

The Gospel of The Kingdom

A series of 11 Bible Studies on Major Themes In The Kingdom of God



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Topics

- 1. What Is The Kingdom of God?**
- 2. The Throne of God**
- 3. The Holy Spirit**
- 4. Parables Of The Kingdom**
- 5. Prayers Of The Kingdom**
- 6. The Cross & The Kingdom 1 - OT vs NT**
- 7. The Cross & The Kingdom 2 - The Cross and The Blood**
- 8. The Powers Of The Kingdom: Prayer and Spiritual Gifts**
- 9. Walking In The Kingdom (N.T. ethics)**
- 10. The Kingdom Is Opposed**
- 11. The Kingdom Is Victorious**

Introduction

Matthew 24:14 *And this gospel of the kingdom shall be proclaimed in all the world as a witness to all nations. And then the end shall come.*

Jesus and the apostles taught a great deal about the Kingdom of God, how to enter in to it, how to have an inheritance in the kingdom, and how to understand the privileges and powers of the Kingdom of Heaven.

However this topic has been neglected today, since Christianity has long been regarded merely as a philosophy of life, rather than as involving a complex actual spiritual Kingdom with a throne, angels, laws, judgments and so on.

Once we start to grasp the teaching of the Kingdom it throws new light on the legal power of the Throne, the spiritual powers of the Christian, the effectiveness of prayer, the inestimable value of God's great mercy to us upon the Cross, the amazing power of the blood, and the vast plans and purposes that God is working out as He saves and sanctifies His children.

Kingdoms have laws, festivals, events and even wars (such as the spiritual battles of the End Times) and kingdoms have also kings, princes, officials, nobles and various levels of authority. The Bible only partially reveals this to us; however we can know enough and see enough to work out that God is a complex Being Who is working on a vast and complex agenda, the purpose of which is to create a new heaven and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

2 Peter 3:10-13 ESV *But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. (11) Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, (12) waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! (13) But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.*

As Christians we are a big part of God's agenda since He has called us to share His nature and His glory, to dwell with Him, and to be where He is. As the redeemed we will even rule and reign with Jesus in His soon coming Kingdom.

Revelation 1:5-6 ESV *and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood (6) and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

Revelation 5:9-10 ESV *And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, (10) and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth."*

So we see that the topic of the Kingdom of God runs throughout the New Testament as one of its most distinctive themes; from Jesus' "*Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!*" (Matthew 4:17) to the final declaration of Revelation 22:5 *And there will be no night there. And they need no lamp, or light of the sun; for the Lord God gives them light. And they will reign forever and ever.*

The concept of the Kingdom brings other ideas into play such as: community, love, justice, purpose, law, history, conquest, reigning, Lordship and citizenship. When the Scriptures call us "citizens of Heaven" it is not a mere philosophical concept. Christians are actually citizens of the Heavenly Zion, which is an enormous and lively community of spiritual beings:

Hebrews 12:22-24 ESV *But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, (23) and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, (24) and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.*

And this community, this Heavenly Zion is a community with a purpose which we see glimpses of these purposes in the following two passages in the book of Revelation:

Revelation 11:15-18 ESV *(15) Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever." (16) And the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshiped God, (17) saying, "We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, who is and who was, for you have taken your great power and begun to reign. (18) The nations raged, but your wrath came, and the time for the dead to be judged, and for rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints, and those who fear your name, both small and great, and for destroying the destroyers of the earth."*

Revelation 19:5-8 ESV *And from the throne came a voice saying, "Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, small and great." (6) Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. (7) Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; (8) it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure" — for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.*

So the very idea of the Kingdom of God / Kingdom of Heaven implies that Christianity is NOT merely a static philosophy, such as a set of truths and principles that can be written down in theology texts. Rather Christianity is a living Kingdom of actual spiritual beings, and is full of spiritual events (such as the proclamation of the gospel) and which advances in the face of conflict.

Christians are not just those human beings who ascribe to certain truths. Christians are new creations. Christians are spiritually alive. Christians have eternal life in an eternal kingdom. And that Kingdom has a King, a history, and a purpose. Thus Christianity is primarily about actively living life in God's Kingdom where the law is love since God Himself is love.

About The Studies

The "Good News Of The Kingdom" series is designed to help Christians to understand the great concepts of the Christian faith taught from a "Kingdom perspective".

The 11 bible studies cover the basic teaching about the Kingdom of God: What Is The Kingdom of God?, The Throne, The Holy Spirit, The Kingdom Parables, Kingdom Prayers, What The Cross Did (O.T. vs N.T.), The Cross and the Blood, The Powers of the Kingdom (Prayer & Spiritual Gifts), Walking In The Kingdom (N.T. Ethics), The Kingdom Opposed, and The Final Arrival of the Kingdom.

The studies build one upon the other, so it is important to study them in the order shown.

They are meant for small group study and contain tightly summarized teaching plus study questions and scenario questions where participants have to work out how to apply the teaching to a real life situation.

Theologically this bible study series is Charismatic/Pentecostal and emphasizes life in the Spirit.

It clarifies many key puzzling concepts in New Testament Christianity and people say it is very helpful.

You may issue your own Certificates of Completion.

Each class takes between an hour and a quarter and an hour and a half and you should encourage plenty of discussion.

Having 15 minutes or more of worship beforehand can be inspirational.

You can book Rev. John Edmiston to speak at your church or conference. **Just send him an email.**



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Kingdom of God – Definition, Overview and Introduction

Kingdom – Greek *Basileia*: *royalty*, that is, (abstractly) *rule*, or (concretely) a *realm* (literally or figuratively): - kingdom, + reign. God’s moral and spiritual rulership, through Christ, over born-again believers, their families and their churches and eventually, after Christ’s return, over the entire world. It is trans-local and trans-cultural, includes Earth and Heaven, Jew and Gentile, male and female, and is found in the local church meeting place, fields, fishing boats, prayer places by rivers, bible colleges, house churches and many ordinary locations where God turns up. It is not manifestly present amidst idolatry, greed, wickedness and corruption.

Kingdom of God and Kingdom of Heaven are the same, with a slightly different emphasis, “of Heaven” prioritizes the spiritual nature and throne-room authority of God, “of God” emphasizes the broader aspects, including the Christian’s inheritance of the Kingdom. Also Kingdom of Heaven is mainly used in the gospel of Matthew. because of the Jewish intended audience.

There are 150 verses in the New Testament that use the word Kingdom, of which 4 refer to the kingdom of the Beast, one to human kingdoms fighting each other, one to a kingdom divided against itself, and the other 144 verses refer to the Kingdom of God either directly or in parables.

Much of the concern in the gospels is with “entering” the Kingdom of God, much of the concern in the epistles is in “inheriting” the Kingdom of God (since their audience is baptized Christians). The difference between entering and inheriting can be seen in 1 Corinthians 3:10-15 which concludes with:

(1 Corinthians 3:14-15) If anyone's work which he built remains, he shall receive a reward. (*inheritance*) (15) If anyone's work shall be burned up, he shall suffer loss. But he shall be saved, (*entrance*) yet so as by fire.

The Spiritual Nature Of The Kingdom of God

(Luke 17:20,21) And being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered and said, The kingdom of God does not come with observation. Nor shall they say, Lo here! or, behold, there! For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst.

(John 3:3) Jesus answered and said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

(John 3:5) Jesus answered, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless a man is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

(John 18:36) Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would fight so that I might not be delivered to the Jews. But now My kingdom is not from here.

(Romans 14:17) for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

(1 Corinthians 15:50) And I say this, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does corruption inherit incorruption.

Discussion Question: *How does the spiritual nature of the Kingdom of God affect how Christians view progress and politics esp. in the light of John 18:36?*

The Kingdom God Is Ruled By Jesus, Who Is Co-Regent With The Father

In most ancient Kingdoms there came a time when the Father and the Son ruled at the same time, often for many years. This is very well set out in the following section from Colossians;

Colossians 1:13-20 For He has delivered us from the power of darkness and has translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son; (14) in whom we have redemption through His blood, the remission of sins. (15) who is the image of the invisible God, the First-born of all creation. (16) For all things were created in Him, the things in the heavens, and the things on the earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers, all things were created through Him and for Him. (17) And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. (18) And He is the Head of the body, the church, who is the Beginning, the First-born from the dead, that He may be pre-eminent in all things. (19) For it pleased the Father that in Him all fullness should dwell. (20) And through Him having made peace through the blood of His cross, it pleased the Father to reconcile all things to Himself through Him, whether the things on earth or the things in Heaven.

Other verses include:

(Luke 22:29) And I appoint a kingdom to you, as My Father has appointed to Me,

(Luke 22:30) that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

(Luke 23:42) And he said to Jesus, Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.

(Ephesians 5:5) For you know this, that no fornicator, or unclean person, or covetous one (who is an idolater), has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

(2 Timothy 4:1) Therefore I solemnly witness before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who is going to judge the living and the dead according to His appearance and His kingdom,

(Hebrews 1:8) But to the Son He says, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom.

(2 Peter 1:11) For so an entrance shall be ministered to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

(Revelation 1:9) I, John, who also am your brother and companion in the affliction, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the island that is called Patmos, for the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

(Revelation 12:10) And I heard a great voice saying in Heaven, Now has come the salvation and power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ. For the accuser of our brothers is cast down, who accused them before our God day and night.

Discussion Questions: Who is Jesus ruling over? How long does He rule for? Who does Jesus delegate some Kingdom authority to? When will Jesus authority be fully manifested? How is the Kingdom of Christ both "present now" and also "yet to come"?

Living In The Kingdom 2 - The Throne of God

The Kingdom of God proceeds from the throne of God. In this study we will look at the major passages on the throne of God in the Scriptures and how God's Kingdom is an eternal Kingdom of glory, justice, mercy, covenant, worship and healing.

OLD TESTAMENT

Isaiah's Vision

Isaiah 6:1-13 In the year that King Uzziah died I then saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple. (2) Above it stood the seraphs; each one had six wings; with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. (3) And one cried to another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of Hosts; the whole earth full of His glory. (4) And the doorposts moved at the voice of the one who cried, and the house was filled with smoke. (5) Then I said, Woe is me! For I am undone; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of Hosts. (6) Then one of the seraphs flew to me, having a live coal in his hand, snatched with tongs from the altar. (7) And he laid it on my mouth and said, Lo, this has touched your lips; and your iniquity is taken away, and your sin purged. (8) And I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then I said, Here am I; send me!

