

a workbook

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Using the Bible  
to prove that  
“brick and mortar”  
religion should  
have died a long  
time ago.

# **The End of Material Religion**

**S. A. McCraney**

Paul the apostle wrote,

*“However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual.”<sup>1</sup>*

Do we have evidence of this order in the Bible? I would say that we do. For example, what did God create first – a spirit for the man Adam or his body? The LDS folks say that God created Adam’s spirit first, but this contradicts Paul doesn’t it? Going back to Genesis we are actually given the order of how God created Adam as Moses wrote, *“And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.”<sup>2</sup>*

Did you catch the order? First, *“the LORD formed man of the dust of the ground,”* second, *“(He) breathed into his nostrils the breath of life,”* and third, *“man BECAME a living soul.”* There’s the order which clearly supports Paul who said, *“the spiritual is not first, but the natural and afterward the spiritual.”*

Are there other examples of this order in scripture? There are. And that is what this little booklet is all about . . . How God used this approach to redeem and reconcile the world to Himself.

First through the physical, then through the spiritual.

Remembering this rule of thumb, let’s move in an effort to provide support for the bold title of this little booklet, *“Using the Bible to prove that 'brick and mortar' religion should have died a long time ago.”*

After *“material then spiritual Adam”* fell God, through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob created a . . .

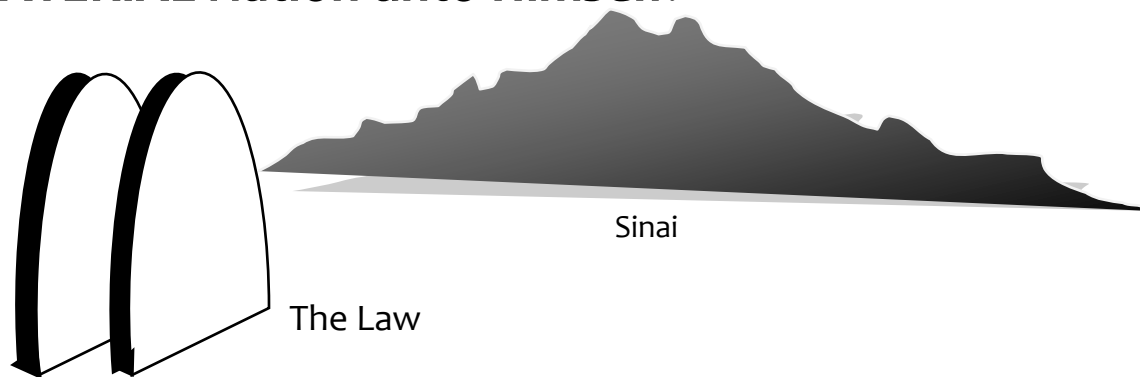
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<sup>1</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:46 (NKJV)

<sup>2</sup> Genesis 2:7 (KJV)

**Notes:**

## MATERIAL Nation unto Himself.<sup>3</sup>



Known in scripture as, “the Nation or House of Israel” . . . with

- Laws and Commands written in stone<sup>4</sup>
- Temples “made with hands”<sup>5</sup>
- Priesthood held by flesh and blood<sup>6</sup>
- Sacrifices of actual animals<sup>7</sup>
- An economy of “Obedience/Blessing or Disobedience/Curse”<sup>8</sup>
- A literal material Nation culled out from all others<sup>9</sup>
- Cities prescribed by God<sup>10</sup>
- Literal manna given to them from heaven<sup>11</sup>
- Literal water given to them from rock<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Leviticus 26:12 "And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people."

<sup>4</sup> Deuteronomy 9:10 "And the LORD delivered unto me two tables of stone written with the finger of God; and on them was written according to all the words, which the LORD spake with you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly."

<sup>5</sup> Exodus 25:9 "According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it."

<sup>6</sup> Exodus 19:6 "And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel."

<sup>7</sup> Leviticus 5:9 "And he shall sprinkle of the blood of the sin offering upon the side of the altar; and the rest of the blood shall be wrung out at the bottom of the altar: it is a sin offering."

<sup>8</sup> Deuteronomy 11:26 "Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; a blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day: and a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known."

<sup>9</sup> Leviticus 26:12 "And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people."

<sup>10</sup> Numbers 35:4 "And the suburbs of the cities, which ye shall give unto the Levites, shall reach from the wall of the city and outward a thousand cubits round about."

<sup>11</sup> Exodus 16:15 "And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna: for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat."

<sup>12</sup> Exodus 17:6 "Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel."

- A literal day of rest<sup>13</sup>
- Literal Prophets prophesying of literal events<sup>14</sup>
- Ten percent of increase of fruits and harvest given to temple priests<sup>15</sup>
- What to eat and drink prescribed<sup>16</sup>
- What to wear prescribed<sup>17</sup>
- How to worship prescribed<sup>18</sup>
- Sanitary laws demanded<sup>19 20 21</sup>
- Even physical deformity forbidden<sup>22</sup>

All of these things God first created materially pointing to the coming of a literal material Messiah who was promised to them.<sup>23 24 25</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Exodus 16:29 "See, for that the LORD hath given you the sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day."

<sup>14</sup> Numbers 12:6 "And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream."

<sup>15</sup> Leviticus 27:30 "And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD'S: it is holy unto the LORD."

<sup>16</sup> Exodus 22:31 "And ye shall be holy men unto me: neither shall ye eat any flesh that is torn of beasts in the field; ye shall cast it to the dogs."

<sup>17</sup> Exodus 39:1 "And of the blue, and purple, and scarlet, they made cloths of service, to do service in the holy place, and made the holy garments for Aaron; as the LORD commanded Moses."

<sup>18</sup> Ezekiel 46:3 "Likewise the people of the land shall worship at the door of this gate before the LORD in the sabbaths and in the new moons."

<sup>19</sup> Exodus 30:21 "So they shall wash their hands and their feet, that they die not: and it shall be a statute for ever to them, even to him and to his seed throughout their generations."

<sup>20</sup> Leviticus 11:40 "And he that eateth of the carcass of it shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even: he also that beareth the carcass of it shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even."

<sup>21</sup> Leviticus 14:8 "And he that is to be cleansed shall wash his clothes, and shave off all his hair, and wash himself in water, that he may be clean: and after that he shall come into the camp, and shall tarry abroad out of his tent seven days."

<sup>22</sup> Leviticus 21:18-21 "For whatsoever man he be that hath a blemish, he shall not approach: a blind man, or a lame, or he that hath a flat nose, or any thing superfluous, or a man that is brokenfooted, or brokenhanded, or crookbackt, or a dwarf, or that hath a blemish in his eye, or be scurvy, or scabbed, or hath his stones broken; no man that hath a blemish of the seed of Aaron the priest shall come nigh to offer the offerings of the LORD made by fire: he hath a blemish; he shall not come nigh to offer the bread of his God."

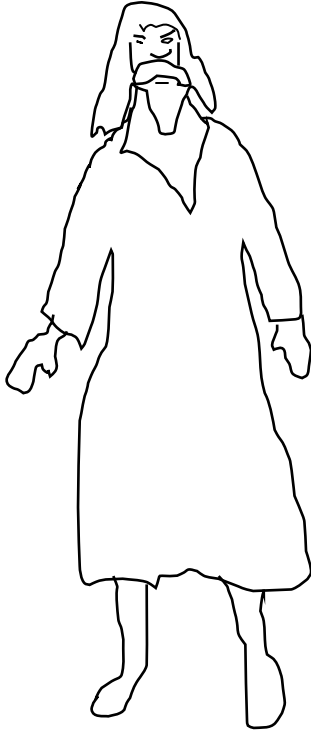
<sup>23</sup> A Promise of the Messiah: 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 7:16 "And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever."

<sup>24</sup> Another Promise of the Messiah: Deuteronomy 18:15-18 "The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; According to all that thou desiredst of the LORD thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. And the LORD said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him."

<sup>25</sup> Other promises of the Messiah: Isaiah 35:4-6; 40:1-5,9; 50:6; 53:1-3; 53:4-6; 53:7; 53:9; 53:12; Jeremiah 23:5; Zechariah 9:9; 12:10; Psalm 41:9.

**Notes**

## SECONDLY . . . God sent the material fulfillment of the Promised Messiah in “His Word made flesh.”



### The Promise Messiah (Material)

- He was born of a woman (materially) and under the material law.<sup>26</sup>
- He came to the House of Israel first - specifically, materially and literally.<sup>27</sup>
- He materially fulfilled the Law and the Prophets by obedience.<sup>28</sup>
- He was the “bread of life,”<sup>29</sup> “the living water,”<sup>30</sup> “the way, truth and life,”<sup>31</sup> and “rest.”<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Galatians 4:4 “But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.”

<sup>27</sup> Matthew 15:24 “But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

<sup>28</sup> Matthew 5:17 “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.”

