

# The Pathway to Spiritual Maturity & the Coming Glory

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## Foreword

There are many Christians who take great comfort in Bible prophecy and are indeed looking for the rapture of the Church to take place in these, the “last days.” They are aware of the seven-year tribulation period that will then transpire on earth and upon its inhabitation. And they are even knowledgeable regarding the 1,000-year reign of Christ (the Messianic Era, Christ’s millennial kingdom) that will be established when Christ comes back to earth (His second advent) after the tribulation period. Yet these same Christians, by and large, have no concept of the distinct and most certain connection between their present life and their position relative to the upcoming kingdom. Some are even aware that they will face Jesus Christ post-rapture at His judgment seat; but, they primarily focus on a positive outcome, completely unable to either understand or face the negative outcome that most likely will take place at this judicial setting.

This study, if considered, will in fact correct the ignorance regarding these issues. This study, if considered, will indeed change the reader’s Christian life in a most definite and positive fashion, which the reader will deeply be grateful for now and in the kingdom to come. This document will focus on the one and only path upon which a Christian can travel in order to achieve spiritual maturity, with its revealed goal being to rule and reign with Christ in His glory as King of kings and Lord of lords in the upcoming Messianic Era.

## Fundamentals

To fully understand both the reality and importance of *the pathway to spiritual maturity and the coming glory*, it is necessary to review and understand the following fundamental doctrines of the Word: (1) Composition of Man, (2) God’s Redemption Plan, and (3) The Christian’s Coming Judgment; all which follow:

### Composition of Man

Man is a tripartite being, composed of a spirit, soul, and body. Scripture is careful to make this distinction, never confusing the three (**1 Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 4:12**).

1. Man’s spirit (Greek: *pneuma*) is the spiritual part of man that links him directly to God who is spirit. Every person born into the world is born with a dead spirit (**Ephesians 2:1**), as a result of Adam’s sin (**1 Corinthians 15:22**; cf. **Genesis 2:17; Romans 5:14**), which can only be activated (made alive) by means of the birth from above (**John 3:3-7**).
2. Man’s soul (Greek: *psuche*) is the sentient part of man that links him to self-awareness (self-consciousness) and all non-spiritual aspects of life. The soul is composed of intellect, emotions, and will; and it is through the soul that man

relates to the natural world. Its animating (life-giving) principle is found in the blood (**Leviticus 17:11**; cf. **Genesis 9:4**). Individuals in the Bible are occasionally referred to as “souls,” a word used to represent the entire person. A person without a soul is a dead person, because the “soul” is the “life” in the person. The Hebrew word for “soul,” *nephesh*, is often translated “life” in the Old Testament; just as the Greek word, *psuche*, is used accordingly in the New Testament.

3. Man’s body (Greek: *soma*) is the corporal part of man that links him to all that is material. The body does this through the five senses (sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch), allowing him both assimilation and expression relative to the material world. The body is the material part of man through which both the soul and spirit of man may express themselves externally. It is intimately united with the “soul,” because it the *psuche* (soul/life) that keeps the physical body alive.

**Genesis 1:26** reveals that God created man in His “*image*” and “*likeness*.” The word for God here in the Hebrew text is *Elohim*, a plural noun, which, in complete keeping with related Scripture, would include all three members of the Godhead — God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit (e.g., cf. **John 1:1-3**). And since *Elohim* is a trinity, for man to be created in the “*image*” and “*likeness*” of God, he too must be a trinity.

Jesus is *Elohim* manifested in the flesh; and having been made in the “*likeness*” of man (but apart from man’s fallen nature), He, as man, must also be a trinity (**John 1:14**; **Philippians 2:7**). This tripartite nature of Christ, in whom “*dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily*” (**Colossians 2:9**), was clearly revealed at the time of His death. At that time Jesus yielded up *His spirit*, which went back into the presence of His Father in heaven (**Luke 23:46**; cf. **Ecclesiastes 12:7**; **Acts 7:59**); *His soul* went into Hades, the place of the dead, housed inside the earth at the time (**Acts 2:27**); and *His body* was removed from the cross and placed in Joseph of Arimathea’s tomb (**Matthew 27:57-61**). This threefold separation persisted until the soul and spirit re-entered the body at the time Christ was raised from the dead.

Thus, God (*Elohim*) is a trinity; Jesus (*Elohim*), manifested in the flesh, is likewise a trinity; and man, created in the “*image*” and “*likeness*” of *Elohim*, can only be a trinity as well. Accordingly, *a complete redemption* provided by the triune God must, of necessity, pertain to man as *a complete being*. *Man’s complete redemption must encompass spirit, soul, and body*.

Yet, it is unfortunate that most Christians fail to understand God’s comprehensive plan of redemption, which is distinctive as it relates *individually* to the spirit, the soul, and the body. It is misunderstood because of the way most Christians view the topic of salvation, particularly as to how it relates to soul-salvation.

Contrary to common belief, soul-salvation has nothing to do with *eternal* destiny. Biblically, eternal salvation always relates to the spiritual part of man, never to the soulical, and it is centered in one realm alone — *Christ’s finished work on Calvary*.

The message pertaining to spirit-salvation, having to do with Christ's finished work on Calvary and one's eternal destiny, is both clear and straightforward:

*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved [made possible through that which Christ has done on man's behalf] . . . (Acts 16:31)*

*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have everlasting life. . . . He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned . . . (John 3:16, 18a)*

*For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that [salvation] is not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. (Ephesians 2:8, 9)*

But the salvation of the soul is dealt with after an entirely different fashion in Scripture. Rather than Christ's past work at Calvary, His *present work* as High Priest is in view; and rather than the unsaved, Christians alone are in view. Christ is presently performing His High Priestly ministry (**Hebrews 4:14-16**), on the basis of His shed blood on the mercy seat, to effect a cleansing from sin (**1 John 1:9; 2:1, 2**) for the kingdom of priest (**1 Peter 2:9**) that He is about to bring forth (**Hebrews 2:10**) — all solely relating to Christians and their soul-salvation.

Soul-salvation is dealt with in Scripture in relation to the *present faithfulness of Christians*, and this salvation will be realized only at the *end of one's faith* (**1 Peter 1:9**). It is a salvation associated with *rewards, Christ's Second Advent, and His kingdom* (cf. **Matthew 16:24-17:5; Hebrews 10:35-39**).

*Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow [abundance] of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted Word, which is able to save your souls [the souls of Christians, those who have "passed from death to life" (1 John 3:14),] the only ones in a position to receive "the implanted Word" ]. (James 1:21)*

### God's Redemption Plan

Probably no one has better expressed the comprehensive redemption plan of God regarding man than Arlen L. Chitwood in chapter one of his book, Salvation of the Soul, The Lamp Broadcast, Inc., 2003, as follows:

*For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. (Ephesians 2:8, 9)*

*For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. (1 Corinthians 1:18)*

*Are they [angels] not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit [lit. "for the sake of the ones about to inherit"] salvation? (Hebrews 1:14)*

Salvation in the Word of God is spoken of in three tenses — *past, present, and future*: (1) Christians *have been saved*, (2) Christians *are being saved*, and (3) Christians *are about to be*

*saved*. The previously quoted verses provide examples of how Scripture deals with each of these three tenses or aspects of salvation.

In **Ephesians 2:8, 9**, salvation is *a past, completed act*; in **1 Corinthians 1:18**, salvation is *a present, continuous work*; and in **Hebrews 1:14**, salvation is *a future, inherited possession*. Since the Word of God presents salvation in a framework of this nature, it is vitally important in Scriptural interpretation to *first* ascertain to which of these three aspects of salvation any given passage pertains.

In the first aspect of salvation, dealt with in **Ephesians 2:8**, the words, “*you have been saved*,” which is a correct translation, are a translation of two Greek words that form, what is called in the Greek, a “periphrastic perfect.” The “perfect” tense refers to *action completed in past time*, with *the results* of this action extending into *the present and existing in a finished state*. The “periphrastic” construction places additional emphasis on the present, finished state and refers to *the persistent results* during present time of *the past, completed work*.

Salvation in this verse is wrought *by grace through faith*, accomplished completely *in past time*, and is *the present possession of every believer*. This present possession, in turn, constitutes an active, continuing, ever-abiding salvation. The eternal security of the believer cannot be expressed in stronger terms than the periphrastic construction of the perfect tense in **Ephesians 2:8**, for the present results of the past action, in this case, *can only continue unchanged forever*.

However, in **1 Corinthians 1:18**, dealing with the second aspect of salvation, things are presented in an entirely different light than seen in **Ephesians 2:8**. Rather than the tense in the Greek text referring to *a past, completed act*, the tense refers to *a present, continuous work*. The former has already been completed, but the latter has yet to be completed.

Then, in **Hebrews 1:14**, dealing with the third aspect of salvation, matters are presented yet in a completely different light. The wording in the Greek text of this verse refers to something that is about to occur. Nothing is past or present; the reception of this salvation, in its entirety, is placed *in the future*.

Further, the salvation referred to in **Hebrews 1:14** is not only to be realized in the future, but it is also *an inherited salvation*. And the thought of *inheritance* further distinguishes the salvation in this verse from the salvation previously seen in **Ephesians 2:8**, for the salvation that Christians presently possess *is not* an inherited salvation.

Rather, our present salvation was obtained as *a free gift* during the time we were alienated from God. And, as aliens (outside the family of God), we were in no position to inherit salvation, for inheritance in Scripture is *always a family matter*.

In the Old Testament, “sons” were first in line to receive the inheritance, with “daughters” next. If there were no sons or daughters in the immediate family, the inheritance was passed on to the nearest family member or members, designated by the law of inheritance (**Numbers 27:8-11**).

Consequently, an individual must first be *a family member* before he can be considered for the inheritance, which, during the present dispensation, is restricted to “children” or “sons” of the Owner. That’s why the statement is made in **Romans 8:17**, “*If children, then heirs . . .*” And that’s also why, in **Hebrews 1:14**, that an inherited salvation pertains to those who have already been saved, those who are no longer alienated from God but are presently family members.

In this respect, the complete scope of salvation — *past, present, and future* — has a beginning point, with an end in view. It involves the Spirit of God breathing life into the one having no life and thereby effecting the birth from above. And this has been done with a purpose, with an end in view. This has been done so that the Spirit can take the one who now has spiritual life and perform a work in the life of that individual, with a view to an inheritance that will be realized at *a future time*.

Thus, one should immediately be able to see the importance of proper distinctions being drawn and observed in the realm of these three aspects of salvation. And depending on how one approaches and deals with the different salvation passages in Scripture, either *difficulties* can be avoided on the one hand or *insurmountable problems* can result on the other. . . .

### 1. *Past, Present, Future . . . Spirit, Soul, Body*

When man sinned in the garden in Eden, the complete being of man — spirit, soul, and body — became in a fallen state. God had commanded Adam concerning the fruit of *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*, “*you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die*” (**Genesis 2:17**). After Satan had deceived Eve into eating of the fruit of this tree, she then “*gave to her husband with her; and he ate.*” Immediately following this, “*the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings*” (**Genesis 3:1-7**).

At the time of the fall, Adam and Eve lost something; and it is clearly stated in Scripture that both immediately recognized this fact. That which they lost could only have been a covering of pristine glory that had previously clothed their bodies; for they, following the fall, found that they were in a twofold condition: (1) *naked* and (2) *separated from God*.

God is arrayed in a covering of “*light*,” connected with “*honor and majesty*.” And man, created in the “*image*” and “*likeness*” of God, could only have been arrayed in a similar manner prior to the fall.

*Bless the LORD, O my soul! O LORD my God, You are very great: You are clothed with [You have put on] honor and majesty,*

*who cover Yourself with light as with a garment, who stretch out the heavens like a curtain.” (Psalm 104:1, 2)*

Recognizing the loss of this covering, realizing that they were naked, explains why Adam and Eve immediately sought to clothe themselves following the fall. They tried to replace the covering that had been lost with a work of their own hands, with fig leaf aprons. And then, apparently realizing the utter inadequacy of this covering, they, in their fallen state, sought to hide from God.

God, finding Adam and Eve in this condition, completely rejected the works of their hands. God completely rejected their feeble efforts to atone for their own sin by seeking to replace the covering of pristine glory with fig leaves. Then, to bring His fallen creature back into a right relationship (although not in complete keeping with their previously unfallen state — something still future even today), God provided a covering consisting of animal skins (**Genesis 3:21**). This necessitated *death and the shedding of blood*; and herein lays basic, unchangeable truths concerning the state of fallen man and the means that are necessary to effect his redemption.

Unredeemed man is a fallen creature, alienated from God; and two things are necessary to effect his redemption: (1) *divine intervention*, and (2) *death and shed blood*. These truths have forever been set forth in the opening chapters of **Genesis** and can never change.

(Two different words are used for “*naked*” in the Hebrew text of **Genesis 2:25** [before the fall] and **Genesis 3:7** [after the fall]. In the latter [3:7], the word has to do with *absolute nakedness*, but not so in the former [2:25].

Remaining within the way a person dressed in the East at the time Moses wrote **Genesis**, and at later times as well, the word used relative to *nakedness* pertaining to Adam and Eve preceding the fall [2:25] could be used to describe a person clothed in a tunic [inner garment] but lacking the mantle or cloak [outer garment]. In the preceding respect, prior to the fall, Adam and Eve were clothed in the Glory of God but had yet to possess the regal outer garments worn by kings [fulfilling the reason for man’s creation — to rule the earth (**Genesis 1:26-28**)].

Then, following the fall, no longer clothed in the Glory of God, Adam and Eve were no longer in a position to be further clothed in regal garments, realizing the purpose for their creation. They, apart from the inner garment [the Glory] could not wear the outer garments [royal apparel]. Adam, prior to the fall, never wore regal garments or held the scepter. In this respect, he never moved beyond the description given in **Genesis 2:25** — a “*naked*” condition, “*naked*” in relation to the reason for his creation [lacking the outer regal garments].

Thus, if man, now separated from the Glory, is to ever fulfill the purpose for his creation, God must act. Redemption has to occur; and this, of necessity, has to include the complete man — *spirit, soul, and body* — with a view to not only *a restoration of the Glory but to regality beyond this restoration.*)

#### a) *Spirit*

Man’s sin in the garden in Eden produced *death*. Man *died* the day he ate of the forbidden fruit. Since his *body* continued to live, revealing that his *soul* — the life-giving principle in the blood (**Leviticus 17:11**; cf. **Genesis 9:4**) — remained unchanged with respect to life (natural life), it is evident that it was his *spirit* that died.

The spiritual nature is that part of man that links him directly with God. “*God is spirit*,” and man’s worship of God must be “*in spirit and truth*” (**John 4:24**). The death of Adam’s spirit separated him from God (establishing the primary meaning of “death” in Scripture — *separation from God*), and this *death* (this separation from God) “*passed upon all men*” (**Romans 5:12**).

Scripture speaks of an unsaved person as being “*dead in trespasses and sins*” (**Ephesians 2:1**). With an unredeemed, inanimate spirit (*spiritually dead*), he is *alienated from God, separated from God* (**Ephesians 2:12**).

But once the person has been born from above, he is then spoken of as *having passed “from death to life,” as having been “quickened”* (**John 5:24; Ephesians 2:5**). Possessing an animate spirit, possessing spiritual life (having been made alive spiritually), he is *no longer separated* from the One who Himself is “*Spirit*” (**John 4:24**).

This aspect of salvation is brought to pass through the Spirit of God breathing life into the one having no life, based on Christ's finished work at Calvary; and once this has been accomplished, everything surrounding the work effecting this aspect of salvation has been completed, with this work existing in a finished state (as previously seen through the use of the perfect tense in **Ephesians 2:8**). Thus, the salvation experience that man enters into at the time of the birth from above is a work of the Spirit, based on a previous work of the Son. It is a *spiritual* birth and has to do with man's *spirit* alone: ". . . *that which is born of the Spirit is spirit*" (**John 3:6b**).

#### b) *Soul*

*The salvation of the soul*, on the other hand, should *never* be associated with the past aspect of salvation. Scripture carefully distinguishes between *the soul* and *the spirit*, never using the words interchangeably in this respect (cf. **1 Thessalonians 5:23**; **Hebrews 4:12**). And Scripture also carefully distinguishes between salvation in relation to *the spirit* and salvation in relation to *the soul*. Salvation in relation to *the spirit* is always dealt with *in a past sense*, but not so with the salvation of *the soul*. Rather, the salvation of *the soul* is always dealt with *in a future sense*:

*Receiving the end of your faith — the salvation of your souls. (1 Peter 1:9)*

*Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted Word, which is able to save your souls. (James 1:21)*

*But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe [are faithful] to the saving of the soul. (Hebrews 10:39)*

The statements and exhortations in these verses pertain to *Christians alone* — those whose *spirits* have already been saved and whose *souls* are in the process of being saved, with the salvation of the soul being realized only at *a future time*.

