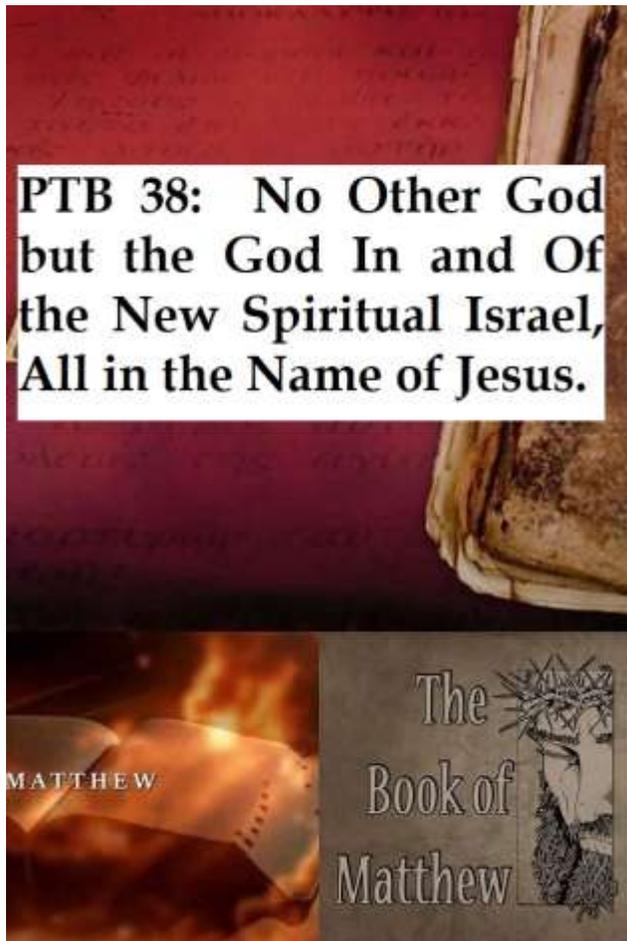


PTB 38: No Other God but the God In and Of the New Spiritual Israel, All in the Name of Jesus.



Introduction:

1. Too often especially in the theological approach of most seminary graduates today, salvation is made to sound difficult such as calling it soteriology when we all know IT IS THE SALVATION OF GOD. Here it is simple and straightforward from God in His Book, the Bible in a three-step process.

- Repentance, a change in lifestyle of the past, sort of in military terms an about face; the Bible often calls it “repentance from dead works (all works in the sight of God are dead, as salvation is by grace alone) and raised to walk in newness of life.”

- Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ in what He did on the cross for the salvation for our sins, He died for us in order that salvation for sins is provided. Faith is, you must believe that!

- Some like to call the third step in the

salvation process as the new birth, the preference of the Bible is on A NEW CREATION. When God our Heavenly Father sees and hears the proper attitude and expression for us of FAITH AND REPENTANCE, this new creation is what He does for us to make it possible to live a better and more noble life.

- This is not to say that more can not be said from the Bible on the subject of the Salvation of God; because there is more, much more, in fact a whole Bible full of salvation. What many of us appreciated about our Pastor Dr. R. G. Lee was that when he chose a subject like SALVATION, you knew you were doing to hear almost everything in the Bible on salvation, and quoted directly from the Bible by memory.

Sitting at the feet of Dr. Lee at Bellevue and being licensed by him to preach as well he performed the wedding ceremony of Ann and I, was when we really began to learn the ALL SCRIPTURE METHOD AND MOVEMENT which few if any preachers can or will practice today. Pray that Dr. Lee looking down from heaven while having supper with Ann, will acknowledge the carrying out of the commission he gave to me to know and preach the Bible.

2. Salvation starts with getting to know Jesus, the Jesus of the Bible and the Jesus Who is and was the Son of God. Here is an outline for a short message on Who Is Jesus?

Introduction

I. Who Jesus is to His Contemporaries?

II. Who does subsequent history say Jesus is?

III. Okay, let's look at what the Bible is and who the Jesus of the Bible is?

IV. Look at relationships in marriage and Christ/church.

Conclusion.

1. The homiletics and hermeneutics of continuing to preach thru the Bible in one year which depends on some teaching background of Ephesians and the abbreviated LCC. (Each remaining message of the 12 last sermons will be provided at the end of the post for you two free downloads from Ephesians and the abbr LCC.)

Only 12 weeks of 12 messages are left in order to do justice to the Preaching thru the Bible in one year, which some in the Facebook Southern Baptist group still call impossible; forgetting as they do that besides the outline of the Bible under 12 major topics, two major supplements to the sermons for more inclusive All Scripture method and movement have been and will more heavily be added in these last twelve sermons, those supplements being "The Abbreviated LCC" (a short version of all 8 volumes of the Learn Christ Commentaries) and the book of Ephesians (which is actually volume 8 of the LCCs). It is easier to do it than to explain it, so that instead of dividing each of the 12 topic topics into four parts, we will for the completion of Preaching the Bible in one year, follow the pattern of (1) a chapter from abbr LCC which is sort of like a textbook for the Bible outline,

(2) one half of top topic, 10-12 of the remaining 12 top topics of the Bible, and (3) Ephesians commentary. Sounds a little complicated, but it will become simpler with the doing of the Preaching thru and the Preaching the Bible rather than theology and the wisdom of the world.

2. Something of the Salvation of God, tenth of the 12 top topics of the Bible with an emphasis on the Acceptable Time of Salvation to our ALMIGHTY GOD, LORD AND CREATOR OF THE UNIVERSE. On the new earth, all nations will come to the New Jerusalem and bowed down to the only real God Who is in the new spiritual Israel. (Isaiah 54:14)

**“Surely God is in you,
And there is no other;
There is no other God.’ ”**

**“Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”
(Philippians 2:9-11)**

I. (10-2): God Himself took the initiative by sending His own Son to planet earth.

1. This is My Beloved Son , God said of Jesus of Nazareth: Isaiah 42:1-4, Matthew 3:17, Mark 1:11, Matthew 17:5, Mark 9:7, and Matthew 12:18-21.

2. God is faithful but He will listen to the cries of men for salvation in a time acceptable to Him: Isaiah 45:14 and I Corinthians 14:25.

3. It is inevitable that every knee will voluntarily now and involuntarily at the end of time bow and worship to the praise of God: Isaiah 45:23 and Romans 14:11.

II. *Matthew and Jesus. (from Chapter 4 of the Abbreviated LCC)*

The Gospel has for many years been established in the Old Testament and proclaimed in the New Testament every time that Matthew is read, preached, or taught let us establish and proclaim it in our hearts and minds. Let us Not Forget the Prime Subject of the Bible--Who Is Jesus?

Here is an outline for a short message on Who Is Jesus?

Introduction

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4-1: Who Is Jesus to His Contemporaries?

The angels were contemporaries of Jesus--still are as a matter of fact--and an angel announced before the first Christmas about the birth of Jesus. Those shepherds had no personal axe to grind as they were just out there tending their flocks by night. Out in the fields was also their home. They had no plans that suddenly their lives would be interrupted by an angel and a bright light. This angel

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“Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.” (Luke 2:11)

That's what the angel thought and what was told to say:

A SAVIOR, HIS NAME IS CHRIST THE
LORD

The wise men who came from the East also had an opinion about “who Jesus is?” It was a master plot, you see, if you are trying to take the perspective of subsequent history that I will present in a few moments from the Encyclopedias. The angle has it in for the liberals, the shepherds who spread the word in Jerusalem about what happened to them had it in for the liberals, and now the wise men from the East had conspired in a plot to prove that Jesus is the Son of God.

No, not really. The wise men have come all the way from the east because they saw a unique star in the sky, and they knew to expect one that was born King of the Jews as predicted in the Old Testament.

“Where is he that is born King of the Jews. For we have seen his star in the east and are come to worship him.” (Matthew 2:2)

John the Baptist was also part of this conspiracy to deceive the whole world. I hate to appear

so sarcastic but as you will see later when I look at the Encyclopedias, these so called “intellectuals” and liberals deserve it; and I will also discuss “intellectual” and “intellectual honesty”. John the

Baptist said several things about Jesus.

1. First, he said that Jesus is the Lamb of God that was ordained from before the foundation of the world and predicted in the Old Testament to some how like the Passover lamb take away the sins of the world. Christians call this the atonement. Jesus was made to be sin for us, the Jesus who knew no sin, in order that we might be made the righteousness of God through Him. Here is the wording about John the Baptist’s personal testimony as recorded in John 1:29.

“Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.” (John 1:29)

John didn’t conspire. Because he also said as recorded in John 1:32,33 that he didn’t know beforehand that His cousin Jesus was the Christ of the Old Testament, but he was told by the same God who sent him to baptize that there would be one certain man that when he baptized Him the Spirit of God would descend in the form of a dove. John said I baptized Jesus and saw the Spirit of God descending on Him. This is the promised One that will baptize in the Spirit of God!

Well, we have John the Baptist, a bunch of wise men from the East that were not as wise and the subsequent history, a bunch of shepherds who had some axed to grind. Let’s add to the plot by seeing how quickly the 12 apostles joined in the charade! One of the later to be called apostles that heard John the Baptist speak was **Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter**. Andrew made a beeline for his brother and told him, “We have found the Messiah, which is being interpreted, the Christ.” (John 1:41) Up to this point then we have opinions of Christ that He is the: Savior, Christ Jesus, King of the Jews that is to be worshipped, the Lamb of God that provided salvation in the atonement, and the One that would baptize with the Spirit of God, and from Andrew the two words Christ and Messiah or Messiah, one being the Greek for Christ and the other Hebrew. The “Christos” or “Messiah” was promised in the Old Testament that would be the new King, the Savior, the Prophet like Moses, the Lamb that like the sacrificial lamb would take away the sins of the world.

I could not discuss testimonies from the contemporaries of Jesus without mentioning perhaps the most famous one of all, that of Simon Peter. And really when Simon Peter gave his personal testimony as recorded in Matthew 16:16 it was as a spokesman **for the whole group of 12 apostles** because the conversation between them and Jesus started with Jesus asking all the disciples, “Who do men say that I the

Son of Man, am?" (Matt 16:13) The whole group gave the initial answers some say John the Baptist come back to life, some say Elijah, other say Jeremiah, and still others say one of the other prophets.

Jesus said, "Who do you say that I am"

It was Peter that answered for the group this time, saying, "Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God." (Matthew 16:16)

So in reverse order we have: the Son of God, the Christ, the Messiah which is Hebrew for Christ the Promised One of the Old Testament, the Lamb that takes away the sins of the world, the One who would endow the Holy Spirit, the Savior, the King of the Jews. We could also bring forth the personal testimony of Dr. Luke as recorded in the Gospel of Luke, that also of Mark, and John the Apostle, or Matthew, or Jude, or James; but it would be essentially the same as already noted. However, in order to be complete we should note a contemporary testimony of a Jew who is perhaps the most famous next to Simon Peter; and that is the apostle born out of due time as he called himself since he wasn't there among the original twelve, and that of course is the Apostle Paul. Since Paul personally wrote 10 of the 27 books of the New Testament with many personal testimonies to Jesus it is difficult to know which one to chose.

And before I chose only one, let us briefly look at some of the credentials of the Apostle Paul.

Paul was a lawyer, a leader in the Jewish nation before he became a Christian. He was also a Roman citizen. He spoke and wrote in several languages and had one of the best educations of his day. Of course, as we learn about him he is persecuting Christians. Paul as Luke recorded for us in the book of Acts had a marvelous conversion experience on the road to Damascus where he was going to put more Christians into prison for their belief in Jesus as the Christ.

Now, it is this Apostle Paul that gives us 10 books of the New Testament that are full of testimonies to Jesus. Which one do we choose? I think it would have to be Philippians 2:9-11 as a summary of all else he wrote.

"Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Philippians 2:9-11)

Paul adds "Lord" to the list with Jesus Christ! In the Bible there is the :LORD God Almighty for the heavenly father and there is the Lord Jesus Christ for Jesus of Nazareth. David expressed the two in Psalm and Peter quoted it as recorded in Acts that: "the LORD said to my Lord, set on my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool".

4-2: Who Is Jesus According to Subsequent History?

Now let me explain to you what I selected in order to represent what subsequent history things about Jesus: the encyclopedias Americana, Britannica, and Colliers. Now in some ways this is a mistake. If I desired to really turn something about Napoleon, or George Washington, or Billy Graham or anyone else I would select a book written by someone that admired that person and that had no other axe to grind. However since we have very adequate sources from the 4 evangelists and others in the Bible and a very large body of Christians through the centuries that profess a personal experience with Christ, perhaps in another way I selected the majority opinion in the Encyclopedias of the world about Jesus.