<sup>29</sup> John 6:35 “And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.”

<sup>30</sup> John 7:37 “In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.”

<sup>31</sup> John 14:6 “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”

<sup>32</sup> Matthew 11:28 “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

- He explained dietary laws (doing away with them).<sup>33</sup>
- He became the day of rest fulfilling the Sabbath.<sup>34</sup>
- He is our literal and final sacrifice for sin and death.<sup>35</sup>
- He is our new, final and only High Priest.<sup>36 37 38 39 40</sup>
- He said the temple would be destroyed within a generation.<sup>41</sup>
- The Material Messiah was put to death for the sins of the world.<sup>42</sup>
- At His death the Temple veil ripped in two, top to bottom.<sup>43</sup>
- He died physically.<sup>44</sup>
- He was buried physically.<sup>45</sup>
- He resurrected physically from the grave.<sup>46</sup>
- He promised to return to save them physically from coming judgment.<sup>47</sup>
- He ascended physically into the heavens.<sup>48</sup>
- He was the last to be sent by God.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Matthew 15:17-18 "Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man."

<sup>34</sup> Matthew 11:28 "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

<sup>35</sup> Hebrews 10:9-10 "Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

<sup>36</sup> Hebrews 3:1 "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus."

<sup>37</sup> Hebrews 4:14 "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession."

<sup>38</sup> Hebrews 4:15 "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

<sup>39</sup> Hebrews 8:1 "Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens;"

<sup>40</sup> Hebrews 9:11 "But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building."

<sup>41</sup> Matthew 24:34 "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled."

<sup>42</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> John 2:2 "And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

<sup>43</sup> Mark 15:38 "And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom."

<sup>44</sup> John 19:30 "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost."

<sup>45</sup> Matthew 27:59-60 "And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed."

<sup>46</sup> Matthew 28:5-6 "And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay."

<sup>47</sup> Revelation 3:11 "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

<sup>48</sup> Acts 1:9 "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight."

<sup>49</sup> Matthew 21:37 "But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son."

- As our High Priest He had to come out of the Holy of Holies.<sup>50</sup>

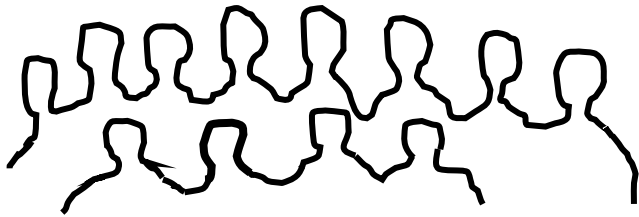
**Notes:**

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<sup>50</sup> Anciently, when the singular high priest on the Day of Atonement entered into the Holy of Holies of the temple with the blood of an animal, the Nation for which he was offering the blood waited outside in anticipation of his exit (or return). His exit from the Holy of Holies was proof to the Nation that God had accepted the offering (by not killing Him, essentially). Once the High Priest came out the Nation would collectively rejoice and celebrate. So it was with Jesus our great High Priest, who ascended into the heavens and entered the presence of God (in His heavenly Holy of Holies) with His own blood. To fulfill the Old Testament picture of the ancient High Priest, Jesus had to exit (or return) to them to show that His offering was accepted. This was accomplished in 70AD with His return to Jerusalem.



**THIRD . . . Jesus chose twelve material witnesses to usher in the Spiritual age while warning all (in that age) that the end of material religion was near.**



## 12 APOSTLES

"Am I not an apostle? . . . Have I not seen the Lord Jesus Christ?"

- The Holy Spirit fell on them on Day of Pentecost – initiating a new administration/economy/dispensation (of the Spiritual).<sup>51 52</sup>
- The eleven (plus Matthias and Paul) were the last material witnesses of Him.<sup>53 54</sup>
- They were commanded to go and preach the Gospel to the “vicinity or area” containing His people.<sup>55</sup>
- In time these witness also wrote (according to the Holy Spirit).<sup>56</sup>
- What they wrote was to the believers in that day and age.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Acts 2:4 "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

<sup>52</sup> This was only the beginning of the Spiritual church. The former things still had to vanish before it would take full effect.

<sup>53</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:8 "And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time."

<sup>54</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 4:9 "For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men."

<sup>55</sup> Matthew 28:19 "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations ('ethnos' in Greek, 'tribes')."

<sup>56</sup> Namely Matthew, John, Paul, James, and Peter.

<sup>57</sup> There is not a passage in scripture where any of the New Testament writers intimate that their written epistles were for the benefit of future generations of believers.

- They gave instructions on how to survive “the end of all things”<sup>58</sup> which was headed their way – “destruction” (as described by Jesus).<sup>59</sup>
- When the Apostles referred to scripture it was almost always to the Old Testament.
- There was no New Testament to guide people – just some letters sent to different locations. They were copied but not universally delivered.
- All compositions occurred before 70 AD – including Revelation.<sup>60</sup>
- The Holy Spirit did the converting and guiding of believers far and wide in the early church. The Gospel was preached not read.
- The Apostles gave their lives for their witness of His material life, death, burial, resurrection, ascension and promise of His eminent return.

**Notes:**

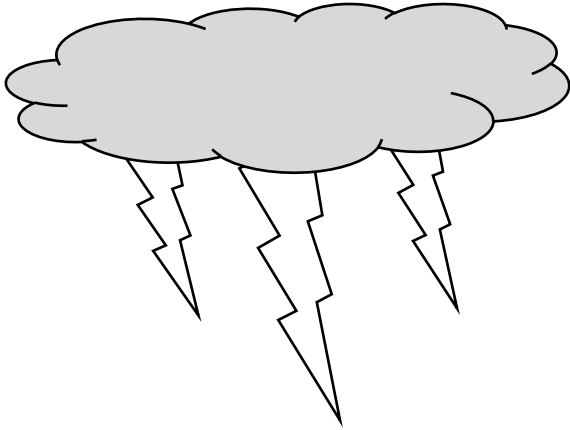
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<sup>58</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 4:7 "But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer."

<sup>59</sup> Matthew 24.

<sup>60</sup> See chapter on Revelation in “Knife to a Gun Fight” available at [www.hotm.tv/store](http://www.hotm.tv/store).

## FOURTH . . . Utter Material Destruction



*“And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.”*

### Jerusalem – 70 AD

- End of “*all things*” (of the former Covenant/Economy/Administration).<sup>61</sup>
- End of “the world” (which refers to “their world,” the Nation of Israel).<sup>62</sup>
- The Material Temple is utterly leveled.<sup>63</sup>
- Matthew twenty-four describes all the signs of the end of that age.
- This was the beginning of a New Heaven and New Earth (spiritual).<sup>64</sup>
- And a New Jerusalem (spiritual).<sup>65</sup>
- The Church (His Bride) was saved by Christ at His coming.<sup>66 67</sup>
- Literal physical Judgment fell on the rest for rejecting Him.<sup>68</sup>
- They did not escape “Gehenna.”<sup>69</sup> All was utterly destroyed.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>61</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 4:7 "But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer."

<sup>62</sup> Matthew 13:49 "So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just." (World here is not the typical "Kosmos" but "Aion," which means age – “the end of the age.”)

<sup>63</sup> See Josephus' "History of the Jews" for a detailed description of this destruction.

<sup>64</sup> Revelation 21:1 "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea." (Apocryphal language – "no sea" describes "no brazen sea" that was part of the temple).

<sup>65</sup> Revelation 21:2 ". . .and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God," (meaning it is heavenly and spiritual not physical by any means).

<sup>66</sup> Revelation 21:2 "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." (God has always longed to be the husband of a worthy bride of believers).

<sup>67</sup> This was the Church that the gates of hell would not prevail against. Ever since the gates of hell have ruled churches.

<sup>68</sup> (See note 55.)

<sup>69</sup> Throughout the King James Jesus' use of "Gehenna" is translated "hell." Actually, those who did not receive Him as Messiah did not escape "Gehenna," an actual dumping pit for dead bodies located in Jerusalem.

<sup>70</sup> The actual temple, the actual genealogies (and therefore the actual priesthood) and the actual City of David.

## FIFTH . . . His Spiritual Kingdom continues to this day.



“Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him.”

**Having destroyed material religion and saved His Church from physical destruction, the Body of Christ today is entirely spiritual - made up of spiritually regenerated believers. Nothing that can be shaken remains. (See note 77 and 78 below.)**

- Now God writes His laws upon individuals' hearts and minds.<sup>71 72</sup>
- Believers continue to be the epistles today.<sup>73</sup>
- “No man need teach His neighbor for all will know Him.”<sup>74 75 76</sup>
- All things that can “be shaken” have now been destroyed.<sup>77</sup>
- Only “unshakeable things” should remain (things of the Spirit).<sup>78</sup>
- No vestiges of the material remains (*they can be shaken*).
- No build-up of brick and mortar edifices (*they can be shaken*).