#### c) *Body*

The salvation of *the body* presents very few problems for the majority of Christians. Very few Christians contend, contrary to Scripture, that the body has either already been redeemed or is in the process of being redeemed. Scripture places the redemption of man's body entirely in the future (**Romans 8:23**).

The Christian's body is presently in a continuous state of deterioration. The body grows old and weakens with time; and the body is subject to sickness, disease, and eventually death. This must ever remain the case as long as the body remains unredeemed. The "*wages of sin is death*" (**Romans 6:23**), and the unredeemed body must pay the price that sin requires.

Within this unredeemed body are two opposing entities, each seeking dominion — *a redeemed spirit*, and *an unredeemed soul*. The unredeemed soul is housed in an unredeemed body, and the two are mutually compatible. But the redeemed spirit housed alongside an unredeemed soul in an unredeemed body experiences no compatibility with either of the other two at all. Compatibility is not possible, for "*what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness, and what communion has light with darkness?*" (**2 Corinthians 6:14**). This heterogeneous union is what produced the cry of the Apostle Paul in **Romans 7:24**:

*O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?*

## 2. Soulical, Spiritual, Carnal

According to the Word of God, every man can be categorized as being *soulical*, *spiritual*, or *carnal*. The word “soulical” pertains to all non-Christians, and the words “spiritual” and “carnal” pertain to two classes of Christians.

### a) *Soulical*

*But the natural man [the “soulical” man] does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are [can only be] spiritually discerned.” (1 Corinthians 2:14)*

The Greek word translated “soul” throughout the New Testament is *psuche*. This word has to do with “the natural life” of the individual. The soul is the seat of a person’s emotions, feelings, and desires pertaining to his man-conscious existence.

The Greek word translated “natural” in **1 Corinthians 2:14** is *psuchikos*, a form of the word *psuche*. *Psuchikos* is the “natural” or “soulical” life (self-life) that man has in common with the animal kingdom. The soulical man is dominated or ruled by his soul, which includes all the experiences, desires, emotions, sensations, likes, and dislikes within the personal life of the individual. Such likes, dislikes, etc. will vary from individual to individual, but all emanate from the soul-life of man. The soulical man is alienated from God and thus possesses no way to grasp spiritual truth. A man must be *born from above* — *made alive spiritually* — before he can possess spiritual discernment.

### b) *Spiritual*

*And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual . . . (1 Corinthians 3:1a)*

The Greek word translated “spirit” throughout the New Testament is *pneuma*. This word is used in the New Testament referring to the Holy Spirit, man’s spirit, angels (both fallen and unfallen), a state of mind or disposition, wind, and breath. Examples in Scripture of the last four are **Luke 8:55; John 3:8; 1 Corinthians 4:21; 2 Timothy 1:7; Hebrews 1:7; 1 Peter 3:19**.

Man’s spirit is the seat of the higher divine life pertaining to his God-conscious existence. The Greek word translated “*spiritual*” in **1 Corinthians 3:1a** is *pneumatikos*, a form of the word *pneuma*. The spiritual man is one who is controlled by the Spirit of God acting through his own spirit (through a spirit made alive by the birth from above).

The spiritual man, unlike the soulical man, controls his emotions, feelings, and desires pertaining to his still-present, man-conscious existence. He brings his unredeemed body under subjection and exerts control over the soulical man. This, of course, is not performed within his own power, but within the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. This is an experience open to redeemed man alone, to an individual who has been made alive spiritually.

Unredeemed man, on the other hand, although a tripartite being, fails to rise above the dichotomous animal kingdom in his natural or soulical existence. He lacks a redeemed spirit with the accompanying, indwelling Holy Spirit. He, with an inanimate spirit, is spiritually dead. And, consequently, he remains alienated from God. Thus, for unredeemed man, an existence outside the soulical (natural) state is not possible.

c) *Carnal*

. . . *but as to carnal, even as to babes in Christ. (1 Corinthians 3:1b)*

The Greek word translated “carnal” is *sarkikos*. This is a form of the word *sarx*, which means “flesh.” *Sarkikos* (fleshly) is the opposite of *pneumatikos* (spiritual). The carnal Christian is “fleshly” as opposed to “spiritual.” He is one who allows himself to be controlled by his soul rather than by the indwelling Holy Spirit. He, as the soulical man (the unsaved man), follows his personal emotions, feelings, and desires.

He, however, unlike the soulical man, has been born from above and is capable of grasping spiritual truth. But, unlike the spiritual man, this truth is not being received. Thus, the carnal Christian, without an impartation of spiritual truth flowing into his saved human spirit, remains immature and fleshly, following the fleshly impulses of the soul.

(The use of “flesh” or “fleshly” in the preceding respect would be a direct allusion back to that which occurred in Eden at the time of the fall. Man, following his fall, possessed a body that was no longer enswathed in a covering of Glory, with the exposed flesh openly demonstrating this fact. This is what is meant by Christ coming “*in the likeness of sinful flesh*” [Romans 8:3]. Christ came to earth in a body not enswathed in the Glory of God.

This was *the crux of the ignominy and shame surrounding the events of Calvary*. Not only was Christ’s body of flesh [apart from the covering of Glory] arrayed in a mock regal manner [with a robe and a crown of thorns], but He hung on the cross without even His Own garments to cover His body, for all to behold that which had been wrought by sin 4,000 years earlier — *nakedness, and death* [Matthew 27:27-36].

There is nothing wrong with “flesh” *per se*. Man was created in a body of flesh, Christ presently has a body of flesh, and both God’s Son and man will live in bodies of flesh forever.

But, though there is nothing wrong with a body of “flesh,” *there is something wrong with a body of flesh that is not enswathed in the Glory of God.*)

Within the scope of that which God reveals about the impartation of spiritual truth *to redeemed man alone* lies the great lesson concerning unredeemed man’s relationship to the Word of God. It is utterly futile for unredeemed man to either himself attempt to understand the Word of God or for redeemed man to attempt to teach him the Word of God. Scripture is “*spiritually discerned,*” and *a man must be born from above — be made alive spiritually*, which places him in a position where he can exercise spiritual discernment — before he can understand the things of the Spirit of God. The soulical (unredeemed) man, completely alienated from God — spiritually dead and in no position to exercise spiritual discernment — cannot understand spiritual things, and they appear to him as no more than “*foolishness*” (1 Corinthians 2:14).

Herein also lies the reason why the things of the Spirit have been hidden from the “*wise and prudent,*” but revealed to “*babes*” (cf. Matthew 11:25). Certain Christian intelligentsia of the present dispensation, even though saved and in a position to understand the Word of God, too often seek spiritual discernment in the light of worldly wisdom rather than through comparing “*scripture with scripture*” and looking to the indwelling Spirit *to lead them “into all truth”* (John 16:13; 1 Corinthians 2:9-13).

And, although those Christians who seek spiritual discernment in this manner may often be looked upon as great spiritual leaders, theologians, expositors, etc., they, in the final analysis, cannot understand these things. Such individuals can only be sadly lacking in the very realm where they are held in high esteem.

While at the same time, “*babes*” (Greek: *nepios*, those who are still on the milk of the Word and have not grown enough to even partake of solid food), through the leadership of the Spirit of God — as they compare “*scripture with scripture*” and look to the Spirit *to lead them “into all truth”* — can invariably be brought into an understanding of these things.

They, through turning to the Word and looking to the Spirit for discernment and leadership, can understand more about these same spiritual truths than the “*wise and prudent*” who turn to places other than the Word and either ignore or reject the Spirit’s discernment and leadership.

### Redeemed Man

Redeemed man, through a past and finished work of the Spirit, based on a past and finished work of Christ, has been brought from a dead to a living state spiritually. He has passed “*from death to life.*” And in this living state, he is now in a position to realize *the purpose for his salvation — the salvation of his soul.*

One aspect of salvation is past. The individual presently possesses eternal life, and nothing can ever change or nullify this fact. But the individual has been saved *for a purpose, which will be brought to pass only within the framework of his realizing present and future aspects of salvation.*

And this complete panorama of the salvation message, with a purpose in view, *must be recognized.* Redeemed man *must recognize* that there is not only a past aspect to salvation but present and future aspects as well.

And the present and future aspects of salvation are inseparably connected with man one day being brought into a realization of *the purpose for which he was created in the beginning — “. . . let them have dominion” (Genesis 1:26-28).*

Present and future aspects of salvation have to do with man occupying *regal positions* following the time when he, in that coming day, is brought into a realization of the salvation of his soul.

#### 1. *The Complete Salvation Issue*

In order to effect man’s eternal redemption, the Spirit of God deals with unsaved man on *one basis alone.* The Spirit deals with unsaved man solely on the basis of Christ’s finished work at Calvary.

But once an individual has believed on the Lord Jesus Christ and has been dealt with on the basis of Christ’s finished work, realizing the birth from above — the salvation of his spirit — the salvation issue then shifts *from* the salvation of his spirit *to* the salvation of his soul. The salvation of the spirit becomes a past, completed work and is *never* dealt with as an issue beyond this point. The Spirit of God, from this point forward, deals with the individual solely on the basis of *present and future aspects of salvation.* The individual, from this point forward, is dealt with in relation to *the salvation of his soul.*

Thus, all scriptures dealing with carnality or unfaithfulness of Christians, resulting in forfeiture or loss, *must* pertain to issues surrounding the salvation of the soul and NEVER to issues surrounding the salvation of the spirit.

Once the salvation of the spirit has been effected, making it possible for the indwelling Spirit of God to impart spiritual truth into and to control an individual's life through his own spirit, then man's unredeemed soul occupies the center of attention. The salvation of the soul, unlike the salvation of the spirit, is *conditional*. The salvation of the soul is dependent on the life one lives after his spirit has been saved. It is dependent on the individual allowing the Spirit of God to impart spiritual truth into and to control his life through his own spirit.

An individual allowing the Spirit of God to impart spiritual truth into and to control his life through his own spirit progressively grows from immaturity to maturity. He progressively grows into a spiritually mature Christian. Growing in this manner, he exerts control over his emotions, feelings, and desires pertaining to his man-conscious (soulical) existence. And, through this means, he will ultimately come into a realization of *the salvation of his soul (life)*.

On the other hand, an individual who refuses to allow the Spirit of God to impart spiritual truth into and to control his life in the preceding manner can only remain as a carnally immature Christian. Apart from the assimilation of spiritual truth, resulting in spiritual growth, he cannot help but be controlled by his emotions, feelings, and desires pertaining to his man-conscious (soulical) existence. And, accordingly, such a person will ultimately suffer *the loss of his soul (life)*, which can have no bearing whatsoever on his eternal salvation (for that is a past, finished matter that has already been dealt with).

## *2. The Complete Salvation Message*

The shift of the salvation issue *from* the spirit *to* the soul at the time of the birth from above necessitates a corresponding shift *from* the salvation message that is to be proclaimed to the unsaved (which concerns the salvation of the spirit) *to* the salvation message that is to be proclaimed to the saved (which concerns the salvation of the soul). *This must ever be the case*, for that which is past *ceases* to be the issue, and that which is present and future *becomes* the issue.

The only message to be carried to the unsaved is *the gospel of grace*. This is the good news that "*Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.*" This message *alone* forms the basis upon which the Spirit can breathe life into the one having no life (**1 Corinthians 15:3**; cf. **1 Corinthians 2:1, 2**).

But once the unsaved individual has believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, experiencing the birth from above, the message *must* then change, for the goal of the message will have been realized. The Spirit *must* then deal with the individual on an entirely different plane, with the issue at the forefront no longer being the salvation of the spirit, but *the salvation of the soul*.

Thus, a minister with a congregation placed under his care has been charged with *a tremendous responsibility*. His central ministry is among the saved, among those capable of grasping spiritual truth; and he is to disseminate spiritual truth to these individuals as it relates to things surrounding present and future aspects of salvation, not to things surrounding the past aspect of salvation. He, in this manner, is to "*feed the flock of God,*" looking ahead to Christ's appearance in all His glory (**1 Peter 5:2-4**).

This individual is responsible, under the leadership of the Spirit of God, to provide proper spiritual nourishment to and for those Christians placed under his care. And the only thing that God has provided for him to use as he feeds the flock of God is *the Word of God*.

As a minister in charge of a flock, he is to expound this Word under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. And Christians placed under his care are to receive this proclaimed Word into their saved human spirits. Then the Spirit of God can take this “*implanted Word*” and effect spiritual growth to maturity, with the end result being the salvation of their souls (**James 1:21**).

The tragedy in Christian circles today is the light regard that pastors of churches have for fulfilling the very purpose of their ministry. And, the end result of pastors failing to properly “feed the flock” entrusted to their care will be the entrance of innumerable carnal, immature Christians into the Lord’s presence at the end of the present dispensation with redeemed spirits, changed bodies, but wasted and thus unredeemed souls — forfeited lives. Their eternal salvation will remain unaffected; but, with the forfeiture or loss of their souls, they will be unable to realize the inheritance presently “*reserved in heaven*” for the faithful (**1 Peter 1:4**). Consequently, they will occupy no position among the “*many sons*” who will be brought to glory (**Hebrews 2:10**).

#### *Concluding Thoughts:*

Failure to understand and distinguish between the salvation that we presently possess and the salvation, to be revealed when our Lord returns, has caused untold confusion in Christian circles.

Many Christians take scriptures dealing with the salvation to be revealed and seek to apply them to the salvation that we presently possess. And misapplying scriptures in this manner, these individuals arrive at the erroneous conclusion that it is possible for a saved person to be lost, which not only casts reproach upon the sufficiency of the finished work of Christ at Calvary, but also does violence to numerous portions of the Word of God.

Then, on the other hand, there are those Christians who recognize that the loss of one’s eternal salvation is not possible, but still fail to understand distinctions between the salvation of the spirit and the salvation of the soul. Most from this group take many of these same verses and seek to either apply them to the nation of Israel or to unregenerate individuals, whether Jew or Gentile. And applications of this nature not only remove the Spirit’s exhortations and warnings to redeemed individuals, but erroneous interpretations in one area of Scripture will often, for the sake of consistency, lead to erroneous interpretations in other areas.

Thus, the importance of understanding distinctions between the salvation of the spirit and the salvation of the soul becomes self-evident.

Let it be forever stated: Redeemed man has come into a position from which he can *never* be removed. But this same redeemed man, in this position, is directly responsible to his Creator; and, at a future date, he will either *inherit as a joint-heir with his Lord or suffer loss in the presence of his Lord*. The former will be realized through the salvation of his soul, or the latter will, instead, be realized through the loss of his soul.

(Salvation of the Soul, Arlen L. Chitwood)

Today in even the most evangelical-conservative local churches, ignorance of the “meat” of God’s Word prevails. Even though most Christians will admit that the Word teaches they are to live holy lives, they fail to understand the very real consequences for not

doing so. They have little concept of the coming judgment they most assuredly will face at Christ's judgment seat and how the decisions and determinations at this judicial setting will affect their lives during the millennial kingdom — for one thousand years!

There view of what is to come appears to be focused on only the mere fact of gaining or losing of rewards with little regard to any *suffering* due to the loss. There is little wonder that the fact of a sure and coming judgment, a most unpopular topic, is glossed over or completely disregarded by most pastors as they ignore their God-assigned position as *pastor-teacher* (literal rendering of **Ephesians 4:11**; cf. **2 Timothy 4:1-5**) and attempt to seek popular support with sermons that emanate out of the “milk” of God's Word (**1 Corinthians 3:1-3**; **Hebrews 5:12-14**).

### The Christians' Coming Judgment

This is another basic doctrine, which one must understand before one will be able to truly appreciate and apprehend the subject of *the pathway to spiritual maturity and the coming glory*. Again, probably no one represents this issue better than Chitwood in chapter one of his book, The Judgment Seat of Christ, The Lamp Broadcast, Inc., 2001, a portion of which follows:

#### Basis for Judgment

*For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*

*Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,*

*each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is.*

*If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward.*

*If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. (1 Corinthians 3:11-15)*

Something little understood today is the fact that the “basis” for God's judgments is always *works*. God judged sin at Calvary, based on Christ's completed work; and when God views redeemed man today, He views this past completed work of His Son and past judgment upon sin. Redeemed man, through the Spirit having breathed into him, possesses spiritual life; and Christ's righteous, justifying act — His finished work at Calvary — has been reckoned as merit to him (**Romans 5:16-18**; **Philemon 18**). However, redeemed man in this standing before God is directly responsible to his Creator; and he, in his justified state, will himself be judged on the basis of *works* — *his own works* performed following salvation (**Matthew 16:27**; **1 Corinthians 3:12-15**).