Daniel's Vision

Daniel 7:9-10 I watched until the thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days sat, whose robe was white as snow, and the hair of His head like the pure wool. His throne was like flames of fire, and His wheels like burning fire. (10) A stream of fire went out and came out from before Him. A thousand thousands served Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The judgment was set, and the books were opened.

Discussion: Where is God's throne? What words are used to describe it? What is God's Throne like?

THE NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 5:34 But I say to you, Do not swear at all! Not by Heaven, because it is God's throne; (see also 23:22)

Hebrews 1:8 But to the Son He says, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom.

Hebrews 4:16 Therefore let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Hebrews 8:1 Now the sum of the things which we have spoken is this: We have such a High Priest, who has sat down on the right of the throne of the Majesty in Heaven,

Hebrews 12:2 looking to Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and sat down at the right of the throne of God.

Revelation 1:4 John to the seven churches which are in Asia. Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is coming; and from the seven spirits which are before His throne;

Revelation 3:21 To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame and have sat down with My Father in His throne.

Revelation 6:16-17 And they said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him sitting on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; (17) for the great day of His wrath has come, and who will be able to stand?

Revelation 12:5 And she bore a son, a male, who is going to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her child was caught up to God and to His throne.

Revelation 16:17-18 And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air. And a great voice came out of the temple of Heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done! (18) And voices and thunders and lightnings occurred. And there was a great earthquake, such as has not been since men were on the earth, so mighty and so great an earthquake.

Discussion: Who is on the throne now, in the New Testament? How is it a throne of grace?

JUDGMENT

Judgment Of The Nations

Matthew 25:31-46 But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He shall sit on the throne of His glory. (32) And all nations shall be gathered before Him. And He shall separate them from one another, as a shepherd divides the sheep from the goats. (33) And indeed He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats off the left. (34) Then the King shall say to those on His right hand, Come, blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. (35) For I was hungry, and you gave me food; I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and you took Me in; (36) I was naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me. (37) Then the righteous shall answer Him, saying, Lord, when did we see You hungry, and fed You? Or thirsty, and gave You drink? (38) When did we see You a stranger, and took You in? Or naked, and clothed You? (39) Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and came to You? (40) And the King shall answer and say to them, Truly I say to you, Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brothers, you have done it to Me. (41) Then He also shall say to those on the left hand, Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his angels. (42) For I was hungry, and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty, and you gave Me no drink; (43) I was a stranger and you did not take Me in; I was naked, and you did not clothe Me; I was sick, and in prison, and you did not visit me. (44) Then they will also answer Him, saying, Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister to You? (45) Then He shall answer them, saying, Truly I say to you, Inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me. (46) And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into everlasting life.

The Great White Throne

Revelation 20:11-15 And I saw a great white throne, and Him sitting on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And a place was not found for them. (12) And I saw the dead, the small and the great, stand before God. And books were opened, and another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. (13) And the sea gave up the dead in it. And death and hell delivered up the dead in them. And each one of them was judged according to their works. (14) And death and hell were cast into the Lake of Fire. This is the second death. (15) And if anyone was not found having been written in the Book of Life, he was cast into the Lake of Fire

Discussion: What do these two great judgment scenes tell us about how God judges people?

WORSHIP

The Great Worship Vision – Revelation Chapters 4 & 5

Revelation 4:1-5:14 After these things I looked, and behold, a door was opened in Heaven. And the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me, saying, Come up here, and I will show you what must occur after these things. (2) And immediately I became in spirit. And behold, a throne was set in Heaven, and One sat upon the throne. (3) And He who sat there looked like a jasper stone and a sardius. And a rainbow was around the throne, looking like an emerald. (4) And around the throne I saw twenty-four thrones. And on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white clothing. And they had crowns of gold on their heads. (5) And out of the throne came lightnings and thunderings and voices. And seven lamps of fire were burning in front of the throne, which are the seven spirits of God. (6) And a sea of glass was in front of the throne, like crystal. And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, were four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind. (7) And the first living creature was like a lion, and the second living creature like a calf, and the third living creature had the face of a man, and the fourth living creature like a flying eagle. (8) And each one of the four living creatures had six wings about him, and within being full of eyes. And they had no rest day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God, the Almighty, who was and is and is to come. (9) And whenever the living creatures gave glory and honor and thanks to Him who sat on the throne, who lives forever and ever, (10) the twenty-four elders fell down before the One sitting on the throne. And they worshiped Him who lives for ever and ever, and threw their crowns before the throne, saying, (11) O Lord, You are worthy to receive glory and honor and power, because You created all things, and for Your will they are and were created. (5:1) And I saw a book on the right of Him sitting on the throne, written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals. (2) And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book and to loosen its seals? (3) And no one in Heaven, nor on the earth, nor under the earth, was able to open the book or to look at it. (4) And I wept very

much, because no one was found worthy to open and to read the book, nor to look at it. (5) And one of the elders said to me, Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the book and to loose the seven seals of it. (6) And I looked, and lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, amidst the elders, a Lamb stood, as if it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. (7) And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him sitting on the throne. (8) And when He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one having harps and golden vials full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. (9) And they sang a new song, saying, You are worthy to take the book and to open its seals, for You were slain and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation. (10) And You made us kings and priests to our God, and we will reign over the earth. (11) And I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, and the living creatures and the elders. And the number of them was myriads and myriads, and thousands of thousands, (12) saying with a great voice, Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing. (13) And I heard every creature which is in the Heaven and on the earth, and under the earth, and those that are in the sea, and all who are in them, saying, Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him sitting on the throne, and to the Lamb forever and ever. (14) And the four living creatures said, Amen. And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped the One living forever and ever.

Discussion: What do these two chapters tell us about the nature of worship in heaven before the Throne?

THE SAINTS' THRONE

The Saints Before The Throne

Revelation 7:9-17 After these things I looked, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, out of all nations and kindreds and people and tongues, stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palms in their hands. (10) And they cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God sitting on the throne, and to the Lamb. (11) And all the angels stood around the throne, and the elders, and the four living creatures, and they fell before the throne on their faces and worshiped God, (12) saying, Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever. Amen. (13) And one of the elders answered, saying to me, Who are these who are arrayed in white robes, and from where do they come? (14) And I said to him, Sir, you know. And he said to me, These are the ones who came out of the great tribulation and have washed their robes, and have whitened them in the blood of the Lamb. (15) Therefore they are before the throne of God, and they serve Him day and night in His temple. And He sitting on the throne will dwell among them. (16) They will not hunger any more, nor thirst any more, nor will the sun light on them, nor any heat. (17) For the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will feed them and will lead them to the fountains of living waters. And God will wipe away all tears from their eyes.

Prayers Before The Throne

Revelation 8:3-5 And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer. And many incenses were given to him, so that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints on the golden altar before the throne. (4) And the smoke of the incense which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God from the angel's hand. (5) And the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar, and cast it into the earth. And voices and thunderings and lightnings and an earthquake occurred.

The 144,000 Before The Throne

Revelation 14:1-5 And I looked, and lo, the Lamb stood on Mount Zion. And with Him were a hundred and forty-four thousands, having His Father's name written in their foreheads. (2) And I heard a voice from Heaven, like the voice of many waters and like the voice of a great thunder. And I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps. (3) And they sang as it were a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders. And no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousands who were redeemed from the earth. (4) These are those who were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are those who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, as a firstfruit to God and to the Lamb. (5) And in their mouth was found no guile, for they were without blemish before the throne of God.

Discussion: What do the above three passages tell us about how important that's saints and martyrs and their prayers are to the Lord?

TRIUMPHANT

Hallelujah!

Revelation 19:1-8 And after these things I heard a great sound of a numerous crowd in Heaven, saying, Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and honor and the power to the Lord our God! (2) For true and righteous are His judgments. For He has judged the great harlot who defiled the earth with her fornication, and He has avenged the blood of His servants out of her hand. (3) And secondly they said, Hallelujah! And her smoke rose up forever and ever. (4) And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God sitting on the throne, saying, Amen! Hallelujah! (5) And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all His servants, and the ones fearing Him, the small and great. (6) And I heard as the sound of a great multitude, and as the sound of many waters, and as the sound of strong thunders, saying, Hallelujah! For the Lord God omnipotent reigns! (7) Let us be glad and rejoice and we will give glory to Him. For the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has prepared herself. (8) And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white. For the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints.

The Throne of Renewal

Revelation 21:5-8 And He sitting on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And He said to me, Write, for these words are true and faithful. (6) And He said to me, It is done. I am the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who thirsts I will give of the fountain of the Water of Life freely. (7) He who overcomes will inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he will be My son. (8) But the fearful, and the unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, will have their part in the Lake burning with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.

The Healing Throne

Revelation 22:1-5 And he showed me a pure river of Water of Life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. (2) In the midst of its street, and of the river, from here and from there, was the Tree of Life, which bore twelve fruits, each yielding its fruit according to one month. And the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. (3) And every curse will no longer be; but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His servants will serve Him. (4) And they will see His face, and His name will be in their foreheads. (5) And there will be no night there. And they need no lamp, or light of the sun; for the Lord God gives them light. And they will reign forever and ever.

Discussion: What do these three passages from the final chapters of Revelation tell us about God's triumphant throne?

Personal Notes

Living In The Kingdom 3 - The Holy Spirit

Quick Overview

The Holy Spirit is God, and is part of the Trinity (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) and was involved in Creation (Genesis 1:1-3) and is involved in renewing the natural order (Ps 104:30). The Holy Spirit is not a "force" or an "it" but rather He has emotions, can be grieved, resisted, lied to and speaks to God's servants giving them instructions and revelations. The Holy Spirit is also called the Spirit of Christ (Romans 8:9). The Holy Spirit is "before the Throne" with a seven-fold personality as the Spirit of the Lord, counsel, might, wisdom, understanding, knowledge and fear of the Lord (Isaiah 11:2) For a good explanation of how the Holy Spirit is fully God go to: <https://www.gci.org/God/deityHS>

There are two main operations of the Holy Spirit in Christians:

A. "IN" - for spiritual fruit, wisdom, assurance of salvation, and sanctification.

B. "UPON" - as in Acts 1:8 - power from on high, witnessing, spiritual gifts, miracles, tongues, strength and courage (Samson), boldness (Acts 4), prophecy and tongues of fire (Acts 2 and 10).

