

Chapter 9

Summary and Conclusions



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The Vastness of God's Mind

The enormity of God is incomprehensible to the human mind, except for what He has revealed about Himself and His character through His Spirit in His Scriptures. Although we are not even able to calculate His Being on the most sophisticated human computer even imaginable, He does want us to appreciate and imitate the unrestricted love and forgiveness that He feels towards each of us, no matter what we ever have done against Him or other people. And, He desires that we believe this above everything that would try to sway us to doubt it, ever. We only can accomplish this task by doing two things: (a) being reborn spiritually and (b) afterwards letting Christ be the Governor of our feelings, thoughts, communication, and actions.

"Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For, who has known the mind of the Lord or who has become His counselor? Or, who has first given to Him and it shall be repaid to him? For, of Him and through Him are all things, to Whom be glory forever. Amen." (Romans 11:33-36)

"I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from Whom the whole family in Heaven and earth is named:

(1) That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man.

(2) *That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.*

(3) *That you, being rooted and grounded in love may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height.*

(4) *To know the love of Christ which passes (fleshly) understanding.*

(5) *That you may be filled with all the fullness of God." (Ephesians 3:14-19)*

God's Mystery Revealed

"To you has been given to know the mystery of the Kingdom of God." (Mark 4:11)

"I do not desire, brethren, that you be ignorant of this mystery lest you be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in." (Romans 11:25)

"For this reason we also, since the day we heard it do not cease to pray for you and to ask that you be filled with the knowledge of His will, in all wisdom and Spiritual understanding. That you may walk worthy of the Lord fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God, strengthened with all might according to His glorious power for all patience and endurance, with joy. Giving thanks to the Father Who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the Light.

He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the Kingdom of the Son of His love, in Whom we have redemption through His blood--the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God (Genesis :26), the firstborn over all creation. For, by Him all things were created that are in Heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And, He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. (Hebrws 1:3)

And, He is the head of the Body--the Church--Who is the Beginning, the Firstborn from the dead/Dead; that in all things He may have pre-eminence: for, it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell; and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself. By Him, whether things on earth or things in Heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.

And, you who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works. Yet, now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death/Death, to present you holy and blameless and beyond reproach in His sight--if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the Gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under Heaven....

To fulfill the Word of God; the mystery which has been hidden (from ages

and from generations) but now has been revealed to His saints. To them God made known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you--the hope of glory. Him we preach warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." (Colossians 1:9-28)

Even though the human brain is not sufficient to be able to comprehend God's entire mind, He does intend for us to be able to discern His will at every situation that confronts us. It is good that we also have fellowship with other believers, but our real connection to God the Father and His Son Jesus is through His Holy Spirit dwelling in our hearts and minds. When we take the time to spend with Him in the Word, He will show us how to react to any person or circumstance.

This is important to recognize, for no matter how seemingly insignificant at the time, our reactions will have lasting consequences on our own, as well as others' lives. The bigger we allow the bond between God and ourselves to grow and develop, the more of Jesus' strength (a.k.a. joy--*Nehemiah 8:10b*), faith, patience, endurance, perseverance we will experience personally. Our new covenant includes an inheritance filled with many blessings that we will not ever enjoy to the fullest unless we learn about and actually use it's benefits.

This is concise statement concerning Christ's omnipotence over Satan. Jesus' blood offering both delivered mankind and the earth from out from under the authority of a corrupt and evil influence back into a perfect and virtuous Kingdom. God's Son was an exact representation of His Father, a perfect Ambassador Who always demonstrates the will, communication, and actions of the Being He was sent to embody to humanity. Before He was born on the earth as a human being, He existed in His Spiritual body from the beginning of the creation of the world and mankind. In fact, nothing was made without His help.

Jesus came to the earth with His Father's direction and blessing. He was the first Man to experience the rebirth of His soul and Spirit after the Adams rebelled against God and His Spirit was forced to depart from within their newly flawed natures. Therefore, God the Father has given Him a place of prominence both in Heaven and over His Church. His perfect blood offering of Himself was able to reestablish the Spiritual connection between God and humanity, a link that never will be severed again because that covenant is between two Persons Who never lie or die/Die. God the Father even proclaimed this when Jesus was just born.