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<sup>71</sup> Hebrews 8:10 "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:"

<sup>72</sup> Hebrews 10:16 "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them."

<sup>73</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 3:3 "Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart."

<sup>74</sup> Hebrews 8:11 "And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest."

<sup>75</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> John 2:27 "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him."

<sup>76</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> John 2:20 "But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things." (note that this was written before the end of the age and before the New Testament was gathered, agreed upon, compiled or printed).

<sup>77</sup> Hebrews 12:27 This phrase, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of what is shaken, as of what has been made, in order that what cannot be shaken may remain.

<sup>78</sup> (see note reference # 66 above) Ask yourself, "What in my Christian walk can be shaken?" (upset, changed, moved, destroyed, altered). Then realize whatever such things are, they are superfluous to your walk. Remember all church things – buildings, boards, pastors, reverends, policies, even hard and fast doctrines – can be shaken.

- No institutional hierarchies, boards, or intermediaries into the life of believers (*they can be shaken*).
- No priesthoods (*except that of Christ and His followers*).
- No rules, policies or regulations (*as all who are part of the Body have the Spirit in them and are responsible before God for how they respond to His leadings*).<sup>79</sup>
- No church discipline (*as the Spirit disciplines each individual*).<sup>80</sup>
- No tithes, building funds, collections – all free will offerings.<sup>81</sup>
- All Christian commandments are summarized in “faith and love.”<sup>82</sup>
- Doctrinal knowledge and education are often antithetical to humility.
- There is no theology test at the gates of heaven.<sup>83</sup>
- God has had the total victory.<sup>84</sup>

**Notes:**

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<sup>79</sup> Romans 14:22 "Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth."

<sup>80</sup> Romans 14:10 "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ."

<sup>81</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 9:7 "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver."

<sup>82</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> John 3:23 "And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment."

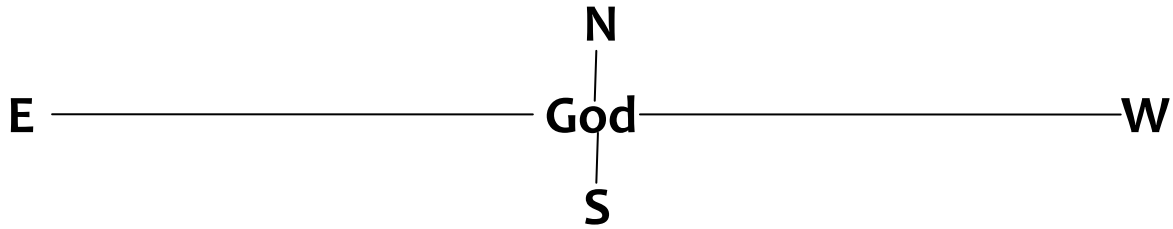
<sup>83</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 8:1 "Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth."

<sup>84</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:20-28 "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."

We could stop here and argue that the point has been more than made through the passages presented. Material religion has long been over. Unfortunately what continues on are men and women “playing” church forgetting that God through His Spirit reigns and believers are governed by Him and Him alone.

But how about something to put a nail in all of this? Something that proves *everything* is done and we do not need men and religious institutions anymore?

**Notes:**



## SIXTH – God is now “all in all.”

In chapter three of Acts, Peter and John, by the power of Christ Jesus, healed a man born lame. This miracle opened Peter up to preaching. Preaching what? Jesus Christ. To Whom? Devout Jews. He told them they had killed “the Just” and “the Holy One” and “the Prince of Life,” but that “they and their rulers had done it ignorantly,” and that in the face of all this information they should now:

“Repent” (*change their minds*) “and turn” (*from their present course*) . . . that “*their sins* (related to their rebellious response and rejection of God’s Only Son coming to save them) would be blotted out.” And then Peter adds:

“*when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;*” (and listen to more context - verse 20 and 21) “*And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.*”

Now, point blank, ask yourselves, “What does the context of Peter’s words sound like he is talking about? And to whom?”

He has preached Jesus to them.

He has told them that they put Him to death in ignorance.

He has directed them to repent, and to turn, that their sins may be blotted out, and he has said for them to do all of this that they may be prepared for . . .

(READY)

when “*the times of refreshing shall come from the presence (of whom?) the Lord,*” **AND** “*he shall send . . . JESUS CHRIST*” (*who was preached unto them*) whom the heavens received (*through His ascension into it*) UNTIL “*the restitution of all things.*”

There are theories out there on what Peter meant when he used the line, “*times of refreshing,*” theories on what he meant when he said, “*he shall send Jesus Christ,*” and grand evolving theories on what Peter meant by, “*until the restitution of all things.*” Right here in front of us we have what Peter says and we have the context wherein it was said. So, again . . . What does this sound like Peter is talking about when he says – then and there -

“*You guys, repent and turn and have your sins blotted out to prepare you for when the times of refreshing shall come (from the presence of the Lord,*” **AND** “*he shall send . . . JESUS CHRIST* (who was preached unto you) whom the heavens received UNTIL “*the restitution of all things.*”

Does it sound like Peter is speaking of a frame of time that is way out into the future when he is imploring those men there to act? Does it sound like, speaking to these Jewish men in the temple, the period of time (where “the times of refreshing and restitution of all things”) has bearing on these very people, or does it sound like something that would be far, far, far into the future?

Paul also spoke of this same time as Peter – he called it “the dispensation of the fullness of times.” Ever hear that phrase? What does it mean and to whom does it apply?

In Ephesians 1:10 Paul writes:

*“That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him.”*

Again, is Paul speaking of a period or dispensation of time to occur way out in the future or was it something else? Something that would be of application to these men and their families? Stepping back to the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century there lived a Christian man named Darby – John Darby. He laid the ground work of a theory called “dispensationalism” which is a belief that the earth’s history can be divided up into seven dispensations (or periods of time), with the seventh being the millennial reign of Jesus Christ on earth. This theory makes great use (and some really good sense) of periods of time in the Bible and the number seven. Darby created a theme from scripture that was pretty convincing, and when Joseph Smith claimed to restore the truth back to the earth he included this popular theme of Darby’s “dispensationalism” into his restoration - but with Smith being the one to oversee this last dispensation of time.

As an FYI, “dispensationalism” was not a theory prior to the early 1800’s, but it is a thriving way to see Christian eschatology today and is the driving force behind Christians screaming that “the end is near.” Because of all of this rhetoric, most believers – myself included for a time – have embraced the notion that a dispensation is a period of time. And since Paul wrote in Ephesians 1:10,

*“That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him.”*

. . . we are prone to see things the way Darby interpreted them – including how we define the term, “dispensation.” Truth is, “dispensation,” and the Greek word from which it is garnered, have nothing to do with periods of time. They have to do with “administration” and/or “an arrangement of affairs.”

Listen to the Greek word– it’s “OIKONOMIA.” Does that sound like a familiar English word to you? “OYKON-O-MEEAH?” (phonetic pronunciation). It’s where we get our word “economy,” and do you know what economy means in its simplest form? The “management of a house.”

One of the better expository reference books out there on the Greek, called Vine’s Expository Dictionary, says this of “OIKONOMIA”:

*“A dispensation is not a period or epoch (which is a common but erroneous use of the word), but a MODE of dealing, an arrangement or administration of affairs.”*



In our book *A to Z*<sup>85</sup> we explain that when trying to understand Grace we might examine the Old Testament versus the New in terms of a change of administration. Under the Old Economy there was a works/obedience/reward administration in place, but in the New Economy Christ introduces a new administration – one of grace. Same God – different administration – just like one administration under the president of the United States being Republican and then the next being Democrat; the office of president is the same but the administration (or the economy – the management of the household) is changed.

So when Paul speaks of the “dispensation of the fullness of times,” and when Peter is telling these men right there at that time and in their age that they need to repent and have their sins blotted out “when the time of refreshing shall come by the presence of Jesus Christ,” they are both speaking of the ultimate completion of the former administration and the implementation of God’s ultimate “plan” for all of creation.

The *Expositors Bible Commentary* says of this verse from Paul:

*“Here Paul uses it to suggest the administration or putting into effect of God’s far reaching redemptive plan.”*

One more factor to consider. When did this fullness of times begin? Interestingly enough, the New Testament assigns the term to the birth of Christ. Listen to Galatians 4:4,

*“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.”*

The writer of Hebrews made it clear that in order for “the restitution of all things” and “the dispensation of the fullness of times” to have a full presence, the former administration had to leave office (so to speak) and wrote in Hebrews 8:13,

*“In speaking of a new covenant he treats the first as obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.”*

This context gives additional meaning to 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:17, which says,

*“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”*

Paul added in Romans 13:12,

*“The night is far spent, **the day is at hand**: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.”*

In 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 13:10 he said,

*“But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.”*

The writer of Hebrews said (in 10:25),

*“Don’t forsake assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, **as ye see the day approaching.**”*

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<sup>85</sup> Available at [www.hotm.tv](http://www.hotm.tv).