1. Americana.

“Jewish teacher of the first century,” is the way the Encyclopedia Americana begins the article on “Jesus Christ”. Well, I suppose that you can not object too much with that and it is true although it worries you already as an understatement. And you already sense a less than dedicated Christian approach.

Then it comes: “Christians claim to have been the prophesied Messiah and the Savior sent by God to all people”. Well, Encyclopedias are written for Moslems, Buddhist, and unbelievers as well as Christians. And at least he or the group including the chief editor is honest enough to admit of what most Christians do claim.

Then it goes on to say how difficult it is to treat Jesus Himself in a biographical fashion as what

we have is centuries of what scholars have thought of Him instead of any real sources “except the New

Testament”.

2. Britannica.

I must read this in order for you to gain the tenor, etc.

“Jesus Christ, byname JESUS OF GALILEE, or JESUS OF NAZARETH (born approximately 6 BC in Judaea and died approximately AD 30 in Jerusalem, founder of Christianity, whose deeds and message are recorded in the New Testament”.

I must stop here to make a few comments: (1) I hope that it did not over burden their intellectual honesty and scientific method to record that Jesus was born and died in terms of the manner in which we date history, BC for Before Christ and AD for after Anno Domino for After His Death; and (2) the founder of Christianity I seriously believe that Jesus would not want to claim that He started the forms of Christianity today that exist that approximately over 50% of the world attest to (recall that broad is the way that

leads to destruction and narrow the way that leads to life eternal so that the majority will not be believers.

I read more: *“According to the Gospel accounts, miraculous events surrounded the conception and birth of Jesus”.*

Yes, the shepherds and the wise men thought so, etc.

“Only a few isolated incidents are known of the years that intervened before his public ministry, which began when he was baptized by John the Baptist. In the company of 12 Apostles, Jesus preached a message of religious reform and divine love.”

Wow, this is a good another perspective and certainly that of a liberal intellectual: that Jesus primarily preached a message of religious reform and divine love. I would agree that Jesus did that very secondarily; but primarily He preached a message of salvation through His name and of the love of God in providing Himself as an atonement for the sins of the world.

“Many miracles were attributed to him, and he attracted numerous followers.”

In a few moments I will come to those miracles attributed to Him and in particular the Bible as a reliable historical and Word of God record.

“His growing influence alarmed Jewish and Roman authorities; he was arrested as a troublemaker and crucified under Roman law. Belief in his Resurrection from the dead became the focus of the religion that developed around his teachings.” Goodness, you would think that the Sermons that Simon Peter preached immediately after the Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus were heard by no one, as if they had never been recorded by Dr. Luke in the book of Acts. The sermons that talked about Jesus’ teachings but primarily about His death on the cross for the sins of the world as predicted by Moses, David, and other Old Testament Prophets.

“The term Jesus Christ, however, not only designated a historical person who live in Palestine during the reign of the Roman emperors Augustus and Tiberius but also one who has been the object of Christian faith and worship for almost 20 centuries. These two designations may be distinguished, but they cannot be separated.”

See how they are beginning an effort to separate the historical Jesus and the Jesus of history

from the Jesus that is taught and preached in hundreds of churches across the nation and the world! Also, you know I wish I had time to go through their treatment in the Encyclopedias to see if they have similar treatments for Augustus and Tiberius or even Napoleon. To see if they try to separate the historical persons from the mystical present-day concepts. Which really comes down to, from their perspective, as the difference between the Jesus of the Bible and the historical Jesus.

“These two designations may be distinguished, but they cannot be separated. For almost

everything known about the historical person comes from the reports of those who addressed faith and worship to him.”

You see what that overlooks and I will discuss it for the third point: (1) it overlooks that the Bible is a very different book that claims to be the Word of God and as such is very easily provable; and (2) it overlooks the aspect often discussed in Christian Apologetics and Christian Evidences as to the reliability of the testimony of the four Evangelists. Shortly I will come to those matters and philosophically how scientific and intellectual such a liberal approach really is.

“The portraits of Jesus in the Gospels are the testimony of ‘faith to faith.’ It is therefore impossible to write a biography of Jesus in the conventional sense of the word. Rather, one is compelled to draw a picture of a picture, to describe Jesus on the basis of the way he was remembered by the believing community that took his name.”

You see, at least in his own mind or in the mind of the group of writers and/or the chief editor they have separated the historical Jesus from beliefs about Jesus as they evolved, they have separated even the Bible record about Jesus from what is believed today and that evolved later. You would think that the essentials of what we believe about the life, teachings, miracles, resurrection, and death of Christ developed in history after the completion of the Bible record!

“How satisfactory one finds such a picture of a picture depends in part upon the credence one is ready to assign to the sources—the amount of biographical information that the sources provide is slight.”

In all this reveling in historical doubt and unbelief I must make a preliminary statement even before I come to the next point: We know the sources about beliefs in Jesus, it is the book of the Bible which is really a library or an encyclopedia or 39 books in the Old Testament and 27 books in the New Testament. It was written by over 40 authors over hundreds of years from the historical perspective, and it was written by God Himself from the larger perspective with proof of its supernatural origin among other ways the way predictions in the Old Testament were fulfilled in the life of Christ.

3. Colliers.

“Jesus Christ. Figure who in orthodox Christian belief, founded Christianity, being the incarnation of God who suffered on the cross to save mankind.”

4-3: The Sources, the Bible and the books of the Bible.

These Liberals or at least non-committals are right about one thing and that is the reliability of the Sources, the Bible and the books of the Bible. I am going to introduce you briefly to Christian Apologetics and its sub-field of Christian Evidences

which I seriously doubt that the writers and/or editors of the Encyclopedias even know exists; and if they did they did not mention it in their articles which “intellectual honesty” according to Elton Trueblood the philosopher of religion would demand. Philosophy of Religion deals with the very philosophical questions about God and truth, while Christian Apologetics deals with the questions about the existence of God, the Creation of the Universe, and sometimes even the proofs about Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Just to name some of the classical works would be “The Evidence of God In an Expanding Universe” by Mosma in which 40 scientist tells more their disciplines reason to believe in God. Rimmer and Bernard Ramm had done great works on Science and Creation and books on Christian Apologetics and Evidences itself.

Now, besides no mention of Christian Evidences in the Encyclopedias something else is evident: that they never read the sources. In other words they never read the Bible for themselves as a mature adult. When they talk about writing an article on an article, a paper on a paper, they are talking about writing their quite extensive articles on Jesus Christ by reading other men’s articles or summaries on Jesus Christ. There are educated people dumb in the Bible. I dare say that they are functioning in an adult world with a child’s personal Sunday School or catechism knowledge, or something similar, in the way of knowledge about the Bible. And that is the way it generally is. Irwin Linton, who practiced law before the Supreme Court of the United States, has written a book entitled “A Lawyer Examines the Bible” in which he said invariable if some one told him that they did not believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, then when asked “Have you read the Bible for yourself as a mature adult,” the answer was always no. And also if such a person did read the Bible for themselves then they came to believe in Jesus Christ.

And while I am on the subject of lawyers. I know a lot of people smile when you mention lawyers in connection with Christianity, but the reputation of lawyers use to be much better than now. And lawyers do and even more in the past did deal with evidence. Anyway, the encyclopedias regret that the only source of information about Jesus is Matthew, and Mark, and Luke, and John, and Paul, and James, and Jude, and Peter, and etc. Well Simon Greenleaf the former dean of the Harvard Law School wrote a book entitle “The Testimony of the Evangelists” in which he just locked in on the four Gospel writers---Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John--stating that the testimonies of these four would be sufficient to stand up in any court of law.

At this point let me deal with a question more philosophical which is at the heart of the problem with the Encyclopedia. In the scientific method we would call it a predisposition to prove otherwise. In other words if you truly want to know the truth of a hypothesis you can not conclude otherwise at the beginning. Or stated another way by R.A. Millikan the Nobel prize winning physicist the scientific do not always act scientific nor do the education act in a factual, objective manner. Millikan won the Nobel prize in physics for the famous Millikan oil drop experiment which proved that

the electron is a discrete particle of a specific charge. He taught at the University of Chicago where he also worked on the Manhattan project that developed the Atomic Bomb. Later he was President of Cal Tech. Anyway lectured at large Universities and wrote a book on those lectures called "The Evolution of Science and Religion." He told of how his fellow scientist at the beginning of the twentieth century said that all the discoveries had already been made in science, it would only remain for future generations to improve the accuracies of those discoveries.

Well since that audacious and non-scientific conclusion among the scientists X-rays were discovered,

natural radioactivity, the photoelectric effect and the development of quantum physics, the atomic bomb, and on and on. You see the point, the very educated and the very scientific when that is the way they want it can be very illogical and non-scientific. Now, the philosophy of religion deals with those questions; but I prefer the more concrete approach of Christian Evidences.

When the Encyclopedias took on the Sources which is the Bible of 66 books, they did not realize that they were taking on the most provable of the Christian Apologetics. Here we have a book which claims to be words from God and the Word of God which we can investigate for ourselves. We can get our hands on it and examine both the internal and the external evidence that it is really what it claims to be. The evidences here are manifold as Day has listed so adequately in "The Wonder of the Word", or Nettles in "The Supernatural Origin of the Bible", or Werner in "The Bible as History": evidences like (1) the testimony of great men to the Bible; (2) the influence on civilization; (3) the predictions in the Old Testament fulfilled in the New; (4) the personal experience with it; and so on.

I like that last two and because of the shortness of my time I will briefly look it on those two.

(1). Personal Experience.

As a Chinese interpreter said as he was translating the book of Romans into his native language: "The one who wrote this book is the one who made me. He tells me things about myself that no one else knows."

(2). Predictions that come true.

Moses years ago told the Hebrew nation the difference between a real Prophet and a false prophet. If the prophet predicts something and it doesn't happen that is a false prophet, but if he predicts and it happens that is a real Prophet. So much of this is true about the Prophets of the Old Testament. So many predictions about Israel and about the life and death and resurrection of Jesus were predicted that came true. For brevity sake I momentarily look in on the cross and some of those predictions.

Looking at only one chapter in John, chapter 19, that records some of the historical events of the crucifixion.

(1). Psalm 22:18 predicted that the Roman soldiers would divide and then cast lots or gamble for the garments of Jesus, the tunic which was a seamless garment that they did not desire to split into four parts as the rest of the garments. The actual event is recorded in John 19:23,24.

(2). Psalm 24:20 predicted that not a bone in Christ's body would be broken. You recall the story how rather than leave the bodies on the cross at sunset they would break the bones to hasten death. The soldiers did in the cast of the two thieves crucified on either side of Jesus, but when they came to Christ, He was dead already and in order to prove that they pierced his side with a spear. Out flowed blood and water.

(3). Zechariah 12:10 predicted that Christ's enemies would look on or gap on Him when they pierced Him. This is recorded in John 19:34-37. And we could go on and on.

4-4: Christ, Marriage, and the Church.

Make a last point with a very practical comparison between Christ and the church and husband and wife in marriage. I will not deal with the solid lasting marriage that conforms to the pattern of the Bible--one male and female joined together for life--as I will not try to deal with the solid relationship between Christ and the Church, individual church members with Christ and collective the total church with Christ. Rather I want to talk about both Christ and the church and marriage in terms of strained relationships: (1) estranged, where they are not divorced but do not communicate; (2) where they are separated; and (3) divorce itself. Now how would you compare that the a Christian and His church of the whole church and Christ. Well, (1) the estranged relationship would be where he is not praying regularly and reading his Bible. You should talk to your wife at least every day. The second (2) the separated would be where the Christian or church has ceased to be a friend of Christ. Remember, Jesus said "You are my friends if you do what I have commanded you." So the separated Christian or church has ceased to do the things that Christ commanded.

(3) Third, the Christian or church divorced from Christ. That is where they have come to the point of living and activity without even thinking about what Christ and God want. The driving force has become "what I want". The desires of self and persons have come to replace the will of Christ.

Bottom Line:

George W. Truett delivered his famous sermon "Who Is Jesus?" in which he advocated that only three approaches are made to Jesus: (1) that He was good and

utterly what He claimed to be; (2) that He was bad, deceived and not to be believed at all; and (3) That He was good but mad. He deceived Himself on what He really was. Well, I think that there is a fourth that is really more prevalent today. And that is the people who have not thought about it at all. Who have not seriously been confronted with the question, "Who do you say that Jesus is?"