The Holy Spirit is God, resident in human personality, with the power to change it (Emil Brunner). The Holy Spirit is closely involved with our sanctification. Jesus is our example and model, the Holy Spirit gives us the power to be like Him, and agape love is the goal. (We will have a separate lesson on the Spiritual Gifts later in this course – week 7)

The Spirit of Holiness

Revelation 4:5 From the throne came flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, and before the throne were burning seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God,

Romans 1:4 and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord,

1 Peter 1:2 according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, (20) for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

Discussion: What are some of the logical consequences of Christians being "temples of the Holy Spirit"?

In The Gospels – The Spirit Of The Kingdom

Matthew 1:20 But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 3:11, 16, 17 "I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; (17) and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

Matthew 28:18-20 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. (19) Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, (20) teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Luke 4:17-21 And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, (18) "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, (19) to

proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." (20) And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. (21) And he began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

Luke 10:21-22 In that same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. (22) All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."

Discussion : What activities is the Holy Spirit involved in ?
How do these activities glorify God and extend His Kingdom?

Acts – The Holy Spirit In Action

Acts 1:4-8 And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me; (5) for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."(8) But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Acts 2:1-18 When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. (2) And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. (3) And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. (4) And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.... (14) But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. (15) For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. (16) But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel: (17) "'And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; (18) even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.

Acts 2:41-47 So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. (42) And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. (43) And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. (44) And all who believed were together and had all things in common. (45) And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. (46) And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, (47) praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Acts 4:31-35 And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness. (32) Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. (33) And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. (34) There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold (35) and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

Discussion: List at least eight changes that the Holy Spirit is bringing into the lives of these early Christians?
How is the Holy Spirit building the Kingdom?
How is the early Christian community being transformed?
How does this feel to you?

Receiving The Holy Spirit

John 20:20-23 And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. (21) Then Jesus said to them again, Peace to you. As My Father has sent Me, even so I send you. (22) And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, Receive the Holy Spirit. (23) Of whomever sins you remit, they are remitted to them. Of whomever sins you retain, they are retained.

Acts 8:14-17 Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, (15) who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, (16) for he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. (17) Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit.

Acts 9:17-19 So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." (18) And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized; (19) and taking food, he was strengthened. For some days he was with the disciples at Damascus.

Acts 10:44-47 While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. (45) And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. (46) For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared, (47) "Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?"

Acts 11:15-17 As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning. (16) And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' (17) If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?"

Acts 19:1-7 And it happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the inland country and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples. (2) And he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they said, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." (3) And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" They said, "Into John's baptism." (4) And Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus." (5) On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. (6) And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying. (7) There were about twelve men in all.

Discussion: How do Christians receive the baptism in Holy Spirit?
What kind of experience is it?
How does it relate to water baptism?

The Holy Spirit Speaks

Acts 8:29 And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and join this chariot."

Acts 10:19-20 And while Peter was pondering the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are looking for you. (20) Rise and go down and accompany them without hesitation, for I have sent them."

Act 13:2 While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."

Acts 21:11 And coming to us, and taking Paul's belt, and binding his hands and feet, he said, The Holy Spirit says these things: So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man whose belt this is, and will deliver him into the hands of the nations.

Discussion: What is it like to receive ministry instructions from the Holy Spirit? How do you think this helps the Kingdom of God?

Living In The Kingdom 4 - The Parables Of The Kingdom

The Kingdom of God is a spiritual reality, however the Bible tells us that it is not a completely strange and unknowable spiritual reality. In fact there are very deep analogies between the principles of Creation and the principles of the Kingdom and some of these deep analogies are set out in the parables of Jesus.

An analogy is when something is “like” something else in a way that “maps onto” the other thing, so that inferences can be drawn or conclusions can be made.

So when we say that Christ is the Head of the Church which is His bride then we are using human marriage (the known thing) as a “map” that tells us how God’s love for His Church (unknown thing) operates. Because the map is very close we can press that particular analogy a long way and talk about faithfulness, love, submission, sacrifice etc. Some analogies are very poor analogies and not very useful e.g. saying the earth is like a basketball.

The parables often start with a key phrase that indicates the analogy e.g. “the Kingdom of God is like unto...” so we know the two things which are being compared e.g. the Kingdom of God and a field or a dragnet. And the analogy can only be pressed as far as the similarity is valid. For instance it would be incorrect to say that the Kingdom of God is constructed from soil (field) or is carried in a fishing boat (dragnet).

Parables are mainly found in the Synoptic Gospel (Matthew, Mark and Luke) which are written for solely Jewish audiences (Matthew) or combined Jewish and Gentile audiences (Mark, Luke). John’s gospel has no parables and was written primarily for Greek-speaking churches in Ephesus and Asia Minor (Turkey) and thinks in terms of symbols rather than in terms of similarities and parables.

So the key thought is that parables are like maps of the Kingdom of God, however “the map is not the territory” and they only give us partial information and can only be pressed so far. In this lesson we will examine the parables in Matthew chapter 13.

Definitions: *An **Analogy** is a relation of similarity between two or more things, so that an inference (reasoning from premise to conclusion) is drawn on the basis of that similarity. So if item or person or process A is known to have certain characteristics, and if item or person or process B is known to have at least some of those characteristics, the inference is drawn that B also has those other characteristics. If the cases are not similar enough to warrant the inference, then it is a false analogy.*

The Law of Correspondence of Heaven and Earth: Matthew 16:19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." (see also Matthew 18;18)

Discussion:

When the Bible says that God is a Shepherd seeking the lost sheep is that a good analogy or a poor analogy?

In what ways is God like a shepherd seeking the lost sheep (Luke 15) ?

In what ways is God not the least bit like a shepherd?

What do we mean by “the map is not the territory”?

PARABLES & SPIRITUAL SENSITIVITY

(10) Then the disciples came and said to him, "Why do you speak to them in parables?" (11) And he answered them, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. (12) For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. (13) This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.

(14) Indeed, in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says: ""You will indeed hear but never understand, and you will indeed see but never perceive." (15) For this people's heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them.'

(16) But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. (17) For truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.

Discussion: How is it "blessed" to be spiritually perceptive? What happens to those who "have more"? on the other hand what happens to those who are "dull of hearing?"

SOWER

Matthew 13:1-52 That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. (2) And great crowds gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat down. And the whole crowd stood on the beach. (3) And he told them many things in parables, saying: "A sower went out to sow. (4) And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. (5) Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil, (6) but when the sun rose they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away. (7) Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. (8) Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. (9) He who has ears, let him hear."

SOWER EXPLAINED

(18) "Hear then the parable of the sower: (19) When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the path. (20) As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, (21) yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away. (22) As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. (23) As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it.

Discussion:

How is the parable of the Sower the master parable which gives us the keys to Jesus' use of analogy?

What is its meaning? What does it tell us about the spiritual life?

In this parable, how do heaven and earth correspond to each other?

TARES

(24) He put another parable before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, (25) but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. (26) So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. (27) And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?' (28) He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' So the servants said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather them?' (29) But he said, 'No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. (30) Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.'"

TARES EXPLAINED

(36) Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples came to him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field." (37) He answered, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. (38) The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, (39) and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. (40) Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. (41) The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, (42) and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (43) Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

Discussion:

What does the parable of the wheat and the tares tell us about the nature of the Kingdom of God?

How does it build upon the symbolism in the parable of the sower?

How does this parable introduce a more complex mapping of the spiritual world and the natural order?

What does it tell us about the nature of evil?

Why is God patient with evil?

MUSTARD SEED

(31) He put another parable before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field. (32) It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is larger than all the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches."

Background: The mustard tree was a rapidly multiplying "pest" that grew everywhere and took over entire fields as the mustard seed was blown by wind. It was against the law to plant it anywhere near someone else's field.

Discussion:

How is the mustard seed's growth like the Kingdom of God?

How is the Kingdom of God a "pest" to the kingdoms of this world?

THE HIDDEN BUT POWERFUL AND VALUABLE KINGDOM

LEAVEN

(33) He told them another parable. "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, till it was all leavened."

HIDDEN THINGS

(34) All these things Jesus said to the crowds in parables; indeed, he said nothing to them without a parable.

(35) This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet: "I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter what has been hidden since the foundation of the world."

TREASURE

(44) "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

THE PEARL

(45) "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, (46) who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

Discussion: All these parables indicate that the Kingdom is secret, hidden or obscure in some way. They also show people discovering it, or the Kingdom being revealed by its leaven-like influence. They also indicate the great value of the Kingdom.

Have we made Christian truth "too easy and too cheap"?

Why does God want us to seek Him out and to "pay a price" of some sort for the Kingdom?

What price did the disciples pay in order to learn about the Kingdom from Jesus?

Is there a connection between the price we are prepared to pay for truth and our joy at finding it?

ULTIMATE SEPARATION

(47) "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind.

(48) When it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into containers but threw away the bad. (49) So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous

(50) and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Discussion:

What does this parable tell us about the end of the age?

How do the angels sort out the good from the bad?

What is meant by "sorting the good into containers"?

Living In The Kingdom 5 - Prayers Of The Kingdom

The Kingdom of God is a place of prayer where we can come to the Throne of Grace in time of need:

1 John 5:14-15 And this is the confidence that we have toward Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. (15) And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him.

Hebrews 4:16 Therefore let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

The Lord's Instructions On Prayer

Matthew 6:5-14 "And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. (6) But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. (7) "And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. (8) Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

Discussion: What are some of the key differences between holy prayer and hypocritical prayer?

(9) Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. (10) Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. (11) Give us this day our daily bread, (12) and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. (13) And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the Kingdom, the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

Discussion: How is the Lord's Prayer different from the prayers of the hypocrites in:

- a) form and style ?
- b) content and focus?
- c) praying the will of the Father?

Forgiveness

(14) For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, (15) but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Discussion: Why is forgiveness essential to answered prayer?

The Unrighteous Judge

Luke 18:1-14 And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. (2) He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man. (3) And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, 'Give me justice against my adversary.' (4) For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, 'Though I neither fear God nor respect man, (5) yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.'" (6) And the Lord said, "Hear what the unrighteous judge says. (7) And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? (8) I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"

Discussion: How is God different from the unrighteous judge? How can Christians pray for justice?