James 5:8 *“Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: **for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.**”*

And in one of the last books written chronologically in the New Testament, Peter, again showing up, says to the believers who had repented, turned, and had his sins blotted out,

*“**But the end of all things is at hand:** be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.”*

This is the context of Peter’s words here in Acts chapter 3 verses 19-21.

Let me read what he said to these men (yet) again:

*“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come **from the presence of the Lord**” again! “Be prepared when the times of refreshing shall come” (listen) “which will occur from the presence of the Lord.” In other words, the very presence of the Lord will initiate this times of refreshing. It will signify the utter end of all things old and the full integration of all things new.*

It will happen when the Old Economy is manifestly over and the New has utterly taken over. Then Peter adds even more clarity to the context and says,

Acts 3:20 *“And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you.”*

Do you see the connection between all of these factors?

That Peter is speaking to them, those people, about preparing for the “times of refreshing” and he ties it to Jesus being sent back to them to completely wipe out the former administration and implement the new. And speaking of Jesus (who, he says, “was preached to them” – and they rejected) Peter says,

Acts 3:21 *“Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.”*

So we are given yet another connection and explanation in context here. Speaking of Jesus at His ascension, Peter says,

*“Whom the heaven must receive. . .”*

Meaning, since He was holy and pure and overcame sin and death the heaven had to take Him in (receive Him) UNTIL? *“Until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.”*

Every single believer and reader of the Bible has to decide for themselves what they believe Peter was speaking of here when he said that, *“the heaven must receive Christ **until** the times of restitution of all things.”* Darbian Dispensationalists believe that this speaks of a future date in which Jesus will finally return (with judgment) and establish His kingdom once and for all. Admittedly, this is the way most Christians understand this passage. But not all. I want to use what Peter says next, plus some other insights from the whole of scripture, to explain why I am convinced that *“the times of refreshing,” “the restitution of all things,”* and *“the dispensation of the fullness of times”* all refer to

that period when Peter was talking to these men – the period that started the moment Jesus was born in a manger and ended when the Old Economy was destroyed and all things, from that time forward, have been fully restored – spiritually.

The first appeal I will make to support this view is what Peter says next in what appears to be a means to support what he has said. So after saying to them that Jesus was to be in the heavens until the restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began, he says,

Acts 3:22 *“For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.”*

In verse 21 Peter says that *“God has spoken of this restitution of all things by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.”* And guess who he uses, having made this claim, to prove this? Moses - saying,

*“For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.”*

Who do all Christian scholars say Moses was talking about here prophetically? That’s right, Jesus. So do the Jews. If the Jews and the Christians are correct in this then right here and now we can see that Peter, in quoting Moses, ties “the restoration of all things” to the coming of Jesus and His work among the Nation of Israel. Peter continues and says to these men then and there:

Acts 3:23 *“And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.”* This is a directive from Peter to those men that supports his reasoning to get them to “repent” and “turn” – so they won’t be destroyed from among the people! Peter is citing for them reasons why they must change their minds and direction, *“because EVERY soul that will not hear this prophet of whom Moses spoke will be destroyed from among the people!”* Get the context? We don’t need Darby to reinterpret what the Word is clearly saying. Peter continues,

Acts 3:24 *“Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of **these days.**”*

What days? The days we are living in? Two thousand years later? No, Peter says that all the prophets foretold of those days right then. And then to bring it all home, and in context to those men standing there (who he has told to repent and turn), Peter says,

Acts 3:25 *“Ye are the children of the prophets (which foretold of those days when the restitution of all things would happen), and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.”*

And adds,

Acts 3:26 *“Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.”*

And from this we can see that Peter was telling them that the “restitution of all things,” this “time of refreshing,” this “dispensation of the fullness of times” was spoken of as the time when, as God told Abraham, “in his seed would ALL the kindreds of the earth be blessed” (including us Gentiles) and that “God first giving these blessings unto them,” had begun . . . ; “Receive Jesus now,” Peter is saying, for the heavens are going to hold Him until the time for the completion of this restitution of all things, and the Messiah comes to completely shut down the old Administration and utterly replace it with the new – where all things are done by and through His Spirit – where the Law, and the prophets, and temples, and priesthoods, and sacrifices, and all things from the Old would become new.

There would be a new heaven and a new earth, governed by God, and the new economy would then thrive – but the Old has to first vanish away.

The question that remains for many today is - *If Peter (and Paul) were all speaking of Christ and his first coming through birth and His second coming to wrap everything up, and this is “the restitution of all things,” “the time of refreshing,” and “the dispensation of the fullness of times,” then . . .*

*Did Jesus have the victory over **all** things?*

*Was it truly “the end of all things,” as Peter said?*

*Have **all** things really become new?*

*What does this mean and look like? Why is there still death, and evil - and what about Satan and the like?*

Again, when Peter said,

*“Behold the end of all things is at hand,”* we have to ask, “Who was he talking to? Was it us?” No. It was to those who were living at that age, where all things in and of it were about to end. Obviously this has to be the case or Peter was wrong – and Peter wasn’t wrong. The mere fact that we are living, and believing, and reading the Word today proves that Peter clearly did not mean the end of all things, right?

So, again, writing to the people of that age, the “all things” Peter was talking about were “all the things related to that administration” – the former material economy. And when it utterly came to an end, the New Administration would be in full and absolute effect. This is not appreciated by believers today because we want to see things in material terms. We want to believe that the earth will become materially like the Garden of Eden again, instead of spiritually. We want to believe that Satan has been completely thrown out and is unable to tempt anyone, instead of realizing that God continues to allow him to tempt but that all of his power has been lost.

Christ has had the victory – He is not waiting to have it. “*The dispensation of the fullness of times,*” started at His birth and was in full effect when the Old Administration was utterly wiped out with material judgment in 70 AD. The completed “restitution of all things” continues out to this very day.

Let me wrap this up with a final scriptural insight which will rock the world of many in orthodoxy. Speaking of Jesus, Peter says in 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 3:22,

*“Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.”*

The most literal Greek translations have Peter speaking of Jesus and saying that He “has gone into heaven.” Got that?

We now remember that the writer of Hebrews calls Jesus our great High Priest. He makes reference to Him making intercession for us and he makes reference to Him entering the Holy of Holies.

I am convinced that Jesus did just that – as our High Priest, He entered into the Holy of Holies to make intercession with the Father. Looking back to the Old Covenant High Priest, Jesus, upon His ascension, entered into the realm where God dwells, on the behalf of human beings, taking His own shed blood, as it were, with Him – as the high priests of the Old Testament would take animal blood.

Now, in Old Administration times, when the High Priest went into the temple the Nation of Israel waited outside while he was inside. It was only when He exited – alive – that the people knew that their offering of blood through the high priest was accepted! And celebrations followed.

So we have Jesus entering into heaven upon ascension, but unlike the high priest of the Old Covenant (who never sat in the Holy of Holies because the sacrificial work was never done) Jesus, entering in once and for all of us, sat at the right hand of the glory of God.

This is where Jesus was when Peter was speaking to these men in the temple in Acts 3.

For an entire generation the Nation of Israel (to whom He came and revealed Himself) would have an opportunity to recognize Him as the promised One and to believe and receive Him. This was the work of the Apostles by the Holy Spirit.

The parallel to the Old Testament high priest coming out of the temple again, signifying that God had accepted his offering of blood on behalf of the people, was met when Jesus returned out of the Holy of Holies – with rewards for those who looked for Him and judgment for those who did not. His coming in the clouds in that day was, for believers, the proof that God had accepted His offering in the Holy of Holies.

We often teach that His resurrection was this evidence but I think we make a mistake. Nothing was finished until He died, resurrected, ascended, entered the Holy of Holies, and then returned – picturing the Old Administration high priest. If He hasn’t yet returned then we are still waiting to see if God truly received His offering as High Priest entering in with His atoning blood. So here Peter says, speaking of Jesus,

*“Who has gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; **angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.***

At the time of Peter’s writing this was the case – Jesus had gone into heaven, and He was on the right hand of God and listen – at that time, when Peter was writing, as verse 22 proves, *“angels and authorities and powers being made subject to Him.”*

The King James translation of this is unfortunate because the Greek for “*hupotasso*” is in the genitive absolute and might better be translated that angels and authorities and powers . . . *“Have BEEN made subject unto Him”* or *“Now Yield unto Him”* or *“Have been put under Him.”* In other words, when

Peter was writing, he admits that when Jesus sat down at the right hand of the Father “angels, authorities and powers” were - NOT **WOULD BE**, BUT **WERE** – placed under His control.

It was completed then. We are not still waiting today for this to occur. It happened. It’s done.