4-5: Jesus and The Builders of History

When Moses came to Pharaoh with the demand from God to let the children of Israel go, Pharaoh was shocked thinking that he was the ruler over Egypt. The ruler who thought he was the potter did not know that in reality he was the clay. The builder of history who thought he was in control and making history was in reality being controlled by God and used by God to make eternal history.

The Apostle Paul expressed it in this manner in Romans 9:

"For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "Even for this same purpose I have raised you up, that I might show My power in you, and that My name might be declared throughout all the earth." (Romans 9:17)

And:

"Does not the potter have power over the clay..." (Romans 9:21a)

After Pharaoh rejected God's demand through Moses, God started gently to convince Pharaoh who was really in ultimate control by making all the water of Egypt undrinkable. The scientists and engineers of the day duplicated the feat so that when God gave Pharaoh seven days to think about, Pharaoh decided that he was still the ruler and in control, would not change his mind, and then came the frogs. Biologists can make frogs also, and still Pharaoh decided that he was the real builder of history. The third judgment was lice, the fourth was a swarm of flies, the fifth was on the cattle of the Egyptians only, the sixth was a destructive hail such as had not been seen in Egypt. This was almost too much for Pharaoh, he called for Moses and Aaron saying that God was righteous, and he had sinned. Then, no doubt, he was reminded by his fellow advisors and cohorts as to who really ran Egypt, and he still refused to let the children of Israel go. God then sent the plague of locust, and then darkness for three days. Pharaoh said, "Okay, you can go but God has to compromise with me by you leaving your cattle here." You see, at least he wanted half control! Lastly came death on all the firstborn among the Egyptians, and finally with that Pharaoh let them go! You see, even then after consideration and the children of Israel had crossed the Red Sea, Pharaoh decided to use his army to show who was in control. You know the story: all the chariots, captains, and army of Egypt were killed in the flooding waters.

Now, where is my point: if you to read a book today on the history of Egypt, I doubt if you would read anything about these judgments of God on Egypt, especially of the destruction of the army in the Red Sea. And if you did it would include a lie about how

it happened. The newspapers of the day, the local gossip, and the history might read something like this: "Army accidentally killed in freak flood."

1. God Reversed the History Makers by Making the Stone which the Builders Rejected the Head

Cornerstone.

There is no need to pick on Pharaoh. History is replete with rulers and leaders that thought they were in control; what the Bible refers to as the "stone builders". I like to call them the "Makers" or "Builders of History". We have them today, and they have always existed throughout history. Quite often they are the religious leaders, often they are the community and government leaders, sometimes a combination of both, and sometimes even the leaders in the Christian church as we will see as we look closely at Judas "who was numbered among the twelve"

The Psalmist expressed it in this manner:

"Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?> The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us." (Psalm 2:1-3)

What you see here is:

- *first the heathen, the Gentiles or the non-people of God rage against the control of God
- *then the people of God themselves get carried away with their own concepts of reality thinking that they themselves are in control
- *the kings, the leaders, the rulers set themselves against the will and control of God
- *they take counsel against God and His Christ
- *they try to break the bands of heavenly control by making their own reality and their own history
- *they try to cast aside any ties that God and Christ have over their conscience or will

But you see, the stone which the builders of history are constantly rejected, the God of this Universe is constantly making the head cornerstone. The Prophet David continues in Psalms 2, telling of what God's response is to these "Builders of History".

"He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath and vex them in his sore displeasure." (Psalm 2:4,5)

God looks down from heaven and laughs at the littleness of it all. God holds these “Builders of History” in derision. Then finally, after a couple of thousands of years of warnings, He gets mad, showing His wrath and His sore displeasure. And that brings us to the period of history of Psalm 118, the day of the LORD that is a period of time that started with the First Coming of Christ and the First Coming of the Holy Spirit in great power on the first day of Pentecost after the Resurrection and will continue to that great and terrible day when God’s wrath is rained out.

2. The Period of History over Which God will allow a Rejection of the Chief Cornerstone. (1). This Period of Time or History is referred to as a Day in Psalm 118:24.

“This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.”

If you stop to think about it, we often use the word “day” in the same way to mean a period of time. For example, how often have you heard the expression “in this day and time”. It literally means this period of time or history. You can also see it from the context of Psalm 118 as it refers to that period of history where God dramatically intervened in human affairs by sending His Son to earth. Look at Psalm 118:26 which is quoted in Matthew 21:9.

“Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the LORD: we have blessed you out of the house of God.”

(2). Matthew quotes this verse from Psalm 118:26 in Matthew 21:9 as what the Jerusalem multitude was saying about Jesus during what history now calls “The Triumphal Entry”.

This was the time according to the Bible record when the “great multitude” spread garments out on the road in front of Jesus’ feet. Granted to them, this was the time of history of the re-establishment of the kingdom of God; and indeed it was, but they did not understand the true nature of the kingdom. Others of the multitude cut down branches from the trees and spread them in his path. Part of the multitude was in front of Him and His disciples, part were behind; and all were crying out, “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!”

(3). Now, at this same period of time the builders of history were at work. Here they are, in

Matthew 21:15, the chief priests and scribes. (The rulers and scholars, if you would!)

“But when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying out in the temple and saying, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David!’ they were indignant.” (Matthew 21:15)

How about that? The History Makers of the Time were “indignant”. Jesus had the nerve to go about the Temple causing the blind to see and the lame to walk. Did Jesus not understand that the Temple belonged to them! They were the Temple Builders and the keepers of the Temple Building! They said to Jesus:

“Do you hear what these are saying? And Jesus said to them, ‘Yes, have you never read, ‘Out of

the mouth of babes and nursing infants you have perfected praise.”
(Matthew 21:16)

(4). Psalm 118:22 tells us outright that this Period of Time in History is the time of God’s doing, a time during which the refused stone starts to become the head cornerstone.

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

4-6: Understanding from Peter’s First Sermon.

Peter More Completely identifies this Period of Cornerstone Rejection and Final Anger in his first Sermon on the first day of Pentecost after the Resurrection (Acts 2). You know this historical occasion. The twelve apostles, they had already replaced Judas who hanged himself with Matthias, the women and Mary the mother of Jesus was there, and the brothers of Jesus. “they were all with one accord in one place.” Things began to happen there was a loud noise like a rushing wind that caused the multitude of Jews there from every nation to come together with them to see what was going on. Not only the sound startled them, but they were further amazed that each of them could understand what the Christians were saying in their native tongues

**“Parthians, Medes, and Elamites; those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoins Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretians and Arabs--we hear them speaking in our tongues the wonderful works of God.”
(Acts 2:9-13)**

It was time for Peter to stand up and explain! The gathered multitude was perplexed. They were asking, “What does this mean?” It was then that Peter explained the Period of History which began here wwhich he calls the “last days” and ended with the “great and notable day of the LORD.”

1. Beginning of the Last Days: The Coming of the Holy Spirit in great and democratic power with the widespread of salvation through Christ.

2. The end of the Last Days: the great, notable, and terrible day of the LORD in which the angry of the LORD God will come on the rejectors of the chief cornerstone.

“But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: ‘And it will come to pass in the last days, says God, I will pour out of My spirit on all flesh; and you sons and your daughters will prophesy, and your young men will see visions, and your old men will dream dreams. And on My menservants and on My maidservants, I will pour out in those days of My Spirit; and they will prophesy. And I will shew wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath: blood, fire, and vapor of smoke. The sun will be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and notable day of the LORD. And it will come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.” (Acts 2:16-21 and Joel 2:28-32)

Having introduced this period of time in which God allows a cornerstone rejection, let us back up to the specific beginning of the stone rejection!

4-7: Choose Jesus or the Temple.

The Religious Leaders Rejected Jesus in Order to Save the Temple. At least, that is what they said.

Two days before the Passover, Jesus told His disciples plainer that He would be both betrayed

and crucified (Matthew 26:2). At the same time that Jesus was specifically prepared His twelve Apostles for that which was to come, the builders of history were making their plans. These specifically are mentioned in Matthew 26:3 as “the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders of the people”. These builders assembled at the palace of the high priest, Caiaphas. Their objective was to “plot” how they might take Jesus by trickery and kill him (Matthew 26:4). They had a couple of problems: (1) Being under the Roman government of Pontus Pilate, they were not allowed to put a person to death; and (2) Jesus was very popular among the people, and somehow, they would have to take him privately. They agreed during their assembly that if they tried to take Jesus during the feast of the Passover, they would be an uprising among the people against them.

Jesus and His Apostles proceeded to the house of Simon the leper in Bethany. This was the place

where a woman poured a costly bottle of alabaster oil on Jesus’ head as He sat at the table, The record states that the disciples were set back by the waste of such an expense, no doubt Judas the treasurer was leading in the discussion. But Jesus turned the discussion to another reminder of His crucifixion and burial as He said that the woman did this to prepare His body for burial. And this was all Judas could take. He went to the chief priests. The chief priests thought a gift had come from heaven; and in a way it had, as this was the way God had planned it and the way it had been predicted in both the Old Testament and by Jesus as the twelve had sat at the Last Supper.

Judas motivation was profit. As the Treasurer of the group he was beginning to feel insecure. Not only was he seeing money slip away as in the case of the woman wasting the ointment, but Jesus had already told them that the group would be broken,

up as they fled at His arrest. He could not take the loss of status and income. He asked the chief priests, "What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you in a private place?" Here, was answered prayer, the chief priests and the other makers of history thought; and they immediately counted out to him thirty pieces of silver. Judas bagged the money and left to find the appropriate opportunity to betray Jesus.

When the Passover came, Jesus sat down with his twelve apostles as the evening came to eat what has become known as the Last Supper. In the midst of the meal, Jesus plainly told them that one of the twelve was going to betray. Jesus did not need to see the thirty pieces of silver that already jingled in the pocket of Judas. The other disciples did not even know who He was talking about. It was at this Supper that Jesus broke the bread and passed the cup of the wine, saying that He would not drink of the cup of the vine again until with them again in the fulness of the kingdom. They sang a hymn and then they out to the Mount of Olives.

Once again Jesus reminded them of how the Shepherd would be struck and the sheep would scatter, how they all would be made to stumble by the arrest and crucifixion. But Jesus encouraged them with the words that after His resurrection from the dead He would before them into Galilee. Then they came to Gethsemane where Jesus prayed. And while Jesus was reminding them that he who would betray Him was on the way, Judas showed up with a great multitude from the chief priests and elders with swords and clubs. And when Jesus told the multitude that this was done in fulfillment of the Scriptures, the apostles forsook Him and fled.

"And those who had laid hold of Jesus led Him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. But Peter followed Him at a distance to the high priest's courtyard. And he went in and sat with the servants to see the end. Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death but found none. Even though many false witnesses came forward, still they found none. But at last two false witnesses came forward and said, 'This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.'" (Matthew 26:57-61)

4-8: Judas Betrayed Jesus in Order to Save His Own Temple.

Judas could not take the blow of the sudden loss of status and money. He looked for Jesus to immediately establish a material kingdom on earth, in which of course, he was one of the twelve would be a leader. He kept the money and had the security of holding onto the money. He could not stand to lose that security and status. I am sure that he thought, or at least rationalized in his own conscience that Jesus would simply be punished and then left go. Harrows, he never imagined even though Jesus told them plainly that the arrest would lead all the way to the death of Christ by crucifixion. And the next morning when the builders of history made their decision to put Jesus to death, binding Him and leading Him away to Pontius Pilate for the legal declaration of death, it suddenly hit the conscience of Judas what he had done.

1. Judas and the Potter's Field.

"Then Judas, who had betrayed Him, when he saw that He had been condemned, felt remorse and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, 'I have betrayed innocent blood.'" And they said, 'What is that to us? You see to that!' (This is another way of saying, "That is your problem!") And he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple, departed, and went and hanged himself. And the chief priests took the silver pieces and said, 'It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, because they are the price of blood.'" (Matthew 27:3-6)

Isn't that amazing. These Makers of History were willing to kill God's own Son. They were willing to find false witnesses and to encourage and make lies. But they had ethics. They would not put the thirty pieces of silver back into the temple treasury from which it was taken in the first place. It is blood money they said. It is the money of betrayal.