The High Priestly Prayer

John 17:1-26 When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, (2) since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. (3) And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. (4) I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. (5) And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.

Discussion: How is Jesus "praying the will of the Father" here? In what manner is Jesus addressing His Father?

(6) "I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. (7) Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. (8) For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. (9) I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. (10) All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them.

Discussion: What is Jesus saying to the Father about His disciples? What kind of praying is this?

(11) And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. (12) While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. (13) But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. (14) I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. (15) I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. (16) They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. (17) Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. (18) As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.

Discussion: What does Jesus pray for His disciples while they are "in the world"? How does this apply to us?

(19) And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth. (20) "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, (21) that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

Discussion: How is Jesus praying for the wider Church?

(22) The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, (23) I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. (24) Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. (25) O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. (26) I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them."

Discussion: What amazing benefits and blessings is Jesus asking for those who believe?

Paul's Prayer For The Ephesians

Ephesians 3:14-21

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father,

(15) from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named,

(16) that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being,

(17) so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

(18) may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,

(19) and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

(20) Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, (21) to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Discussion: a) How is Paul praying the will of the Father?

b) What are the blessings that Paul desires for the Ephesian Christians (and all Christians)?

SCENARIO QUESTION

Most church prayers are for sick people, finances, exams, marriages and other crisis events in the life of the people, church or nation. And yes, James does encourage us to pray for the sick, and crisis prayer has always been part of church life (e.g. the arrest of the apostle Peter).

1. Yet, how is this “crisis prayer”, TOTALLY DIFFERENT from the type of Kingdom Prayer we see in these three examples above (Lord's Prayer, High Priestly Prayer, Ephesian Prayer)?
2. Do you think that if we prayed more “Kingdom prayers” we might require less “crisis prayers”?
3. How can churches pray for Kingdom issues such as missions, church unity and spiritual growth?
4. How could your prayer life change?

The Cross and The Kingdom (Part One - OT vs. NT)

The Law and the Prophets were up until John the Baptist, this was the Old Testament. The Cross changes all that bringing in a new era of God's operation with the death and resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ.

Matthew 11:11-14 Truly I say to you, Among those who have been born of women there has not risen a greater one than John the Baptist. But the least in the kingdom of Heaven is greater than he. (12) And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of Heaven is taken by violence, and the violent take it by force. (13) For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John. (14) And if you will receive it, this is Elijah who is to come.

Romans 7:4 So, my brothers, you also have become dead to the law by the body of Christ so that you should be married to Another, even to Him raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit to God.

The Cross replaces all the Old Testament sacrifices and renders the requirements of the Law null and void. Christians go from being condemned Law-Keepers (because we all failed) to joyous forgiven Spirit-Followers (because we are being led by the Spirit).

Romans 8:1-4 LITV There is therefore now no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to flesh, but according to Spirit. (2) For the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus set me free from the law of sin and of death. (3) For the Law being powerless, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and concerning sin, condemned sin in the flesh, (4) so that the righteous demand of the Law might be fulfilled in us, those not walking according to flesh, but according to Spirit.

Galatians 5:16-18 LITV But I say, Walk in the Spirit, and you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh. (17) For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another; lest whatever you may will, these things you do. (18) But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under Law.

The Cross extends into the Resurrection to new life and into the Ascension where we are seated with Christ in the Heavenly realms with authority:

Ephesians 2:4-7 MKJV But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love with which He loved us (5) (even when we were dead in sins) has made us alive together with Christ (by grace you are saved), (6) and has raised us up together and made us sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus, (7) so that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

Discussion: What are some of the huge spiritual changes that the Cross makes between the Law and the Gospel?

This new heavenly status of Christians is reflected in practical ways (we can now cast out demons with authority whereas no one in the Old Testament could do so) and in theological and spiritual ways such as in the grace in which we stand and in our access to the throne-room of God.

Matthew 28:18-20 MKJV And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, All authority is given to Me in Heaven and in earth. (19) Therefore go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, (20) teaching them to observe all things, whatever I commanded you. And, behold, I am with you all the days until the end of the world. Amen.

1 Corinthians 6:1-3 MKJV (1) Do any of you dare, when you have a matter against another, to go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? (2) Do you not know that the saints shall judge the world? And if the world shall be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? (3) Do you not know that we shall judge angels, not to mention the things of this life?

Hebrews 12:22-24 MKJV But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, (23) to the general assembly and church of the first-born who are written in Heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, (24) and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.

Luke 9:1 MKJV And He called His twelve disciples together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases.

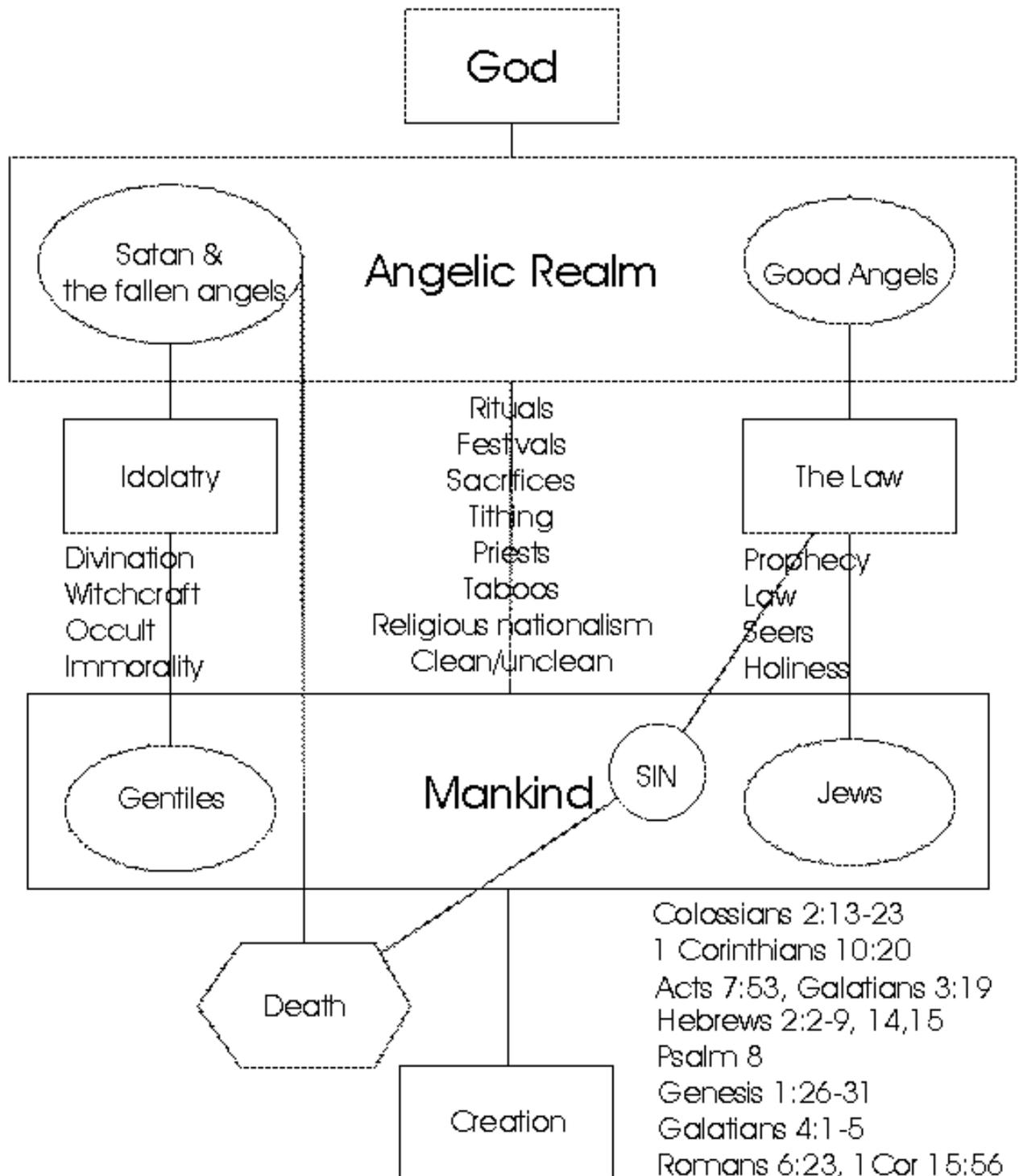
Romans 5:1-2 MKJV Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (2) Through Him we also have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice on the hope of the glory of God.

Hebrews 4:14-16 MKJV Since then we have a great High Priest who has passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. (15) For we do not have a high priest who cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted just as we are, yet without sin. (16) Therefore let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Hebrews 10:14-20 MKJV For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are sanctified. (15) The Holy Spirit also is a witness to us; for after He had said before, (16) "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord; I will put My Laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them," (17) also He adds, "their sins and their iniquities I will remember no more." (18) Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin. (19) Therefore, brothers, having boldness to enter into the Holy of Holies by the blood of Jesus, (20) by a new and living way which He has consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, His flesh;

