY ONE THAT LOVETH HIM THAT BAGAT (God) **LOVETH HIM ALSO THAT IS BEGOTTEN OF HIM** (Christ).

How then do we know if we love Jesus Christ? Loving Jesus Christ is demonstrated by obedience to Him in the things which He has commanded us:

John 14:15 – IF YE LOVE ME, KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS.

1 John 5:3 - For THIS IS THE LOVE OF GOD, THAT WE KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS: and HIS COMMANDMENTS ARE NOT GRIEVOUS (i.e. they are a light yoke…).

The admonition to keep ourselves in the love of God means to continue in His commandments in faith and love:

John 15:10 – IF YE KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS, YE SHALL ABIDE IN MY LOVE; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

Keeping ourselves in His love by seeking to obey His commands shows to us our own sinful nature and demonstrates our failure to love Him as much as we should. The product of this working of faith with power is repentance and a hopeful looking for deliverance from this body of death, as well as an acute awareness of the need for God's mercy upon us as creatures who can no more keep the law of Christ than could keep the law of Moses or the law of Adam.

Jude 1:21 – KEEP YOURSELVES IN THE LOVE OF GOD, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

All of the admonitions from Christ that are taught to us by His apostles ought to be received today with this readiness of mind. Jesus Christ still speaks to those who put their trust in Him, and He speaks as a loving husband who has communicated His will and exercised His authority. He communicates many commands to us in His word, such as: Forsake all that you have and follow me… Be ye therefore perfect… Love your enemies… Give to him that asketh of thee… Resist not evil… Bless them that curse you… Lay not up for yourselves treasure upon earth… Seek ye first the kingdom of God... Beware of false prophets… Take my yoke upon you… Take heed what ye hear… Have faith in God… Forgive if ye have ought against any, and many other such holy commands given to His people. If we have heeded the holy commands to hear, repent, and believe, then let us also go on to perfection in these precious expressions of His love for us.

Psalm 119:60 – 61 - I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies. I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.