"And they took counsel and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. Therefore that field has been called the Filed of Blood to this day. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, 'And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the value of Him who was priced, whom they of the children of Israel priced, and gave them for the potter's field, as the LORD directed me.'" (Matthew 27:7-10 and Jeremiah 32:6-9)

2. Judas as the prototype of the Man of Perdition.

The book of Acts in chapter 1 has several very interesting beginnings just before the day of Pentecost and Peter's Sermon in Acts 2, including the necessity of finding a replacement for Judas among the twelve. Peter and Luke reiterate much of what was read about Judas in Matthew, adding that (1) Peter explained what happened to Judas quoting two different places from David in the Psalms, (2) Judas fell headlong into the Potter's Field, his entrails gushing out from which we can conclude that Judas hanged himself on a cliff over the Potter's field, the rope broke, and fell onto the Field of Blood; (3) In the language of Jerusalem, it became known as "Akel Dama", the Field of Blood; (4) the quote from Psalm 69:25 that Judas habitation would be desolate and that no one would live in it; and (5) the second quote at which we desire to look more carefully as the context is background for Judas as the prototype of the Son of Perdition of II Thessalonians.

"His office let another take." (Acts 1:20b)

3. Judas, Psalm 109, and the Man of Perdition.

If you look at the quote and the context of the quote in Psalm 109, you will see that Judas is a prototype of the wicked, deceitful, and lying man who is in turn also a prototype of the Son of Perdition that must be revealed before the Second Coming of Christ.

First, the context of the quote in Psalm 109:8. **“When he shall be judged, let him be condemned: and let his prayer become sin. Let his days be few; and let another take his office. Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow.”** (109:7-9)

However, besides containing a prediction that Jesus and Peter both applied to Judas, it in the context as a general discussion of the typical wicked, deceitful, and lying person. You see that in the very introduction of chapter 109 in the second verse:

“For the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful are opened against me: they

have spoken against me with a lying tongue.”
(Psalm 109:2)

In turn both Judas and the context of Psalm 109 are background for understanding the Son of Perdition from the Apostle Paul in II Thessalonians. You must never forget that Judas was numbered among the original twelve; and as such Judas is a prototype of the wicked, deceitful, and lying person among the Christian church, and even a leader in the Christian church.

First remember what was said earlier about the Period of Time from the life of Christ and the Coming of the Holy Spirit in Power and the end of time, the last days of the Bible. Also recall how that when Paul wrote second Thessalonians there was a problem that some there thought they had missed out on those end time events, namely the Second Coming of Christ. So Paul writes:

“Now we ask you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.” (II Thessalonians 2:1-4)

You see what I mean by deceitful, wicked, and lying. This is the ultimate of the wicked man, far beyond Psalm 109 and Judas: this Man of Perdition who is revealed before the end of time, sits in the very temple of God and claims to be God. He solicits and gains worship from people as God.

This gets us somewhat closer to understanding when the end times is. Paul says that first of all

there will be a falling away from the Christian faith. This may not help us greatly since there was a falling away at Ephesus even immediately after Paul left this area of his longest ministry. But the Man of Perdition must first be revealed. And Paul goes on to say in the context that the mystery of lawlessness, or wickedness, is already at work;

and at that point in time when the Holy Spirit no longer restrains that spirit of wickedness in the world, then the Man of Sin will be revealed.

4-9: The Cornerstone is Alive!

The Cornerstone Was Still Alive, Active and Out of Control. Meanwhile, as we think of Judas, his tragedy and the Man of Sin with all the evil that connotes, we must remember above all that the Cornerstone Christ is still active and out of control. "The stone which the builders rejected has become the head cornerstone." The builders and makers of history could not exercise control over Jesus and His followers.

1. The Builders of History Could Not Control Jesus.

They made their history. They plotted and schemed and planned and found a way to capture Jesus privately; then they found a way to get Him wiped off the face of the earth. Or so they thought. But they were worried. They went to Pilate, saying when this fellow was alive, He said that in three days He would come back from the dead. They requested of Pilate a guard on the stone that covered the grave. You see, they just could not stop being stone builders. Pilate agreed and they therefore secured the tomb with guards.

Then when the guards came running back to explain how an angel feared and they fell dead, the

builders of history made them a large sum of money to keep them quiet. They like the man of perdition, the wicked man, promoted a lie!

"Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened. And when they had assembled with the elders and taken counsel, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, saying, 'Tell them His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept. And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will appease him and make you secure. So they took the money and did as they were instructed, and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.'" (Matthew 28: 1-15)

Now, that is real history making, by hook or by crook! And all it took was a large sum of money. You know how they say you buy anything with enough money. Well these stone builders had enough money to make their own history!

And that was the end of the matter! No, not hardly, Jesus started making appearances from the grave; and the beginning of Acts tells us that Jesus made appearances over a 40-day period. Can you imagine how hard that was on the history makers. Jerusalem was a small city in that whatever happened in one part of the city was quickly spread to other parts. The history makers were busy putting out fires about the appearances of Jesus all around the city.

2. The Builders of History Could not Control the Followers of Jesus who carried on all that "Jesus began to both do and teach."

And then when Jesus Ascended, the real spread of the Gospel of Jesus got started. By the time Peter stood up before the group to lead in selection of a twelfth Apostle to take the place of Judas, there had already been added 120 more people to the group (Acts 1:15). Then on the first day of Pentecost after the Resurrection of Christ with the Coming of the Holy Spirit in great power, three thousand more Christians were added to the group (Acts 2:41). And Acts 2:47 records how that every day more were added to the church. No, Jesus and the cause of Jesus was hardly under control.

3. You see the frustrations of the builders of history in Acts 4:16-17 where after Peter's healing

of the man lame for 40 years, they took Peter and John captive.

"But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, saying, 'What shall we do to these men? For, indeed, that a notable miracle has been done by them is evident to all who dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. But so that it spreads no further among the people, let us severely threaten them, that from now on they speak to no man in this name.'" (Acts 4:15-17)

4-10: How are the Living Stones today?

Hopefully today the living stones that relate to the chief cornerstone are out of control. The Sermons that the Apostle Peter preached in the first chapters of Acts find complete expression in the first and second epistles from Peter, and this elaborate on both the cornerstone and living stones as well as that period of time of the last days.

1. I Peter.

You see in I Peter 2 how the Apostle Peter takes the theme of the corner stone and stones that he initiated from the Prophets and form his first Sermons in Acts to develop the "living stone" and "living stones".

"Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, 'Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believe on Him will be no mean be put to shame.' Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, 'The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone,' and 'A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense.'" (I Peter 2:4-8)

2. II Peter.

And beyond that we are indebted to Peter and the Holy Spirit through Peter developing more thoroughly the period of time of the last days.

“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Seeing then that all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought we to be...”

4-11. Jesus Proclaimed in the Old Testament and Established with His Teachings in the New Testament by the Apostle Matthew.

You have seen how much of Jesus is in Matthew. Now you will see how much of the Old Testament is in Matthew. There are 63 quotes from the Old Testament in the book of Matthew. Likewise much of **Jesus** in the quotes and the interpretation in the New Testament.

1. Genesis 1:27 and Matthew 19:4. Moses allowed the people to put away their wives

because of "the hardness of their hearts", but this was not what God the Father originally intended for marriage.

2. Genesis 2:24 and Matthew 19:5. Husband and wife in marriage become "one flesh".

3. Genesis 4:8 and Matthew 23:35. All the accumulated knowledge from God, and the peoples rejection of that knowledge, brings an accumulated responsibility on each generation.

4. Genesis 5:2 and Matthew 19:4. God made male and female at the beginning a complimenting couple and called them "man".

5. Genesis 6:11-13 and Matthew 24:37. People at the second coming of **Christ** will be going about the normal routines of life and making a living as if God and **Christ** did not exist even as in the days of Noah when sudden destruction came upon all the earth.

6. Genesis 7:7,21 and Matthew 24:37. No man or **Christ Himself** can predict that day,

for only God the Father knows.

7. Genesis 18:14 and Matthew 19:26. It is difficult for men of wealth and position to be saved, and this is part of the marvel of faith in God.

8. Genesis 19:24 and Matthew 11:24. The tolerance of the Judgment Day depends on the

knowledge of God and **Christ** to which peoples have been exposed.

9. Exodus 20:13,14 and Matthew 5:21,27. Anger and lust in God's sight is as much a violation of the Ten Commandments as is murder and adultery. It is the thoughts that God is as much concerned about as the actions.

10. Exodus 21:24 and Matthew 5:38. Don't respond to people's wrong with legality and
justice respond with grace and mercy.
11. Leviticus 19:12,18 and Matthew 5:33,43. Count on the Word of God more than your own oaths and bless and pray for your enemies.
12. Leviticus 24:20 and Matthew 5:38. Do not respond to evil in kind but respond with grace.
13. Deuteronomy 6:13,16 and Matthew 2:6. Herod the king sought for the time and place of the birth of the **King** of the Jews in order to kill **Him**.
14. Deuteronomy 8:3 and Matthew 4:4. Priority is to be given for the things of God over making a living.
15. Deuteronomy 10:20 and Matthew 4:10. Only God is to be served and worshipped.
16. Deuteronomy 19:15 and Matthew 18:16. If two Christians disagree, first they should try to settle it; then if unsuccessful, two or more other Christians should be involved; and if that doesn't work, then it should be taken before the church in assembly.
17. Deuteronomy 23:3-6 and Matthew 5:43. Love your enemies and pray for those who use or abuse you.
18. Deuteronomy 24:1 and Matthew 5:31. Divorce unless based on the cause of fornication is adultery.
19. I Samuel 21:6,16 and Matthew 12:2,3. **Christ** is > the Temple or any place of worship as **Lord** of the sabbath day as **Lord** of all.
20. I Chronicles 1:1-34 and Matthew 1:1-17. All of the Old Testament from Abraham to **Christ** can be divided into three divisions based on the actual genealogy of **Jesus**: (1) 14 generations from Abraham to David; (2) 14 generations from David to Captivity; and (3) 14 generations from Captivity to **Christ**.

4-12: MMatthew and Psalms.

21. Psalms 2:7 and Matthew 3:17. God the Father gave verbal testimony to **Jesus** as His

Son in whom He was pleased.

22. Psalms 2:7 and Matthew 17:5. God repeated that verbal testimony on the Mount of transfiguration, adding to listen to Him as Moses also said of the Prophet **Messiah** in Deuteronomy.

23. Psalms 10:25 and Matthew 5:7. Mercy is a characteristic of God, so **Jesus** teaches mercy for those who would also have the mercy of God.

NOTE: Even part of the famous sermon on the mount of Matthew 5 is based on the Old Testament. And by the way it is in this same chapter 5 of Matthew where **Jesus** said that **He** did not come to destroy the law and the prophets but to establish. And stated that heaven and earth will pass away before one jot or one tittle passes from the Old Testament.

24. Psalms 22:1 and Matthew 27: 46. Some the people watching the Crucifixion thought

Jesus was calling for the help of Elijah, while **He** was crying to God who had to turn His back on **Him**

as **He** bore the sins of the world.

25. Psalms 22:19 and Matthew 27: 35. The Romans crucified **Jesus** at the insistence of the Jewish leaders, gambling for **His** clothing, watching for weaknesses, and taunting **Him** and the Jews with a sign, "This is the **King** of the Jews".

26. Psalms 24:3-5 and Matthew 5:8. Those who heart of the human spirit is declared legally righteous by God through **Christ** shall see God the Father personally; and those same human spirits are given a change of heart that permits the ultimate achievement of purity.

27. Psalms 37:11 and Matthew 5:5. Those who meekly get under the load of God and **Christ**

are those that inherit as new citizens the new heart under the new heavens.

28. Psalms 48:2 and Matthew 5:33f. **Jesus**, the master teacher, constantly comes back to marriage and divorce as the most fundamental expression of those who will be new citizens on the new earth; and because much of the Old Testament Prophets and laws deal with such matters consistent with the character and thoughts of God Himself.

29. Psalms 55 and Matthew 5:6. Those who give a priority to the need of the righteousness of God over other physical needs will find themselves satisfied in this life, and more so in the life to come on the new earth where God Himself will dwell with them, making His home on this new earth.

30. Psalms 62:12 and Matthew 16:27. When **Jesus** comes the second time, in power and with **His** angels to enforce His power, then **He** will reward every man that has ever lived on this earth according to the works that each has done.

31. Psalms 69:21 and Matthew 27:34. **Jesus** was crucified at Golgotha, the place of the skull, according to the prediction of the Prophet David.

32. Psalms 78-2 and Matthew 13:35. **Jesus** would not speak to the multitudes except in parables which was also a prediction from the Prophet David.

33. Psalms 82 and Matthew 21:16. When the multitude cried "Hosanna to the **Son** of David", they as babes on the wisdom of God were yet reflecting some of the wisdom of God as recorded in the Old Testament.

34. Psalms 89:4,26,38,48 and Matthew 16:18. God reveals truth to men consistent with

His Word as predicted in the Old Testament.