And *works* are the basis for all God's subsequent judgments upon man — Israel, the living Gentiles coming out of the Great Tribulation, and those appearing before the Great White Throne. Man's appearance or nonappearance at a particular judgment, or place in this judgment (e.g., man's appearance at the judgment seat of Christ, or at the great white throne judgment 1,000 years later), is dependent on his *acceptance* or rejection of the *past work of Another*; but

judgment of the individual will be on the basis of *his own works*, which will be performed either as a redeemed or as an unredeemed individual (**Ezekiel 20:34-38; 2 Corinthians 5:9-11; Revelation 20:11-15**).

Before the judgment seat of Christ, “*Every man’s work shall be made manifest . . . it shall be revealed by [in] fire.*” There will be works comparable to “*gold, silver, precious stones*”; and there will be works comparable to “*wood, hay, straw.*” One set of material reveals works of intrinsic value, which will endure the fire; but the other set of material reveals valueless works, which will be burned in the fire.

Works performed by Christians during the present time can vary a great deal in worth. Such works can be performed under the leadership of the Holy Spirit and redound to the praise, honor, and glory of the Lord; or such works can be performed under the leadership of man and redound to the praise, honor, and glory of man. At the judgment seat, all will be revealed; for “*the fire shall test each one’s work, of what sort it is.*”

#### 1) *Works . . . Revealed by Fire*

Works emanate out of faithfulness to one’s calling and bring faith to its proper goal, which will result in the salvation of one’s soul (cf. **James 2:14-26; 1 Peter 1:5-11**). At the judgment seat, the worth of every man’s work in this realm will be revealed; and decisions and determinations emanating out of this judgment will determine every man’s position in the coming kingdom (cf. **Matthew 16:24-27; 24:45-51; 25:14-30; Luke 19:12-27**).

“Judgment” on the basis of *works* is alien to the thinking of many Christians, for they have been exposed time and again to a proclamation of salvation by grace through faith apart from works, *unbalanced* by the proclamation of the coming judgment of Christians on the basis of works. The emphasis has been placed almost entirely upon the finished work of Christ at Calvary, with little regard given to Christian living, the coming judgment seat, and the coming kingdom.

Teachings of this nature have centered almost solely on the salvation that we presently possess; and things having to do with the inheritance awaiting Christians, the salvation of the soul, etc., have been removed from their respective contexts and applied to our present salvation. Ministries centering on this type teaching in the churches have produced both confusion and complacency in Christendom.

Then, there is another type widespread teaching in the churches that recognizes works but has every Christian performing good works. The reasoning of those who so teach centers on the thought that if a person is really saved he will produce good works; if, on the other hand he doesn’t produce good works, this simply goes to show that he was never really saved in the first place. Aside from having no scriptural basis whatsoever, such a teaching produces both an erroneous view of salvation by grace through faith and an erroneous view of issues surrounding the judgment seat of Christ.

If every Christian produces good works to show that he has been saved, then works enter into an area where works cannot exist.

*And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work. (Romans 11:6)*

The presence or absence of works on the part of Christians can have no connection whatsoever with their prior reception of the finished work of Christ. Christ's finished work *allows* an individual to be placed in the position where he *can produce* good works. There is nothing in Scripture which teaches that he, of necessity, *will produce* good works. Such would be completely contrary to the teaching of salvation by grace through faith apart from works.

If it be maintained that every Christian *must* produce good works to show that he has been saved, then it *must* follow that every Christian would appear at the judgment seat of Christ with works that "abide" the fire. Possessing works of this nature, every Christian would "receive a reward."

But this thought is at once seen to be erroneous by reference to the text in **1 Corinthians** chapter **three**. There will be Christians appearing at the judgment seat who will "*suffer loss*" and "*be saved; yet so as by [through] fire*" (v. **15**). ALL of their works will be burned, but they themselves will "*be saved,*" i.e., *they themselves will be delivered*. And this *deliverance* will occur "through fire."

This *deliverance* at the judgment seat can have nothing to do with eternal salvation, for all issues surrounding one's eternal salvation, whether during the present time or at the future judgment seat, are *past issues* (e.g., Christ's finished work at Calvary, the Spirit's finished work of breathing life into the one having no life, allowing him to pass "*from death to life*"). God judged sin in the person of His Son at Calvary, and God is satisfied; and the Spirit breathes life into the one having no life, on the basis of the finished work of God's Son. And this work of the triune Godhead is a *past, finished deliverance* which could never be referred to in *the future sense* seen in **1 Corinthians 3:15**.

The *deliverance* seen in **1 Corinthians 3:15** is, contextually, *a deliverance out of the fire at the judgment seat*. Though all of the person's works will be burned and he will appear naked in Christ's presence (**Revelation 3:17, 18**), he himself will not be burned. Rather, he will be delivered — *delivered from being burned with his works*.

But, though he himself will be delivered in this respect, "*so as by [through] fire,*" he will be unable to escape the dire consequences which will result from his works being consumed by the fire and his consequent naked appearance. And there can be no deliverance from these consequences, for there will have to be a "*just recompense*" — exact payment for services rendered in the house during the time of the Lord's absence. If not, God would not be perfectly just and righteous in His dealings with His household servants.

One-sided views of the judgment seat that maintain that every Christian will appear with good works are little different than the teaching which ignores works. Confusion and complacency, once again, can only be the ultimate result.

Much of the preceding, erroneous teaching is fostered by a misunderstanding of **1 Corinthians 4:5**. This verse in the King James Version reads,

*Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God. (1 Corinthians 4:5, KJV)*

The problem emanates from both a mistranslation in the text and a non-contextual understanding of the words, "*then shall every man have praise of God.*" The words "*every man*" could be better translated "*each man*"; and the reference is back to the *faithful stewards* in verse two. Faithful

stewards will, individually, receive praise from God; but there is nothing in Scripture which teaches that “*every man*,” apart from the context would also include unfaithful stewards, will receive such praise. To the contrary, Scripture quite clearly reveals that *both faithful and unfaithful stewards* will appear at the judgment seat, that the judgment seat will be operable in *two realms*, and that *faithful stewards alone* will receive praise of God.

## 2) *If Anyone’s Work . . . Endures*

“Rewards” are being reserved for the *faithful alone*. This is one side of the judgment seat. Christians have been “*created in Christ Jesus to good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them*” (**Ephesians 2:10**).

Works of this nature, performed by a Christian exhibiting faithfulness to his calling, will “*endure*” at the judgment seat. They will be manifested as works comparable to “*gold, silver, precious stones*” and will endure the fire. Such works will result in the Christian receiving a reward and a position with Christ in the kingdom.

Works that endure the fire will be the type works necessary to bring faith to its proper goal, resulting in the salvation of the Christian’s soul. Following the testing of such works, the Christian will receive praise from his Lord. He will hear his Lord say, “*Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things: enter into the joy of your Lord*”; and he will subsequently be positioned according to rank among those destined to rule as joint-heirs with Christ (**Matthew 24:45-47; 25:19-23; Luke 19:15-19; Romans 8:17**).

## 3) *If Anyone’s Work is Burned*

“Suffering loss” is in store for the unfaithful. This is the other side of the judgment seat. It is possible for a Christian to appear before the judgment seat of Christ without one single good work to his credit. He may have works, but not works done under the direction of the Holy Spirit, for the praise, honor, and glory of the Lord. Such works, comparable to “*wood, hay, straw*” will be burned. They will not endure the fire. But the Christian himself “*will be saved [delivered]; yet so as by [through] fire*.”

The presence of works, the absence of works, or the type works can have no bearing on his eternal salvation, wrought completely apart from his own works. He will come out of this judgment, as Lot from Sodom, with nothing to show but escape from the condemnation befalling the unregenerate.

Works consumed by fire will be the type works unable to bring faith to its proper goal, resulting in the loss of the Christian's soul. Following the testing of such works, the Christian will be *rebuked* by his Lord. He will hear his Lord say, “*Thou wicked and slothful servant . . .*”

Then, that which had been entrusted to him during the time of his Lord’s absence will be taken from him. He will be denied a position with Christ in the kingdom, a position which could have been his had he previously exercised faithfulness in his calling; and he will be appointed “*his portion with the hypocrites*.” (**Matthew 24:48-51; 25:19, 24-30; Luke 19:15, 20-26**).

He will then find himself cast “*without*,” into the place that Scripture calls, “*the outer darkness*” (ASV). In this place there will be “*the weeping and the gnashing of teeth [an Eastern expression showing deep grief]*” (ASV) on the part of Christians who realize too late that they could have

occupied one of the proffered positions with Christ in His kingdom. Their rights as firstborn sons — the rights of primogeniture — will have been forfeited; and they, as Esau, will *lift up their voices and weep*.

*Concluding Thoughts:*

*Receiving rewards or suffering loss* at the judgment seat of Christ are grave issues about which most Christians seem to know very little, or, for that matter, appear to even be concerned. But such will have no bearing upon the fact that there is a day coming in the not too-distant future when every Christian MUST render an account to his Lord for the “*things done in his body*” (**2 Corinthians 5:10**).

*Events of that day* will come to pass at the end of the present dispensation, immediately preceding the Messianic Era; *issues of that day* will surround a review of the works performed by Christians in view of their receiving rewards or suffering loss; *the purpose of that day*, aside from providing a “*just recompense*,” will be to make decisions and determinations concerning Christians occupying positions with Christ in His 1,000-year rule from the heavens over the earth.

Everything is moving toward that 1,000-year Messianic Era when God’s Son will reign supreme. Man’s Day, in conjunction with *his rule* over the earth, is about to end; and the Lord’s Day, in conjunction with *His rule* over the earth, is about to commence. A kingdom, such as the coming kingdom of Christ, requires a *King* with numerous *vice-regents*. Christians are today being tested, tried, and refined with a view to that coming day.

Events of the entire present dispensation revolve around the thought that God is today calling out the vice-regents who will reign with His Son during the coming dispensation; and the presence of the Church upon the earth will extend, in one sense of the word, to that point in time when God will have acquired the necessary rulers to occupy the proffered positions in the kingdom under Christ. It will extend to that point in time when the Spirit successfully completes His search for a bride for God’s Son.

The removal of the Church and the appearance of Christians before the judgment seat will involve the issues of two dispensations: This *basis* for this judgment will have to do with *works*, emanating out of faithfulness or unfaithfulness of the Lord’s servants during a past dispensation (the activity of Christians during the *present* dispensation, which will be *past* in that coming day), and the *purpose* for this judgment will have to do with *Christians participating in the coming reign of God’s Son* (co-heirs ascending the throne with God’s Son in the kingdom of Christ).

*Preparation* occurs today; *placement*, based upon preparation, will emanate out of issues and determinations made at the judgment seat and will be made known after the Father delivers the kingdom to His Son (cf. **Daniel 4:17, 25, 32; 7:13, 14; Matthew 20:20-23**); and *positions* in the kingdom will be realized in the reign of Christ that follows (cf. **Matthew 25:19ff; Luke 19:15ff; Revelation 2:26, 27**).

(Judgment Seat of Christ, Arlen L. Chitwood)

The Christian, with a proper understanding of the composition of man, of God’s comprehensive redemption plan, and of the coming judgment for Christians, is then in a position to follow God’s *pathway to spiritual maturity and the coming glory*.

And there is *only one* path to this dual end. It is not by embracing a legalistic structure of rituals, traditions, and requirements proffered by any religion.

### **The Pathway**

The *pathway* is the study and apprehension of the “meat” doctrines within God’s holy, revealed, and living Word. And this is a process that can only be achieved when a Christian allows the Spirit to lead “*into all truth*” (**John 16:13**), which will then without fail produce within him a metamorphosis (a true spiritual change) and a resulting outward change during his pilgrim’s journey. Unfortunately, almost all Christians avoid this pathway. The depth of Holy Writ is totally ignored by most Christians, contrary to the boasting that churches offer instruction in the Word.

Very few Christians ever take it upon themselves to personally, seriously, and thoroughly study the Word; seeking rather to sooth their conscious with church traditions, church attendance, and the mimicking of various and often spurious “spiritual” activities. In addition to this, there is very little contextual exegesis (critical analysis) of Scripture within Sunday schools and from pulpits. There appears to be no end of replacement activity within local churches for this deficiency; such as milk-based and psychologically oriented (pep-talk/feel good) sermons from pulpits, an emphasis upon emotionally based public expression, and various and sundry social programs.

This, coupled with church-sponsored Bible classes that are encumbered with “other activities,” leaving usually thirty minutes or less for actual study of Scripture; and the church’s general assembly (“worship service”) much of which is given over to activities other than the study of the Word (i.e., solicitation of money, announcements, various vocal performances, and other administrative activities), along with a brief sermon on elementary and/or under-developed biblical principles, often given in such a manner to rivet the parishioners’ attention on the messenger instead of the message; provides little to no spiritual substance or sustenance for Christians. Consequently, the result is little to no spiritual growth to maturity for those under the church’s leadership.

And the sad fact is that this is perfectly acceptable to Christians today. This is how they understand the local church and they, as Christians, should function. They have no concept of the manner and conduct of early New Testament Christians or of the formation and function of early local New Testament churches. But then, the progressive deterioration of the Christian “model” was prophesied by the Lord Himself in the various “*mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens*” parables in the book of **Matthew** chapter **thirteen**.

Jesus Christ, just prior to going to the cross, probably delineated most succinctly *the pathway* while praying to the Father in behalf of His disciples. In His prayer and upon stating that He had indeed given to them the Word of God (**John 17:8, 14**), He made the following supplication:

*Sanctify* [set apart to holiness, i.e., spiritual maturity] *them by Your truth. Your word is truth.* (**John 17:17**; cf. **Ephesians 5:26**)

By this prayer, Christ established the fact that sanctification (the process of being set apart to holiness [spiritual maturity]) is directly proportional to one's consumption (understanding) of the Word of God.

Moses, to whom God "*made known His ways*" (**Psalm 103:7**), voiced this truth in his instruction to the children of Israel:

*Set your hearts on all the words which I testify among you today, which you shall command your children to be careful to observe all the words of this law. For it is not a futile thing for you, because it is your life, and by this Word you shall prolong your days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to possess. (Deuteronomy 32:46, 47)*

This admonition, which referred to *the power of the Word's ability to bring about a change in one's spiritual life*, climaxed Moses' expression of concern for the present and future spiritual welfare of the people of Israel. Absorption of and obedience to the Word would produce an inward change to spiritual maturity, resulting in being built up in and a walk by faith. And this pertained not only to the Israelites' present spiritual life but to a future prolongation of that life in the land to which they had been called as well.

The Word — the 66 books of the Holy Bible — is the *only* spiritual food with which the Holy Spirit enables spiritual growth! The only way a Christian can know the mind of Christ (**1 Corinthians 2:16**), is by *knowing* the "*meat*" of the *living Word* (**Hebrews 4:12**), which then will inevitably alter his inward thought processes (**Romans 12:2**; cf. **2 Corinthians 3:18**; **Colossians 3:10**) toward a more mature spiritual walk (**Proverbs 23:7a**) and truly enable him to "*discern both good and evil*" (**Hebrews 5:14**). One does not come without the other.

The apostle Paul made this fact clear to the elders of the church in Ephesus, when he said, "*So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the Word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified*" (**Acts 20:32**). He confirmed that it was *the Word* that could bring them to spiritual maturity and thereby insure their inheritance in the coming kingdom. He also insisted to the believers in the Roman church that it was only through "*the patience and comfort of the Scriptures*" that they could have "*hope*" toward the future (**Romans 15:4**) and be "*established . . . for obedience to the faith*" (**Romans 16:25, 26**).

Paul further affirmed that spiritual maturity comes only through *the Word*, when he revealed that it was the primary responsibility of pastor-teachers, "*for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect [spiritual mature] man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting*" (**Ephesians 4:11-14**). In essence, he affirmed that it is only by being grounded in the meat of the Word that will insulate a Christian from false doctrine.

And to Timothy he reinforces this point by urging him to “*give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine . . . Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress [spiritual maturity] may be evident to all. Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save [a reference to soul-salvation] both yourself and those who hear you*” (1 Timothy 4:1-16). And also to Timothy he said, “*Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth*” (2 Timothy 2:15). In fact, he assured Timothy that it was *the Word* alone that would make him “*complete [mature], thoroughly equipped for every good work*” (2 Timothy 3:16, 17).

Peter’s buttress to Paul’s position on *the Word* may be found in his words:

*Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”*  
(2 Peter 1:2-4)

But again, probably no one reveals more clearly the necessity of personal consumption of the Word of God as the *only pathway* to spiritual maturity and eventual glory with Christ during the coming Messianic Era than Chitwood in chapters 3 and 4 in his book Salvation of the Soul, which follow:

#### The Implanted Word

*Of His own will He brought us forth by the Word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.*

*Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted Word, which is able to save your souls. (James 1:18, 21)*

“Redemption” is the central issue throughout all Scripture, but redemption includes far more than the salvation that we presently possess. Redemption begins with unredeemed man who, because of sin, is both alienated from God and dwelling on an earth that is under a curse; and redemption terminates with redeemed man dwelling as a joint-heir with his Messiah, ruling over an earth removed from the curse.