Humanity was divided against God's Kingdom through the debasement of our minds through ignorance and continual disobedience. However, when we accept Jesus' ransom for our souls and turn away from everything that is not in line with God's Spirit, we are freed from all overpowering persuasions to sin. As we continue to learn about and then put into practice our faith in God's ways instead of our own, we will allow ourselves to be swayed by any other influences than those that the Bible instructs are good in His sight less and less.

God the Father's character was somewhat mysterious until His Son came and revealed it to people. Jesus comported Himself daily precisely how His Father would have done and have Him imitate. We should use Their Gospel not only to help and guide

ourselves, but also to warn and teach everyone how to return to and then continue to conform to Their goodness. Now this mystery not only has been preached among God's people, the Jews, but should be presented to the entire rest of mankind as well.

God's Plan of Impartiality and Justice

"Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save. Nor is His ear heavy that it cannot hear. But, your iniquities have separated you from your God and your sins have hidden His face from you so that He will not hear. For your hands are defiled with bloodshed and your fingers with iniquity. Your lips have spoken lies. Your tongue has muttered perversity.

No one calls for justice, nor does any plead for truth. They trust in empty words (II Timothy 4:3) and speak lies. They conceive evil and bring forth iniquities. They hatch viper's eggs and weave the spider's web. He who eats of their eggs dies/Dies and from that which is crushed a viper breaks out.

Their webs will not become garments, nor will they cover themselves with their works. Their works are works of iniquity and the act of violence is in their hands. Their feet run to evil and they make haste to shed innocent blood. Their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths. The way of peace they have not known, and there is no justice in their ways. They have made for themselves crooked paths. Whoever takes that way shall not know peace.

Therefore, justice is far from us, nor does righteousness overtake us. We look for light but there is darkness, for brightness, but we walk in blackness! We grope for the wall like the blind and we grope as if we had no eyes. We stumble at noonday as at twilight. We are dead men in desolate places.

We all growl like bears and moan sadly like doves. We look for justice, but there is none, for salvation but it is far from us. For our transgressions are multiplied before You and our sins testify against us. For, our transgressions are with us, and as for our iniquities, we know them: in transgressing and lying against the Lord and departing from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering falsehood.

Justice is turned back, and righteousness stands afar off. For, truth has fallen in the street and equity cannot enter so truth fails. And, he who departs from evil makes himself a prey (of the devil).

Then the Lord saw it and it displeased Him that there was no justice. He saw that there was no man and wondered that there was no intercessor. Therefore, His Own arm brought salvation for Him; and His Own righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation on His head. He put on the garments of vengeance for clothing and was clad with zeal as a cloak.

According to their deeds, accordingly, He will repay fury to His adversaries, recompense to His enemies the coastlands He will fully repay. (Deuteronomy 32:35) So shall they fear the Name of the Lord from the west and His glory

from the rising sun.

When the enemy come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him. 'The Redeemer' will come to Zion and to those who turn away from transgression in Jacob. 'As for Me,' says the Lord, 'this is My Covenant with them: My Spirit Who is upon You, and My words which I have put in Your mouth and shall not depart from Your mouth, nor of the mouth of Your descendants, nor from the mouth of your descendant's descendants,' says the Lord, 'from this time and forevermore.' (Isaiah 59:1-21)

God is able to get anyone out of any predicament. He even was powerful enough to snatch Jesus of Nazareth from inside Satan's most inner domain. The blame has been due to his influence, not God's, when tragedies or harmful things ever have taken place. And, it has been the accumulation of the effects of sin that has brought this world to the shape it is in today, including all sadness, poverty, disease, natural disasters, crime, war, greed, jealousy, etc. God twice gave mankind the earth to subdue and control. The consequences of mankind's constant rebellion against what He desired for us and this planet have never been His fault. God is indeed powerful enough to stop everything bad, but He gave us the choice to conform to His ways or not. Unfortunately, for the most part we have not.

We have kept God away from us too often for Him to accomplish many of His good plans for us. Our cries for Him to fix things too often have become futile because we, ourselves, constantly annul His work within and around us. Instead of remaining faithful to His wishes, we regularly let what we can sense steer our feelings, thoughts, words, and actions. Jesus taught that we should ignore whatever happened that seemingly to deter or stop His will and allow Him to work unhindered.