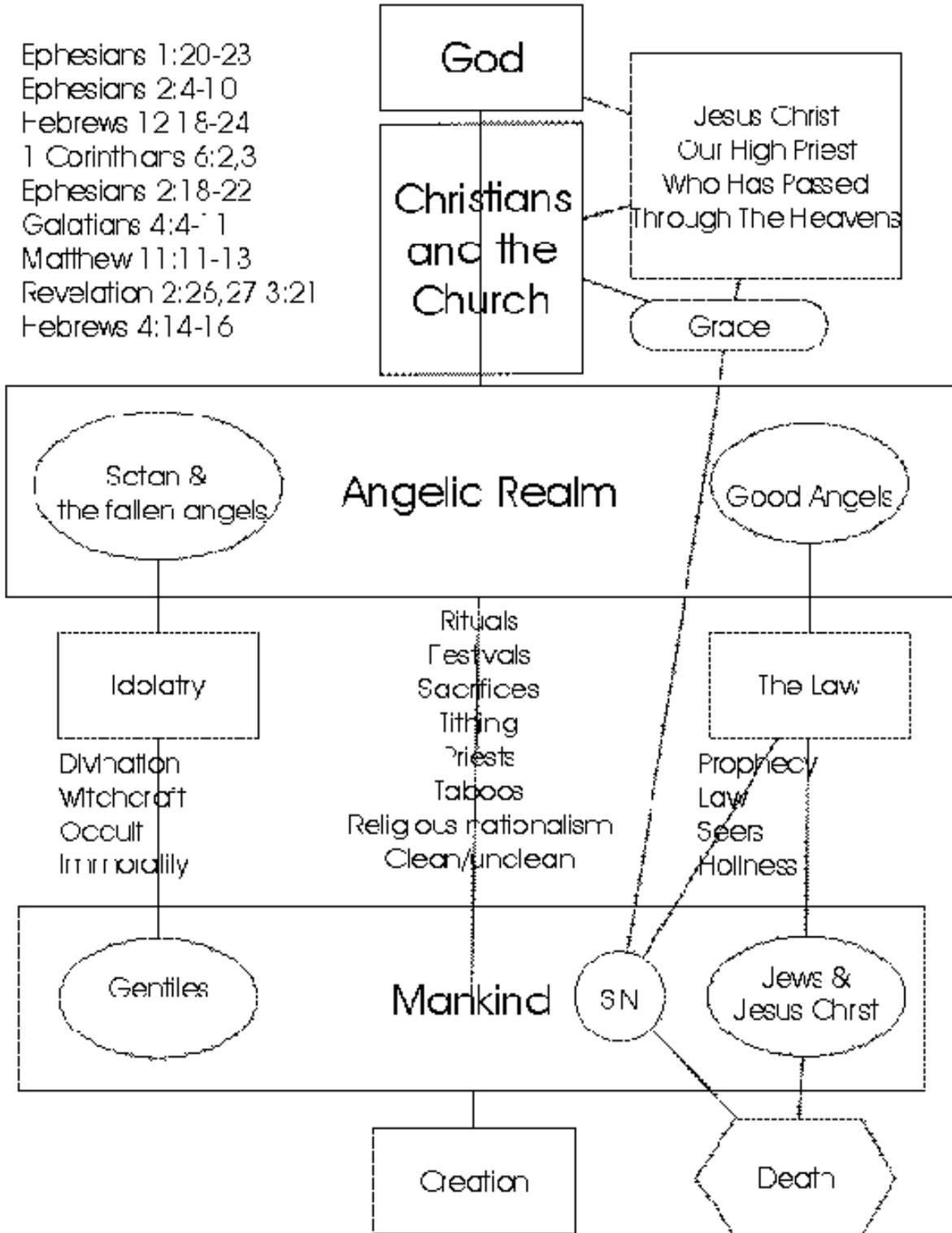
Discussion: What is
a) our heavenly position?
b) our heavenly access?
c) our heavenly powers?

The Old Testament



The New Testament

Ephesians 1:20-23
 Ephesians 2:4-10
 Hebrews 12:18-24
 1 Corinthians 6:2,3
 Ephesians 2:18-22
 Galatians 4:4-7
 Matthew 11:11-13
 Revelation 2:26,27 3:21
 Hebrews 4:14-16



Scenario Question: You are talking to a strict Seventh-day Adventist who says you have to obey the dietary and other commands of the Old Covenant, how can you show them some of the key differences between the spiritual worlds of the Law and of the Gospel?

Living in The Kingdom Part 7 – Benefits of The Cross and The Blood

Paul said to the Corinthians that he only came preaching "Christ and Him crucified", which was foolishness to the Gentiles, and a stumbling block to the Jews. To the Jews they were incredulous "how could the Messiah be crucified!", to the Gentiles "where is the logic in this, what kind of scheme of philosophy is about a crucified man?"

You see, Christianity is NOT a philosophy. It is, as Derek Prince says "a declaring of what the Word says that the blood does."

Christianity depends on an actual historical event - the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, on Calvary. It depends on the shedding of a real man's actual blood. It depends on nails and spears and atonement. This is really offensive to many minds. So offensive that teaching on the Blood is rare in some denominations.

Christianity, at first seems like the New Age, full of concepts such as love, peace, joy, spirituality and abundance. However the New Age eschews the Cross and cannot save or sanctify a lost soul.

The unique power in Christianity comes SOLELY from the Cross and The Blood and the directly consequent events such as the resurrection, ascension etc. The benefits of this historical act include things such as:

Relationship With God

1. The blood of Jesus Christ brings us into a new and living covenant with God (Matthew 26:26-28, Hebrews 13:20-21)
2. Peace with God (Colossians 1:19-23)
3. Grace abounds to us through Christ's obedient death on the Cross (Romans 5:17-21)
4. Reconciliation through the Cross (Romans 5:10, Colossians 1:19-23, Ephesians 2:16)
5. The ability to abide in Christ continually (John 6:35-36)
6. Boldness and confidence with God (Hebrews 10:19)
7. The blood of Jesus Christ draws us nearer to God (Ephesians 2:13)
8. Christ's suffering on the Cross (the just for the unjust) brings us to God (1 Peter 3:18)
9. The blood saves us from God's wrath (Romans 5:9)
10. The blood speaks a better word than the blood of Abel (Hebrews 12:24) Justice vs. Forgiveness
11. Now nothing can separate us from the love of Christ (Romans 8:34-39)

Discussion: What does the Cross and the Blood do for our relationship with God (for those who believe)?

Forgiveness, Cleansing and Atonement

12. Forgiveness from sin (Isaiah 53:3-5, Matthew 26:28, Ephesians 1:7)
13. As the crucified Lamb of God Jesus would take away the sins of the world (John 1:29)
14. The blood of Jesus God's Son, is cleansing you now and continually from all sin. (1 John 1:7-10)
15. We are personally washed from our sins by His blood (Revelation 1:5, 1 John 1:7-9)
16. The blood of Jesus Christ gives us a clean conscience (Hebrews 9:14)
17. Atonement for sin (Romans 3:23-25, 1 Peter 2:24)
18. Remission of sins (Colossians 1:14)
19. The Cross means that there is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1,2,33,34)

Righteousness, Sanctification and New Life

20. Eternal life (John 3:14-16, 6:35,36) since the life is in the blood (Leviticus 17:11)
21. Life to the spiritually dead, being made alive together with Christ (Colossians 2:13)
22. Becoming dead to the Law and alive to Christ (Romans 7:4, Romans 10:1-4)
23. Through the blood of Jesus Christ you are made righteous, justified, "just-as if I'd" never sinned. (Romans 5:9, 1 Corinthians 1:30, Proverbs 28:1, Isaiah 32:17)
24. Our sin was exchanged for His righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:21)
25. Through the blood of Jesus Christ you are sanctified, made holy, set apart for God. (Hebrews 10:29, 13:12 ; Colossians 1:12, 13 Romans 8:2)
26. We are redeemed out of an evil and wicked world, by the blood of the Lamb (Revelation 5:9)
27. The creation of a holy and blameless people to God (Colossians 1:19-23)
28. We are baptized with Him in His death (Romans 6:3)
29. As a result we walk in newness of life (Romans 6:4)
30. Our "old man" is destroyed and crucified with Christ (Romans 6:6)
31. We no longer serve sin (Romans 6:6)
32. In fact we are to reckon ourselves "dead to sin" (Romans 6:11)
33. We have crucified the flesh with its passions and its lusts (Galatians 5:24)
34. We are crucified to the world and the world is crucified to us (Galatians 6:14)
35. Christ lives in us and empowers a new lifestyle (Galatians 2:20)
36. Regeneration, a new creation, all things become new (1 Peter 1:2-3, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Titus 3:5)
37. Death is made of no effect (2 Timothy 1:10, Hebrews 2:9, 1 Corinthians 15:54-57)
38. We receive immortality (2 Timothy 1:10)

Discussion: Does a Christian have to sin?

Healing & Victorious Living

39. Disarming of the demonic (Colossians 2:13-15)
40. The prince of this world is cast out by the Cross (John 12:31,32)
41. Jesus' death and resurrection gave Him the keys of Death and Hades (Revelation 1:18)
42. The world system is brought into judgment by the Cross (John 12:31, 16:11)
43. Freedom from taboos and religious regulations (Colossians 2:13-23)
44. Emotional healing (Isaiah 53:4)
45. Physical healing (Isaiah 53:5, Matthew 8:16,17, Acts 3:12, 16, 4:10)
46. Wellbeing / Shalom (Isaiah 53:5)
47. The blood of Christ brings redemption out of the hand of the Devil. (Eph 1:7, Psalm 107:2)
48. The Cross destroys him who had the power of death; that is, the Devil. (Hebrews 2:14)
49. Redemption from useless cultural practices and customs (1 Peter 1:18-19)
50. Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit , redeemed, cleansed, sanctified by the blood of Jesus, therefore the devil has no place in you and no power over you. (1 Corinthians 6: 13, 19-20, 1 John 5:6, Eccl. 4:12)
51. The blood makes us complete for every good work (Hebrews 13:20-21)
52. We receive both the power of God and the wisdom of God (1 Corinthians 1:23,24, 30)
53. The curses of the Law were taken on the Cross (Galatians 3:10-14)
54. Instead of the curses of the Law we inherit the blessings of Abraham (Galatians 3:10-14, 29)
55. We serve in the newness of the Spirit not the oldness of the letter (Romans 7:6)
56. An eternal inheritance (Hebrews 9:15, 1 Peter 1:4)
57. We become kings and priests to our God and reign with the Lamb (Revelation 5:9,10)

OTHER

58. The Holy Spirit could only be sent to us if Christ went to the Cross (John 16:7)
59. Jesus would die for both the Jews and the Gentiles (John 11:50-52)
60. Jesus would draw all men to Him when He was crucified (John 12:32)
61. When Jesus was lifted up (crucified) people would know that He was truly God and spoke the truth (John 8:28) and this would validate the gospel.
62. The blood bears witness in the earth along with the Spirit and the water (1 John 5:8, KJV)
63. The purchase of the Church by His blood (Acts 20:28, John 10:11)
64. Because He was obedient to the point of death on a cross Jesus was highly exalted and received the Name that is above every other Name (Philippians 2:5-11)

Scenario Question

A continuously defeated Christian comes to you for advice. This person stumbles into poor relationships and has an out-of-control and often sinful life. They are frequently ill, they are nervous, anxious and see very few answers to their prayers.

What does this person need to learn and to believe about the Cross and the Blood?