In this respect, God’s revealed purpose for man’s redemption is to ultimately place him in the position for which he was originally created: “*Let them have dominion . . .*” And when this has been accomplished, *restored man will occupy a regal position over a restored earth, removed from the curse* (cf. Genesis 1:26, 28; Acts 3:21; Colossians 1:20). *Anything short of this revealed goal is short of God’s purpose for His redemptive work surrounding man.*

The Hebrew word translated “*dominion*” in Genesis 1:26, 28 is *radhah*, which means “to rule.” This is the same word translated “rule” in Psalm 110:2, referring to Christ ruling the earth in the coming age as the great King-Priest “*after the order of Melchizedek*.” Christ, however, is not to rule alone. He will have many “*companions*” (Hebrews 1:9; 3:14) ruling as joint-heirs with Him, and *God’s purpose for His past and present redemptive work surrounding man is to*

*ultimately bring him into this regal position* — a culmination of God’s redemptive work, to be realized at a future date.

The text in **James 1:18, 21** encompasses the complete scope of redemption — past, present, and future. The word translated “*brought us forth*” [“begat us” in other translations] in verse **eighteen** is a medical term in the Greek text that refers to the actual birth itself. The individuals in this passage (the writer included himself) had been begotten from above, realizing the salvation of their spirits. And through the birth from above, these individuals had been placed in a position (possessing spiritual life) where they could ultimately be brought into a realization of *the salvation of their souls* through following that which is outlined in verse **twenty-one**.

In the preceding respect, the issue surrounding *redemption* in relation to alienated, unredeemed man has to do with *the salvation of his spirit*; and the issue surrounding *redemption* in relation to redeemed man, who possesses a right relationship with God, has to do with *the salvation of his soul*. Thus, relative to the salvation of both *the spirit* and *the soul*, man has been saved (salvation of the spirit) in order to bring him into a position where he can be saved (salvation of the soul).

The former has to do with *eternal verities* and the latter with *millennial verities*. Through the salvation of man’s *spirit*, he comes into possession of eternal life; but only through the salvation of his *soul* does he come into possession of the inheritance awaiting the faithful, to be realized during the Messianic Era.

Therefore lay aside . . . receive . . .

In **James 1:21**, there is really only one command in the wording of the Greek text. The verse should literally read,

*Therefore, putting away all filthiness and all prevailing wickedness, in meekness receive the implanted Word, which is able to save your souls. (James 1:21)*

Following the salvation of one’s spirit, an individual (Christian) is commanded to “*receive the implanted Word,*” *for this Word alone is able to effect the salvation of his soul.*

However, a Christian is to receive this Word only after he has set aside the things which would hinder the reception of this Word. The words “filthiness” and “wickedness,” though appearing to refer basically to the same thing in the English text, set forth two entirely different thoughts in the Greek text.

The word translated “*filthiness*” comes from a root word that, relative to the human ear — the channel through which “*the implanted Word*” is received — could have to do with *earwax*. In a metaphorical manner of viewing the matter, the thought set forth through the use of this word has to do with the possibility that these Christians’ ears, so to speak, were filthy. There were possibly obstructions — having to do with a dulled spiritual perception — that prevented the Word of God from flowing through the auditory canals in a proper manner; and, if so, they were to remove these obstructions.

Then, after these Christians had removed any obstructions that could prevent them from hearing the Word of God properly, they were to put away all “wickedness” in their lives. This is simply a general term that carries the thought of “anything opposed to purity.” These Christians were to put away any impurity in their lives that could hinder the reception of the Word of God. And receiving the implanted Word in this fashion would then allow them to “*grow thereby unto*

salvation” (**1 Peter 2:2**, ASV), i.e., through spiritual growth they would ultimately realize *the salvation of their souls*.

The word “implanted” has to do simply with *that which is placed on the inside*. This Word is to be *firmly fixed within a person’s mind, within his thinking process*. The channel, as we have seen, is the ear. According to **Romans 10:17**, “. . . faith comes by [‘out of’] hearing, and hearing by [‘through’] the Word of God.” The Word is to flow *through unobstructed auditory canals into a saved human spirit, for a revealed purpose*.

Once the Word has been received in this manner, the indwelling Holy Spirit *can then perform a work in the individual*. As all hindrances (all impurities) are set aside and the spiritual man is allowed to exert full control, the Holy Spirit, using “*the implanted Word*,” *can then effect spiritual growth*. And, as this process continues over time, spiritual growth of this nature will lead from immaturity to maturity.

The teaching in **James 1:21**, or for that matter the book of **James** as a whole, must be understood in the light of the subject matter at hand — *the salvation of the soul*. In order to properly understand the Word of God at this point, one *must* not only have an understanding of the salvation that he presently possesses, but he *must* also have an equally good understanding and comprehension of the salvation that he is about to possess.

Teachings surrounding the salvation of the soul are, in reality, the central subject matter in all of the epistles — both the Pauline and general epistles, from **Romans** through **Jude**. Each epistle is different, containing its own peculiarities; and each has been written to provide a different facet of revealed truth, with all of the epistles together forming a complete body of revealed information and instructions for Christians relative to present and future aspects of salvation.

In this respect, apart from an understanding of the salvation of the soul, it is not possible *to properly understand* the central message of the epistles. An understanding of the salvation of the soul, which is introduced in the Old Testament and continued in the gospels and the book of **Acts**, *is the key that will open the epistles to one’s understanding*.

Thus, the importance of understanding that which Scripture reveals about the salvation of the soul *cannot be overemphasized*. And this importance can be shown by *the goal*, which the writer of **Hebrews** dealt with near the beginning of his epistle, referring to this salvation as “*so great salvation*” (**Hebrews 2:3**; cf. **Hebrews 1:14; 2:5; 6:13-19; 10:35-39; 1 Peter 1:9**). It is *the greatest thing* God could ever design for redeemed man, for it includes *joint-heirship with His Son over all things during the coming age*.

#### Growing unto Salvation

*Putting away therefore all wickedness, and all guile, and hypocrisy, and envies, and all evil speaking,*

*As newborn babes, long for the spiritual milk that is without guile, that you may grow thereby unto salvation. (1 Peter 2:1, 2, ASV)*

The American Standard Version (ASV) of the Bible has been quoted rather than the King James Version (KJV) because it includes the translation of two important and explanatory Greek words in verse **two** (ref. also NASB, NIV, Weymouth). These two words, *eis soterian*, appear at the end

of the verse and actually sum up and conclude the thought of the entire verse, for within these two words lie the revealed reason for growth towards maturity.

*Eis soterian* should be properly translated either “unto salvation” or “with respect to salvation” (ref. NASB). Then the question naturally arises, “What aspect of salvation is in view?” It can only be *the salvation of the soul*, for not only is this the subject matter dealt with in **1 Peter** (cf. **1:9, 10**) but Christians do not grow “unto” or “with respect to” the salvation that they presently possess.

The salvation of the spirit was effected in past time completely apart from any accomplishment, effort, etc., of man. Nothing can ever be added to or taken from this salvation, for it is based entirely on the finished work of Christ at Calvary. And this finished work can never be changed or altered in any fashion.

All Christians remain on an equal plain within the scope of this salvation. A newborn babe in Christ, a carnally immature Christian, and a spiritually mature Christian all occupy *identical positions* insofar as the salvation of the spirit is concerned. Christian growth is brought to pass *on the basis of* the salvation of the spirit, but there is no such thing as growing “unto” or “with respect to” this salvation.

The command in **1 Peter 2:2**, although applicable only to newborn babes, parallels and has to do with the same central thought as the command in **James 1:21**: “. . . long for the spiritual milk that is without guile, that you may grow thereby unto salvation,” and “. . . receive with meekness the implanted Word, which is able to save your souls.” Both begin at the same point (a reception of the Word of God into man’s saved human spirit), progress in the same manner (spiritual growth), and end at the same point (salvation).

The commands to receive the Word of God in both **James 1:21** and **1 Peter 2:2** are preceded by parallel statements:

*Therefore lay aside* [lit. Therefore laying aside] *all filthiness and overflow of wickedness* . . . (**James 1:21a**)

*Putting away therefore all wickedness, and all guile, and hypocrisy, and envies, and all evil speaking.* (**1 Peter 2:1**)

Nothing must be allowed to interfere with the reception of the Word of God as Christians mature day by day. This is the reason Christians are exhorted over and over in the New Testament to separate themselves from the things of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Sin in one’s life will impede the reception of the Word of God; and sin harbored in one’s life will impede the reception of this Word to the extent that the individual may *fail to grow* “unto salvation.”

The problem of sin in the Christian’s life today, in view of the coming salvation of the soul, is the reason Christ is presently exercising a high priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary. Christians reside in a body of death with the ever-present sin nature; and, in this condition, they reside in a world under the control and dominion of Satan and his angels. Residing in the present world system after this fashion, Christians come under constant attack from the archenemy of their souls; and failure in the pilgrim walk, producing defilement in their lives, can and does occur.

Because of present conditions and circumstances, Christ, as High Priest, is performing a work in the heavenly sanctuary. He is performing *a present, continuous cleansing for Christians*, accomplished solely on the basis of His shed blood on the mercy seat (**Hebrews 9:11, 12**). And *forgiveness* and *cleansing* from “all unrighteousness” occur as Christians “*confess*” their sins (**1 John 1:5, 6, 9; 2:1, 2**).

The reason for Christ’s present ministry has to do with *the salvation of the soul*, as the reason for His past ministry had to do with *the salvation of the spirit*. God’s complete purpose for man cannot be realized apart from the salvation of both, i.e., the salvation of man as a complete being (which, in that coming day, will include his body as well).

### Milk . . . Meat . . . Strong Meat

In the terminology of Scripture itself, *milk* is for babies, and *meat* is for those who have experienced sufficient growth to leave the milk and partake of solid food. Both milk and meat (solid food) are indispensable elements as one progressively grows from an immature infant into a mature adult, and nourishment to produce proper growth in both the physical and spiritual realms must come from the correct source.

#### 1. *In the Physical Realm*

The analogy concerning a newborn Christian’s *spiritual needs* for the “*milk which is without guile*” is drawn from *the physical needs* and desires of a newborn baby. Almost immediately following birth the baby instinctively begins seeking nourishment from his mother. His needs are very basic: food, warmth, and security.

These are all satisfied at his mother’s breasts, as he longs for his mother’s milk. This milk is pure, easily digested, and contains all the necessary components for the early growth of the entire body, especially the brain and nervous system. The mother’s milk is *a living organism* that cannot be duplicated. Man’s best efforts to reproduce this milk are described by the terms “most like,” or “near to.”

A child in his early physical growth does not continue on milk indefinitely. The child’s growth always moves toward a day when he is able to leave the milk and continue on solid food. The solid food that the child first begins taking is a type that is more easily masticated and digested. But as the child grows, the teeth become more firmly entrenched, the digestive system matures, and the day arrives when the child becomes physically mature enough to handle any type of solid food.

#### 2. *In the Spiritual Realm*

God revealed Himself to Abraham as “*El Shaddai* [‘Almighty God’]” (**Genesis 17:1**). *El* is the singular form of the plural Hebrew word for “God” (*Elohim*), and *Shaddai* is a derivative of the word *shad*, which means “breast.” In this respect, God literally revealed Himself to Abraham as the “All-Powerful, Breasted God,” i.e., the All-Powerful God who nourishes, gives strength, and satisfies. This appears to be the primary thought behind the words *El Shaddai* when used with God’s own people in view.

God’s revealed Word to man, derived from the “All-Powerful, Breasted One,” is the means through which God nourishes, strengthens, and satisfies His people throughout their pilgrim walk. The newborn Christian, because of his new nature, is to instinctively long for the “*spiritual milk*

*which is without guile*”; and the more mature a Christian becomes, the more he, in like manner, is to instinctively move on into the “meat” and “strong meat” of the Word.

This Word is “*quick* [‘alive’], *and powerful*” (**Hebrews 4:12**) and contains everything necessary for Christian growth unto maturity. The weaning process in Christian growth pertains only to the “milk,” not the source. It is not possible for *any* Christian to receive nourishment *apart from* the “All-Powerful, Breasted God.”

Proper Christian growth begins with “*milk*,” *progresses to “meat,” and then moves on to “strong meat.”* In **Hebrews** chapter **five**, the writer of this book severely rebuked certain Christians for their inability to handle anything but “milk.” They had been saved for a sufficient length of time that they should not only have progressed from milk to meat, and then to strong meat, but they should also have progressed to the point where they could teach the Word to other Christians.

However, because of a lazy, careless manner of conducting their spiritual lives over time, these Christians had not experienced proper growth in their understanding of the Word. They were still on the milk of the Word and had not progressed in their Christian growth beyond the point of themselves needing to be taught.

The subject matter at hand in relation to “*strong meat*” in **Hebrews** chapter **five** is the Melchizedek priesthood. The writer of this book had “many things” he would like to have said concerning this priesthood; but these things had to do with a realm of biblical doctrine beyond that which these Christians, because of their immaturity, were able to comprehend.

The things associated with the Melchizedek priesthood had to do with *strong meat*, and these Christians were still on *milk*. They were unable to partake of meat, much less strong meat drawn from teachings surrounding the Melchizedek priesthood.

(Note that both “milk” and “meat” have an association with that which is *living* in both the physical and spiritual realms. Man may attempt to duplicate both; but, in reality, he can duplicate neither. *Life* of this nature — physical or spiritual — *comes only through breath, which comes from God.*

This whole overall thought will explain what is meant in **John** chapter **six** by partaking of Christ as the Bread of life, or eating His flesh and drinking His blood [vv. **33-35, 48-58**]. There is *the living Word*, and there is *the written Word* [which is *living* as well]. The two are inseparably related; and an individual partakes of the former through an intake, assimilation, and digestion of the latter.

*Everything is alive.* It is a partaking of *the living Word* through a partaking of *the written Word* [which, again, is *living* as well]. It is a progression *from living milk, to living meat, to living strong meat.* Only through this means can *spiritual growth* for the man now possessing *spiritual life* occur.)

The Christians in **Hebrews** chapter **five** were said to be “*dull of hearing*” (v. **11**). The thought from the wording of the text is that they didn’t necessarily begin this way as newborn babes. This is something that had resulted from the careless manner in which they had governed their spiritual lives.

Before they had grown to the point where they could leave the milk of the Word, they *had become* sluggish in hearing the Word of God. They, as brought out in **James 1:21**, had possibly

allowed *wax* to build up in their ears. Their spiritual perception had been dulled, preventing them from hearing properly.

The Word of God was not being allowed to travel in a proper and natural manner through the auditory canal into their saved human spirits. There was no proper exercise of faith because there was no proper exercise of hearing the Word of God (cf. **Romans 10:17**; **Hebrews 11:6**). And, apart from the reception of this Word, there could, consequently, be no growth toward maturity.

The only way to rectify an existing situation of this nature is clearly outlined in **James 1:21** and **1 Peter 2:1, 2**. It requires removing any obstructions from the auditory canals, laying aside everything opposed to purity, and receiving “*with meekness [in a favorable manner] the implanted Word . . .*”

The word translated “dull” in **Hebrews 5:11** is from the same word in the Greek text translated “become sluggish” in **Hebrews 6:12**:

*That you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*

The Christians referred to in chapter **six** where exhorted to not be like the ones previously referred to in chapter **five**; and the given purpose had to do with *faith, patient endurance, and a future inheritance* (vv. **13ff**).

The word “patience” is the translation of a Greek word that has to do with *patiently enduring over a long period of time*. In this case, the entire Christian life is in view. These Christians were to receive the Word of God *in a continuing manner throughout their entire pilgrim walk*.

The reception of this Word would, in turn, produce a walk by faith and progressively result in Christian maturity. And, while patiently enduring trials and tests during the pilgrim walk after this fashion, they were to look ahead to *the inheritance* that would be realized at the end of their faith, in connection with and at the time of *the salvation of their souls* (cf. **Hebrews 6:14-19**; **1 Peter 1:4-9**).

#### The Neshamah

*And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath [the Neshamah] of life; and man became a living soul. (Genesis 2:7)*

The roots of all biblical doctrine have been established in the book of **Genesis**. This is *the book of beginnings*; and *all Scripture* beyond this point must, after some fashion, reach back and draw from this book.

In the account of the creation of man, insight is given into certain truths concerning “life” derived from God. These truths will, in turn, provide light on the subject matter at hand — the reception of the Word of God (which is alive, and powerful [**Hebrews 4:12**]) in relation to the salvation of the soul/life.

The creation of Adam from the dust of the ground, and the removal of a rib from Adam’s side, occurred on the sixth day of the restoration account in **Genesis** chapter **one**. But the methods that God used to bring about both Adam’s creation and the formation of Eve from a portion of

Adam's body were not revealed in the recorded account until following the seventh day in chapter **two**.