Finally, God sent His Own Son to be born on the earth as one of us because what He invariable witnessed in humanity was an inability for any other person to be worthy of undoing the evil that Adam had let into the earth. No matter how he/she tried to obey God, he/she failed because at some point they let their fleshly reactions prevail over obeying Him. We have witnessed this with the main people with whom He made covenants before the one that He made with Jesus of Nazareth.

Everyone who works against the Lord becomes His enemy, whether they realize and acknowledge it or not. There are only two forces that instigate or initiate anything that ever takes place--God or Satan, in simpler terms, good or evil. Every second that we live we have let one of those opposite influences dominate our lives. We should not ever think that we can get away from the consequences of our deeds without paying the price for any time we side with evil.

"He who is not with Me is against Me and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad." (Matthew 12:30)

"No one can serve two masters. For, either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and riches." (Matthew 6:24)

God revealed His impending covenant with His Son in the last paragraph above. No longer would He remain apart from mankind, but actually reside among us, as one of us. And, He would send His Son, Who would be empowered with the same Spirit that He had breathed into Adam in *Genesis 2:7*.

"God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power--Who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him." (Acts 10:38)

The Gospel of Christ Included Everyone Forever

Although God first revealed and aligned Himself with the Israelites, He did not end there. He also has made Himself known to the rest of the world and included them in the blood covenant with His Son. Therefore, we all now are considered to be Abraham's seed, and full and equal heirs to every promise that Jesus of Nazareth won for Himself as a human being. No matter what sex, race, age, appearance, intelligence, etc. we may be, we are all equal to God.

"The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the Gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, 'In you all nations shall be blessed.... There is neither Jew nor (non-Jew), there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, but you all are One in Christ Jesus. (John 10:30) And, if you are Christ's then you are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the Promise.'" (Galatians 3:8, 28-29)

"For, there is no partiality with God." (Romans 2:11)

"My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality. For, if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings in fine apparel and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes and you say attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, 'You sit here in a good place' and you say to the poor man, 'You stand there, ' or, 'Sit here at my footstool.' have you not shown partiality among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?

Listen, my beloved brethren, has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the Kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? But, you have dishonored the poor man! Do not the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts? Do they not blaspheme the noble Name by which you are called? If you really fulfill the royal Law according to the Scriptures, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' you do well. But, if you show partiality you commit sin, and are convicted by the Law as transgressors. For, whoever shall keep the whole Law and yet stumble in one point, he is

guilty of all." (James 2:1-10)

"I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes--for the Jew first, and also for the Greek (i.e. non-Jew). For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, 'The just shall live by faith.' For, the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all unGodliness of men who suppress the Truth in unrighteousness ; because, what may be known is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen--being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Divine nature.

So, they are without excuse because although they knew God they did not glorify Him as God. Nor were (they) thankful, but became futile in their thoughts and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

Therefore, God also gave them up to uncleanness in the lust of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves... who worshipped the creature rather than the Creator.... And, even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind--to do those things which are not fitting.... Who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of Death, not only do the same, but also approve of those who practice them." (Romans 1:16-32)

Since God shows no favoritism and we are to imitate Him (*Ephesians 5:1*), for us to have any biases for or prejudices against anyone whomsoever is to insult Him. This is a grievous sin and it will separate us from God whenever we judge anyone else, especially in unforgiveness. We cannot know their hearts and motivations, but He does. The Gospel, or "Good news", of Christ contains all of God's power within it's message for any of us to be free from all bondage of sin. All that is necessary for people to extricate themselves out of the control of evil is to listen to the message and keep it in their hearts. When we persevere to exist in faith, God will be able to help us increasingly, as well as teach us more about Himself and His Kingdom. The more we know and put into practice, the better our lives will become. Our capacity to endure any hardship that arises to try to prevent or steal our spiritual growth will increase also.

The scientific complexity and symmetry of the entire universe corroborates the existence of a Being or Beings Who was/were the origin of everything, including us. Hypotheses and experiments to prove or disprove this notion daily confirm that the odds of a cosmos created by a random incident of some kind increasingly make less sense as mankind develops more sophisticated technology. So, where is that Being? Can we contact Him? How? And, has He already contacted us? According to the Bible, the answer is an unequivocal 'yes'. Therefore, since there is ample evidence of a God of some kind just in nature itself, the Scriptures teach that we have no excuse not to try to find Him.