35. Psalms 91:11 and Matthew 4:6. It is foolish to pray, "Lead us not into temptation", then to use our freedom of choice to lead ourselves into temptation, tempting God and God's Word.

36. Psalms 118:26 and Matthew 21:9. The fickle multitude, babes on the wisdom of God, on one day cried, "Blessed is the **one** who comes in the name of the LORD God", then on the next day cried, "Crucify **Him**"!

37. Psalms 118:26 and Matthew 23:38f. Yet that same multitude of Jerusalem will see **Jesus** once again at the end of time, again crying,

"Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord".

4-13: Matthew and the Prophets.

38. Hosea 11:1 and Matthew 2:15. This prophetic prediction and the fulfillment in Matthew illustrates the double or beyond nature of predictions: (1) God called Israel as His children out of Egypt under Moses; (2) God sent then called His own **Son** out of Egypt where He was sent to protect **Him** from Herod; and (3) In Revelation the seed of the woman are Christians who are likewise protected from Satan.

39. Isaiah 2:18,19 and Matthew 11:5. **Jesus** preached the Gospel, healed the sick, and

raised the dead as predicted in the Old Testament--a double witness from God the Father.

40. Isaiah 5:1f and Matthew 21:33. **Jesus'** parable of the householder and the vineyard was only a parable and difficult to understand in the same sense that it's counterpart and foundation is hard to understand in the Prophet Isaiah.

41. Isaiah 6:9,10 and Matthew 13:14,15. **Jesus** spoke in parables so that most would hear and not hear, see and not see--not understand.

42. Isaiah 7:14 and Matthew 1:23. An angel told Joseph in a dream that Mary's conception

was of the Holy Spirit, being a fulfillment of Isaiah 7:14 that a virgin would conceive, bringing "**God with us**" into the world.

43. Isaiah 8:14 and Matthew 21:44. The Pharisees in the parable of the stone and the builders that **Jesus** spoke of them.

44. Isaiah 13:9,10 and Matthew 24:30. Before the Second Coming of **Christ** the old heavens shall be shaken in preparation for the new heavens, the old earth in preparation for the new earth; then **Christ** shall appear to all in heaven, and **His** angels will gather the chosen of God from all the areas of the earth.

45. Isaiah 14:13-15 and Matthew 11:23. God will judge cities by the works of God that

have been done in them.

46. Isaiah 29:13 and Matthew 15:8,9. It is hypocritical in God's sight to approach God and worship God with the lips with hearts from dedication to Him; and this worship is vain, a kind of worship that teaches for doctrines the commandments and traditions of men.

47. Isaiah 40:3 and Matthew 3:3. John the Baptist was the one of Isaiah 40:3 who prepared the way of the **Lord Jesus Christ**. (Also Malachi.)

48. Isaiah 42:1 and Matthew 3:17. After **Jesus'** baptism God the Father also gave verbal

testimony that **Jesus** was indeed **His Son**, and that He was pleased with what **He** was doing.

49. Isaiah 42:1 and Matthew 17:5. The second time was on the Mount of transfiguration.

50. Isaiah 42:1-4 and Matthew 12:18-21. God was also giving testimony to **His Son** in the miracles which **Jesus** performed.

51. Isaiah 49:12 and Matthew 8:11. Gentiles from all over the earth will sit down with

Hebrew leaders like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.

52. Isaiah 53:4 and Matthew 8:7. In physical and spiritual healing, **Jesus** carried and carries the sorrows and griefs of the world.

53. Isaiah 56:7 and Matthew 21:13. What God has intended for His houses of worship have consistently been perverted to serve the purposes of men.

54. Isaiah 61:2 and Matthew 5:4. Those that mourn on earth godwardly shall be comforted on earth, even more in the new heavens and on the new earth to come.

NOTE: More in the Sermon on the Mount from **Jesus** in Matthew 5.

55. Isaiah 62:11 and Matthew 21:5. **Jesus** gave instructions to His disciples in order to fulfill what He knew to be Old Testament predictions; but the primary point is that the Word of God proclaimed in the Old or New Testament will inevitably be fulfilled.

56. Isaiah 66:1 and Matthew 5:33f. From the Old Testament and the New we keep coming

back to the very basic relationships of life where God's Word is more important than our own oaths and resolutions, God's patterns for life more important than our own.

57. Micah 5:2,7,8 and Matthew 2:5,6. Herod called the religious leaders to tell him where

Jesus would be born, and they replied that in Bethlehem would be born the prince that would rule

Israel.

58. Jeremiah 7:11 and Matthew 21:13. **Jesus** cast out merchandizing from the temple as

God wanted it to be a house of worship.

59. Jeremiah 31:7,15 and Matthew 2:17,18. God knowing all the works of earth including His own, knew and predicted that Herod would kill all the children in Bethlehem from two years old and under.

60. Daniel 11:31 and Matthew 24:15. The "abomination of desolation" of Daniel happened

in Jerusalem when the Roman general Titus destroyed the temple and Jerusalem.

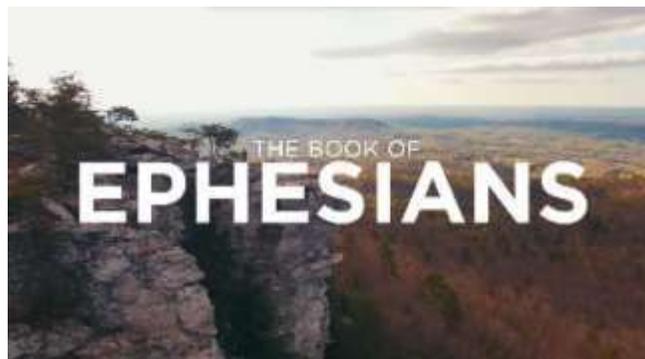
61. Isaiah 29:13 and Matthew 15:7. Lip service in worship is not enough, it takes the heart of the human spirit to worship in Spirit and truth.

62. Zechariah 9:9 and Matthew 21:4. As well as of other Old Testament Prophets when **Jesus** rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, it was in fulfillment of several Old Testament Prophets and predictions as Zechariah.

63. Malachi 3:1 and Matthew 11:10. John the Baptist as the new Elias fulfilled Malachi's prediction as well as Isaiah 40:3.

Do you doubt that the Old Testament and the New Testament is about Jesus! And, of course, it is true that the New Testament was required to properly understand and interpret the Old Testament. Since the Old Testament Scriptures were "of no private interpretation", God through Christ and the Holy Spirit provided in the New Bible of New Testament with Old Testament quotes the proper interpretation.

III. Batten down the Hatches on the Unity God the Holy Spirit has Provided. (From Chapter 1 of One Commentary on Ephesians.



At this the beginning of Bible study on the One Commentary on the Bible, a friend knowing the Bible has pointed out the need for more Christ and Grace, so here it is in Paul's statement of faith and practice in Ephesians which is really a short summary of Ephesians chapter by chapter.

Introduction to Chapter 1 of One Commentary on Ephesians.

1. Christ in Ephesians.

"IN CHRIST", if there can be a dominant phrase and truth in Ephesians, even beyond that of the ultimate integration of ONE, it is faith, salvation, and believe as a Christian in Christ. If we preachers of the Christian faith had been more

consistent with the whole New Testament, we would have made IN CHRIST a substitute for the word Christian which through the ages has lost so much meaning. The very purpose of Ephesians is to show the Purpose of God Himself for man and the universe through and IN CHRIST as expressed in this introduction of the first chapter.

Ephesians 1:9-10 New King James Version (NKJV)

“(God) having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth – in Him.”

2. Grace in Ephesians.

Chaplain Mike Harrison, fellow sailor and student at Ouachita and Southwestern Seminary, pointed out the need for more Grace and Christ, so I requested patience on both as Ephesians certainly deals with them extensively; and perhaps he was subtly pointing out that the book of Ephesians itself was more important than the Sun Grist’s One Commentary on the book, point well taken. So, the normal flow of the commentary as first Desktop Published in 1984 is interrupted, or really made better, with some written-on Paul’s Statement of Faith and Practice written in 2007 as volume 4 of the Learn Christ Bible Commentaries, “Christ, Paul, and the Falling Away”, the book of Hebrews. To get to the point or two points, Ephesians 2:8,9 is the greatest and most famous statement of Grace in the Bible, at least the one with which most people are familiar:

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.” (KJV)

Once again however, as in all of the SunGrist commentaries, this verse be put back and kept in the total context of chapter 2, the whole book of Ephesians, the New Testament, and the whole Bible; and this will be done by the grace of God.

*Ephesians 2 New King James Version
(NKJV) By Grace Through Faith*

2 And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, ² in which you once walked according to the ^[a]course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, ³ among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

⁴ But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶ and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His

kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast. ¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Brought Near by His Blood

¹¹ Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh – who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands – ¹² that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

Christ Our Peace

¹⁴ For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, ¹⁵ having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶ and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. ¹⁷ And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. ¹⁸ For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the

Father.

Christ Our Cornerstone

¹⁹ Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰ having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, ²¹ in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, ²² in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.”

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%20&version=NKJV>

NOTE: Mike are you more satisfied with this quote of the second chapter and the little outline Gateway has inserted for us of the chapter: (1) By Grace Through Faith; (2) Brought Near Through His Blood; (3) Christ our Peace; and (4) Christ our Cornerstone. Having acquiesced to this more classical Southern Baptist approach, it must be agreed that in spite of our teaching and preaching on this, or the lack of, whatever the case may be CHRIST HAS NOT BEEN PROPERLY LEARNED in our convention or our convention churches. (which is Paul’s point for the church at Ephesus, before John has to tell the same church in Revelation that they have left their first love, that love being Christ; however, we will come to that in Ephesians 4, “But you have not so learned Christ...” Guess who first taught them about Christ, the Apostle Paul who preached and taught in Ephesus longer than any

other region in his missionary journeys, so the problem was with the hearer and their social environment not with the message that was delivered.

3. Paul, or really God the Holy Spirit through Paul, describes our main failure among Southern Baptist people in Ephesians 4:26, "Spare no effort to make fast with bonds of peace the unity which the Spirit gives..." (NEV)

God the Holy Spirit first of all provides a unity in the Bible of the Old and New Testaments: it is the Christ Jesus of Nazareth in the NT of the 4 Gospels and other NT books and the Spirit unites with the Christ for the Prophet Messiah of Moses and the OT.

4. Granted the book of Ephesians is primarily a large message for Christians only, but hopefully during the course of this Bible study the message of Christ and Grace and One might be an example in its purest unadulterated and unspotted form for non-believers like John Quinn and Shirley McMichael. Hopefully you Christians see that in Ephesians 1:17-19:

"...that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe..."

1-1: Paul's Statement of Faith and Practice in Ephesians as an Introduction to the

ONE of ultimate integration in One Commentary on Ephesians.

The history of theology, Christianity, and denominations illustrates the discovery of a verse or verses of Scripture which surprises some new group, which when isolated out of the context of the book from which it came and the whole Bible, creates additional divisions and distinction. You recall the example of the person who read in one place in the Bible "Judas went out and hanged himself", then put that together with "go thou and do likewise". It has led many to conclude that you can prove anything from the Bible. Well, not if you keep a verse in the chapter context, the chapter in the book context, the book in the New Testament or Old Testament context, and the Testament in the total context. In other words, the larger the amount of the Bible that is included in your "Statement of Faith and Practice", the higher degree of probability do you have of high fidelity with what God through the Holy Spirit, through Jesus, the Apostles, and Prophets had put in there in the first place. This is implied in the statement by the Apostle Peter that "no scripture is of any private interpretation". The interpretation of Jesus is to be found in the writings of the Apostles; the interpretation of the Apostles is to be found by the inherent agreements through the Spirit between the writing of one Apostle with another; and the Apostles, especially Paul, Matthew, and Jesus specialized in the

interpretation of the Old Testament Prophets, quoting often in their writings from the Prophets and them through what Jesus taught them and how the Holy Spirit guided them, explained what the Prophets meant.

All this has been written to come to the necessity of putting as much Scripture as possible into any significant Bible-based "Statement of Faith and Practice"; and the recognition of the fact that we can do no better than to use the book of Ephesians, written by the Apostle Paul from the human side and by the Holy Spirit on the supernatural side, as a minimal "Statement of Faith and Practice".