Paul echoes the finality of this, saying in Ephesians 1 beginning at verse 17:

Ephesians 1:17 *“That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:*

*18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,*

*19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,*

*20 Which **he wrought in Christ**, (that line is past tense) when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,*

*21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:*

*22 And **hath put all things under his feet**, (again, past tense) and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,*

*23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth **all in all**.”*

So back to Peter’s last verse in chapter 3 of 1<sup>st</sup> Peter. Like Paul, he too says, speaking of Jesus (and probably even echoing Paul),

*“Who has gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers are made subject unto him.”*

If I was to say that in the XYZ Corporation Bob is “over everything” – senior managers, laborers and everything under its roof – my mentioning these three areas is like saying, “everything or all things.” That is what Peter is saying here when he mentions, “angels, authorities, and powers” – that is, everything is made subject to Him. He has all power in the heavens and in the earth. He alone can save; and He alone can destroy.

Nobody needs to fear who have put their trust in Him, as He, making a restitution of all things spiritually, can do whatsoever He will in behalf of his followers, and has good and evil spirits under His absolute command.

Now the trouble.

At the time Peter wrote these words the Gospel was still being preached to those of the House of Israel who were dwelling at Jerusalem where the temple stood, the priesthood thrived, the genealogies lay. As we have mentioned earlier, in chapter four of this epistle Peter includes this line,

*“But the end of all things is at hand . . .”*

I am convinced that this means the end of all things relative to the establishment of all things God uses to redeem human kind. I don’t believe it was the end to the work of His Spirit, who draws all



men to Christ nor do I believe that God's love, or care or interactions with Man are over. But I do believe that His work in, through and against the Nation of Israel to establish all things through them and their promised Messiah ended. The implications of this are weighty.

Why?

The most oft quoted words from the Old Testament in the New are from David where he said in Psalm 110:1,

*“The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, **until** I make thine enemies thy footstool.”*

We have just read, from the pen of Paul in Ephesians and from the pen of Peter here in 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 3 that all things *have* been placed in the authority and power of Jesus. This means that David's prophecy is complete. All things are in His power. Not some. All.

And if this is so, what are we to make of the line, *“Sit thou at my right hand, **until** (beat) I make thine enemies thy footstool.”*

We can either say that not all enemies are in His control and we are waiting for all of them to BE placed under the power of Jesus, OR that God HAS made all His enemies UNDER Him (or His footstool) and the restitution of all things is complete. Which is it? Most believers today somehow believe that Jesus is not in control – yet. They will say,

“Look around. Does it look like He's at the helm?”

But if we remember *“that His kingdom is NOT of this world,”* that He reigns over His Kingdom spiritually, and that scripture **clearly states that He is in full control** – and if this is the case, we have to ask ourselves how to interpret the words of 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15 where we read beginning at verse 20:

20 *“But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.*

21 *For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.*

22 *For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.*

23 *But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.*

24 *Then cometh the end, (which I believe is the end Peter said was on its way – LISTEN) . . . when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.*

25 *For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.*

26 *The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.”*

Then read verse 28,

***“And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.”***

What is this saying? So much – most of which is not admitted or even touched upon today. But I would submit to the following short summary of God's narrative:

That, in the beginning God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.

And when God “spoke” everything happened.

I would then suggest that the very Words God spoke, which were in the beginning with God, and which were God – “became flesh and dwelled among us.”

I would suggest that His Word, named Immanuel / Jesus – “God with us” – accomplished everything He was called to accomplish by God and that He finished it all.

He finished it ALL - through His birth, His life, then through His death, His resurrection, His ascension to the right hand of the Father, where everything was put under His feet, and then finally at His return with judgment and reward on that age. Done. And this completed God's material work in “the dispensation (administration) of the fullness of times.”

I now submit that since all things – including death – have been won over by Him, that His **“sitting at the right hand of the Father UNTIL”** is complete. That the “until” has happened, and that now “God is all in all through His Son, our Savior, Mediator, and God in the flesh.”

“Every single knee will bow and every tongue will confess Jesus as LORD,” and I agree with scripture that “nobody can admit such things unless by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

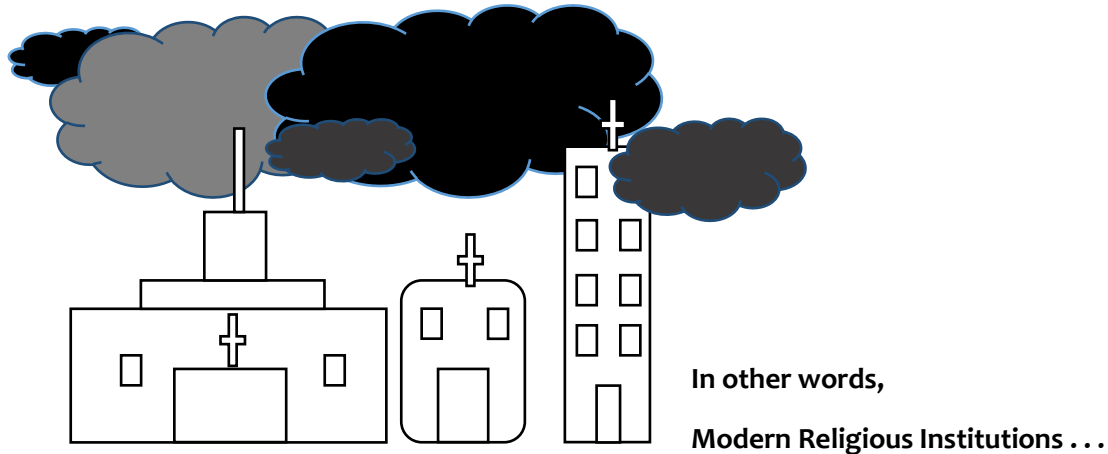
In the face of all of this, we cannot see Satan as anything but absolutely powerless (but like in the Garden of Eden - before the fall - he is still allowed to tempt). Death has no hold on any person, all people will reap what they sow at death – and all will be reconciled to God (as Christ has had the total victory), although some will enter into the eternities with a resurrection of damnation while others will enter into a resurrection of life – whatever these things mean.

**Notes:**



## UNFORTUNATELY . . . (and Seventh) . . .

Men have taken the Body of Christ (which is spiritual) and have tried to re-materialize a Kingdom in His name by building-up “shakable” institutions. They have used the contents of the Bible as a new form of Law (rather than allowing it to be a tool to lead and guide individual believers).



- Started accepting men called “early- church Fathers.”<sup>86</sup>
- Tried to gather the Apostolic letters and form a new code of governing instructions for brick and mortar institutions – with the Catholic being first.
- Did not have an agreed upon “manual” for first 250-330 years of Christian history.
- Allowed counsels (under Constantine) to formalize beliefs and doctrinal creeds for the masses.
- For a thousand years heaped horrors upon others in Jesus' name.
- Did not make the Bible available to the masses due to poverty, education, and inability to understand or even read it.<sup>87</sup>
- Did not have a Bible available until 1450 with the Guttenberg Printing Press.

<sup>86</sup> Matthew 23:9 "And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven."

<sup>87</sup> But the Holy Spirit – without the Church's influence or an available New Testament – continued to save.

- Finally initiated a Reformation – Erasmus, Luther, Calvin – but the contents and translation of the Bible were still not entirely agreed upon at that point either!
- Ultimately applied a stance called “Sola Scriptura” (an absolute fail).<sup>88</sup>
- Then used the Bible to divide the Body, create schisms, and forge denominationalism, instead of do what it was supposed to do – enlighten individuals to the nature of God and Christ.
- Have created countless “translations” (and therefore differences) of “the manual,” but most Christians rhetorically say the book is perfect and all we need.
- Allowed materialism to reign and to serve as a sign of success for God.
- Have for 2000 years used “material hell,” “eternal judgment” and “the eminent return of Christ” to terrify unsuspecting people.<sup>89</sup>
- All the while ignoring the fact that the Bible has been materially fulfilled, that God has had the total victory through Christ, and that everything continues to play out spiritually in the lives of all people as God reconciles the worlds inhabitants to Himself.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> In the face of "Sola Scriptura" all we have accomplished is 35,000 different Christian denominations – many of whom castigate all but themselves for interpreting the Bible improperly.

<sup>89</sup> (See “What the Hell?” available at [www.hotm.tv](http://www.hotm.tv).)

<sup>90</sup> (See next section.)

## **Eight - The Big Question!**

### **“If Material Religion is altogether over, how does this effect Christianity today?”**

This end question is perhaps most troubling to believers today. Being human, and readers of the Bible, most of want to replicate what we read in the ancient text today all the while forgetting that that is exactly what it is – an ancient text. Without question, the Bible is the Word of God and does provide all who consider its content tremendous spiritual insights to the Christian walk. But nowhere does the text itself convey the idea that what the first church did and experienced materially ought to be replicated in the future. God has placed everything under His feet, He has become all in all, and the formation of all things necessary for the redemption of humanity is complete.