They further warn that if any person honestly seeks to meet God the Father, they will come to know Him through His earthly ambassador--His Son, Jesus of Nazareth, the only Messiah/Christ.

When we do not acknowledge the existence of God we cannot glorify Him. He hates to see us flounder and deteriorate, which eventually will happen because we are not equipped to handle everything by ourselves. Nevertheless, if we refuse to seek Him, once He is sure that we have become inflexible He will not bother us further. However, whenever we grant Him access into our lives if even for an instant (like in an emergency situation) He still will come to aid and even rescue us if we allow it. Our deliverance from the crisis will last as long as we let Him guide the rest of our behavior.

God gave each of us the freewill to accept Him into our lives, or not. As stated above, when we are not willing to receive anything from Him, He will let us follow the course that a flawed authority will present, no matter what the consequences. Therefore, whenever we make a choice to follow any sensorial fleshly desires we move in a direction away from God. The more we do so, the further we will exist until one day we might not even be able to recognize Him any longer. We even may begin to admire and follow a creation instead of its Creator. This is like appreciating an object above the person who both designed and made it. Which of the two can alter the composition or even produce another of the item? Therefore, which of the two truly is more valuable?

Since God considers the inner man--thoughts and feelings more than He does outward appearances or manifestations (*I Samuel 16:7*), it is just as important how we react to sin we recognize than sin we commit ourselves. We should never join or approve of anyone else doing it, while never judging the people committing the acts. God will do whatever is necessary to stop the rebellion in His timing, not ours. Our assignment is merely to look to and imitate Him, not what other people are doing, whether good or bad.

False Teaching

"Let no one deceive you with empty words (Matthew 12:34, 36-7), for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore, do not be partakers with them." (Ephesians 5:6-7)

"I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him Who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel; which really is not another, but there are some who want to pervert the Gospel of the Christ (II Corinthians 11:3-5, 14-15) But, even if we, or an angel from Heaven preach any other Gospel to you than that which we already have preached to you, let him be accursed." (Galatians 1:6-9) (See also James 3:1)

"If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words--from which come envy, strife, slander, and evil suspicions, useless disputes of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the

truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself.

Now, godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world and it is certain that we can carry nothing out. And, having food and clothing, with these we shall be content (Matthew 5:25-34). But, those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and ruin. (Mark 4:18-19) For, the lust of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

But, you, o man of God, flee these things and persue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, and gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal Life.... Guard what was committed to your trust. Avoid the profane and idle babble and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge--by professing, some have strayed concerning the faith. Grace be with you. Amen." (I Timothy 6:3-21)

"Let no one cheat you of your reward taking delight in false humility and worship of angels (II Corinthians 11:13-15), intruding into those things which are not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind and not holding fast to the Head from Whom all the Body nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments grows with the increase that is from God. Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why as though living in the world do you subject yourselves to regulations--'Do not handle', which all concern things that perish with the using--according to the commandments and doctrines of men? These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh." (Colossians 2:18-23)

"Charge some that they teach no other doctrine (James 3:1), nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies which cause disputes rather than Godly edification which is in faith. Now, the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith, from which some, having strayed, have turned aside to idle talk." (I Timothy 1:3-7) (See also Matthew 12:34, 36-7)

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith:

- (1) giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons,*
- (2) speaking lies in hypocrisy having their own conscience seared with a hot iron,*
- (3) forbidding to marry, and*
- (4) commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received*

with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. For, every creature of God is good and nothing to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving, for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer." (1 Timothy 4:1-5)

"Therefore, take heed to yourselves and to all the flock among which the Holy Spirit has made overseers to shepherd the Church of God which He purchased with His Own blood. For, I know that after my departure, savage wolves (Luke 10:3) will come in among you not sparing the flock. Also, from among yourselves men will rise up speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after themselves. Therefore, watch (1 Peter 5:8; Matthew 26:41) and remember." (Acts 20:28-31)

We never should be deceived into receiving instruction that is void of God's truth. Likewise, we especially should not encourage such harmful communication, instigate it, or perpetuate it. If anyone at all, even a seemingly harmless spirit being, tries to modify the Gospel of Christ even slightly, it alters what God has said enough to make the teaching a deceptive and corrupted invention that He will not tolerate. He views doing this as so contaminating to His message that He directed the apostle Paul to tell the churches that anyone who perverted Jesus' message was accursed when they did so. Even a small addition, reduction, or variation of Jesus' Gospel is potentially wicked distortion. Therefore, whenever we try to share the Gospel we must be very careful to adhere to the true and complete ideas contained therein.