The Powers of The Kingdom: Spiritual Gifts and Prayer

The 14 Purposes of Spiritual Power

1. To glorify God and to exalt the Name of Jesus (John 11:4, 14:13)
2. To be an expression of Christ through the Holy Spirit (Romans 15:19, 1 Corinthians 2:4)
3. To demonstrate a covenant relationship between God and His saints whereby He responds to their requests in real, tangible and positive ways. (Matthew 7:7, 21:22, John 16:24)
4. To attest to the validity of the Gospel (Matthew 4:23, 9:35, 11:15)
5. To cause repentance and faith (Matthew 4:17-25, 11:20-23)
6. To distinguish between the occult power of idols and the power of the Living God (Elijah - 1 King 18:21-39)
7. To build up and to unify the Church (1 Corinthians 14:3,5,26; Ephesians 4:11-13)
8. To demonstrate God's mercy (Matthew 9:27, 15:22, 17:15, Mark 5:19)
9. To distinguish between the righteous and the wicked (Exodus 9:27, 2 Chronicles 6:23, Psalm 37:17,
10. To distinguish between God's people and those not of God's people (Exodus 8:22, 9:26)
11. To establish justice in the earth (Isaiah 11:3,4; Jeremiah 23:5,6)
12. To satisfy the desires of every living thing and to bring about Shalom (Psalm 145:13-20, Isaiah 9:6-7, 11:6-9)
13. To change "impossible" situations (Matthew 17:20, 19:26, Mark 9:23, Luke 1:37, 18:27)
14. To actualize the Sovereignty and Providence of God and to distinguish them from the achievements of mere human power and wisdom. (1 Corinthians 2:1-5, 4:20, 2 Corinthians 4:7)

Intercessory Prayer

There is a vast change in intercessory prayer between the Old Testament and the New Testament because of the work of the Cross which results in a new power and authority for the Christian (*see previous studies*). The prayer promises of the New Testament are not found in the Old Testament.

The Promise of New Testament Prayer

Read: Mark 11:21-25, Matthew 18:19, John 14:13, 15:7, 16:23-27, James 5:15-18, 1 John 3:22, 5:14,15

The Practice of New Testament Intercessory Prayer

Read: Acts 3:1-8, 12-16; 8:6-8; 9:32-42; 13:8-12, 14:7-18, 19:11-20

The promise of prayer becomes the practice of prayer when:

- a) There is the presence of faith in the Name of Jesus and
- b) There is the issue of a spiritual command consistent with God's will (such as "rise up and walk")

e.g. the lame man at Lystra had faith but did not walk until Paul gave the command, on the other hand the seven sons of Sceva gave a command but had no faith, so they were overcome by the demon. All demonstrations of spiritual power in the New Testament involve the use of spiritual commands e.g. Lazarus come forth, peace be still, be cleansed, go your way, pick up your mat and walk, little girl arise, ear be opened, rebuking a fever, telling demons to leave, and so on and so forth. Even the Lord's Prayer is a series of imperatives (commands) in the original Greek. The only exception is when the prayer is not a power prayer but a spiritual growth prayer such as being filled with the Spirit or receiving wisdom.

Scenario Question: Someone strongly asserts that prayer is: *Just a conversation with God, that expecting answers to prayer is only for the selfish and immature, that real saints don't see answers to prayer, and that the use of spiritual power is occultist and shamanistic.*

How would you show them that their point of view is totally unbiblical?

Spiritual Gifts

1. Spiritual gifts are the Holy Spirit “upon us” to give us power to be witnesses (Acts 1:8, 2:3, 2:16-19)
2. 1Corinthians 12:1-11 – How is the Holy Spirit involved with spiritual gifts?
3. 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 – How is Christ and His body relevant to spiritual gifts?
4. 1 Corinthians 12:28-31 – What is the order among spiritual gifts?
5. 1 Corinthians 14:1-5 – What is the difference between tongues and prophecy?
6. 1Corinthians 14:6-19 – Why is it better to use a known language rather than tongues, in public worship?
7. 1Corinthians 14:20-25 – What effect does prophesy have on those who hear it?
8. 1Corinthians 14:26-33 – How are gifts to be used by each Christian?

Note 1: There are three kinds of tongues in the Bible:

- a) Human tongues as known languages (Acts 2)
- b) Angelic tongues that can be interpreted by someone for prophetic purposes (1 Corinthians 13:1, 14:5)
- c) Tongues known only to God and man which are for self-edification (1 Cor. 14:2, 4)

Note 2: Prophecy in the New Testament (prophetes) is very different from prophesy in the Old Testament (nabi). In OT prophesy: Infallible, special office, very few prophets, they wrote large portions of the Bible, pointed back to the Mosaic Covenant and Law and ahead to Jesus as the Messiah. In NT prophesy: congregational, many prophets, did not write Scripture, did not point back to Moses or ahead to the Messiah, not infallible, for encouragement, exhortation and comfort (1 Cor. 14:3). In OT “thus says the Lord...” in the NT “I sense that the Holy Spirit is indicating..”

Note 3: 1 Corinthians 13 (the Love Chapter) is between the two gifts chapters because the gifts are to be used in love and are “nothing without love” (1 Corinthians 13:1-4).

Scenario Question: Imagine that you have been sent as a missionary to a completely unreached tribe:

- a) How would spiritual gifts help to explain both the gospel and the nature and character of God?
- b) How would spiritual gifts demonstrate the difference between Jesus and the tribal gods?
- c) How would spiritual gifts help the new church to have faith and to function in love?

Walking In The Kingdom - Ethics In The Early Church

LOVE FULFILLS THE LAW AND REPLACES LEGALISM

Romans 13:8-10 Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for he who loves another has fulfilled the Law. (9) For: "Do not commit adultery; do not murder; do not steal; do not bear false witness; do not lust;" and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this word, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (10) Love works no ill to its neighbor, therefore love is the fulfilling of the Law.

1 John 3:22-24 And whatever we ask, we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. (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. (24) And he who keeps His commandment dwells in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit which He gave to us.

2 John 1:5-6 And now I beseech you, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment to you, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another. (6) And this is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, as you heard from the beginning, that you should walk in it.

Comparison of Law vs. Love

LAW

- ▶ External
- ▶ Perfect Performance
- ▶ Blessings are based on performance
- ▶ Curses for breaking taboos
- ▶ Righteousness via Law
- ▶ Specific Precepts
- ▶ Everyone treated the same
- ▶ Only responsible for own spiritual performance

LOVE

- ▶ Internal and External
- ▶ Growth As a Person
- ▶ We already have all the blessings "in Christ"
- ▶ Taboos eliminated at the Cross
- ▶ Righteousness by Faith
- ▶ General Principles
- ▶ Everyone treated differently
- ▶ We are responsible to help others grow in Christ

LONG-TERM LIFETSYLE - REPLACES - SHORT-TERM ACTIONS (WALKING VS. ACTING)

In the New Testament the overwhelming emphasis is on the long-term general tone of the Christian's life and conduct e.g. are they walking in the Spirit or in the flesh. The word for "walk" is peripateo / peripatein and means to walk about as the wandering Greek philosophers or Jesus or Paul would do. It is a continual, present-tense, state of being; a habitual daily chosen lifestyle consistent with a personal philosophy. So Christians then act out from Christ, out from deep inner Christian conviction, and not "up to" a legalistic and particular set of

laws, precepts or regulations. It is no longer about a set of one-off actions, a sort of spiritual “to-do list” that must be accomplished. Rather it is about continually abiding and living in love and holiness and seeing how that plays out in a wide variety of personal and cultural circumstances.

From the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia:

walk wôk (περιπατεῖν, *peripateín*): Aside from its frequent occurrence in the usual sense, the word “walk” is used **figuratively** of conduct and of spiritual states.

(1) Observance of laws or customs: “Thou teachest all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs” (Acts 21:21).

(2) Of the spiritual life: “If we walk in the light, as he is in the light” (1John 1:7); “That like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:4); “Walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh” (Galatians 5:16); “For we walk by faith, not by sight” (2Corinthians 5:7).

WALKING IN THE LIGHT:

John 8:12, 12:35, 2 Corinthians 4:2, Ephesians 5:18, 1 John 1:6,7

WALKING IN THE TRUTH:

2 John 1:4, 3 John 1:3,4

WALKING IN THE SPIRIT:

Romans 8:1,4 ; Galatians 5:16,25

WALKING IN NEWNESS OF LIFE:

Romans 6:4, Galatians 6:14-16

WALKING IN LOVE:

Romans 14:15 Ephesians 5:2

WALKING WORTHY:

Ephesians 4:1, 1 Thessalonians 2:12, 1 John 2:6, Ephesians 2:10, Colossians 1:10

WALKING ORDERLY AND IN WISDOM:

Ephesians 5:15, Romans 13;13-14, Philippians 3:16-18, 1 Thessalonians 4:1, 12, Colossians 4:5

THE SPIRIT – REPLACES - THE LETTER

Romans 7:6 MKJV But now we having been set free from the Law, having died to that in which we were held, so that we serve in newness of spirit and not in oldness of the letter.

2 Corinthians 3:6-9 MKJV (6) who also has made us able ministers of the new covenant; not of the letter, but of the spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit makes alive. (7) But if the ministry of death, having been engraved in letters in stone was with glory (so that the sons of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses because of the glory of his face), which was being done away; (8) shall not the ministry of the Spirit be with more glory?

(9) For if the ministry of condemnation is glorious, much more does the ministry of righteousness exceed in glory.

Romans 2:28-29 MKJV For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that outwardly in flesh; (29) but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is of the heart; in spirit and not in letter; whose praise is not from men, but from God.

Galatians 3:2-5 MKJV This only I would learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law, or by hearing of faith? (3) Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, do you now perfect yourself in the flesh? (4) Did you suffer so many things in vain, if indeed it is even in vain? (5) Then He supplying the Spirit to you and working powerful works in you, is it by works of the law, or by hearing of faith?

Galatians 5:18 MKJV But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law.

Scenario Question: A religious leader knows the Bible backwards but is full of hate, rage and control. He trusts no one and invents numerous rules for his church. What is wrong with this?