Let me illustrate how this was the intention of the Apostle Paul in the first place, and consequently also the intention of God as the Source of Scripture. Remember that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God..." One of the greatest works of God in history, second perhaps only to the Crucifixion of Christ on the cross for the salvation provision to the whole world, is God's creation through Apostles and Prophets and Jesus of the "Oracles of God", the Word of God, the book of 66 books that we have in our possession. Study carefully the content of the first ten books that the Apostle Paul wrote, then study carefully Ephesians and the twin of Colossians carefully, and you will find that Ephesians is a condensed summary of those first ten books such as Romans, I and II Corinthians, Hebrews, Galatians, and so on. **{See the LEARN CHRIST commentary, volume 4, "Christ, Paul, and the Falling Away" for more on this and how Paul was chosen by Christ to have the ministry of being the chief editor of the New Testament. You will find good material on this also in volume 1, "The Old Testament According to the New Testament".}** Also, this makes Ephesians therefore the prime candidate to summarize all of the Bible, and to be the prime candidate to be the most Bible-comprehensive "Statement of Faith and Practice". How angry such an approach must make Satan and the disciples of Satan, who like Satan, would take Scripture out of context to prove some pet theory, to make disciples after themselves, and to win from Satan the status in the world he promised to Jesus by quoting Scripture out of context.

Of course, Jesus set the pattern for Paul and the other Apostles to quote extensively from the Old Testament in their teachings and writings; but Paul was the chief practitioner of that pattern. You will notice that books like Romans, Hebrews, and I and II Corinthians are full of Old Testament quotes with an explanation of the correct meaning accompanying the quote. This is what is meant by "no scripture is of any private interpretation". Jesus and the Apostles quote and explain the proper interpretation of the Old Testament Prophets; the proper interpretation comes by letting Paul explain John on the same subject, and vice versa, and letting Peter explain Paul and John, and Jesus through Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John explain all of them, and vice versa. Never, never will you find a contradiction between any of the Apostles and Jesus or of the Prophets and Apostles. If you think you have found one, it is a personal problem; and you must enlarge the total context of your Bible study.

Anyway, back to the main point: you will see in the first 10 books of Paul a large number of quotes, then suddenly with the writing of Ephesians, almost no quotes. Why? It is

time to summarize all the great truths of God that Paul has written about in the first ten books. And never forget, how qualified Paul was on the Old Testament. Paul before conversion was a “lawyer”; and in Israel that meant an authority of the law of the nation which was also the Old Testament. Granted Paul needed “conversion” on the road of Damascus in order to remove the “veil” which blinded in the proper understanding of the Old Testament, which he wrote about as still in the way of most Jews for seeing the proper interpretation of the Old Testament; true also Paul needed immediately after conversion and some instruction from Ananias, private time in Arabia with the Ascended Christ to get straightened out his own interpretations and understandings of Scripture, even a little time with Peter and James recording their testimonies of personal experience with Jesus {later to be the manuscripts that Paul left for John Mark and Dr. Luke to write the Gospels that Paul sponsored as chief editor of the New Testament}; and then lastly before writing the majority of the New Testament books, 14 of 27, Paul needed to study again through the Old Testament in the light of his recent experiences and teachings from Jesus and with guidance from the Holy Spirit, about whom no doubt Jesus has taught him. What did Paul do during this study again through the Bible during those so-called seven silent years at Tarsus? He must have made a record on parchments and books of all those quotes that he would later use so extensively in books like Romans, Hebrews, and Corinthians, even in the little epistle of Galatians.

Well, you see the point: the first ten books from Paul are a summary of the Old Testament with proper interpretations, also a summary of his own conversion experience and the teachings of Jesus in Arabia; and Ephesians is a summary of those first ten books, hence a summary of the Bible itself; and therefore is a prime candidate from the Word of God for a comprehensive “Statement of Faith and Practice”.

1-2: Ephesians Chapter One: Statements of Faith and Understandings, the “spiritual blessings in heavenly places”. {If you desire you can correlate these enumerated spiritual blessings even with the beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount.}

1. Some Supporting Bible understandings for Major Statements of Faith.

(1). (Ephesians 1:1a): Paul was an Apostle of Jesus Christ, called personally by the Ascended Christ on the road to Damascus and specially trained by Jesus in Arabia. **{Later in Ephesians we will learn that it is the Ascended Christ that calls Apostles as well as evangelists and pastors and gave special gifts to those men for the benefit of the total body of Christ, the church.}** Based on those verses as a starting point, we go on to the total context of the Bible to find that only Apostles and Prophets can get and give revelations, or Scripture.

(2). (Ephesians 1:1b) It was the will of God for Paul to be an Apostle. Jesus when He called Paul, like always in everything He did, was only doing the will of God; and was expressing fully the will of God.

(3). (Ephesians 1:2). True Christians or believers are called “saints” in the Bible in order among other things to distinguish between “the faithful in Christ Jesus” and the unfaithful, between the tares and the wheat, between the sheep and the goats. Always from Jesus and all the Apostles in the Bible is the recognition that all who chose to name the name of Christ do not belong to Christ. In that final Day of the LORD and Lord, many will say to Christ “Lord, Lord”; and Christ will say, “depart from me you that work iniquity, for I never knew you.”

2. Major Statements of Faith and Practice in Ephesians

1.

(1). (Ephesians 1:3a) The only God of the Universe, the same God of the Bible, is the “God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ”; and God is only our Father because first He was the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, and we have accepted them for What and Who they are. **{Also, God has adopted us through the work of the Spirit, and the Spirit causes us to cry “Abba” for Father.}**

(2). (Ephesians 1:3b). The false and itching ears teachers going about to teach and preach the Gospel of Wealth, the corollary of success, and the Gospel of Prosperity need to be re-focused again on the primary place of “spiritual blessings” as in heavenly places. The prosperous and wealthy just cannot get their lusts and eyes off material possessions here on earth, and off their desires to justify themselves for lives dedicated to seeking first these other things instead of the kingdom of God and God’s righteousness.

(3). God chose us to be believers from before the foundation of the world,
(Ephesians 1:4a). This is predestination, sometimes in Theology called Calvinism,
and contrasted to

Arminianism or free-will. Both are true in the Bible, but beyond our complete understanding even as we cannot fully understand the nature of light itself: how it can

be both wave-like in nature and sometimes act like a particle. We cannot even comprehend the molecule of water. A best example of how both are true in the Bible is

the shipwreck of Paul on the way to Rome. God predestined and told Paul, Paul telling also the sailors, that no one would be lost in the shipwreck; but yet later Paul invoked the

freedom of choice of the sailors in that he told them if they left the ship for the life raft

they could not be saved. You see freedom of choice and predestination were both there.

(4). God chose us to be sanctified, “holy and blameless before Him in love”
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["work out your own salvation with fear and trembling"]; and accept it as it is by grace. Ephesians 1:6 continues of God's Pleasure, the famous commentary by W.O. Carver expressing that in the title for Ephesians of "The Glory of God in the Christian Calling".

(6). We are adopted and justified, the justification expressed as “accepted by God” (Ephesians 1:6b). How grand it is, Paul is saying, to be accepted by the “Beloved Father”, He that runs and controls all and is the only Eternal God.

(7). Wow, we just can grasp the rapid advance of statements of faith about salvation, what Paul likes to call the spiritual blessings in heavenly places, as we go from predestination to adoption to justification, and now in Ephesians 1:7 to redemption and forgiveness.

a. Redemption, or the buying back of us to God, is by the blood of Christ, a pungent phrase to describe how Jesus died on the cross for our sins.

b. We have forgiveness of sins by God through the Lord Jesus Christ and by the grace of God. **{Is that not a good statement of faith about salvation! Did I not hear an Amen or two coming out of Norway?}**

(8). The Mystery of the Will of God, which only He could reveal through Jesus and the Apostles, is that He might get together all things that are in heaven and in earth under the Lordship of Christ (Ephesians 1:9,10). This mystery of the will of God was manifested by God through Christ at one certain time in history, when Jesus lived and died, which the Bible calls “in the dispensation of the Fullness of the times”, In other words at the time and place in human history chosen by God.

(9). Here we go again on more spiritual blessings in heavenly places and more on predestination by God (Ephesians 1:11-14). This spiritual blessing is our inheritance, our future and security if you would! This inheritance or future heritage is part of the predestined purpose of God. Even as James quoted from the Prophets at the Great Jerusalem conference in Acts of how “known unto God are all His works from the beginning”, even so Paul echoes this same doctrine in the “Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will”. You just know that Paul is summarizing here from Romans where he has previously written, “and we know that all things work together for good for those who love the Lord and the called according to His purpose.” Here as Paul goes on, we see our common inheritance with those who first believed in Christ, us being among those who later have “trusted after hearing the word of truth, which is the gospel of our salvation! Wow, as we preacher boys use to say at Bible college, “that will preach!”

(10). Although the “believe and be baptized” of Ephesians 1:13 continues on our inheritance started above, I set it out as a separate doctrinal statement of faith. The prime baptism of the 14 letters of Paul and of the Bible is the one baptism of salvation. Believe is our part, and the one baptism that comes with real faith is the part done by God. This one baptism of salvation is called “the seal of God”. Paul is again summarizing what he wrote in II Timothy books about “nevertheless the foundation of God stands sure, having this seal that God knows His own, and let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.” The Holy Spirit is the “guarantee”, the surety if you

would, of us to-be- completed salvation; the security and guarantee of our inheritance in salvation. The inheritance is not complete until the full redemption of body and soul at the Second Coming of Christ **{Thessalonians}**, when the purchased possession **{us}** becomes completed!

NOTE: Sorry this simple statement of Faith and practice is so long; but the praise to

God and Bible just flows on, comparing Scripture with Scripture!

(11). {Ephesians 1:17): The Holy Spirit given to all believers is also the Spirit of “wisdom and revelation”. Do not misread this verse. Revelation is not given to all believers, but rather the Spirit of Revelation. What this is another way of saying, as Paul does in the first 10 letters, is that the same Holy Spirit who wrote the Bible, giving the revelations through Apostles and Prophets and Jesus, is the same Holy Spirit that lives and teaches inside the believer. What you will find in the context of Ephesians 1:17-18 is a clear distinction between revelation and illumination. What happened in the completed writing of the Word of God through Apostles and Prophets, the 66 books we called Bible. That Bible only is “revelation”; and what happens to us as believers when gain understanding from the Bible with the help of the Holy Spirit is “illumination”.

“the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power...” (Ephesians 1:18,19)

NOTE: Please stay away from the current and popular heresy of “God told me”, or “God gave me a word”, or even worse the “God gave me a revelation”--all of which sound like God is revealing new Word of God through you or your Bible teachers; and which tends to confuse illumination and revelation. Please read carefully first and second Corinthians where Paul and the Word of God, once and for all, dealt with this problem in a church body where members thought either “the Word of God came to them only” or that “the Word of God came out of them only”. This conceited and self- serving attitude breeds all sorts of false practices such as: (a) Gnosticism where certain church members claim to have special revelations and wisdom that others do not have; (b) self-gratification and disturbances in worship where everybody has a song, a word, and a prophecy and a prayer at the same time; and (c) so-called praise songs without any real meaning, and done contrary to the worship traits of Corinthians with “understanding”.

(12). The same power of God and of the Holy Spirit at work as God brought forth Jesus from the dead in the Resurrection on the third day after Crucifixion is the same power at work in us for completed salvation: first the 9 month new birth, not that instantaneous new birth of the fundamentalists for their own glory; then the process of

sanctification as we become more like Christ, and then full salvation or redemption at the Second Coming of Christ as “we shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is”.