Whenever we do not obey the above, it may be that we simply are not sufficiently prepared to instruct the Gospel correctly. Often, we become so excited about this good news about salvation that we rush out to teach it to others before we have taken enough time to learn a comprehensive account. In such cases, we must maintain an openness towards the true gospel, always willing to learn more about it and modify or change any errors.

Unfortunately, too often it is the case that people hold their own self-centered agendas above God's message and actually may try to enhance their own importance over Christ's. The Word says that this behavior always will stir up *strife* among people, not bond them together with God. Eventually, divisions will spring up between groups that want to intimidate each other as they continue to argue their particular beliefs. God's original message may even be lost to them in their struggle for dominance. The more of an audience they can sway, the more seemingly powerful they will become. Inevitably they will have continued to preach and listen to their own perverted gospels so much that they will become deaf to Christ's.

People who are in earnest about searching for God's truth should stay away from any behavior that will entice and eventually corrupt their minds and hearts away from the gospel of Christ. However, since the Bible also teaches that He socialized with sinners, was this hypocritical behavior on His part? The established religious leaders of that period certainly thought as much and accused Him of duplicity.

Jesus pointed out to them that a well person does not require a physician, but an

unhealthy one does. He was saying that these people would benefit greatly from His presence and teaching among them and they would be affected by His goodness, whereas He would not be by their sinful natures. Remember, He successfully had resisted all of Satan's temptations, so there was no chance that He would relent and go against His flawless connection to His Father by keeping company with certain people. Besides, at that time Jesus was the only person ever born who had not rebelled against the Law, so He always was in the company of sinners whether He liked it or not, even if He dined with any Pharisees.

However, no other human being had or has the faith and endurance to even come close to Jesus'. Normal people do not possess His capacity not to sin because their heart is not nearly attuned to God the Father's, even if they are born again. When we are around sin it constantly tries to dominate us, as it did Jesus, but we have a tendency to conform to earthly, visible, peer pressures instead of always crucifying our flesh to be able to resist it. This is why the Scriptures strongly warn us not to be even near its influences.

God wants us to be content with what we have and not envy the wealth and tangible possessions of others. This does not signify that God is against money or what it can purchase. On the contrary, He Himself said the following:

"Beware that you do not forget the Lord your God by not keeping His commandments.... Then you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gained me this wealth,' and you shall remember the Lord your God. For, it is He Who gives you the power to get wealth that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day. Then, it shall be that if you by any means forget the Lord your God and follow other gods and serve them and worship them. I testify to you this day that you will surely perish." (Deuteronomy 8:11a, 17-19)

God does not forbid people to have wealth; He is not against money itself, just the carnal mindset that its acquisition can cause in many people. They too often begin to crave its deceitful and temporary pleasures over the true and lasting gifts that He has planned for us in Heaven. Additionally, God has stated that the people may feel superior to others because of the amount of their possessions. This often leads to envy, jealousy, greed, judgment, feelings of superiority, and a thirst for power over other people. It also can result in a craving for recognition, fame, and being the object of homage, which is idolatry. Jealousy and the ambitious lust to make himself equal to God were the first sins ever committed, by Satan himself. It follows then, that he, not God, wants us to do the same thing, for then we are worshipping another likeness than God's, one that conforms to evil.

"Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? You lust and you do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and battle. Yet, you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your own pleasures. Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is

enmity against God? Whoever, therefore, wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God." (James 4:1-4)

God wants us all to stay away from evil behavior and imitate and practice only the gifts from God's Spirit. (*Galatians 5:22-26*) We also are commanded to stay firm in our convictions about what the Bible teaches and guard our thoughts, feelings, and actions. Furthermore, to be able to accomplish this we have to stop talking out of line with what God would have us communicate to each other. This includes never lying or arguing about anything, including our beliefs about Him for they only generate separation, animosity, prejudices, and disharmony. (*Matthew 12:25, 34-37*) No matter how educated, knowledgeable, persuasive, or wise any person appears to be, if what they say conflicts with God, they are wrong and what they teach is quite dangerous.