Most of the second chapter is taken up with certain specifics concerning that which had previously occurred on the sixth day in the preceding chapter, and this account is rich beyond degree in biblical study. The second chapter of **Genesis** (just as in the first chapter) is the point where *the origin of numerous biblical doctrines* can be traced, and these doctrines cannot be properly understood apart from this chapter.

The means that God used in both man's creation and the subsequent impartation of life into His new creation are given in **Genesis 2:7**. There first existed a lifeless form that had previously been fashioned from the dust of the ground. Creation itself did not produce life in this form. Rather, God imparted life to man *following* his creation. This life was produced by means of *the breath of God*, and it is here that "life" *in relation to man* is first mentioned in Scripture.

The Hebrew word translated "breath" in **Genesis 2:7** is *Neshamah*. The *Neshamah* of God produced "life." The word "God" in this verse is a translation of the plural noun, *Elohim*, indicating that not only the Father, but also the Son and the Holy Spirit were instrumental in producing this life.

Thus, man's life in the beginning was derived from the triune God through what is called the *Neshamah*. And **Genesis 2:7** provides insights into things far beyond the simple fact that God created man and then imparted life into man. This verse provides insights into things surrounding man's salvation today — both the salvation of the spirit and the salvation of the soul.

*First*, the impartation of life to unredeemed man, who is "dead in trespasses and sins" (**Ephesians 2:1, 5**), *must follow the pattern (type) established in Genesis*. He, as Adam prior to the *Neshamah* of God, is lifeless; and his life must be derived through the same means as Adam's life.

*Second*, once this life has been imparted, *it must be continued and sustained*; and, as will become evident, Scripture teaches that life is not only imparted through the *Neshamah* of God, but life is also continued and sustained through the *Neshamah* of God as well.

A first-mention principle has been established in **Genesis 2:7**, and *life* that man derives from God must always be in complete keeping with that set forth in this verse. *God alone* initially "imparts" and subsequently "continues" and "sustains" *life*; and this entire sequence, having to do with God's revealed work as it pertains to *life*, is always accomplished, in its entirety, through the *Neshamah* of God.

#### 1. *Impartation of Life to the Unsaved (Salvation of the Spirit)*

Unregenerate man today comes into a right relationship with God solely through the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit on the basis of Christ's finished work at Calvary. The Spirit breathes life into the one having no life, and through this work of the Spirit man passes "*from death to life*" (**John 5:24**).

(The word "Spirit" in the Greek text is *pneuma*, a word that also means "breath." It is used in the latter sense in the New Testament to show life being produced through a "breathing in," or death being wrought through a "breathing out." In **Luke 8:55**, life was restored to a young girl by her "spirit [breath]" returning; and in **Luke 23:46**, Christ

terminated His life on the Cross by giving “up the spirit [lit. from the wording of the Greek text, He ‘breathed out’].”)

Thus, the Holy Spirit is the One who generates life in lifeless man (on the basis of Christ’s finished work at Calvary), and the expression used in both the Hebrew and Greek texts relative to the Spirit generating life in this manner is a “breathing in.” God, through the instrumentality of the Holy Spirit, “breathes life into” unregenerate man, which results in man passing “*from death to life.*”

Or, in **James 2:26**, the same principle is seen relative to the physical body, as previously seen in **Genesis 2:7**: “. . . *the body without the spirit [‘breath’] is dead.*”

Since type and antitype must agree in exact detail, the impartation of life to Adam in **Genesis** chapter **two** must, of necessity, have occurred in the same fashion that the impartation of life to unredeemed man occurs today. Lifeless man during the present time derives life from God through the work of the Holy Spirit, and lifeless Adam in the **Genesis** account could only have derived life from God in this same manner.

Teachings drawn from the original type in relation to man’s redemption necessitate this same conclusion. The original type is found in the first chapter of **Genesis** (vv. **2b-5**), with **Genesis 2:7** being a subsequent type, providing additional details. And the latter verse, providing the first mention of “life” in relation to man, must be in complete agreement with and understood in the light of revelation in the former verses, in the original type.

The portion of the original type under consideration at this point is **Genesis 1:2b, 3**:

*. . . darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved on the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.*

These verses outline the beginning of the restoration of a creation that was brought into a ruined state through an act of Satan (*the earth*, the province over which Satan ruled [and still rules today], becoming *a chaos* because of his aspirations to be “*like the most High*” [**Isaiah 14:12-14**]).

Then these verses, in turn, set forth in type the beginning of the restoration of a creation that was brought into a subsequent state of ruin through another act of Satan (causing *man* to fall [becoming *a ruin, a chaos*] through deceiving the woman into believing that she could be “*as God*” [**Genesis 3:5, 22**]).

The established pattern (type) relative to the restoration of a ruined creation is set in the first chapter of **Genesis**. Once God establishes a pattern of this nature, *no change can ever occur*. The restoration of any subsequent ruined creation *must occur in exact accord with the established pattern*. Thus, God’s work in the restoration of fallen man today — a subsequent ruined creation — *must follow the established pattern, in exact detail*.

The Spirit of God moved in the first chapter of **Genesis**, effecting a beginning of the earth’s restoration. And the first thing recorded immediately following the Spirit’s movement was the placement of light alongside the previously existing darkness, with a division established between the light and the darkness.

The Spirit of God, in like manner, moves today, effecting a beginning of man's restoration (the salvation of his spirit). And the first thing that God does for man is to place light alongside the previously existing darkness — place a new nature alongside the old nature, a new man alongside the old man — with a division established between the two (cf. **Hebrews 4:12**).

But in the **Genesis** account, complete restoration was not accomplished through God's work on the first day. Rather, the earth, through this divine work accomplished on the first day, was brought into a state where a continued work could be accomplished. And, over time, this continued work would complete the earth's restoration.

And restoration for ruined man occurs exactly the same way. Complete restoration is not accomplished through the birth from above. Rather, the person, through the birth from above, is brought into a state where a continued work can be accomplished. And, over time, this continued work will complete man's restoration.

Note the words of the apostle Paul in **2 Corinthians 4:6; 5:17** in this respect:

*For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ . . .*

*Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature [‘new creation’] . . .”*

These verses in **2 Corinthians** chapters **four** and **five** can only be a direct allusion to the account of the restoration of the ruined creation in **Genesis** chapter **one** — light shining out of darkness, associated with a new creation being brought into existence in both instances, with the former foreshadowing the latter. And **Genesis 2:7**, a subsequent type concerning unregenerate man (life produced in that which is lifeless), is an account portraying exactly the same truth from a different perspective, providing additional details. The Spirit of God wrought order out of chaos in **Genesis** chapter **one**; the Spirit of God — the *Neshamah* — produced life in **Genesis** chapter **two**; and the Spirit of God brings order out of chaos, produces life in unregenerate man today, exactly the same way.

The Spirit of God today moves upon the ruined creation, upon ruined man (chapter **1**). That is, He breathes *life* into the one having no life (chapter **2**). Only then does “light” shine out of what was only darkness before that time (allowing for a continued divine work), with everything being done in complete accordance with the revealed Word of God — “*And God said . . .*” (cf. **Genesis 1:2b ff; 2 Corinthians 4:6**).

Then, to complete the type, note the septenary structure of this opening section of **Genesis**, establishing, at the very beginning, *a septenary structure* upon which the whole of subsequent Scripture rests. The six days of work used to restore the earth in **Genesis** point to the six days (6,000 years [cf. **2 Peter 1:15-18; 3:1-8**]) of work that God is presently using to restore man; and the Sabbath rest following the six days in the **Genesis** account points to the Sabbath rest, the 1,000-year Messianic Era, which will follow the present six days, the present 6,000 years of work (cf. **Exodus 31:12-17; Hebrews 4:1-9**).

## *2. Impartation of Life to the Saved (Salvation of the Soul)*

*All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16, 17, NIV)*

Once life has been generated, life must then be continued and sustained. Life is *generated* through “breathing in” (initial work of the Spirit), *retained* through “the breath remaining” (a subsequent work of the Spirit), and *sustained* through a “continued breathing in.” Sustenance for life, “a continued breathing in,” is what is involved in **2 Timothy 3:16**.

This verse, studied in the light of **Genesis 2:7**, is the key that will 1) unlock the door concerning the *Neshamah* of God in relation to saved man (past or present), 2) demonstrate the power of the Word of God, and 3) reveal the reason Christians are commanded to “*receive the implanted Word*.”

The word “*God-breathed*” in **2 Timothy 3:16** is a translation of the compound Greek word *theopneustos*, which is simply the word for “God” (*theos*) and the word for “breath,” or “Spirit” (*pneuma*) added. Thus, the translation “God-breathed” is not only a very literal translation, but, in the light of **Genesis 2:7**, it can only be the best of all possible translations.

The “Word of God,” through comparing **Genesis 2:7** and **2 Timothy 3:16**, is identified with the *Neshamah* of God — *the breath of God*. The Word of God was given through the instrumentality of the Holy Spirit (**2 Peter 1:21**), and is the element — *the living organism* — that the indwelling Holy Spirit uses *to sustain the life* that He Himself originally imparted and presently continues.

Thus, in a full Scriptural respect, the *Neshamah* of God can only refer to both *the Spirit* and *the Word*. “Life” emanates from both (**2 Corinthians 3:6**; **Hebrews 4:12**; **James 2:26**), and they are inseparably linked through one common denominator — *Breath*.

The Word of God, because of its very origin and nature, is *the only thing* that the Holy Spirit, who gave the Word, can use to effect man’s spiritual growth toward maturity. The *Neshamah* of God (the Holy Spirit) who imparted life uses the *Neshamah* of God (the implanted Word) to feed, nourish, and properly develop this life.

*The Word of God alone* is able to make one “*wise unto salvation*” (**2 Timothy 3:15**). That is to say, *the Word of God alone* can be used by the Holy Spirit to bring about the Christian’s walk by faith (cf. **Romans 10:17**), ultimately resulting in the salvation of his soul.

### The Breath of God

*And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath [neshamah] of life; and man became a living being. (Genesis 2:7)*

*All Scripture is God-breathed [theopneustos] and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16, NIV)*

Man’s “life” following his creation in the beginning was produced by “*the breath [neshamah] of God*” (**Genesis 2:7**). This establishes a first-mention principle in Scripture concerning “life” in relation to man, and this principle remains *unchanged* throughout all subsequent Scripture. Man’s life throughout time *and* eternity, as in the **Genesis** account, *must emanate from God*; and this life cannot be generated, continued, or sustained apart from the *neshamah* of God.

In scriptural terminology, the *neshamah* is identified with both the “Holy Spirit” of God and the “Word” of God. *Life*, which comes from God alone, is always produced through “breathing in.”

Remaining within basic teachings drawn from the types in **Genesis 1:2-5; 2:7**, God, through the instrumentality of the Holy Spirit, “breathes life into” unredeemed, lifeless man today. Once imparted, with the man *possessing spiritual life* (having been redeemed), this *life* is then continued and sustained through the same principle — the breath of God *remaining with man* (past dispensation) or *remaining in man* (present dispensation), and the breath of God *continuing to be breathed into man*.

*Through the abiding presence of the breath of God* (which, during this present dispensation, is through the Spirit indwelling the one in whom He had previously breathed life), the believer remains secure in his positional standing before God; and *through a continued impartation of the breath of God* (the Word of God flowing into man’s saved human spirit, with the indwelling Holy Spirit leading the individual “*into all truth*”), the believer receives *living nourishment* for spiritual growth unto maturity.

“Scripture,” unlike any other writings, is *alive*:

*For the Word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword . . . .*  
**(Hebrews 4:12a).**

“Life” can be attributed to *Scripture* only on the basis of the fact that the “oracles of God” emanated from *the Giver and Sustainer of life*. *Scripture* is “God-breathed.” It is the *neshamah*, the “breath” of God.

This is what sets *Scripture* apart from all other writings. That which God has to say in His Word is *alive, not subject to error, and will endure forever*. But that which man has to say is, on the other hand, *lifeless, subject to error, and will endure only for time*.

Thus, the Holy Spirit today initially *imparts* life to man who is “*dead in trespasses and sins*,” *continues* this life through His abiding presence, and *sustains* this life via the living Word of God flowing into man’s saved human spirit. The indwelling Holy Spirit takes the Word of God received into man’s saved human spirit, and, through man’s spiritual perception, changes the *water* to *wine* (cf. **John 2:1-11**). A continued process of this nature — revealing the things of the Spirit to the man of spirit through man’s spiritual perception — progressively results in growth unto maturity.

The great difference between redeemed man and unredeemed man is possession or non-possession of *spiritual life* derived from the “breath” of God.

*Unregenerate man*, who is spiritually dead, is alienated from everything associated with the “breath” of God in this respect, for that which has no life is completely incompatible with that which has life. Thus, the living Word of God is not for him; it is alien to his fallen nature, the only nature that he possesses.

*Regenerate man*, on the other hand, possesses spiritual life that was “breathed in.” He possesses a new, non-alienated nature; and, on this basis, there can now be a continuance of life “breathed in.” Thus, the living Word of God, because it is the very *life-giving* “breath” of God, is for redeemed man alone.

Redeemed individuals are divided into two classes in *Scripture* — “*spiritual*,” and “*carnal*” (**1 Corinthians 3:1, 2**). Both possess *spiritual life* that was “breathed in,” both are capable of *spiritual discernment*, and both are in a *position* to allow God to continue “breathing in” life.

*The carnal Christian* though rejects the leadership of the Spirit. He follows the fleshly man rather than the spiritual man; and, although his eternal salvation remains secure through the “breath” of God remaining in him (based on Christ’s finished work at Calvary), he experiences no growth. He does not allow God to continue “breathing in” life.

But *the spiritual Christian* governs his life in an entirely different manner. He follows the leadership of the Spirit; He allows God to continue “breathing in” life; and, through his spiritual discernment, as led by the Holy Spirit, he is able to begin grasping *the great spiritual truths of the Word of God*, progressively growing from immaturity to maturity.

A continued inflow of the breath of God into man’s saved human spirit in this manner, following his salvation, will result in what Scripture calls “*the filling of the Spirit*” and “*be transformed*” (“the metamorphosis”). These are actually two different experiences in the lives of Christians that occur in a progressive, concurrent manner. These experiences, however, are so closely related that one cannot occur without the other, and neither can occur apart from the Word of God and the Spirit’s work in the life of a believer in relation to this Word.

The remainder of this chapter will be taken up with “the breath” of God producing a *Spirit-filled Christian* and, at the same time, working *the metamorphosis in his life*.

### Filled with the Spirit

Being filled with the Holy Spirit is an experience that occurs after one has been born from above. At the time of the new birth, an individual is *immersed (baptized) in the Holy Spirit*, and, through this immersion, becomes part of the “*one body*,” the “*one new man*,” *in Christ* (cf. **Matthew 3:11**; **Acts 1:5**; **1 Corinthians 12:13** [“with” and “by” should be translated “in”]; **Ephesians 2:15**). The Holy Spirit, from this point forward, indwells the believer, forming a “*temple of God*” — an earthly tabernacle in which deity dwells (**1 Corinthians 3:16, 17; 6:19, 20**).

But the Spirit filling the tabernacle is an experience in the life of a Christian that occurs subsequent to the Spirit indwelling the tabernacle. Christians, ones in whom the Spirit dwells, are commanded to *be filled with the Spirit* (**Ephesians 5:18**); and the biblical manner in which this is accomplished is clearly revealed to be in connection with *life* continuing to be “breathed into” man following the initial “inbreathing” that generated life at the beginning.

Scripture reveals an inseparable relationship between being filled with the Spirit (the *neshamah*) and dwelling deeply in the Word of God (the *neshamah*). This is clearly taught by comparing “*scripture with scripture*” in **Ephesians** and **Colossians** — companion epistles, which parallel one another in a number of places.

One such parallel can be seen in the section in **Ephesians** where Christians are commanded to be filled with the Spirit and in the section in **Colossians** where Christians are commanded to let the Word of Christ dwell in them richly in all wisdom.

In **Ephesians**, Christians are told:

*And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 5:18-20)*

In **Colossians**, Christians are told:

*Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. (Colossians 3:16, 17)*

Note the contextual parallel between the commands, “*Be filled with the Spirit*” in **Ephesians** and “*Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom*” in **Colossians**. Both have to do with the same thing. One is substituted for the other in its respective, parallel counterpart. And the clear inference from this parallel, in conjunction with related scripture, leads to only one conclusion: *A Christian who is filled with the Spirit is one who has allowed the Word of Christ to dwell in him richly in all wisdom.*

The *indwelling of the Spirit* is consummated at the time God initially “breathes life into” an individual, and the *filling of the Spirit* is progressively accomplished through God *subsequently continuing* to “breathe life into” that individual. The “God-breathed” scriptures flowing into man’s saved human spirit — a continued impartation of life into man — progressively produces, through the work of the indwelling Holy Spirit (**John 16:13**), a Spirit-filled Christian.