(a). God used this same power when after He resurrected Christ from the dead, He caused Christ to Ascend back to heaven where He is seated at the right hand of God the Father. **{We should often pray for more awareness of God seated there on the great white throne with His feet in the clouds, and of the Lord Jesus Christ seated in a place of honor and rule at His right hand where he does two things: ever lives to make intercession for our sins and is preparing to come again to get us!}**

(b). This power of God has ordained that Christ rule at His right hand, “far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but in that which is to come.” **{This total earth age and the age of eternity beyond this life!}** NOTE: You need some perspective of the fullness of what Paul is writing here, based on what is one of the most important doctrinal statements on the relationship between God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ to be found anywhere in the Bible. In I Corinthians 15:24-28: **“Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet...Now when all things {that includes death in the resurrection of the bodies at the second coming of Christ} are made subject to Him who puts all things under Him, that God may be all in all.”** I have never failed to read this in a worship service without seeing grimaces of expression from some. Although it is simply the reading of one of the most important Scriptures, albeit also one of the most neglected as it seems to counter some isogetical conclusions on last things {eschatology} of the Bible, perhaps of the notes of the Scofield Reference Bible, sometimes accepted like Scriptures themselves, there is a reaction as if the Christ is all concepts of many believers cannot allow for the time when God is all in all as the kingdom of God is delivered by Jesus to God the Father. Where I think much of the problem is among fundamentalists, especially those dedicated to the fallacious notes of the Scofield Reference Bible on eschatology, is on the Bible words “Then comes the end”—a clear statement that it is all over without all the complications of Scofield notes like a literal 1000 years, a kingdom on earth where the rich and prosperous can continue to enjoy all their possessions, and a delay in the beginning of eternity with the punishment of the wicked and the reward of the dead. Recently a friend of mine with the Christian Life Commission of the SBC, quoted from II Thessalonians 15-17 how in the Second Coming of Christ the Lord Jesus Christ Himself will descend from heaven with a shout and the final trumpet of God, the dead in Christ rising first to meet Christ and then those alive caught up with them to meet the Lord in the air, and this friend placed the emphasis on “And thus shall we always be with the Lord.” Then he asked, “what is so hard about this to understand”. The Second Coming and it is all over; and trying to add all these seven years and thousands of years are figments of a good imagination. I will tell you right now what will keep you from the follies of the Scofield Reference Bible with its weird and out of context approach to the book of Revelation, and that is this Bible understanding: what bound Satan

for a figurative 1000 years, however real in that it represents a long period of history chosen by God not to be given as a precise number, was the Coming of the Holy Spirit in great power and all over the earth at one time on the first Day of Pentecost after the Resurrection and Ascension. It is the Holy Spirit that binds Satan to a limited effectivity by convicting the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. (Read about that in Acts.) What loses Satan is when the Holy Spirit during the Falling Away is withdrawn from earth according to II Thessalonians. Now, what this does for our eschatology is to make the beginning of the one thousand years at the first day of Pentecost after the Ascension, and the end of the one thousand years with the withdrawal of the Holy Spirit during the Falling Away. And of how certain Pentecostals and fundamentalists strain at a gnat and swallow a camel as they try to claim that this withdrawal of the Holy Spirit is only to the extent of the Holy Spirit in the Christians that are taken up in the rapture. It is a good example of bad exegesis or hermeneutics and a good example of itching ears Bible teachers. How unfortunate it is that young and inexperienced Bible teachers and preachers when pressed to deliver their first messages on Revelation and eschatology, take the easy way out of preaching the Scofield Reference Bible notes. It is a desperate beginning to a life-long commitment for them and their hearers that they never get away from. Darby was an Irishman, unfortunately formerly an eloquent lawyer, who instigated "dispensationalism"; Scofield, a formerly divorced and also somewhat dubious lawyer, took Darby and while pastor of a Congregationalist church in Dallas, wrote the NOTES as a correspondence course. **THE NOTES ARE NOT PART OF THE BIBLE; THEY ARE NOT PART OF THE WORD OF GOD TO BE TAKEN WITH THE SAME RESPECT AND REGARD AS THE BIBLE.** And before you give those kinds of beliefs and notes a respect of authority, I would suggest that you read about the beliefs of Congregationalists as well as about the life of Scofield and Darby.

(c). This power and authority of God has made Christ the head of the church, then and now. That means, bottom line, that Christ is the head of your local church as well as the head of the total church body, the Assembly of the Firstborn written in heaven. What you will find in the first chapters of Revelation in Christ's messages through John to the 7 churches of Asia Minor is that when Christ is not indeed head of a local church like at Ephesus or Thyatira bad things happen in doctrine and practice; and often Christ removes the pastors that he has called and placed there, often it seems like it is the freedom of choice of the church members who will no longer endure sound doctrine, the sure sign that they have already gotten away from the Lordship of Christ as head of their lives and churches.

(13). The Bible here in Ephesians 1:23 teaches one church and yet many churches; and those members of the many churches not among the tares or the goats in the kingdom are automatically members, with a profession of faith and the one baptism of salvation, in the one body of Christ, the church, the Assembly of the Firstborn written in heaven.

1-3: Paul's Statements of Faith in Ephesians 2, the BEFORE and AFTER of the IN

CHRIST life.

1. The AIC or AFTER IN CHRIST of Ephesians 2. "Christian" is not a preferred word of the Bible for believers, being found only three times in the New Testament. Today, it has lost a lot of meaning. Like former prime minister Begin said years ago, "You Americans are born Christians just we like we Israelis are born Jews." Well, according to the Bible, neither is true, although it is admitted that it is a popular belief. Unfortunately, many think they are Christians because they are Americans, and many Jews think they are children of God because they are born of the nation of Israel, contrary to the whole context of the teachings of the Bible in the book of Romans. A preferred word of the 14 letters of Paul is "in Christ", or even those "who name the name of Christ".

(1). We are "made alive" in Christ as we experience the new birth, the beginning of

the one baptism of salvation. (Ephesians 2:1)

(2). By the grace of God, an unmerited and unearned favor, we are saved, Ephesians

2:5 and 2:8,9. Even while we were dead in trespasses and sins, God rich in mercy and

love made us alive together with Christ.

(3). God has raised us up together with Christ and made us sit together with Christ in heavenly places. (Ephesians 2:6)

(4). God wants to show in the ages to come of eternity and heaven and on the new earth, and after this world age, the full extent of those spiritual blessings. Once again, a short summary of Paul in Romans about "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard", nor has it even entered into the mind of man, "the things God has prepared for those who love Him."

(5). After in Christ, we are "God's workmanship", the outworking in our lives of the indwelling spirit of God and the one baptism, "created in Christ Jesus for good works" by new birth and the continuing process of sanctification or Christlikeness. And God has also predestined our good works (Ephesians 2:10).

(6). After in Christ, you are brought back to hope, to the real Israel of the children of God, and back to God and heaven. (Ephesians 2:13)

2. The BIC of BEFORE IN CHRIST of Ephesians 2.

(1). Before in Christ, you were dead in trespasses and sins (2:1); before you were walking according to the customs and traditions of this world (2:2), which is the same as walking or living according to Satan, the prince and power of this world and this world system (2:2); and you before in Christ lived according to that evil spirit that now controls all in the world not believers, disobedience of unbelief being the ultimate of all evils (2:2); before in Christ you conducted yourselves like them in the “lusts of the flesh” --John in the little epistle of I John identifies all it is to “love the world” as the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; and before in Christ you lived in order to fulfill lusts of the flesh and lusts of the mind--Pastor James writes not to be deceived about our natural and human spirit sometimes even allowed to control us in our church behavior where “we lust to envy”; and before in Christ we were by nature also the children of wrath. **{The Bible never, ever teaches of an inherent good nature of man! “The heart is desperately wicked above all things, and who can know it.” And “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” By the way, some of these verses of Ephesians 2, perhaps in a more positive manner, are summaries of the sinners of Romans 3.}**

(2). Before in Christ, you Gentiles were without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel {and do not forget how Paul has already extensively taught in Romans of the true children of God, the true Jews, and the true Israel--such as “all Israel is not of Israel”}, strangers from the covenant promises of God, without hope and without God. (Ephesians 2:11-12)

3. What God did for you to make possible through Christ your transition from the

BIC to the AIC! (Ephesians 2:14-22 and 2:13)

(1). Before you were far off, but now you are brought near to God through the blood of Christ, again a favorite biblical phrase for the death of Christ on the cross for our sins. (Ephesians 2:13)

(2). Jesus has made Jew and Gentile believers One by breaking down the “middle wall of partition” (2:14), thus Jesus Himself becoming Peace and our Peace. **{Peacemaking in the strict Bible sense of the word is to extend the influence of Christ, between God and man and between man and man!}**

(3). Jesus nailed to the cross the enmity between Jews and Gentiles and the commandments in ordinances thus creating in Himself one new humanity of Jewish and Gentile believers. That is peace! (Ephesians 2:15)(4). Jesus made in the cross reconciliation between God and man, between Jew and Gentile, another great and biblical word of the cross and more of peacemaking, at the same time creating of Jews and Gentiles one believing body, the church. (Ephesians

2:
16
)

NOTE: Now, do you really think that you can say all these in one simple statement of faith and practice with an enumerated listed of sentences for each great Bible doctrine. However, we will try to do so at the end of this Statement of Faith and Practice from Paul in Ephesians at the end of this chapter, after we have the proper exegetical Bible background.

(5). Through the One Christ all members of the one church have equal access to the One God the Father by way of the One Holy Spirit. (Ephesians 2:18) **{You can almost smell that Paul is warming up for the seven great Ones, the major doctrines of the Bible, to be stated later in Ephesians 4:4-6 which even as Ephesians is a summary statement of faith of the whole Bible, are a more condensed summary of the Bible and of Ephesians itself. How can we go wrong if we have enough respect for the Bible as the Word of God, for the teachings of Jesus and the love of Jesus, and we meet the Bible's own guidelines for understanding with such thoroughness and conciseness in the Bible--guidelines or rules for understanding as laid out in the Bible are often called hermeneutics, sometimes called the science of biblical interpretation.}**

NOTE: We could almost dispense with all these preliminary statements of faith if we could fully understand from the full context of the Bible, what is meant by "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." (Ephesians 4:4-6) Unfortunately, we have a theological and religious history behind us where Bible readers and so-called scholars have ignored the Authorized Semi- Public Interpretation of the Bible--that is that "no scripture is of any private interpretation"; that the natural man cannot understand the Bible things of the Spirit of God; and that have failed to practice the required rules of understanding laid down in the Bible. Particularly must be discuss why "one salvation" is not in the list of major Bible doctrines, and how the "one baptism" is the all-inclusive phrase of faith for salvation. And once again may I recommend the LEARN CHRIST commentary on the 14 letters of the Apostle Paul with the conclusion chapter on "Ephesians and Colossians", and entitled "Believe and Be Baptized". In fact, if you wished you could take these 7 Ones of Ephesians 4:4-6 as the major 7 points of a statement of faith, then go back to list all the pertinent truths of Ephesians 1 and 2 under these seven. Yes, Paul was a lawyer, a religious lawyer of the Bible, a supreme logician, and above all an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ. You will find that Muslims like to talk about Jesus, and say they accept all about Him, and accept all the Prophets of the Old Testament; but when you bring up the Apostle Paul, they grow silent! Of course, I might also add that without the rest of Ephesians 4 we would never see the relationship of this unity in the Ones to the church, and above all without Ephesians 5 and 6 we would never see the PRACTICES of faith as in a "Statement of Faith and Practice".

1-4: Statements of Faith in Ephesians 3, Explanation of the Mystery of God, the One

Body.

You know how “mystery” is repeated in the Bible, such as in the mystery of godliness, to describe a revealed truth from God that otherwise we would not know about! It is something that God has not always made known but chooses in certain periods of history to make known through Jesus, the Apostles and Prophets. Although Paul elaborates here on the One Body or one church in a whole summarizing chapter of Ephesians, we still have not learned the lesson restated by the fundamentalists John R. Rice of “One Church but Many Churches”, that while there are many local churches in the world and in the Bible, there is one Assembly of the Firstborn written in heaven, many trying to make their denomination synonymous with the one church and ignoring the fact that they, contrary to the teachings of Jesus forbidding before the End separation of the tares and the wheat, have the arrogance to think that they, and they alone of all Christians, in their own local church have already made that distinction! **{Would it not be grand if any group of humans could put a sign out in front of their local church which says The Church, and automatically they would be assured that only wheat and sheep, without any tares or goats, are in their fellowship. Dream on, folks! You have the wrong time and the wrong Person for that! This separation in spite of such arrogance and self-deceiving convictions will be done at the time of the Second Coming of Christ, and by the Person of Christ Himself with the angels dispatched to the four corners of the earth! Did I hear an Amen!}**

1. This Mystery was made known by Revelation to the Apostle Paul (Ephesians 3:3a); this Mystery is what Paul has written about in the previous two chapters of Ephesians (Ephesians 3:3b); this mystery was received by the Apostle Paul as a dispensation of the grace of God (Ephesians 3:2); this mystery is of the knowledge of Christ (3:4); this mystery was not made known by God to men in the history before Paul (3:5a), at least not in the form and completeness as it has now been revealed to Paul by the Holy Spirit, and to the “apostles and prophets” (3:5b).
2. This Mystery in Christ fully stated: “that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the Gospel...” (Ephesians 3:6)
3. Paul became a “minister” with this Mystery of Christ and the one body. (Ephesians 3:7)
 - a. It is a mystery in fellowship (3:9) which was from the beginning of creation by God through Christ has been hidden to the world, but the intention

of God was that now the mystery might be known by the “manifold wisdom of God”. Known “by the church”. This mystery of the one body is according to the eternal purpose that from the beginning God purposed in Christ.

b. It is by this faith in the Lord Jesus Christ that we have access and confidence with God and with the one church. (3:11,12)

4. A Prayer by the Apostle Paul for all believers to grant believers, Ephesians 3:14-21, the following blessings. **{I don't know about you but next to Jesus being at the right hand of God the Father to pray for our sins, I appreciate the Apostle Paul expressing this prayer for us!}**

a. That you and we may be “strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man.” (3:16). **{Later in the two closing chapters of Ephesians, in the practice section of the statement of faith, Paul will give some specifics for strengthening as we put on the whole armor of God.}**

b. That God may dwell in your hearts through faith (3:17). Even as Paul starts the ball rolling with how to learn Christ, not as the others around us in the world have learned Christ, and then Jesus with the 3 questions and answers of John 14 describes the “how” of learning Christ, even so you see an echo of such sound Bible doctrine here in 3:17 where Christ and God dwell in the human heart through faith.

c. That you may be “rooted and grounded in faith” (3:17b). Always remember according to the parable of the seed and the sower, that the seed planted on hard ground is those that stumble in a local church and that never develop any root in the faith.

d. That you may be able to comprehend with all the saints of all the ages in the great and real history of Christianity, the four dimensions of the love of Christ. Try as hard as you may, you cannot visualize anything beyond the three dimensions we know except by adding the dimension of time, that is love that continues with time. (Ephesians 3:17-19)

1-5: Paul's Statement of Faith in Ephesians 4, the unity of the faith, the 7 Ones, and of the one church with Christ.