So what does this mean or actually look like to true seekers of Jesus today? Perhaps the better question is, “Now that God is all in all, and material religion is over, what is the Christian plan of salvation (so to speak):”

The answer is quite difficult for material religionists to understand (or accept) and so it is worthy of some explanation. As a means to really get our minds around the answer, let’s start in the Old Testament where God speaks about a stone. In Isaiah 28:16 we read,

*“Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.”*

Speaking in more detail of this promised stone, we then read in Psalms 118:22-23,

*“The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the LORD’S doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.”*

Anciently, (and even today) the Jews have believed that the “stone” referred to in Isaiah and Psalms was King David. But when Jesus walked the earth He assigned the meaning directly to Himself. We can read about Him doing this in Matthew 21:33-43. This is the setting: A gathering of Pharisees were listening to Jesus and He proposed to them a parable, saying,

*“There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country: And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, ‘They will reverence my son.’ But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, ‘This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance.’ And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. (Jesus then asked them) ‘When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen?’ They (the Pharisees) said unto him, ‘He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.’”*

Did you catch the Pharisees' response to Jesus question? He asked them,

*“When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen?”*

And they responded with,

*“He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.”*

Remember this response they gave back to Him as it plays a very important role in understanding the Apostles' work in the first church and what has been happening in the Kingdom of God ever since. Now, in response to what the Pharisees said to Him, Jesus replies,

*“Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.”*

Jesus has set them up through the parable and asks them what they thought the Lord of the vineyard would do to the wicked husbandmen for killing His Son and their own response was, *“He will miserably destroy them.”* Then right after this Jesus says, *“Don't you read the scriptures?”* and He quotes the passage from Psalm 118 that speaks of the (promised) stone that the builders (of the Nation) would reject! But what is really telling is that after Jesus refers to Himself as being the stone that the builders rejected, He adds something that must be understood by every human being on earth, saying (Matthew 21:44)

*“And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.”*

After Jesus said this we read, (Matthew 21:45-46)

*“And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them. But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet.”*

I would suggest that the contents of scripture have two applications.

First, it actually and materially describes what occurred among the people of that day and second, it has spiritual application to believers thereafter. For example, when we read of Peter and John raising a man born lame to his feet, and then the man leaping and running and praising God, this is a material description of what happens to all people today who are born spiritually lame, but are healed by God and then spend the rest of their lives leaping and running with the joy of what God has done. It's really quite simple, and a pretty clear and reasonable way to understand the scripture today.

If this principle for understanding scripture is true, we have to ask ourselves – how are we to understand Matthew 21:44? In my estimation, if we are able to understand this spiritually then we can understand the Christian plan of salvation since the destruction of Jerusalem. As a means to understand the spiritual application to us today (and therefore the Christian plan of salvation) we will

begin by first understanding what these words meant to the people then, literally and materially. Jesus asks the Pharisees what they thought would be the fate of those who rejected the Son of the Lord of the Vineyard? They say, *“He will miserably destroy them.”* Then Jesus asks them if they ever read the Old Testament (which testify of Him as the stone that the builders rejected) and then He explains (as this promised stone),

*“whosoever will fall on it (Him) will be broken: but on whomsoever it (or He) shall fall, it (or He) will grind him to powder.”*

Got all of that?

So let’s now move out to the book of Acts. Jesus (the stone) has disappeared into the heavens. He has promised to return to bring judgment and to save those who have fallen on Him (and been broken) by faith. Speaking of Christ, to a group of Jewish rulers who had taken he and John by force, Peter said to them in Acts chapter 4:10-11,

*“Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. **This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.**”*

And then right after saying this to them added,

*“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”*

At this point we have a very important question to ask ourselves –

### What was Peter telling those Jewish men that they could be saved from?

I know reading the Bible today it is very easy to think that Peter was speaking to them of being saved from sin and death and hell. It’s the same reason Evangelicals share Jesus with people today – to save them from after-life hell, right? But is this the best context to understand Peter’s words to them? Again, what do you think the Apostle Peter was specifically telling those Jewish leaders they could be saved from through receiving Jesus by faith - the only name under heaven which would ensure their safety or salvation?

Going back to Acts chapter two. At the end of it we read,

*Acts 2:47 “And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”*

When we read, “the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved” we might again ask – saved from what? Most Christians believe that all of these promises of salvation are for those people in that day to be saved from eternal punishment awaiting them in the afterlife. I would suggest that the Messiah had saved them all from that. But being a material nation I would suggest that the apostles were preaching that they could be saved from the promised material judgment that was about to fall upon them.

Go with me back to some of the last words of Jesus to the Pharisees before being crucified. They are found in Matthew 23:33 where He asks a question,

*“Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?”*

Many read this passage and suppose that this is what Jesus was there to save them from – what the King James calls, *“the damnation of hell.”* But is this what Peter was trying to save the Jewish rulers from in Acts 4? It seems like it, doesn’t it?

The problem is the King James Translation takes some horrendous liberties in its English translation of this passage because what Jesus actually asked was (and we can say “actually” because this is what the Greek actually means),

*“Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can you escape the judgment of Gehenna?”*

This is a very different question than what the King James has Jesus ask, isn’t it? To ask how someone can escape the “judgment of an actual place like Gehenna” rather than the “damnation of hell” are all together very different matters, are they not? Jesus’ question to those men was, *“How will you ever escape the material judgment that will be played out in that trash heap located south of the City of Jerusalem in what is known as the Valley called Hinnom?”* He was not asking, *“How will you escape the damnation that will occur in a place of literal burning fires in the afterworld.”*

His question to them was entirely material! *“How will you escape the literal material judgment of Gehenna that is coming?”*

Could it be that when Peter was telling them that they could be saved by receiving Jesus as the stone that had been rejected, that he was telling them that they could escape (be saved from) this same material judgment that was coming their way with such ferocity that it would leave over a million Jews dead? Is this the salvation members of the House of Israel would and could receive by turning and falling upon the discarded stone called Christ? I’m sure of it.

The word “salvation” (in the Greek) is *“sōtēria”* (pronounced “sotayreeah,” which is where we get the big theological word “soteriology” - the study of salvation). *“Sōtēria”* comes from the root word *“sōtēr,”* which means “to deliver,” “be delivered” or “a deliverer.” *“Sōtēr”* comes from the word origin *“sōzō”* which means everything from “safe,” “save,” (as in *deliver* or *protect*) and “*heal, preserve, make whole, do well, or rescue.*”

Throughout scripture these words are applied to every kind of “saving or preserving” that can happen in the existence of human beings – physical saving, material safety, spiritual salvation, being delivered from enemies, from illness, from death, being saved from Gehenna, from torments – you name it – the Greek doesn’t distinguish between being saved physically or spiritually. So these terms (*“sōtēria”* and *“sōzō”*) are used and applied in scripture in almost every way conceivable and do not just mean, “saved from the fires of hell.”

For example, in Acts chapter 27 at verses 33-34, Paul was with some men after a shipwreck and we read,

*“Wherefore I pray you to take some meat: for this is for your health.”*

The Greek word here for the word “health” is “*sōtēria*,” the same word translated salvation in many other places in scripture. So we can see that Paul was telling them that eating meat would provide them “*sōtēria*” – health or salvation from disease.

When Paul talks about women being “saved” in child bearing the word is “*sōzō*” (the very same word we use to describe our escaping hell after this life), but in that case it means that women in general won’t universally lose their lives in bearing children. Will they suffer? They can, and do. But we can see that “*sōzō*” here means saved from death, but not saved from pain.

When Peter, speaking of Jesus, says in verse 12 of chapter four of Acts,

*“Neither is there salvation ('sōtēria') in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved ('sōzō').”*

He very easily could have been talking about being saved from sin, saved from afterlife punishment, saved from the bondage of Satan, or saved from the promised coming destruction of those of that age who would not fall on the Rock and be broken.

I would humbly suggest that Peter is speaking of a type of salvation applicable to them *there*, but when we read it *today* it has a different (but similar) meaning for us.

But let’s first talk about what Peter meant to these men of that age when He said, *“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must (or can) be saved.”*

Jesus came to the Jews, or House of Israel (as prophesied and promised). Quite frankly He only came to them during His earthly ministry and made this plain in Matthew 15:24 where we read,

*“But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”*

The True and Living God had made promises to them – this literal material Nation. I believe that those promises were kept by God (in spite of their rebellious nature) and that He has never let any of them go (though He has allowed them to suffer materially for their rebelliousness). As we’ve made clear, one of the things that the Nation was promised was a material Messiah who would come and save them. Save them from what?