Relative to the filling of the Spirit, note further the relationship to one another of husbands and wives, children and parents, and servants and masters in the verses immediately following these two sections in **Ephesians** and **Colossians**.

*Wives* show that they are filled with the Spirit through their submission to their husbands, “*as to the Lord*” (cf. **Ephesians 5:22-24; Colossians 3:18**).

*Husbands* show that they are filled with the Spirit through their love for their wives, “*even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it*” (cf. **Ephesians 5:25-33; Colossians 3:19**).

*Children* show that they are filled with the Spirit through their obedience to their parents, “*in the Lord*” (cf. **Ephesians 6:1, 2; Colossians 3:20**).

*Fathers* show that they are filled with the Spirit through not provoking their children to anger, but bringing “*them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*” (cf. **Ephesians 6:4; Colossians 3:21**).

*Servants* show that they are filled with the Spirit through being obedient to their masters according to the flesh, “*with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as to Christ*” (cf. **Ephesians 6:5-8; Colossians 3:22-25**).

And *masters* show that they are filled with the Spirit through treating their servants just and equal, “*knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with Him*” (cf. **Ephesians 6:9; Colossians 4:1**).

God desires that all Christians be filled with the Spirit, and the manner God uses to bring this to pass is clearly revealed in His Word. There must be a continued “breathing in” of *life* into the one who has initially been given *life* through the “breath” of God, and this cannot be accomplished apart from the “God-breathed” Oracles.

In view of this, it is no wonder that *the living Word of God* — the *neshamah* — remains under constant attack by Satan, his emissaries, and those who do his bidding.

The Word of God is either what it claims to be or there can be no continued “inbreathing” of *life* into redeemed man. And, apart from this continued “inbreathing” of *life*, redeemed man can not grow spiritually, for only that compatible with spiritual life can provide nourishment for this life, resulting in growth. Apart from the God-breathed Word, every Christian, throughout his entire pilgrim walk, would remain in a carnally immature state rather than grow in a spiritual manner to maturity. Such a Christian would be indwelt by the Spirit, but, apart from the *living Word*, he could not be filled with the Spirit. He would remain carnal, immature, and powerless. Nor could he ultimately realize the salvation of his soul, for there would be no continued inbreathing of *life* to bring this to pass.

Consequently, apart from this continued “inbreathing” of life, God could not ultimately bring “many sons” unto glory to occupy the numerous positions of power and authority as joint-heirs with Christ in the coming kingdom. The “*many sons*” whom God will bring “*to glory*” are those who will be adopted — placed as *firstborn sons* — at the end of the present age. And occupying positions of this nature as sons — occupying positions as *firstborn sons*, with “sonship” implying *rulership* — will be entered into only by those Christians who realize the salvation of their souls.

#### The Metamorphosis — Present

*And do not be conformed to this world [‘age’], but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*  
**(Romans 12:2)**

In this verse there is a negative command followed by a positive command: “*Do not be conformed . . . but be transformed . . .*”

##### 1. *Be Not Conformed*

The Greek word translated “*conformed*” is *sunschematizo*. This is a compound word with the preposition *sun* (“with”) prefixed to the verb form of the word *schema* (“outline,” “diagram”). The English word “scheme” is an Anglicized form of the Greek word *schema*. The word has to do with a schematic outline, and the thought inherent in this compound Greek word along with its negative command is to not outline or diagram your life in accordance with the present age.

During the present age there is a world kingdom in which the Gentile nations rule the earth under the control and dominion of Satan, the “*god of this age*” (**2 Corinthians 4:4**). Fallen man is ruling the earth, which is under a curse, directly under the one who has disqualified himself to rule (Satan, along with his angels — ruling from a heavenly sphere over the earth through the Gentile nations [cf. **Ezekiel 28:14; Daniel 10:13-20; Luke 4:5, 6; Ephesians 6:11, 12**]).

Everywhere one looks there’s something wrong with the structure of the present kingdom: The Gentile nations are out of place, Israel is out of place, Satan and his angels are out of place, and Christ and His co-heirs (those destined to occupy regal positions with Him in the kingdom) are out of place. These conditions have continued unchanged, in part, for the past 6,000 years (since the fall of Adam, which resulted in the entire creation coming under the curse produced by sin); and they have continued unchanged in their entirety for the past 2,600 years (since the beginning of the “*times of the Gentiles*” [**Luke 21:24**], with Israel being scattered among the nations). And no change will occur until Christ returns and takes the kingdom.

The rightful place for Satan and his angels is in the abyss and ultimately in the lake of fire; the rightful place for Christ and His co-heirs is ruling (from the heavens over the earth) in the stead of Satan and his angels; the rightful place for Israel is dwelling in the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, within a theocracy, at the head of the nations; and the rightful place for the Gentile nations is dwelling in their respective lands, out from under the dominion and rule of Satan, in a position subservient to and blessed through Israel.

When Christ returns and takes the kingdom, He and His glorified followers, rather than Satan and his angels, will rule from the heavens over the earth. Satan and his angels (cast out of the heavens slightly over three and one-half years prior to this time) will be chained and imprisoned in the abyss (awaiting consignment to the lake of fire 1,000 years later), the curse will be lifted, and Israel will be placed in her own land at the head of the nations. And all the Gentile nations entering the kingdom will then occupy subservient positions to Israel and be under the dominion of Christ and those who rule as joint-heirs with Him.

Presently, “*the whole world lies in wickedness* [lit. ‘in the evil one’]” (1 John 5:19b). The positional standing of the believer is “*in Christ*,” and the position occupied by the world is “in the evil one.” These positions are diametrically opposed, one to the other. Scripture clearly commands the believer, “*Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world . . .*” (1 John 2:15a). Why? Because the world lies “in the evil one.”

The entire present system is under Satan’s control and sway; and, whether the world realizes it or not, the programs, aims, ambitions, and aspirations of the incumbent ruler are being carried out within the present system. All of this will one day reach an apex under the reign of the “man of sin,” during the coming Tribulation. And, from that apex, it will come to a sudden and climactic end. Then, in conjunction with this end, Satan and his angels will, by force, be removed from their present position — that of ruling the earth through the Gentile nations.

Thus, it does not become Christians to involve themselves in the affairs of this present world system, during the present age. By so doing, they are, in effect, defiling their high calling “*in Christ*” through stepping down into an arena occupied by those “in the evil one.”

Christ, rejected by the world, is in a place removed from the world. And Christians are to share this rejection by and separation from the world with Christ. *It is not possible* for Christians to involve themselves in the affairs of this present world system, during the present age, and, at the same time, share Christ’s rejection by and separation from the world.

(The preceding is dealt with at length in the books of **1 & 2 Samuel**, in the typology surrounding Saul and David. Refer to the author’s book, Judgment Seat of Christ [revised edition], chapter 12, “Crowned Rulers,” for a discussion of this type in the light of the antitype.)

## 2. *Be Transformed*

Following the command in **Romans 12:2**, “*Do not be conformed to this age*,” the Christian is commanded to be “*transformed by the renewing of your mind*.” The Greek word translated “transformed” is *metamorphoo*. This is the word from which the English word “metamorphosis” is derived. This word refers to an *inward change* brought about completely apart from the power of the individual himself. The individual Christian is powerless to bring about this *metamorphosis*.

In **2 Corinthians 11:13-15**, Satan is said to be “transformed into an angel of light” and his ministers “transformed as the ministers of righteousness.” In the Greek text the word “transformed” is not the same in **2 Corinthians 11:13-15** as it is in **Romans 12:2**. The word used in **2 Corinthians 11:13-15** is *metaschematizo*, referring to *an outward change*; and, textually (v. 13), this change is brought about *through an individual’s own power*.

Satan, thus, seeks to *counterfeit* the work of the Spirit by substituting *an outward change in place of the inward change*. And the nature and source of this pseudo change often go unrecognized.

Christians who seek to bring about the change of **Romans 12:2** themselves will always effect a *metaschema* (outward change) rather than a *metamorphosis* (inward change). At the time of the birth from above the Spirit of God began a work *in the Christian* that He will continue “until the day of Jesus Christ” (**Philippians 1:6**). No effort on the part of Christians can help the Spirit of God effect this change.

Man’s way finds man actively involved, seeking spirituality through either quitting certain things or doing certain things, subsequently producing a *metaschema*. But God’s way finds man passive, and God performs a work in the individual, ultimately producing *the metamorphosis*.

The endless list of “do’s” and “do not’s,” taboos formed by Christian groups; invariably have to do with a *metaschema*, not a *metamorphosis*. Any effort on the part of Christians to help the Spirit of God bring about the transformation of **Romans 12:2** will always result in pseudo-spirituality. God’s way is *an inward change* accomplished through the power of the Spirit, not *an outward change* accomplished through the power of the individual.

### 3. *The Renewing of Your Mind*

Note according to the text how this inward change, *the metamorphosis*, takes place: “. . . *be transformed by the renewing of your mind*.” The word “renewing” is a translation of the Greek word *anakainosis*; and the action of the preceding verb (“transformed”) directs attention to a continuous renewing process, one which is to keep on taking place. In **2 Corinthians 4:16** we are told that “*the inward man is renewed* [lit. ‘is being renewed’] *day by day*.” This renewing process is to keep on taking place day in and day out for the entire duration of the pilgrim walk here on earth.

Then, **Colossians 3:10** reveals how the renewing of the mind is accomplished:

*And have put on the new man, which is renewed [lit. is being renewed] in knowledge after the image of Him that created Him.*

Note the word “knowledge” in this verse. The regular Greek word for “knowledge” is *gnosis*, but the word used in **Colossians 3:10** is *epignosis*. This is the word *gnosis* (knowledge) with the prefix *epi* (upon). *Epignosis*, thus, means “knowledge upon knowledge,” i.e., “a mature knowledge.” The word translated “renewed” is a past participle of *anakainoo* (the same word used in **Romans 12:2** and **2 Corinthians 4:16**) and could be better translated, “being renewed.” The only way a Christian can acquire this mature knowledge, which allows the Spirit of God to work *the metamorphosis* in his life, is through receiving the living Word of God into his saved human spirit.

Christians *must* allow God to continue “*breathing in*” life. The living, God-breathed Word *must* be allowed to flow into man’s saved human spirit or there can be no *metamorphosis*. The renewing of the inward man “day by day,” through receiving “*the implanted Word*,” producing *the metamorphosis* in one’s life, is the manner in which the salvation of the soul is presently being effected.

As previously seen, receiving “*the implanted Word*” in **James 1:21** and **1 Peter 2:2** is preceded by “*laying aside*” everything opposed to purity (ref. chapter 3). It is the same with *the metamorphosis* in **Romans 12:2**. The words, “*do not be conformed to this age* [lit. ‘stop being conformed to this age’],” appear prior to the words, “*be transformed by the renewing of your mind*.” Those “*in Christ*” are commanded to remove themselves from that which lies “in the evil one” prior to receiving “*the implanted Word*,” which will effect *the metamorphosis* in their lives.

Thus, **Romans 12:2**; **James 1:21**; and **1 Peter 2:2** all teach the same thing relative to laying aside everything opposed to purity prior to receiving “*the implanted Word, which is able to save your souls*.”

### The Metamorphosis — Future

*Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.*

*Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves;*

*and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light.*

*And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him.*

*Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.”*

*While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!” (Matthew 16:28-17:5)*

The change presently taking place in the lives of Christians is *inward*. But within the culmination of the work of the Spirit in that future day of Jesus Christ, the change will include *the outward* also. *The metamorphosis* actually cannot be completed apart from this culmination, outward change. The Spirit of God “*who has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ*” (**Philippians 1:6**).

The day will come when we will put off “*the body of this death*” (**Romans 7:24**). That will be the day when He will “*fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory*” (**Philippians 3:21a**, ASV). The work of the Spirit in this part of *the metamorphosis* is set forth in **Matthew** chapter **seventeen**.

That which occurred on the Mount, when Jesus was transfigured, is a fore-view of things that are yet to occur. The same Greek word translated “*transformed*” in **Romans 12:2** (*metamorphoo*) is translated “*transfigured*” in **Matthew 17:2**. As Peter, James, and John appeared with Jesus on

the Mount, Jesus was transfigured before them; and Moses and Elijah appeared and stood in His presence.

In **Matthew 16:28**, Christ had revealed that certain disciples would not die until they had seen “*the Son of man coming in His kingdom.*” Then, in **Matthew 17:1-5**, after six days, on the seventh day, certain disciples (Peter, James, and John) saw “*the Son of man coming in His kingdom.*”

Peter, as he wrote years later concerning this experience, said:

*. . . we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty [His greatest regal magnificence — a superlative in the Greek text]. (2 Peter 1:16)*

Peter then went on to state that the time this eyewitness account occurred was “*when we were with Him on the holy mountain*” (v. **18**). Biblical revelation leaves no room to question or wonder exactly what is being foreshadowed by the events on the Mount, recorded in **Matthew 17:1-5**.

The “six days” (**Matthew 17:1**) foreshadow the entire time comprising Man’s Day. “Six” is *man’s number*. These six days extend from the creation of Adam to the beginning of the Messianic Kingdom. Each one of these days is 1,000 years in length (**2 Peter 3:1-8**). This 6,000-year period comprises Man’s Day, and at the end of Man’s Day the Lord’s Day will begin.

The seventh 1,000-year period dating from the creation of Adam comprises the Lord’s Day. “Seven” is *God’s number*. It will be “after six days” — after 6,000 years, at the end of Man’s Day — that the Son of man will be seen “*coming in His kingdom,*” beginning the Lord’s Day on the earth.

The “*high mountain*” (**Matthew 17:1**) foreshadows *the coming kingdom*. A “mountain” in Scripture, when used in this sense, refers to *a kingdom* (cf. **Psalm 2:6; Ezekiel 28:14; Daniel 2:35**). And, in this section of Scripture, the coming kingdom of our Lord is not referred to by just any mountain, but by a “*high mountain.*”

Jesus appeared in a transfigured body. Moses and Elijah appeared with Jesus, also in transfigured bodies. Moses had died, and had been raised from the dead. Elijah had never died, but had been removed from the earth alive. Peter, James, and John, out from the nation of Israel, appeared in natural bodies and were elevated above all those at the foot of the mount. And “*a bright cloud,*” *the Glory of God* (cf. **Luke 9:31, 32**), overshadowed them all.

In the coming kingdom, Jesus will appear in this same transfigured body. Just as Moses (who was raised from the dead) and Elijah (who was removed from the earth without dying) appeared with Christ in transfigured bodies, so will Christians in that future day appear with Christ in transfigured bodies like unto the body of Christ.

When the Lord Himself descends from heaven to take His Church out of the world, “. . . *the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we that are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in clouds, to meet the Lord in the air . . .*” (**1 Thessalonians 4:16b, 17a**).

Christians associated with Christ in the kingdom will possess bodies like unto the body of Christ (*a spiritual body* — a body of flesh and bone, with the life-giving, animating principle being the

Spirit of God). These Christians will be comprised of resurrected believers (typified by Moses) and believers who have never died (typified by Elijah). And these Christians will rule from the heavens over the earth as co-heirs with Christ.

Then, the nation of Israel (typified by Peter, James, and John) will be here on earth. And the individuals comprising this nation will be present in natural bodies (*soulical bodies* — bodies of flesh, blood, and bone, with the life-giving, animating principle being the blood [cf. **Leviticus 17:11**]). As Peter, James, and John were elevated above all those at the foot of the mount, the nation of Israel will be elevated above all other nations. And *the Glory of God*, the “*bright cloud*” that overshadowed those on the mount (cf. **Matthew 17:5**; **Luke 9:32**), will be restored to Israel (cf. **Isaiah 2:1-4**; **6:1-10**; **Joel 2:27-32**).

One day when the Lord returns for His Church, the Holy Spirit will complete *the metamorphosis*. Christians will be delivered from “*the body of this death*” and will receive bodies that will possess an entirely different life-giving, animating principle than the bodies that Christians possess today. The *Neshamah* of God — the Holy Spirit Himself — will provide this life in the completion of *the metamorphosis* (**1 Corinthians 15:40-45**).

All Christians will be changed in the outward manifestation of *the metamorphosis*, for the resurrection and rapture, with the accompanying change of the body, are not contingent upon the inward change during the present time. The outward change is conditioned upon one’s positional standing (“*in Christ*”) alone.

But Christians experiencing the outward change apart from the prior inward change will realize the loss of their souls/lives. They will enter into the presence of the Lord with redeemed spirits, changed bodies, but forfeited lives. Consequently, they will occupy no position among the many sons who will be brought unto glory.

(At the end of the present dispensation, Christians will be resurrected, or removed from the earth without dying, in the same type body in which Christ was raised from the dead. Christ was raised in a spiritual body, not a natural [soulical] body [cf. **1 Corinthians 15:42-44**]. He was raised in a body of flesh and bones, with the life-giving, animating principle of the body being the Spirit of God rather than the blood [which He had previously “*poured out*” (**Isaiah 53:12**)].