1. Here “faith and practice” blend as Paul, having blessed all believers and prayed for them, now throws out the challenge “to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called”. Certainly, you must see in the “walk worthy” of the Christian calling, **21**

practice of the faith; and in Ephesians 4 you will see a beginning of the practices added to faith, then later in Ephesians 5 and 6 the pure practices of “faith and practice”. How are some preliminary and general ways in which you can practice Christian faith?

(1). Walk or live with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love (Ephesians 4:2). Certainly, a most violated Scripture of church members is the admonition “not to think of yourselves more highly than you ought to. And lest we lose perspective of what is happening in churches today during this time of the Falling Away, let us remember the bad church behavior of II Timothy 3:1-9 where these church members have a form of godliness but deny the power thereof. Yes, these bad behaviors and bad attitudes do happen to church members, and today! Once again, this is part of keeping an admonition that guards against pride and advocates humility in the total Bible realities and context where church members do and can go bad!

(2). Church or fellowship members are to keep an inherent unity given by the Holy Spirit of God, which either exists in the fellowship because God put it there or does not exist, that cannot be promoted through human means, PR, or the peace efforts of men as advocated by Rich Warren in his “Purpose Driven” books. (Ephesians 4:3) If you want real unity in your church body, it is recommended that you read closely this fourth chapter of Ephesians on exactly how unity does come in a church body. I think you will find it quite different from the forced and coerced efforts of Warren and disciples to “protect the church”.

2. The famous ONES of Ephesians 4:4-6 as a summary of the basis for unity and for all the major doctrines of the Bible.

(1). One Body, the church, alias the Assembly of the Firstborn--the Lord Jesus Christ being the Firstborn--and the church or assembly written in heaven in the Lamb’s Book of Life, a record of which with your name in is the only assurance of salvation you need. That record in heaven is the only criterion that separates you from the tares and the goats when Christ Comes Again.

(2). One Spirit, the third member of the Trinity and God Himself, the Holy Spirit sent by God and Jesus on the first day of Pentecost after the Resurrection and to be withdrawn from earth during the Falling Away, sent by Jesus to take His place and to convict the world of sin and righteousness and judgment, a person called the Comforter or the Other Jesus, one who reminds Christians of Scripture, providing wisdom and guidance; and the one present at Creation as the effecting cause, also throughout history as the giver to Apostles and Prophets of Revelations. Yes, He also gives illuminations; but we must recognize the difference.

(3). One Hope of Your Calling, even as Elton Trueblood, the Quaker and Philosopher of Religion wrote “Your Other Vocation” as a reminder that the Christian calling is a vocation for which we must give priority, so Paul reminds us that for all Christians the hope is the same and the goal and goals if the calling are the same. [\[Once\]](#)₁₂

again in total context, it must be added that while all believers receive common gifts like some wisdom from the Holy Spirit, each believer is given some unique gift by God through the Holy Spirit; and furthermore, according to the doctrinal teachings of Corinthians, the total church is only complete as long as those diverse gifts cooperate with each other.} Of course, we know the “hope” for this life of a better person and with a better purpose for God and Christ; and eternally as Paul wrote “if in this life only we have hope, we are of all men most miserable”, so that beyond this life is eternal hope, called hope not because we simply wish it to be so, but because it is an assured hope. “Faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.”

(4). One Lord, the Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, the means of salvation on the cross through His blood, the Spirit of Christ who worked with the Prophets in the Old Testament, the teacher and Savior who came to earth, died on the cross and was resurrected and ascended by God, and who now sits on the right hand of honor and rule to God the Father to make intercession for our sins and to prepare for His Second Coming when He will come again to get us. Surely Christ is doing more than this at the right hand of God, also the Bible tells us that the whole universe consists through Him so that surely, He is holding this complex universe together until it disintegrates at the end of this world age and until He and the Father create a new heaven and a new earth with a new Jerusalem.

(5). One Faith, this is both the one faith held in their hearts by all believers and the “faith delivered once for all”, in other words the Bible and the doctrines of the Bible, as expressed in the book of Jude.

(6). One Baptism, this is the equivalent of the one salvation, and you will find as the subject of many Bible passages, especially from Paul, where baptism is discussed as for example in Romans where “we are baptized with Christ”. Paul knew and wrote of several other baptisms such as the baptism by water; but there was only one real baptism that of salvation and by the Holy Spirit of God. Since there is so much confusion created by the theology and divisions of denominations and the history of Christianity which confuses what is done in the baptistry with the One Baptism, please read the LEARN CHRIST commentary with exegesis of the prevalent “baptism” passages, and on the 14 letters of Paul since it is right here that above all we need the total context of Scripture. It is called “Believe and Be Baptized”, the being baptized referring not to the baptistry but to the One Baptism of salvation, the water baptism by immersion to only come later as an act of obedience and of identification with Christ and Christians.

(7). One God and Father of all, this is the only God of the Universe, identified to us as the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, also the Creator of the world and the Universe, and the God of the Bible. He, and He only, “is above all, and through all, and in you all”.

NOTE: Wow, what a high point in a statement of faith! Where can you go from here. Well, we in the light of recent itching ears teachers about how to achieve unity and peace in local churches, need the Bible given practices on how to achieve peace and unity in the church!

3. Peace and Unity in the Church (Ephesians 4:7-16).

(1). There can be no real peace and unity in any church, local or larger, unless Christ is allowed in a practical way to run it. (4:7-12) Jesus is head of your church, and the chain of command in your assembly must come through Jesus to the pastor or any evangelist. The chain of authority between Jesus and the pastor includes the Apostles of the New Testament and the Prophets of the Old Testament, who exercise their authority today as writers of revelations in the Word of God. You will find a lot of the problems today in theology, doctrine, and false and itching ears teachers have come when the authority of the Apostles and Prophets in the Word of God is ignored or minimized. It is the Ascended Christ who chose these Apostles and Prophets, appointed them and called them, also who called your pastors and evangelists and teachers if indeed you heeded the Headship of Christ and sought the wisdom of the Spirit. {Please do not make the mistake of thinking that if the majority of your church votes against the pastor, that they are right. Remember how God told Moses to get out of the way so He could destroy all of Israel in the wilderness, then God would make of Moses and Aaron a nation; how God destroyed over 23,000 in one day and how only approximately 4 Hebrews of the vast congregation in the wilderness were allowed to enter eternal rest; and ask yourselves if Ephesus or Thyatira are all the seven churches of Asia Minor had voted in favor of the unsound doctrines for which Christ condemned them, as a majority vote would that have made it right. Hardly, we confuse all too easily the American Democratic Faith of American history and studies, where the majority is right with the Faith of the Bible where the minority is right. Sometimes that minority as in the wilderness, can only be 2 or 4 people!

(2). All of the church leaders such as Apostles, Prophets, pastors, teachers, and evangelists have the same job for the benefit of the total church body: "for the equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry" **{yes, as a seminary professor wrote, "the work of the ministry is the work of the church", not just of those called professionally}**, for the edifying {building up} of the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:11,12).

(3). Peace and unity in a local church body comes only as members (a) have a common unity in the faith, alias personal faith and sound teachings and doctrines, (b) as members have and share a common knowledge, personal and factual, of the Lord Jesus Christ-

"faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God", (c) as members mature into the Christian faith often called in the Bible "completeness" or "perfection" **{at this point is where Warren is so foolhardy on Bible and church growth, to think that you can achieve a unity and peace with sudden church growth and new believers, a peace**

more by a forced church covenant and strong leadership and public relations: no, it takes a lot of teaching and knowledge which is what discipleship is all about and it takes some, many mature church members which Saddleback is very unlikely to have for many years}, and (d) many members that have reached the full stature of Christ.

(4). This peace and unity are not the norm, the norm being “children, tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting” (Ephesians 4:14). Is this discouraging? If so, keep tuned to the rest of Ephesians where Paul encourages the individual church member, even as Christ and the Apostle John did in the messages to the seven churches of Asia Minor, giving a private and personal and individually encouraging message to certain members of the church who had not been carried away with unsound doctrine. You may see this more and more as we go deeper into the approximately 40 years of the Falling Away before the end of time.

(5). Perhaps you should not give up on your local church unless in keeping with “with such know not to keep company”, your church becomes completely riddled and dominated by the bad church behavior and attitudes of II Timothy 3:1-9. And the pattern for practices to follow in the rest of Ephesians 4 as well as 5 and 6 is established in 4:15: “but speaking the truth in love {love is important and so is speaking the truth}, may grow up in all things into Him who is the Head--Christ.”. Never forget Who **{the correct answer is Christ}** must run your local church and the total body of Christ! Make sure you and your leaders are seeking and finding the wisdom of Christ on any

decision!

(6). A church of peace and unity is first of all built on many New Men, men and women who through the 9-month new birth have become new creations in ‘Christ (Ephesians

4:17-24).

(a). This kind of church member cannot be like other Gentiles around them. (Ephesians 4:17-19)

(b). To really and properly learn Christ as a matter of faith and practice is to be different or separated from the other Gentiles in your world. **{Not to isolate yourself from them, but to live differently. Much of the Bible is summarized with “in the world, but not of the world.”}** (Ephesians 4:20). Shocking huh, Christ can be learned in the wrong way when there is a bent of commitment to the world and to others around you that exceeds or matches your commitment to Christ. Are we to understand that Paul is questioning the salvation of some church members? Yes, and he makes that

clear as he writes: "if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him"! (Ephesians 4:21)

(c). Part of the practice of the faith of the New Man is to put off many of the conducts or habits of the old man and to practice the putting on of the new man in righteousness. The rest of Ephesians will help on these practices of faith.

1-6: A Statement of Practices to Go with a Statement of Faith. (You can and should read these Scriptures for yourself, using the references listed from the book of Ephesians.) 1. Do not Grieve the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:25-32).

2. Practice the Walk in Love (5:1-7).

3. Practice the habit of walking in Light (5:8-14).

4. Practice walking in wisdom, circumspectly (5:15-21).

5. Practice the marriage of the Bible, at home and in the church (5:22-33; 6:1-4).

6. Practice with Bible attitudes on the job (6:5-9)

Conclusion: (1-7): All this sounds impossible.

No, not if you daily put on the whole armor which God has provided in a practical and prayerful manner, realizing that there will be ups and downs, some stumbling's; realizing that "no temptation has taken you but such as is common to man", and that God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able; and remembering to be "careful for nothing but with everything by

prayer and supplication make your requests known unto God"; and remember to "humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him because He cares for you."

And like "imitating God" as advised in Ephesians, or strive to be like Christ, the high standards for a church are idealistic in that we will never get all the way there. Nonetheless the admonitions of the Bible are to be like Christ, to imitate God, and to grow into the perfected church body. Once again, we come much closer to these Christian goals when we have them as goals and we work to achieve them, knowing that the full realization of all three will only have, by the grace and power of God, when Christ comes again and "we shall see Him as He is."

NOTE: To fully appreciate and understand Preaching thru the Bible in one year, you will need to read two supplement books that are available from SunGrist as free downloads.

1. Supplement 1: <http://sungrist.org/TextbookSupp1forPTB.pdf>
2. Supplement 2: <http://sungrist.org/TextbookSupp2forPTB.pdf>