Being Unprepared

"As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man. They ate, they drank, they married wives, and they were given in marriage until the day that Noah entered the ark and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise, as it was also in the days of Lot: they ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built, but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. Even so, it will be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed. In that day, he who is on the housetop, and his goods in the house, let him not come down and take them away. And likewise, the one who is in the field, let him not turn back. Remember Lot's wife. Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it and whoever loses his life will preserve it. I tell you (that) in that night there will be two men in one bed; the one will be taken and the other will be left. Two women will be grinding together; the one will be taken and the other left. Two men will be in the field; the one will be taken, and the other left." (Luke 17:26-36)

God's Son will return to the earth on an average day and people will be following their usual schedules and routines. Therefore, His appearance will be quite unexpected. God has acted suddenly before, yet He always warned people way ahead of time what they should do to prepare for its advent. He instructed them about what not to do as well as what to do. When they came, the consequences of disobedience were swift and permanent. Similarly, He has been warning us about the consequences of not resisting evil for centuries. Some people have listened, while others still have not.

"There was a certain man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. But, there was a certain beggar named Lazarus full of sores who was at his gate desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores.

So it was that the beggar died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's

bosom. The rich man also died and was buried, and being in torment in Hades he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off and Lazarus in His bosom.

Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame.'

But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things. But, now he is comforted and you are tormented. And, besides all of this, between us and you there is a great abyss fixed so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.'

Then he said, 'I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house. For, I have five brothers that he may testify to them lest they also come to this place of torment.'

Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets. Let them hear them.'

And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead they will repent.'

But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.'" (Luke 16:20-31)

Any people who try to save themselves by their own power will fail in their attempts because God easily is able to distinguish who has chosen to belong with Him and who has not. Therefore, even if two individuals are right next to each other He will be able to pick only the ones who have accepted His Son as their Savior.

The Master of the House

"Watch, therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. But know this: If the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore, you also be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour which you do not expect.

'Who then is a faithful and wise servant whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master when he comes will find so doing. Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods.

'But, if that evil servant says in his heart, My master is delaying his coming, and begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with the drunkards, the master of that servant will come in on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, and will cut him in two, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth....

[Continue reading through Matthew 25, the parables likening the Kingdom of Heaven to: (a) 1-13, The ten virgins--five wise, and five foolish, (b) 14-28, The ten talents]

'When the Son of Man comes in His glory and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit upon the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him and He will separate one from another as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats; and He will set the sheep on His right hand but the goats on the left.

Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For:

*I was hungry and you gave Me food,
I was thirsty and you gave Me drink,
I was a stranger and you took Me in,
I was naked and you clothed Me,
I was sick and you visited Me,
I was in prison and you came to Me.'*

Then the righteous will answer Him, Saying, 'When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or, when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?'

And, the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these, My brethren, you did it to Me.' Then He also will say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For:

*I was hungry and you gave Me no food,
I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink,
I was a stranger and you did not take Me in,
naked and you did not clothe Me,
sick, and in prison and you did not visit Me.'*

Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison and did not minister to You?'

Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.'

And, these will go into everlasting Punishment; but, the righteous into everlasting Life." (Matthew 24:42-51)

When someone is ready for an event to take place they can prepare for its advent beforehand, in plenty of time. However, when they are caught unaware they most likely will have to leave things that they intended to accomplish undone. Be alert at all times, like a sentry, because no one knows when Jesus will return to the earth to reclaim His followers. People who have been left in charge of something or someone to maintain and guard may react in several ways. They may supervise it with the same care and respect that they

would like their own things to be treated. They may procrastinate or completely ignore some or all of their responsibilities. Or, they may even steal, harm or destroy the object.

When God's Son physically returns to the earth the second time, He will judge our individual behavior and accountability concerning everything in our lives. He will locate His faithful followers and reward them for their faith, patience, perseverance, and endurance. He will also root out the hypocrites and rebels and give them the reimbursement that God has promised those who have chosen to disregard His commands. No one will be able to escape His scrutiny.

When we all are standing in front to both God the Father and God the Son (a.k.a. the Son of Man) we will want to know why we are being rewarded or punished for what we did on the earth. They will explain to us just how we ever followed or ignored His commands. We will be judged by how we received or rejected Jesus as our Savior, as well as how we esteemed other people. They identify with each of us so much so that how we treated others is a direct reflection of what we have in our hearts towards Them as well.

"Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?"

Jesus said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment, and the second it like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the prophets.' (Matthew 22:36-40)

Diligence and Patience

"We desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance to the end (so) that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherited the promises. For, when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, saying, 'Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you.' And so, after he had patiently endured he obtained the promise. For, men indeed swear by the greater and an oath of confirmation is for them an end of all dispute. Thus, God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel confirmed it by an oath, that by two unchangeable things: (1) it is impossible for God to lie, (and 2) we might have strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us." (Hebrews 6:11-18)

God the Father and His Son Jesus want us to hold onto the faith that They ARE Who They ARE (Exodus 3:14; John 8:58; Hebrews 11:6) and that They are willing to and can fulfill any and all of Their promises in the Bible. (II Corinthians 1:20) We have to learn to accept this above anything that we can detect by our five physical senses, for they are temporary and changeable states. No matter how seemingly permanent anything is on the earth, God can substitute it for something else, like health for deformity.

Faith is the determining factor that lets God work in our lives, and with patience, we can persevere to attain His goals, instead of giving up. God swore an oath to Abraham

about His plans, using Himself as the collateral that He would have to forfeit if He ever once went back on His word. If He ever did, He would have to relinquish His Kingdom like spoils of war (*Colossians 2:15*) to the enemy who beat Him, in this case His archenemy, Satan.

"Do not be deceived. God is not mocked, for whatever a man sows that he will also reap. For, he who sows to the flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting Life. And, let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart." (Galatians 6:7-9)

An oath is supposed to end a discussion and make a contract between the participants. Human beings try so often to get out of an arrangement that presently it is almost an established habit to do so. In fact, people who are able to find loopholes to void the agreement are considered to be quite ingenious. However, God does not work this way and never will break any covenant, especially one using Himself as the insurance. Not only did He freely enter into binding covenants with people; He initiated all of them. He wants to fellowship with us all the time, yet He knows that He cannot unless we return to the state that Adam and his wife were before they rebelled against Him. The first Adam broke his arrangement with God. The Second did not and never will. We can count on it forever.

"The first man was of the earth, made of dust (Psalm 103:14), the Second Man is the Lord from Heaven. As was the man of dust so also are those made of dust, and is the Heavenly Man so also are those who are Heavenly. And, as we have borne the image of the man of dust we shall also bear the image of the Heavenly Man." (I Corinthians 15:47-50)

"There is therefore no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus--who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For, the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus has made me free of the Law of sin and death/Death. For, what the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His Own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh. On account of sin (Jesus) condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

For, those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For, to be carnally minded is death/Death, but to be spiritually minded is life/Life and peace because the carnal mind is enmity against God (James 4:4), for it is not subject to the Law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ he is not His. And, if Christ is in you the body is Dead because of sin, but the Spirit of Life because

of righteousness. But, if the Spirit of Him Who raised Jesus from the dead/Dead dwells in you. He Who raised Christ from the dead/Dead will also give life/Life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit Who dwells in you.

Therefore, brethren, we are debtors not to the flesh, to live/Live according to the flesh. For, if you live according to the flesh you will Die, but if by the Spirit you put to Death the deeds of the body you will Live. For as many as are led (Proverbs 3:6) by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption, by Which you cry out, 'Abba! Father!'

The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and, if children then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him that we also may be glorified together. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory which shall be revealed in us.

For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For, the creation was subjected to futility not willingly, but because of Him Who subjected it in hope, because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For, we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption--the redemption of our body. For, we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope, for why does one still hope for what he sees? But, if we hope for what we do not see we wait for it with perseverance.

Likewise, the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses, for we do not know what we should pray for as we ought. But, the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And, we know that all things work together for good to those who are called according to His purpose. For, whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom He predestined, these He also called, these He also justified, and whom He justified He also glorified. What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who shall stand against us? He, Who did not spare His Own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God Who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ Who died and furthermore is also risen, Who is even at the right hand of God, Who also makes intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: 'For

Your sake we are killed all day long. We are counted as sheep for the slaughter.'

Yet, in all things we are more than conquerors through Him Who loved us.
For, I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers (Ephesians 6:10-12), nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:1-39)

Amen.