Christ though was not raised in a glorified body. He was raised in a type of body that possessed capabilities outside the scope possessed by a natural [soulical] body [e.g., He could appear at a certain place and disappear from that place, moving to another place, at will (**Luke 24:31, 36**)]. But there was no Glory connected with His resurrection body until “*a cloud*” received Him out of the disciples’ sight at the end of His forty-day post-resurrection ministry, when He was “*received up into glory*” [**Acts 1:9**; **1 Timothy 3:16**].

This can be easily seen, for example, through noting the differences in two of Christ’s post-resurrection appearances. He appeared to the two disciples on the Emmaus road later on the same day that He was raised from the dead [appearing apart from His Glory (**Luke 24:13-31**)], and He appeared a few years later to Paul on the Damascus road [in connection with His Glory (**Acts 9:1-5**; **26:12-15**)].

At Christ’s former appearance, it is apparent that there was nothing visibly different about His overall appearance that distinguished Him from any other man. However, at His latter appearance, there was a major difference in this respect. There was a

brightness surrounding His appearance that was above that of the noon-day sun [Acts 26:13; cf. Revelation 1:16].

When Christians are removed from the earth at the end of the present dispensation, they will receive bodies like unto Christ's body at the time of His resurrection — a spiritual body of flesh and bones, apart from the Glory. The “redemption” of the body will then occur at a later time, in connection with “the adoption” [Romans 8:23], not in connection with the removal of Christians from the earth at the end of the present dispensation.

The adoption of Christians can occur only following events surrounding the judgment seat of Christ, for the adoption has to do with *the placement of sons in a firstborn status* — something that cannot be done preceding a separation of Christians [the overcomers from the non-overcomers], based on decisions and determinations rendered at the judgment seat. Christians having been shown faithful at the judgment seat, realizing the salvation of their souls/lives, will be adopted as firstborn sons. But such will not be, for it cannot be, the case for unfaithful Christians, those having forfeited their souls/lives.

According to **Romans 8:18-23**, adoption as firstborn sons is in connection with *rulership* [in the human realm, *only firstborn sons can rule in this manner within the theocracy*]. And the unfaithful, though possessing spiritual bodies of flesh and bones, will be in no position to rule and cannot be adopted into a firstborn status. They can only appear as the ones seen in **Hebrews 12:8** — as individuals who had previously rejected God's child-training [vv. 5-7] and cannot now be His sons [the sons seen in **Romans 8:19**, adopted into a firstborn status in v. 23].

[The word “chastisement” (KJV) or “chastening” (NKJV) in **Hebrews 12:5-8** is from the noun and verb forms (*paideia, paideuo*) of a Greek word that means “child-training.” Then, the word translated “bastard” (KJV) or “illegitimate” (NKJV) in v. 8 is *nothos* in the Greek text. The word, contextually refers to *those who reject God's child-training and cannot be His sons*. “Sonship,” with a view to *rulership*, is in view. And only those capable of spiritual perception, only those “born from above,” would be in a position to reject God's child-training. Thus, the unsaved cannot be in view; nor is eternal salvation even the subject at hand.]

Only following the adoption can the Glory be connected with the body, with man brought back into a full realization of that which Adam forfeited at the time of the fall [at the end of six days, at the end of 6,000 years]. Man, following the adoption and the corresponding restoration of the Glory will once again be enswathed in a covering of Glory and in a position to be further clothed in regal garments [refer to the text in parenthesis on page six in chapter one of this book for additional information in this realm].

Thus, the redemption of the body in **Romans 8:23** can have nothing to do with the change in the body that will occur when Christians are removed from the earth at the end of the dispensation. As shown by the context, the redemption of the body in this verse can only be a reference to that future time when “*the glory . . . shall be revealed in us,*” in *Christians*; it can only be a reference to that future time when “*the sons of God,*” a new order of Sons — Christ with His co-heirs [overcoming Christians, adopted and properly arrayed] — will be manifested for all to behold [vv. 18, 19].)

(Salvation of the Soul by Arlen L. Chitwood)

## Rules of the Road (Pathway)

Contained within God's Word are a number of rules a serious student of the Word must follow in order to insure he is "*rightly dividing the Word of truth*" (**2 Timothy 2:15**). Some are quite explicit, while others are known through experiential analysis. All the rules are important and the following inventory of them is not meant to establish any listing of priorities; except, it may be argued, for the first one.

Furthermore, there may in fact be other rules than on the following list, which the reader may find worthy of note. If such should be the case, the reader is earnestly invited to share them with [www.bibleone.net](http://www.bibleone.net).

### Study the Word under the guidance of (with faith in) its assigned Author/Instructor

The Word of God is in fact just that, divinely inspired living (God-breathed) expressions given through men to man and is therefore not subject to any "*private interpretation*" by man himself (**Hebrews 4:12; 2 Peter 1:20, 21**; c.f. **2 Samuel 23:2; Luke 1:70; Acts 1:16; 3:18; 1 Peter 1:11**). Jesus Christ stated specifically that the One who authored the Scriptures is the One who must teach them.

And the Teacher is the Holy Spirit. The cornerstone of correct interpretation of the Word is utter dependence on the Spirit of God for enlightenment.

*But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. (John 14:26)*

*However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. (John 16:13)*

*But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things. . . . But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him. (1 John 2:20, 27; cf. 1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19)*

In deed, the Word of God is "living [Greek: *zao*] . . . (**Hebrews 4:12a**), which is to say it is the material representation of "*The Word,*" who was "*in the beginning*" and who was "*with God, and . . . was God*" and who "*became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth*" (**John 1:1, 14**).

When one correctly understands Scripture, one understands the "*mind of Christ*" (**Philippians 2:5; 1 Corinthians 2:16**), for indeed, one cannot be separated from the other. And it is the "living Word," which alone can be used by the Holy Spirit as nourishment for one who once was "*dead in trespasses and sins*" but now has been made alive "*in*

*Christ,*” a “*new creation,*” by means of the “new birth” (**Ephesians 2:1; 1 Corinthians 15:22; 2 Corinthians 5:17; John 3:3-7**).

Study the Word with deference to its unity

Both the Old Testament and the book of **John** open with the statement, “*In the beginning,*” going back to the same point in time — the beginning of God’s creative activity relative to the heavens and the earth. In fact, the first five verses of **Genesis** can be paralleled with the first five verses of John’s gospel, with **John**, starting at verse **six**, moving millennia ahead and continuing with events during John’s present day, though still referencing events of prior days.

In fact the opening of the New Testament, the gospel of **Matthew**, immediately references the Old Testament with the statement, “*The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham*” (**1:1**). And in the gospel of **Luke**, the lineage of Christ is carried all the way back to Adam (**3:23-38**).

As Chitwood so aptly states, “The Old Testament leads into the New after *an inseparable fashion*. The latter forms a continuation and completion of that which was began in the former; and both together constitute *one continuous, complete revelation* that God gave to man over a period of about 1,500 years through some forty different Jewish writers, revealing His plans and purposes in relation to man, the earth, and the universe at large.” Chuck Missler of [www.khouse.org](http://www.khouse.org) put it this way: “The New Testament is concealed in the Old Testament and the Old Testament is revealed in the New.”

Consequently, to properly understand Scripture, each Testament must be understood in light of the other, apart from precedence given to either. It is no more or no less valid to interpret the Old Testament in light of the New as it is to interpret the New Testament in light of the Old. Any passage of Scripture must be interpreted contextually, within its present setting, within the setting surrounding its immediate setting, and within the setting of the entire Bible as a whole.

This rule is best expressed by the apostle Paul in his first epistle to the Corinthian church:

*These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. (1 Corinthians 2:13)*

This rule is demonstrated throughout the New Testament, as it presents truths in light of historical accounts contained within the Old Testament. For example, in referencing the passage of the children of Israel out from the Egypt through the wilderness toward the Promised Land of Canaan, the apostle Paul made these statements:

*Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. . . . Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. (1 Corinthians 10:6, 11)*

The book of **Hebrews** references the Old Testament frequently in order to convey its richly laden truths pertaining to the Christian life (**1: 5-14; 2:6-8, 12, 13; 3:2, 3, 5, 7-11, 15-19; 4;** and throughout all its remaining chapters). And Christ Jesus specifically used the Old Testament to enlighten two disciples on the road to Emmaus:

*Then He [Christ] said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?” And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. (Luke24:25-27)*

In fact, one would be hard pressed to find any book within the New Testament that does not draw from the Old. The *foundations* have been established in the Old Testament, and both Testaments together comprise *one continuous, complete revelation* of all the various facets of the person and work of Christ. And *the only way* one can grasp the complete picture is to look at the whole of Scripture after this fashion.

#### Study the Word in light of its type-antitype structure

This rule compliments the previous rule of studying Scripture with deference to its unity. The manner in which Scripture is related in both Testaments is often through a type-antitype arrangement, i.e. God has structured His revelation to man after a fashion in which not only true, correct history is presented but this is presented in such a manner that it is *highly typical* in nature. God draws not so much from history *per se* as He does from *the spiritual content* set forth in the historic accounts — *the great spiritual lessons*, taught mainly from *types* pointing to corresponding *antitypes*.

Anyone can understand facts within revealed biblical history (saved or unsaved alike). This would pertain more to the *letter* of the matter. But only saved man can go beyond *the letter to the spirit* of the matter (**2 Corinthians 3:6-16**). Only the saved can understand the *spiritual lessons* drawn from history. Only the saved can look within biblical history and see *spiritual content* (**1 Corinthians 2:12-16**).

A person can read Old Testament history from one end to the other and never see the person and work of Christ within that history. In this respect, the person would be reading *the letter* of Scripture, failing to see anything beyond. In order to truly see the Christ of the Old Testament, a person *must* see beyond *the letter to the spirit*.

Christ is seen mainly within *the inherent types* set forth by the historic accounts rather than in the actual historic accounts themselves. All Old Testament history is, after some fashion about the person and work of Christ; but this same history must be “*spiritually discerned*,” “*comparing spiritual things with spiritual*” (**1 Corinthians 2:13, 14**).

There are literally hundreds upon hundreds of types in the Old Testament, which, when considered in light of the antitypes in the New Testament, result in great enlightenment of truth. This also goes for the highly typical nature of the New Testament, which, when understood and applied, reveals truth.

In the book of **Romans**, the apostle Paul makes this statement:

*Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. (Romans 5:14; cf. 1 Corinthians 15:45)*

Viewing Scripture after the type-antitype structure in which it is given, a complete word picture is presented of the central Person of Scripture — the Lord Jesus Christ. This word picture begins in the opening chapter of **Genesis** and continues uninterrupted until the Living Word Himself appears on the scene, 4,000 years later. In this respect, the Old Testament forms a complete introduction to and revelation of the One who would appear on earth, intervening in the affairs of man, 4,000 and 6,000 year beyond the creation of man in the opening chapter of **Genesis**.

This is really the underlying thought behind Christ's rebuke of the two disciples on the Emmaus road, following His resurrection. They didn't know *the spiritual content* of their own Old Testament Scriptures, though they undoubtedly would have been familiar with the letter of the matter, the historical facts. Had they known the spiritual content of the historical facts, they would, in turn, not only have known the exact identity of the Person standing in their midst but they would also have known exactly what had occurred, was occurring, and would yet occur.

The truth is that the entire Old Testament is typical of the life and work of Christ. A person can read Old Testament history from one end to the other and never see the person and work of Christ within that history. In this respect, the person would be reading *the letter* of the Scripture, failing to see anything beyond. In order to truly see the Christ of the Old Testament, a person *must* see beyond *the letter to the spirit*.

And it is within this complete, overall thought that one finds the whole of biblical history fraught with types and meanings. This is the manner in which God has structured His Word. It has been given to man after this fashion, and if man would properly understand that which God has revealed in His Word, *he must study it after the fashion in which it was given*.

#### Study the Word in light of the septenary arrangement of Scripture

This rule, in this writer's opinion, can only be adequately understood by reading the complete chapter two of Chitwood's book, The Study of Scripture (which may be obtained verbatim from [www.bibleone.net](http://www.bibleone.net)). But to give the reader a taste, the following several initial and two last paragraphs of his book follow:

*There remains therefore a rest [‘Sabbath rest’] for the people of God (Hebrews 4:9).*

**Hebrews 4:1-11** deals with a *rest* that will be realized by “*the people of God*” during the seventh millennium dating from the restoration of the earth and the creation of man in the first chapter of **Genesis**.

Teachings surrounding this rest, textually and contextually, viewed from the standpoint of the way matters are outlined in the book of **Hebrews**, are based on three portions of Old Testament Scripture:

1. The experiences of the Israelites under Moses, and later Joshua (**Hebrews 3:2-19**).
2. God's work and subsequent rest during the seven days of **Genesis** chapters **one** and **two** (**Hebrews 4:4**).
3. The Sabbath given to Israel that the nation was to keep week after week following six days of work (**Hebrews 4:9**).

The experiences of the Israelites under Moses, and later Joshua, during a past dispensation form the *type*; and the experiences of Christians under Christ during the present dispensation, leading into the coming dispensation, form the *antitype*. Then teachings surrounding a *rest* lying before both the Israelites in the type and Christians in the antitype are drawn from the rest that God entered into following six days of work in **Genesis** chapters **one** and **two**. And the Sabbath was given to Israel to keep, *ever before them*, the whole overall thought of that that occurred in the opening two chapters of **Genesis** (cf. **Exodus 20:8-11; 31:13-17**).

Teachings drawn from the opening two chapters of **Genesis** form the *key* to the entire matter, and a correct understanding and interpretation of these opening chapters is not something that should be taken lightly. Scripture is actually built upon a structure that is laid down in these two chapters, and an individual's understanding and interpretation of numerous things throughout the remainder of Scripture will be governed by his or her understanding and interpretation of this opening section of Scripture.

If one understands these opening verses correctly, he will understand how God has structured His revelation to man, allowing him to grasp numerous things that he could not otherwise understand. However, if one fails to understand these opening verses correctly, the opposite will be true. He will have gone wrong at the beginning, and he will remain wrong the remainder of the way.

The preceding, for example, is the reason many individuals fail to see the proper relationship of the Sabbath rest in **Hebrews 4:9** to God's rest following six days of work in **Genesis 2:2, 3** (cf. **Hebrews 4:4**). They attempt to relate this rest to something that Christians enter into during the present day and time, which is a time prior to the seventh day, a time not even in view. Or this is the reason many individuals attempt to understand **2 Peter 3:8** in the light of **Psalms 90:4**, when, contextually, **2 Peter 3:8** *must* be understood in the light of the opening two chapters of **Genesis** (cf. **2 Peter 1:16-18; 3:5-7**).

With these things in mind, the remainder of this chapter deals with the structure of the Hebrew text, especially in parts of the **first** chapter of **Genesis**, particularly verse **two**, and the testimony of the remainder of Scripture insofar as the opening two chapters of **Genesis** are concerned. One *MUST* understand what is revealed at the beginning *first*. This is the *key*. Only then can an individual be in a position to move forward and properly understand the remainder.

(and)

By viewing the whole of Scripture, the correct interpretation of the opening verses of **Genesis** can be clearly and unquestionably presented through:

- 1) The manner in which the Hebrew words from **Genesis 1:2a**, *tohu wavohu*, are used elsewhere in Scripture (interpreting Scripture in the light of Scripture [**Isaiah 34:11; 45:18; Jeremiah 4:23**]).
- 2) And through the typical nature of Old Testament history (**1 Corinthians 10:6, 11**), which has been set forth in a very evident divinely established septenary arrangement.

And these opening verses, providing the divinely established basis for that which follows, *must* be understood accordingly.

The Bible is *a book of redemption*; and only a correct view of the opening verses of **Genesis** can reflect positively, *at the very outset*, on God's redemptive message as a whole — *the restoration of a ruined creation, performed in its entirety through divine intervention, for a revealed purpose*.

An incorrect view, on the other hand, can only have negative ramifications. *Creation alone*, apart from a ruin and restoration of the creation, fails to convey the complete message at the outset of the Word; and *Restoration alone* (viewing the opening verse as other than an absolute beginning), apart from a record of the preceding creation and ruin, likewise fails to convey the complete message at this opening point in Scripture.

It is as F. W. Grant stated years ago relative to the existing parallel between the creation and ruin of the earth and the subsequent creation and ruin of man:

“The thought of a ruined condition of the earth succeeding its original creation . . . is . . . required by the typical view [that is, the earth's creation, ruin, and subsequent restoration forms a type of (foreshadows) man's creation, ruin, and subsequent restoration].”

Accordingly, the opening verses of **Genesis** cannot deal strictly with *Creation*; nor can these verses deal strictly with *Restoration*. Either view would be out of line with the whole of Scripture, beginning with the central theme of Scripture, *the message of redemption*.