1. From their sin (of course),
2. which alienated them from God, and
3. from actual literal destruction.

I would strongly suggest that God did not in any way fail them on doing what He promised. He saved them from their sin. He reconciled the Nation to Himself. But we know that those who would not receive this Material Messiah by faith were not saved from physical destruction. Instead they actually reaped what the Pharisees said they would reap when they said,

*“He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.”*



I am convinced that when the writers of the New Testament wrote, many of their warnings related directly to His physical coming with judgment, and that it was from this perspective that Peter was telling those Jewish leaders that they could be saved – if they repented and turned from having rejected the stone that was promised to them; if they would only “*fall upon Him and be broken,*” because if they didn’t they would “*be ground to powder.*”

This was Jesus' message to them too. He came and paid for their sin – saved them from their sin as promised, and reconciled the Nation to God – but He would and could only save them from the material destruction that awaited if they repented and had faith on Him. Those who didn’t would be ground to powder.

*Why ground to powder?* The Jewish Nation was proud. They had the Law and the prophets. And they were very reticent to bow to Jesus (of Nazareth, of all places) as Lord and King. So identifying Himself as the stone that was prophesied of anciently, He told them,

*If you fall upon me (the stone) you will be broken. You will see your failures, your wickedness, your need for me, and in your broken state I can and will heal you.* But then He added,

*“but on whomsoever it (meaning Him, the rock) shall fall, it will grind him to powder.”*

Peter was promising them salvation from the coming grinding. Should they refuse to fall on the stone they would experience being ground to powder at the end of that age.

Still with me?

There is historical proof that Peter’s promise and warning in Acts 4 had merit, because in 70 AD the material Nation of Israel was essentially ground to powder and destroyed. So again,

1. God promised to save the Nation of Israel from their sin through a Promised Messiah.
2. This Messiah came and suffered for sin, reconciling the World to God once and for all.
3. Jesus was the stone who the builders rejected who was prophesied about.
4. As the stone He told the religious rulers of His day that they could either fall on Him and be broken or that He would fall on them and grind them to powder.
5. The Lord’s Apostles preached Jesus as the only way to be saved from the “promised grinding,” and then
6. in 70 AD, those who received Him were saved from destruction and those who rejected Him were ground out of material existence by the Roman Armies.

The question remains – “What do the words of Jesus, *'And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder,'* mean to believers today – especially since all things are done and God is all in all?” What exactly do the words of Peter mean to people today when he said,

*“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”*

Again – what are people today saved from when they fall on Him and are broken?



The standard Evangelical response is that they are saved from an eternity in burning hell. That those “*who fall on Him*” (the Rock) “*will be broken*” (and having been broken by the fall will also be healed and saved after this life from “*torments*” in hell), but that those who refuse to be broken by Him in this life will be “*ground to powder*” in after-life eternal punishment.

This view, relative to the experience the Nation of Israel faced, is a fail. God was faithful in reconciling the entire Nation to Himself in and through His Son who saved them from sin. Those who received Him by faith were broken and those who did not were “*ground to powder*” at the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD – but God was still faithful and all were redeemed.

With Material Israel “*ground out*” of material existence, all people since that time relate to God spiritually, facing the exact same choice –

“*fall on Him (the Rock) and be broken or have Him fall on you and be ground to powder.*”

But when and where does all of this occur?

A majority of Christians today maintain that Jesus is coming in the future to grind the world to powder, forgetting that the material has been fulfilled. Additionally, many Christians seem to believe that this grinding will also take place in the afterlife where unrepentant people are burned forever in literal flames applied to literal flesh. Are there afterlife torments? We can answer this question by asking, “*Did the Nation of Israel whom Jesus saved still suffer torments after His work on the cross?*” They certainly did. But they were none the less reconciled by the faithfulness of God, despite their own faithlessness.

All people (post 70 AD) have an opportunity placed before them in this life –

“*Fall on the Rock*” (and be broken – humbled), or refuse and be “*ground to powder*” in the hereafter.

This is the Christian Plan of Salvation, and it is this we will explain in these last few pages.

Right off the bat we can see that the primary goal of God, through Christ by His Spirit, is to continue to bring people in this life to the point where they will fall upon Jesus the Rock and be broken. And how can they fall on Him who they have not believed? And how can they believe on Him whom they have not heard? So we can see that the sharing of Jesus remains paramount in the world and is the focal work of all believers today. Believe and fall and be broken and paradoxically saved. Saved from what? Being ground to powder.

We have a tendency to think that Jesus has yet to gain God’s forgiveness for all people – that this is still a work in progress, and God continues to forgive people ONLY as they come to Him through faith on His Son. This is incorrect. 1<sup>st</sup> John 2:2 says plainly and of Christ,

“*And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.*”

The propitiation (atonement, reconciliation) has been made. God is pleased. He has fully and totally forgiven all people of their sin through His Son – just as He completely forgave the Nation of Israel when Christ reconciled it fully to God through His shed blood. But there is an enormous difference

between being completely forgiven and being purged of our rebelliousness - of being forgiven and being made holy.

Let me explain.

Imagine that there is a happily married couple who have ten children. Father is a hard-working, moral man who is very fair but has high expectations for his brood and is not afraid to teach them tough lessons through love. Mother is kind and tender, and very insightful to the ways and needs of her children. The family lives high in a mountain glen in a cottage near the edge of a wood. Everything in the cottage is perfectly appointed in delicate linens, white wool carpets and embroidered furnishings. Eight of the couple's ten children are very sensitive to the things of the world and lovers of God. But the couple have a set of twin boys who the mother knows are curious and full of mischief. From babes she has instructed all of her children in the ways of God and the family, but she knows in her heart that her twins boys will challenge these teachings someday.

Of all the dangers surrounding their cottage, the greatest is what they call the "Dreaded Woods." Father and mother fear that their children will wander off and enter therein, not aware of the dangers. These woods are dreaded because behind the tall trees lay ponds of muck and tar, skin-piercing barbs, and knotty thistles that could cause weaker children to become seriously ill. Naturally, one of the oft repeated warnings to the children is, "Don't ever enter the Dreaded Woods."

Nevertheless, deep in the heart of mother is a knowledge that of all her children, her twins will someday do exactly what she tells them not to do. And one day in their early teens they do just that. All day long the boys were gone and once the sun fell there was a knock at the cottage door. Mother and Father answered and found their twins cold, shivering, and covered head to toe in thick, black tar mixed with thorns, briars, and poisonous thistles.

How their mother cried. How disappointed Father was in their ways. But did mother and Father forgive them? Absolutely. They forgave them before they ever opened the door. They knew what they would do.

What the Father did next seemed like he was angry at them. His actions appeared to be violent and vicious but they were purposeful. He refused to let them in the home – even though they begged admittance. See, he knew that the tar and briars would infect and harm the other children – children they also loved. He knew the tar would destroy the home they had worked so hard to make a safe place for the others. So even in the face of their pleas, he instructed the twins to go to the cold barn out back and sleep there with the animals. This they did – not being allowed to sleep in the home of their birth. To make matters worse for the next seven days the boys were subject to the horrible process of removing the tar and briars from their bodies. This process meant cutting off all their hair, applying strong and smelly solvents to their skin, and scraping away the product that would damage the interior of their home and health of their siblings. One of the twins lost several toes in the process, as the tar was so tenacious and binding. They were not saved from this torture like their siblings. They had to enter into it. But once the stripping and deburring was over, and the boys were purged and scourged of the results of their will, they were allowed into the cottage once again.

There are those who in this life will fall on the Rock and be broken. They will be accepted in the house and abide - no scourging necessary. They are accepted on the fact that Jesus paid for their

sin and by faith His shed blood made them holy and clean – enough to enter into the presence of God. These have been forgiven and made clean by faith in Him and His name.

But there are many who will not break or bow. They have been forgiven by Jesus' finished work, they have been reconciled to God by the Son but they have not been made clean. And so, banished from the presence of God, they will undergo being ground down – in love – and in the very presence of God.

God has completed and finished all the groundwork for the redemption of human-kind. He did it in and through the Nation of Israel and their promised Messiah. Having rejected Him they were forgiven but materially ground out of existence and a new economy ensued – one of the Spirit. But the same principles remain and will continue to remain forever more:

“Fall on Him and be broken and healed or have Him fall on you and be ground to powder.”

We know how the Nation of Israel was ground down, but how does this grinding take place in our spiritual economy, and in individuals who refuse to fall on Him and be broken?

There are four passages in the Book of Revelation which speak of an after-life place known as the “Lake of Fire” (which, by the way, is the only book that mentions a “Lake of Fire” in scripture). And in those four passages there is a mention of “brimstone” in relation to the fire and torments that are also said to be present.

The passages are Revelation 14:10, 19:20, 20:10 and 21:8.

I have always likened “brimstone” to some rock or product that grinds (partially because it contains the word “stone”). What is interesting is that the Greek word for “brimstone” is “*theion*.” You probably recognize the Greek word “*theos*” right? It means “God” – and it’s where we get the word “theology” (which means, “the study of God”). “*THEIOS*” means “divine,” and so it is really easy to see that the word translated in English to “brimstone” is directly related to God – not to actual rocks, not to sulphur, not to fiery hail – but to God Himself. I would go so far to say that “*theios*” (translated “brimstone”) is synonymous with the presence of God Himself.