PRINCIPLES BECOME MORE IMPORTANT THAN PRECEPTS

Matthew 12:1-8 MKJV At that time Jesus went through the grain fields on the Sabbath day. And His disciples were hungry, and began to pluck the heads of grain and to eat. (2) But when the Pharisees saw, they said to Him, Behold, your disciples do that which it is not lawful to do on the Sabbath day. (3) (6) But I say to you that One greater than the temple is in this place. (7) But if you had known what this is, "I desire mercy and not sacrifice," you would not have condemned those who are not guilty. (8) For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.

(Temple = source of the Law, regulations; Sacrifice = traditional worship, altars, offerings etc;
Mercy = applied faith and kindness)

James 2:12-13 MKJV So speak and do as those who shall be judged by the Law of liberty. (13) For he who has shown no mercy shall have judgment without mercy, and mercy exults over judgment.

WE "DRAW THE LINES" BY APPLYING SPIRIT-LED PRINCIPLES TO SPECIFIC SITUATIONS AND CULTURES

1. A particular principle is a rule which may be applied differently in different contexts.
2. You do not have to list every single use-case when applying a principle. If there is a clear teaching / definition/ boundary line, then everything else on the "wrong" side of that line is also wrong e.g. Jesus teaching on marriage automatically (as an applied principle) excludes polygamy, cohabitation, same-sex marriage, adultery, casual divorce and a host of other behaviors.
3. Fairness is treating everyone differently. (Luke 12:48, James 3:1) God's grace leaves room for growth!
4. The result of applying a principle to a situation should be in accordance with Christ and bring about love, redemption, reconciliation, peace, holiness and general spiritual maturity. Harshness is seldom justified.
5. We are not to create a legalistic spirit of fear (2 Timothy 1:7, Romans 8:14-16, 1 John 4:18))

6. The creation of a sanctified internal spiritual state is always much more important than respectable outward religious conformity. (Matthew 9:10-13)
7. The Holy Spirit may occasionally move in ways that are seldom repeated (e.g. Ananias & Sapphira)
8. The Holy Spirit may give unique instructions for particular contexts (e.g. "go up to that chariot..")
9. A spiritual instruction in one context (e.g. take no bag or cloak in Matthew 10:9,10) may be revoked in another context (e.g. take, bag cloak and sword Luke 22:35,36) or even apply differently to different people such as the apostles Peter and Paul (1 Corinthians 9:3-10, 14-18)
10. In the N.T. the O.T. laws serve as a guide to spiritual principles. So the Sabbath is no longer a legal requirement with a penalty/ reward attached, however it is still a wise spiritual practice.

7 Examples of Applied Principles

1. Treatment of the rich and the poor in a congregation (James 2:1-9)
2. Issues of food, drink and Sabbaths (Romans 14:1-10)
3. Eating food sacrificed to idols (1 Corinthians 10:14-21)
4. Long hair and veils in Corinth (1 Corinthians 11:1-16)
5. Selfish behavior at Communion (1 Corinthians 11:17-34)
6. The brother in need (1 John 3:16-18, James 2:15,16)
7. Partnership with unbelievers (2 Corinthians 6:14-18)

Scenario Question: What spiritual principles clearly indicate that sex before marriage is wrong?

The Kingdom Is Opposed

The Kingdom of God faces opposition from “principalities and powers” (Ephesians 6:10) that seek to steal, kill and destroy (John 10:10) and which oppose the gospel through persecution, deception, temptation and spiritual oppression through witchcraft, curses and demonic activity.

Persecution

Matthew 10:16-42 ESV "Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. (17) Beware of men, for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues, (18) and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles. (19) When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. (20) For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

(21) Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, (22) and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. (23) When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next, for truly, I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

(24) "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. (25) It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household. (26) "So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. (27) What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. (28) And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

(29) Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. (30) But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. (31) Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

(32) So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, (33) but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven. (34) "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. (35) For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. (36) And a person's enemies will be those of his own household.

(37) Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. (38) And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. (39) Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

(40) "Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. (41) The one who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and the one who receives a righteous person because he is a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward. (42) And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward."

Scenario Question: How relevant are these verses today? (say to Christians in Syria) How might they be relevant to Christians in the End Times?

A Tactical Armory

The following table summarizes the ways Satan attacks and the way we should respond to these attacks. I have called it a tactical armory since it tells us which weapon to select for the battle. You may notice that many of the Scriptures for Satan's tactics also contain the remedy for it close by or in the same verse! God is wise.

Scripture References	Satan's Trick	Our Victory
John 10:10	Steal, Kill, Destroy	Take hold of the abundant life in Christ
1 Timothy 3:6,7	Pride leading to condemnation	Wise appointing of those in spiritual authority
Rev 12:10,11	Accusation	The blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony, testifying to what the blood of the Lamb has done for you.
Luke 4:1-13	Temptation through misapplied Scriptures that seem to validate fleshly desires for physical appetite, special-ness to God and power.	Knowing the Scriptures so well that you can spot the lie and counter it with a more appropriate Scripture.
1 Timothy 4:1-7	Deceptive false teachings	Reject fanciful tales, teach the Scriptures, sound doctrine, thankfulness, prayer
James 2:17-26 Matthew 7:15-28	False assurance of salvation	A godly life of good works based on Jesus teaching is evidence of having true faith.
Deut 7:25, 18:10-13, 32:7, Lev 19:31 Isaiah 47:13, Acts 19:19 1 Corinthians 10:14	Ensnarement in the occult , divination astrology, and the worship of false gods.	Destroy all objects associated with it. Complete disassociation from it.
2 Corinthians 10:3-5 Ephesians 6:10-21 Romans 8:4-6,.12:1,2 Philippians 4:8 Colossians 3:1-4.	Strongholds made of thoughts that oppose God -especially prideful thoughts and unbelief. These thoughts can control the life and emotions of a person, church or country.	Biblical apologetics, renewing the mind. Setting the mind on the things of the Spirit Use of our spiritual armour combined with faith, the word of God, prayer in the Spirit and humble submission.
Matthew 23:17,19,24,26 Luke 4:18 John 9:39 Romans 10:7-10,25 2Corinthians 3:14-17, 4:3,4 Ephesians 4:17-24, 1 John 2:10,11	Blinding the minds of unbelievers. Especially those who stubbornly refuse Christ.	Turning to Christ. Having a willingness to accept the light and seek it further. Renewal of the mind. Loving your brother in Christ Good teaching and intercession can "open the eyes of the blind".
1 Corinthians 10:14-22	Religious ceremonies that appear "cultural" but are in fact demonic.	Awareness of the spiritual realities that under gird such things. Not participating in them.
Matthew 12:27-29, 16:19, 18:18-20, Luke 11:19-22	Unrestrained Satanic activity. Spiritual wickedness in the heavenly realms. Spiritual "strong men" occupying a person, place or nation.	Binding and loosing in Jesus name which may often have a corporate dimension to it.
Matthew 9:32-34 Luke 13:11-16 Matthew 8;16,17 Mark 9:14-29	Disease caused by demons (not all disease is meant)	Healing. Prayer and fasting. Faith. Use of command prayers in the name of Jesus.
Luke 10:17-19 Acts 16:16-18 Mark 5:1-20, 9:14-29 Luke 11:20-26 Acts 5;16, 8:7	Demon-possession	Use of the name of Jesus with authority. Command the demons to leave. Sometimes it may help to identify the demons. Then the delivered person must live a Holy Spirit filled life. Faith, prayer & fasting may be necessary.

Spiritual Oppression

Christians cannot be fully possessed by the Devil (because they have the Holy Spirit) but they can be oppressed, hindered and harassed. Such spiritual oppression often stems from things such as involvement in the occult, false teaching, and sexual immorality, or from keeping idols or magic books in the house (Deut. 7:24-26).

Oppression can also come from outside through curses and witch-craft or from within ourselves because we harbor hatred, bitterness, malice and unforgiveness in our hearts (Matthew 18:21-35)

The symptoms of demonic oppression include:

1. Hopelessness, despair, loss of confidence, spiritual anguish and struggle, the constant feeling of accusation or of being 'unclean' in some way.
2. The sense of being cursed or of being the victim of some malicious spiritual force, a feeling that hatred, malice or envy is being directed at you in order to destroy you.
3. An out-of-control thought life, very vivid fantasies and day-dreams, being unable to think straight, numerous fears.
4. A sense of being 'blocked' or stifled in one's Christian life, a pronounced loss of enthusiasm for spiritual things.
5. Addictions, compulsions, lying, impulsiveness, habitual folly, excessive materialism, being hyper-critical, outbursts of anger, a long line of broken relationships.
6. The feeling of being attacked, strangled or seduced by spirits during one's sleep. Seeing dark shapes, hearing seducing, accusing or very demanding voices.
7. Unusual, even bizarre accidents and illnesses, constant financial problems, a continual lack of success in life despite one's best efforts.