The *only* interpretative view that will fit — *at all points* — within the divinely established septenary arrangement of Scripture (which has its basis in these opening verses) is:

*Creation* (an absolute beginning, and a perfect creation [v. 1]).

*A Ruin of the Creation* (v. 2a).

*A Restoration of the Ruined Creation* (vv. 2b-25).

*Rest* (in the type — six twenty-four-hour days of restorative work, followed by a twenty-four-hour day of rest; in the antitype — six 1,000-year days of restorative work, followed by a 1,000-year day of rest [**1:2b-2:3**]).

(The Study of Scripture, Arlen L. Chitwood)

### Study the Word beginning where God began and build upon the foundation

This rule, in this writer's opinion, can only be adequately understood by reading the complete chapter three and four of Chitwood's book, The Study of Scripture (which may be obtained verbatim from [www.bibleone.net](http://www.bibleone.net)). But to give the reader a taste, the following paragraphs from these chapters follow:

**Genesis** is the book of beginnings, and the opening verses (**1:1-2:3**) contain the skeletal framework for the whole of Scripture that follows. These verses cover the whole panorama of Scripture, from beginning to end; and if one understands the foundational framework *first*, he will then be in a position to place all that follows within a proper perspective in relation to the foundational structure.

That would be to say, if one views the bones that form the skeletal framework after the correct fashion *first*, then he will be in a position to clothe this framework with all the sinews, flesh, and skin that follow, placing them in their proper positions upon the bones.

However, if one doesn't see and understand the skeletal framework *first*, then he will be in no position to properly handle that which follows. He will not have utilized the God-provided beginning point of reference, which can only *negatively* affecting his knowledge and understanding of how all subsequent Scripture fits together. He will likely see numerous disconnected verses or disconnected sections of Scripture, for he will not have begun with and understood that which would have allowed him to properly relate these verses or sections to the whole of Scripture.

Thus, two things could be said about the beginning point in Scripture:

- a) A person *must* begin where God began.
- b) And a person *must*, aside from beginning where God began, understand aright that which God has revealed in these opening verses.

*From a biblical standpoint, NOTHING is more important than these two prerequisites in studying Scripture.*

**Genesis 1:1-2:3** begins with a simple statement concerning God's creation of the heavens and the earth (**1:1**). Then disorder entered where only perfect order had previously existed (**1:2a**). The reason for this disorder is revealed elsewhere in Scripture. Satan, God's appointed ruler over the earth, sought to exalt his throne and be "*like the most High*" (**Isaiah 14:12-17**). And, as a result, his kingdom — the province over which he ruled, i.e., the earth (**Ezekiel 28:14-16**) — was reduced to a ruined state. In the words of Scripture,

*The earth was [lit., But the earth became] without form, and void; and darkness was [became] on the face of the deep. . . . (Genesis 1:2a).*

All of this occurred over 6,000 years ago, during a dateless past. That's really all man can know about "time" concerning that which is revealed in **Genesis 1:1, 2a**. The things revealed in these verses could have occurred over aeons of time or they could have occurred over a relatively short period within one aeon. We're simply not told.

The latter part of verse **two** is where God begins to count time insofar as the revelation of Himself, His plans, and His purposes are concerned. The movement of the Spirit of God upon the face of the waters, covering the ruined creation below, marks the beginning point of a six-day period that God used to restore the ruined material creation (**1:2b-25**). Then, at the end of His restorative work on the sixth day, God created man (**1:26ff**). And on the seventh day God rested from all His work (**2:1-3**).

The preceding is the skeletal framework upon which all subsequent Scripture rests. The six and seven days foreshadow six and seven thousand years of time (**2 Peter 3:4-8**; cf. **Matthew 17:1ff**; **2 Peter 1:15-18**); and, with very few exceptions, the whole of Scripture concerns itself with events during these 7,000 years. Scripture reveals events preceding the 7,000 years (e.g., **Genesis 1:1, 2a**; **Isaiah 14:12-14**; **Ezekiel 28:11ff**) or events following the 7,000 years (e.g., **2 Peter 3:10-13**; **Revelation 21:1ff**) only to an extent that would allow man to properly understand and place events in their proper perspective within the framework of the revealed 7,000 years.

As God worked six days to restore the ruined material creation in **Genesis 1:2b-25**, He is presently working six days — 6,000 years — to restore two presently ruined creations (ruined man and the material creation under a curse). At the end of His restorative work in **Genesis**, God rested on the seventh day. And He is going to do exactly the same thing at the end of His restorative work in the present restoration. At the end of six days — at the end of 6,000 years — He is going to rest for one day once again. That is, He is going to rest for 1,000 years, the earth's coming Messianic Era.

Then events outlining God's activity within the six and seven days in **Genesis 1:2b-2:3** are fraught with symbolism and meaning. The skeletal framework is complete within these verses (including **Genesis 1:1, 2a**, for the "Restoration" and the "Time" of the restoration, followed by "Rest" [**1:2b ff**], could not be understood apart from the prior revealed "Creation" and "Ruin" of the creation). Nothing superfluous has been given in these verses. *All is by divine design.*

Thus, **Genesis 1:1-2:3** provides the skeletal foundation upon which all subsequent Scripture rests, given at the very outset of God's revelation to man. And a person reading this book must either attach the sinews, flesh, and skin (all subsequent revelation) to these bones (**Genesis 1:1-2:3**) or lack for a foundation upon which to build, *for God has provided no other.*

(and from chapter four)

*If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do? (Psalm 11:3)*

Scripture begins with the creation of all that exists (**Genesis 1:1**), the ruin of one part of that creation (**1:2a**), the restoration of that one part (**1:2b-25**), the creation of man to rule the restored domain (**1:26-31**), and then God resting (**2:1-3**).

These opening verses of **Genesis** provide not only one complete section of Scripture but also the foundational structure upon which the whole of all subsequent Scripture is built and must be understood. There is a creation, a ruin of a part of that creation, a restoration of the ruined portion occurring over six days of time, and then God resting on a seventh day. And to illustrate how these verses establish the foundation for the whole of Scripture, note events surrounding man's creation, his ruin, the time that God takes to restore man, and that which will occur following man's restoration.

*It has all been set forth at the very beginning.*

God took six days to restore the ruined material creation (ruined because of the sin of the incumbent ruler, Satan [**Isaiah 14:12-17**; **Ezekiel 28:14-19**]); and God, in accord with the pattern that He Himself established at the very beginning, is presently taking six days to restore two subsequent ruined creations — man and the material creation once again (both ruined because of the sin of the one created to take the scepter, ruined because of man's sin [**Genesis 3:1-7, 17, 18**; **Romans 8:20**]). And then, in accord with the pattern established at the beginning, there will be a seventh day that will be a day of rest (**Genesis 2:1-3**; **Hebrews 4:4, 9**).

Each day in the former restoration and rest was twenty-four hours in length, but each day in the latter restoration and rest is one thousand years in length (**Genesis 1:14-19**; **Matthew 17:1-5**; **2 Peter 1:15-18**; **3:5-8**). Just as God restored the ruined creation at the very beginning in six days comprised of twenty-four hours each, He is going to restore the two subsequent ruined creations in six days comprised of one thousand years each. Then, just as God rested for one twenty-four-hour day at the completion of his restoration work in **Genesis**, He is going to rest for a one-thousand-year day at the completion of His subsequent restoration work.

Accordingly, the whole of the latter restoration and rest is set forth in foundational form at the very beginning. The six days of work and one day of rest foreshadow six thousand years of work and a thousand years of rest. And this covers *the whole* of God's revelation to man (save for several brief instances of events either preceding or following the 7,000 years, given so man can place events occurring during the 7,000 years within their proper perspective).

Thus it is easy to see and understand how all Scripture following **Genesis 1:1-2:3** must relate to this opening section of Scripture, which forms the foundation. The whole of Scripture, as this opening section, covers events relating to restoration and rest during six and seven days (six and seven thousand years). The latter is patterned after the former; and to properly understand the latter, one must have a proper understanding of the former. A solid foundation *must first* be laid (**Genesis 1:1-2:3**) before a stable superstructure can be built (**Genesis 2:4ff**). And note that any stable structure *must always* rest on its foundation.

God didn't place **Genesis 1:1-2:3** at the very beginning of His revelation to man and structure the material in these verses after a certain fashion for man to ignore; nor would God expect man to begin his study of Scripture elsewhere. Rather, the opposite is true. God structured His revelation to man *after a particular fashion for a reason, and man is to begin where God began*.

(and)

The word, "eschatology," comes from the Greek word, *eschatos*, which means "last." The word is used in theology to refer to doctrinal teachings surrounding future events (last things), i.e., prophecy.

And, if a person would have a proper grasp of that which is being dealt with on the subject of eschatology at points throughout Scripture, his study must begin in the opening chapters of **Genesis**. The *whole* of the eschatological framework is set forth within the foundational framework surrounding that which God has revealed about the six and seven days in **Genesis 1:1-2:3**.

From within that which is taught in the framework, a person can begin to move forward and see any biblical doctrine (doctrine of man, salvation, angels, etc.) within its correct perspective. Apart from beginning after this fashion, such can never be the case.

In eschatology, everything moves toward that coming seventh day; but it begins on the first day. And a person works his way toward that seventh day in Scripture by moving through the previous six, viewing man's fall and God's redemptive work throughout the six days (throughout 6,000 years of redemptive work), with a view to the seventh day (the coming 1,000 years of rest).

(Eschatology *in relation to man* begins on the first day. Scripture though reveals a few things occurring prior to the events of day one, in eternity past, which must be understood if all things in **Genesis 1:1-2:3** are to, in turn, be properly understood. These things would include God placing Satan over this earth as its first provincial ruler, Satan seeking to exalt his throne, and the ruined kingdom which resulted [over which Satan continued to rule, which he continues to rule today].

And a person understanding these things is then in a position to begin in **Genesis 1:2** [where the kingdom is seen falling into this ruined state] and move forward.)

Starting at the beginning within the foundational structure, following man's creation and fall, two days pass, 2,000 years pass, and Abraham appears (allowing the nation of Israel to later appear); then two more days pass, 2,000 additional years pass, and Messiah appears (followed by His death, burial, and resurrection, allowing the Church to be brought into existence [a Scriptural truth that has its foundational teachings within God's action in **Genesis 2:21-25** and Adam's action in **Genesis 3:6**]). And events surrounding Messiah's appearance all rest on the foundation established in **Genesis** chapter **one**, with a view to realizing that which is foreshadowed by events on the seventh day in chapter **two**.

And that's the way it is with soteriology, anthropology, eschatology, or any other biblical doctrine (Ecclesiology [doctrine of the Church], Christology [doctrine of Christ], Pneumatology [doctrine of the Holy Spirit], etc.). *The foundational teachings for all biblical doctrine* can be found in the opening chapters of **Genesis**, and particular attention has been called to three (soteriology, anthropology, and eschatology) only to illustrate the point.

(The Study of Scripture, Arlen L. Chitwood)

Study the Word always interpreting passages within their context

It is amazing how many misinterpretations have been made by violating this rule. It is often said that anyone can make the Bible say anything one wants it to say; and, this is true BUT only when one takes passages of Scripture out of context. And of course this involves the utilization of the preceding rules. To do otherwise is to give support to the following statements made by Chitwood in his book, The Study of Scripture:

There exists in the world today every conceivable difference in biblical interpretation that man can possibly imagine. This ranges all the way from what might be considered minor differences existing among Christians in the various denominational and independent groups to major differences exhibited by the cults. But, viewing these differences as a whole, things often become clouded. A sharp line in doctrinal thought between the cults and the denominational or independent groups (usually considered to be generally sound) is not always so evident.

In fact, the absence of sharp distinctions in various types of unsound doctrinal thought proclaimed by different groups of this nature is far more prevalent than many may realize. The leaven that the woman placed in the three measures of meal in **Matthew 13:33**, apparently very early in the dispensation, is no respecter of names or any other type divisions among Christian groups; and this leaven, which has been working since possibly the very inception of the Church, is going to continue doing its damaging work *until* “*the whole*” has been leavened, i.e., *until* “*the whole*” has been corrupted.

One of the best examples of the outworking of the leaven within the mainstream of Christendom today would be the widely accepted Lordship Salvation teaching, a teaching that has infiltrated practically all denominational and independent groups. And a high percentage of those holding to this line of thought today are to be found in the so-called fundamental circles. The teaching itself though undermines the whole of God’s restorative work throughout Man’s Day, for it not only corrupts the gospel of the grace of God (negatively reflecting on the foundation set through events of day one in **Genesis** chapter **one**) but it obscures the gospel of the glory of Christ (negatively reflecting on the foundation set through events of days two through six in **Genesis** chapter **one**).

Then another example would be the lack of (and, really, “aversion to” in many instances) teachings dealing with the salvation of the soul within the same so-called fundamental circles (again, negatively reflecting on the foundation set through events of days two through six in **Genesis** chapter **one**). This is the message that Satan hates, and he will do everything within his power to prevent its proclamation or understanding (cf. **Matthew 13:3-7, 18-22; 2 Corinthians 3:3-6**).

(“So-called fundamental circles” because the name *fundamentalism* portends a return to the fundamentals of the faith, which, in turn, portends a return to the foundational truths in **Genesis**. Such a return would be true fundamentalism, in which the manifested errors among many using this name today would not — they could not — exist.)

So that’s where we are today. Men have gone astray because they have ignored that which God established, after one fashion, at the beginning. There has been a departure from the established foundation and subsequent preliminary foundational truths, which has resulted in the manifested error.

And that’s it! The matter is that simple. If you want to remain correct as you work your way through Scripture, then it is *absolutely necessary* that you start out in a correct manner at the beginning.

*Begin at the beginning, find out how God structured His Word, study it after that fashion, and you will not go wrong.*

Study the Word recognizing the value of the “rule of first-mention”

This rule is best expressed by Chitwood when considering **2 Timothy 3:16** in the first chapter of his book, The Study of Scripture, as follows:

**2 Timothy 3:16** in the KJV reads,

*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine [teaching], for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.*

The words, “*given by inspiration of God,*” are a translation of the one Greek word, *theopneustos*, meaning “God-breathed.” This is a compound word comprised of *Theos* (“God”) and *pneuma* (“breath” in this particular usage [this is also the word used for “Spirit” in the New Testament — the Holy Spirit, man’s spirit, and the use of spirit in general; also “wind” in **John 3:8**]).

That which is meant by and the implications of Scripture being God-breathed are given in a somewhat simple manner in Scripture, but one has to look at and compare related parts of both Testaments before he can really begin to see and understand that which is involved. A person has to reference passages in one Testament, then passages in the other. He has to compare Scripture with Scripture, i.e., he has to compare “*spiritual things with spiritual.*”

Note first of all **Hebrews 4:12**:

*For the Word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword. . . .*

Now, the question: Why is the Word of God “*living,*” “*powerful,*” and “*sharper than any two-edged sword*”? The answer: Because of its origin. The Word is “*theopneustos*”; the Word is “God-breathed.”

But, what does that mean? And why is the Word “*living*” because of its origin? This is where one has to go back to beginning points in the Old Testament and find the first mention in Scripture of God bringing a matter to pass through the use of His breath.

This is necessary not only because of the need to compare Scripture with Scripture but also because of a principle of biblical interpretation, called, “the First-Mention Principle.” This principle has to do with *unchangeableness*, and it centers on an unchangeable structure of the Word given by the unchangeable God. Because of the inherent nature of the Word, *the first time a subject is mentioned in Scripture, a pattern, a mold is established at that point that remains unchanged throughout the remainder of Scripture.*

Remaining within this principle, the first time one finds *the breath of God* mentioned in Scripture is in **Genesis 2:7**, in connection with life imparted to man; and, consequently, at this beginning point, this verse connects *life* with *the breath of God* after an unchangeable fashion. God formed and fashioned man from the dust of the ground, but man was not created alive. Life was subsequently imparted through God breathing into man’s “*nostrils the breath of life,*” resulting in man becoming “*a living being* [KJV: soul].” Thus, at this point in Scripture the unchangeable connection between God’s *breath* and *life* is established and set. Only God can produce life, and any time life is produced beyond this point it *must always* be through the one means set forth at the beginning, revealed in **Genesis 2:7**.

(The Study of Scripture, Arlen L. Chitwood)

## **In Conclusion**

The study (absorption, consumption) of God's Word, particularly as one progresses from the "milk" to the "meat" of it, is *the pathway to spiritual maturity and the coming glory* for the Christian. It is the *only* pathway provided by God.

The Word is the *only living* food that can be and is utilized by the Holy Spirit to feed "*children of God*" so that they may indeed grow to maturity, with a resultant and continuous change in their spiritual life; and one day, as a result of decisions and determinations made at the Judgment Seat of Christ, *inherit* positions as "*sons of God*" during the Messianic Era.

There is no more important an activity in which a Christian may and can engage than to study God's holy, living Word!