Taking this point out further, Vines Expository Dictionary of the New Testament defines the word “brimstone” as “*fire from heaven used to purify.*” And not only in Vines, but also in Strong’s Concordance and Thayer’s Concordance we discover that “brimstone” is connected to God’s divine power to purify.

At this point we have to ask ourselves,

*Is the fire or brimstone of God for punishment or for purging?*

*Is it for torture or trying?*

*Is it for cruelty or for correction?*

When we read that Jesus says people can either “*fall on Him and be broken or He will fall on them and grind them to powder,*” are we to understand this secondary action as punitive and vengeful or as having a purpose?

Were the people at the destruction of Jerusalem ground to dust out of vengeance, or as a means to make necessary reparations to insure their sanctification upon entering heaven? I would suggest the grinding they received at the hands of the Romans was a dreaded material result of their recalcitrance; a recalcitrance that broke Jesus’ heart.<sup>91</sup> Why did it break His heart? Because He knew the grinding that was coming upon them. Maybe this is a similar reason we urgently share Jesus with others knowing the grinding that awaits those who reject Him here?

Let’s look closely at Revelation 14:9 which says,

*“and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.”*

Contrary to what I was always taught<sup>92</sup> we can clearly see that those tormented in fire and brimstone are actually *“in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb!”*

We might wonder if the angels and the Lamb are looking down on those in the “Lake of Fire” with glee, or could they be there lending encouragement and love to those who are being ground? One thing we can’t deny, the suffering or purging or grinding is being done in the presence of heavenly angels and the Lamb Himself. I think that tells us something.

*“Well, some might maintain, “those within the fire are being tormented so we know it is a bad situation no matter where it is. And it’s obvious that they are being punished.”* Not so fast. Let’s take a look at that word “tormented” in Revelation 14:10 which says,

*“they will be tormented by fire and brimstone in the Holy Angels’ and Lamb’s presence.”*

Ready for this?

The word translated “tormented” in *Strong’s, Vines’, and Thayer’s Concordance* is “*basanizó.*” It comes from the Greek word that literally means “*to put to the test by rubbing (or grinding) using a touchstone.*” Touchstones are pieces of rock or flint that are used to grind off elements or particles found in alloys or other metals.

From this definitional insight we can see that the orthodox Evangelical view that after-life grinding is a “*torture-for-torture’s-sake*” in a “*lake below the earth*” does not seem to hold water – and that instead of a mindless, endless torture (for the sake of cruelty), it is a purposed “*refining, purging, or rubbing off the rough edges,*” so to speak.

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<sup>91</sup> Matthew 23:37 “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!”

<sup>92</sup> I have been taught from almost every faction of modern Christianity that the Lake of Fire is a place God uses for torturing evil men and that it is in a place below the earth.

Today, those who are saved by grace through faith have been saved from what must be an arduous and difficult refining which occurs in the presence of the Lamb and His holy angels. But what I find interesting is that in this we discover meaning – loving meaning – in what Jesus said to the Pharisees in Matthew 21:45,

*“whosoever shall fall on this **stone** shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.”*

In large part the Nation of Israel refused to fall upon Him (the Rock or touch stone) and to humbly receive Him when He came to them. Those who continued to refuse Him after a generation of Apostolic outreach received another option of sanctification – He fell on them and ground them to powder.

I would suggest, in light of the real meaning of “brimstone and torments” found in Revelation 14, the fact that those in the “Lake of Fire” will be in the presence of the Holy Angels and the Lamb, and that again, when it comes to people being saved today we are talking about being saved from afterlife spiritual refinement – that the arduous grinding down of the “will of the willful” is purposeful and of a limited duration – just like the destruction of Jerusalem was purposeful and of a limited duration.

We have no idea what it looks like to be ground-down spiritually by fire and brimstone in the presence of Jesus, but it is apparently something nobody wants to experience.

Finally, I am convinced that every person's immediate afterlife status is related to the resurrected body they receive at death. Speaking of the departed, Jesus made it clear in John 5:29 that they,

*“ . . .shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”*

But once again, the King James does us another injustice because the Greek word translated “damnation” here is not “damnation,” but “judgment.” In other words, those who will be resurrected to the life and the living are those who have been saved. Saved from what? – judgment! And those who are “resurrected to judgment” have not been saved from this judgment (which is apparently meted out in the presence of the Angels and the Lamb).

Where there is judgment of evil there are losses. The Lord Jesus lost nothing in His resurrection. His was the perfect resurrection to life. So in reality all believers today seek the same resurrection as Christ, for with His resurrected body He was able to abide in the presence of God – even at His right hand. And it was the actual resurrection of Jesus that Paul sought “*by any means to attain.*”<sup>93</sup>

So when Peter speaks of being saved and salvation in Acts, I am convinced that the application today and to us is entirely spiritual – and in that sense, eternal. We are all either saved from judgment or

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<sup>93</sup> Philippians 3:11-12 "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus."

we are judged and suffer loss – losses had at the grinding away of things which prohibit our ability to dwell in the presence of God.

All of this has been one long journey to say the following:

Those who fall on Christ the Rock today will be saved from afterlife grinding. Those who do not will be ground (even to powder) after this life.

The key point to understanding this is that there is an enormous difference between being forgiven and being holy, clean and sanctified. I would strongly suggest that Jesus, successful in what He was called to do, reconciled the entire world to the Father.<sup>94 95</sup> In other words, He saved the whole world. God has *forgiven* us of our sin. ALL of us, of ALL sin - past, present, and future. But not everyone has been *cleansed* by His blood because not all have received Him.

In the end, all will be reconciled to God once and for all. Some having escaped judgment by falling on the Rock in faith in this life, while others, refusing to be broken here in the flesh, will experience afterlife spiritual grinding in the loving presence of Christ and His holy angels.

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<sup>94</sup> John 12:47 "And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world."

<sup>95</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> John 2:2 "And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

**Nine . . .** What can believers today do in the face of these biblical facts? Is there a reasonable way of helping put the material monster called “Institutional Religion” to death?

Some suggestions:

- 1. Replace Objective Religious Demands with Subjective Christian Relationships.**
  - a. Put all doctrinal disputations aside whenever possible.
  - b. Allow all people to seek God (as they are lead) knowing that He will judge, and that the Christian job is to look to Him in faith and to love Him (and everyone else) all the time.
  - c. Continue to preach, teach and share Jesus as “the way, truth, and life.”
  - d. Teach the Word to those who want to hear it contextually but with spiritual application rather than material. (go to [www.campuschurch.tv](http://www.campuschurch.tv))
  - e. Evaporate all organizational religious demands that are currently placed upon individuals in churches today.
    - i. No tithes, plate passing, building-fund campaigns.
    - ii. Deconstruction of institutional mid-week life-consuming programs.
    - iii. Lower institutional over-head and top-heavy staffing.
    - iv. Liquidate material abundance and use proceeds to either help the needy and/or preach to the unsaved and/or teach the saved.<sup>96</sup>
    - v. End all memberships, signed contracts, discipline counsels, boards, and anything that smacks of denominationalism or human authority.
  
- 2. Put an utter and absolute end to Christianity (as a whole) fighting or protesting against social evils, including**
  - a. Issues related to sexuality.
  - b. Issues related to the unborn.
  - c. Issues related to pornography, alcohol or substance abuse.
  - d. Political agendas and stances.
  - e. Any other social evil issue.

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<sup>96</sup> (see #4 below)



**3. Let Christians become KNOWN not only for refusing to cast a stone at the above, but for**

- a. Loving and receiving all people in Jesus' name.
- b. Doing nothing in His name but forgiving, serving, sharing and loving.
- c. Getting along with each other, especially all who claim God or Christ.
- d. Accepting all people as they are, all the time – and letting God be their judge.
- e. Never ever letting doctrinal differences divide those who claim Christ as Lord.

**4. Unite, in a concerted but free-flowing effort, to be collectively known around the world as a people who actually follow Christ through**

- a. Truly not being of this world.
- b. Embracing humility.
- c. Rejecting materialism in all of its forms.
- d. Serving, giving to, and loving the down and downcast.
- e. Forgiving all people of all things.
- f. Leaving all judgment (of all things) to God.
- g. Never using our faith for political gains or sway.
- h. Loving sinners.
- i. Helping saints.
- j. Sharing Him.
- k. Suffering all things.

**For more information on the suggestions or contents of this booklet:**

**WEBSITES**

[www.hotm.tv](http://www.hotm.tv) (for live television show and other books)

[www.campuschurch.tv](http://www.campuschurch.tv) (for verse by verse teachings through the Word)

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