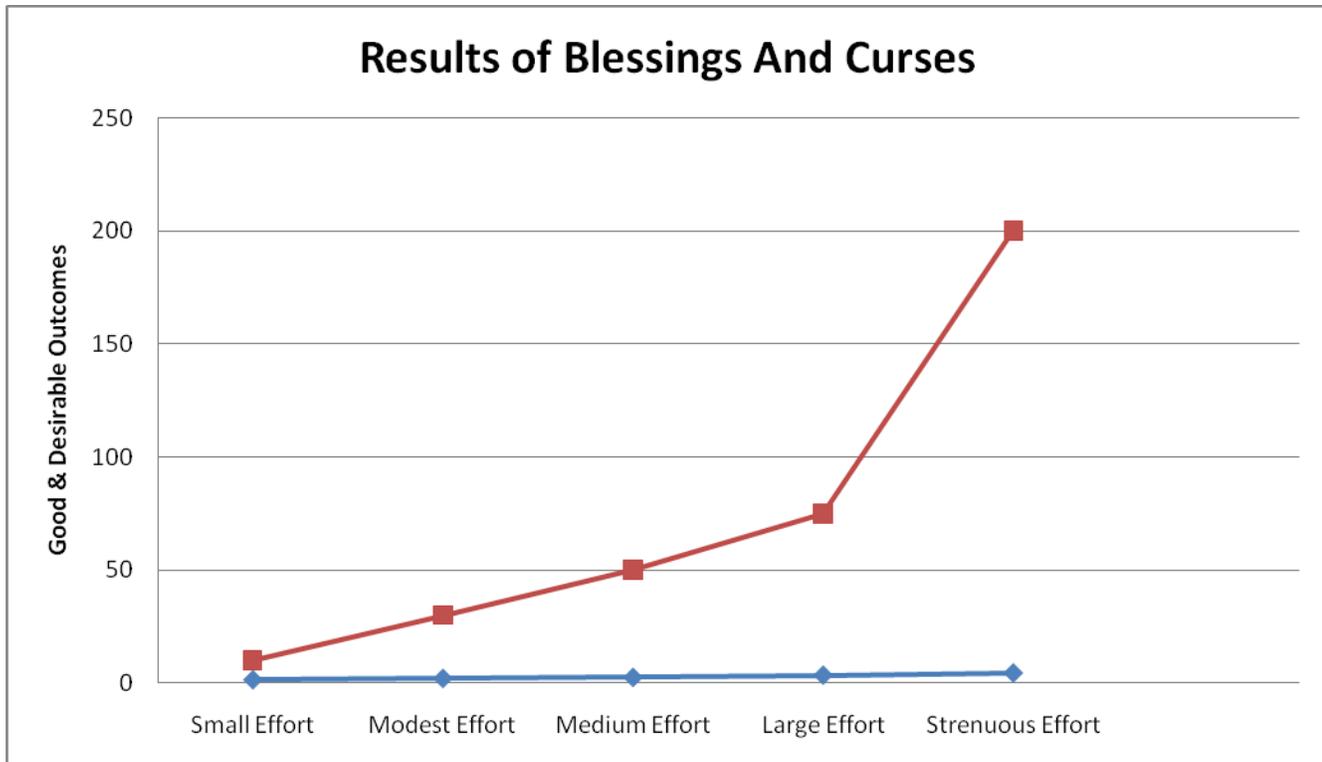
Ezekiel 8 and Your Body As A Spiritual Temple

Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:19) and is analogous to the Jewish Temple built by Solomon. However that temple eventually became defiled by idols. Yet God still dwelt in the Holy of Holies while abominations filled the outer room. This came to a peak just before the Babylonians destroyed the Temple, during the time of Ezekiel.

In Ezekiel 8:3-18 God shows Ezekiel all the secret abominations going on in God's Holy Temple. So we find that demonic activity and holy activity can take place in the same structure for a time (the glory of the Lord eventually leaves the Temple).

So we find that some Christians are leading spiritually defiled lives, worshipping both God and other idols such as New Age idols, statues, and Eastern religions or committing gross sexual sin or taking drugs. They grieve the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30) and set themselves up for spiritual oppression.

Scenario Question: Do you know anyone whose life might be under spiritual oppression of some sort?



Blessings (red line above) – A positive word of great spiritual power, often as a result of faith and obedience, blessing on Abraham, David, the Rechabites etc. Exponential advancement you reap 30, 60 and a hundredfold from the effort that you expend! Blessings go to thousands of generations (Exodus 34:6,7). The Foundational Genesis 1 Blessings: Be fruitful, multiply and have dominion

Curses (blue line above) – a negative word of genuine spiritual power often as a result of judgment on sin, wickedness and injustice or of parental wrath (God on Cain, Noah on Canaan). You can work very hard and yet achieve very little in the way of tangible results e.g. the curse on the ground, etc. Your effort is wasted, futile fruitless and frustrating. Curses go to 3 or 4 generations (Exodus 34:6-7). The Foundational Genesis 3 Curses : hard fruitless labor, difficult childbirth, humiliation and insignificance.

Abrahamic Blessings: Fruitful land, Multiply as the stars & sand of the sea, have dominion over the gates of the enemies also see Noah’s blessings Genesis 9. We have the Abrahamic blessings (read whole of Galatians 3)

We have all the spiritual blessings in Heavenly Realms in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 1:3)

Curses are broken on the Cross: Galatians 3:10-14, Colossians 2:13-15

For an entire article see: <http://www.globalchristians.org/articles/curses.htm>

Ephesus – City of Spiritual Warfare

Acts 19 tells us that Ephesus was full of occult activity such as Jewish exorcists, magicians, idol manufacturers and above them all a gigantic temple to Diana (also known as Artemis).

The apostles Paul and John both ministered there and Ephesians and 1 John tell us much about how to combat spiritual oppression. Here are some of the main points:

1. The powers of darkness are real (Ephesians 2:2, 6:12)
2. But Christ has conquered them (Ephesians 1:19-23, 4:8, Colossians. 2:15) and they must submit to His Name (Philippians 2:10,11)
3. Jesus Christ has ascended into Heaven (Ephesians 1:19-23, 4:8-10) and Christians have been seated with Him in the heavenly realms (Ephesians 2:6) so we also have spiritual authority (1 Corinthians 6:2,3).
4. If we admit our situation and honestly confess our sins we will be forgiven and the blood of Christ will cleanse us from all sin (1 John 1:7-9)
5. So we see that through Christ we have a right to spiritual cleansing. (Hebrews 9:14)
6. We must renounce the hidden deeds of darkness (Ephesians 5:11-14) including the occult, sexual immorality & covetousness (Ephesians 5:2-5) and all hatred (1 John 2:9-11) and decide to walk in the light as He is in the light (1 John 1:5-7, Ephesians 5:8-10). This is often called removing the ground the enemy has in our lives.
7. After this we should then ask for the filling of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18) and put on each piece of the whole armor of God by prayer. (Ephesians 6:10-20)

A Prayer

I honestly confess my sins (list them) including any occult involvement of my parents and ancestors (list them) (Exodus 20:5, Deuteronomy 5:9, 2 Samuel 21:1)

I renounce the Devil and all his works. (this may include destroying occult objects such as magic books & idols) (Acts 19:17-20, Deuteronomy 7:24-26)

I forgive others (list their names) just as Jesus Christ has for-given me. (Ephesians 4:32, Matthew 6:12-15,)

I claim my spiritual cleansing by the blood of Jesus Christ whom I confess to be my Savior and my Lord. (1 John 1:7-9, Hebrews 9:14)

I now give any ground that Satan may have had in my life over to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and I ask for God to fill me with the Holy Spirit and with joy. (Ephesians 5:1-18)

I take up my spiritual authority as one seated in heavenly realms with Christ Jesus and in the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth I command Satan and all his demons to depart from me. (Ephesians 2:6, 1:20, Mark 3:15, 16:17,18; Luke 9:1)

I claim that all curses spoken and written against me are broken by the cross of Jesus Christ. (Galatians 3:10-14, Colossians 2:13-15) and that I have all the spiritual blessings in the heavenly realms (Ephesians 1:3) including the blessings of Abraham (Galatians 3:14,29) for God has out-blessed the curse (Psalm 109:28) and turned it into a blessing (Deuteronomy 23:5)

And I now prayerfully put on each piece of the full armor of God (name each piece see Ephesians 6:10-20) and I will walk in the light as He is in the light (1 John 1:5-7). In Jesus' Name. Amen.

The Kingdom Is Victorious!

Revelation 19:1-6 ESV After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, crying out, "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, (2) for his judgments are true and just; for he has judged the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her immorality, and has avenged on her the blood of his servants." (3) Once more they cried out, "Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up forever and ever." (4) And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who was seated on the throne, saying, "Amen. Hallelujah!" (5) And from the throne came a voice saying, "Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, small and great." (6) Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns.

Matthew 12:20 He will not break a bruised reed, and He will not quench a smoking wick, until He sends out judgment to victory.

Luke 11:22 But when one stronger than he comes, he overcomes him. He takes from him all his armor in which he trusted, and he distributes his arms.

John 16:33 I have spoken these things to you so that you might have peace in Me. In the world you shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer. I have overcome the world.

Romans 12:21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

1Corinthians 15:54,55 But when this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and when this mortal shall put on immortality, then will take place the word that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory?"

1Corinthians 15:57 But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Scenario Question: Who gives us the victory? When is this victory finalized?

1John 2:13,14 I write to you, fathers, because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I write to you, little children, because you have known the Father. I write to you, fathers, because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the Word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.

1John 4:4 You are of God, little children, and you have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

1John 5:4,5 For everything that has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

Rewards and Inheritance

- ▶ Inheritance and Reward are related but separate concepts with some overlap. Christians have BOTH an inheritance and a reward. An Inheritance is by BIRTH and is from the new birth as sons of God.
- ▶ 1 Peter 1:3-4 ESV *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, (4) to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,*
- ▶ A reward is for SPECIAL EFFORT and is for patient endurance, obedience, suffering, diligence and effort in the Lord's work. 2 John 1:8 ESV *Watch yourselves, so that you may not lose what we have worked for, but may win a full reward.*
- ▶ A King has a nobleman, who has a son and heir. The nobleman's estate passes to the son and heir as an inheritance, just by fact of birth. It is not a reward for good behavior or special courage it is a *right of inheritance*. If the nobleman wins a great battle the King may give the nobleman a REWARD – such as a new title, name, honor or more land. *This is earned.*
- ▶ Christians may be “prodigal sons” and destroy their inheritance through grossly immoral behavior inconsistent with the Christian faith. **1 Corinthians 6:9-11 ESV (9)** *Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, (10) nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. (11) And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*
- ▶ A reward is only given for excellent work, slipshod work is unrewarded and burned up **1 Corinthians 3:12-15** *Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.*
- ▶ Christians may “receive their reward in full” by attention-seeking and hypocrisy: **Matthew 6:5** *“And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.”*

The Revelation Perspective

Revelation 2:7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat of the Tree of Life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

Revelation 2:11 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death.

Revelation 2:17 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give to him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knows except he who receives it .

Revelation 2:26 And he who overcomes and keeps My works to the end, to him I will give power over the nations.

Revelation 3:5 The one who overcomes, this one will be clothed in white clothing. 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.

Revelation 3:12 Him who overcomes I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will go out no more. And I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of Heaven from My God, and My new name.

Revelation 3:21 To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame and have sat down with My Father in His throne.

Revelation 12:11 And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony. And they did not love their soul until death.

Revelation 15:2 And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire. And those who had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.

Revelation 17:14 These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them. For He is Lord of lords and King of kings. And those with Him are the called and elect and faithful ones.

Revelation 21:7 He who overcomes will inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he will be My son.

Scenario Question:

Who are the overcomers?

What are they like?

How do they win?

And how will they be rewarded?