

A
THEOLOGICAL
EXERCISE
ON
THE PLAN
OF GOD

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Second edition

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SPECIAL THANKS **TO**

The students and faculty of Charis Seminary for their review and remarks without which this work would not have been possible.

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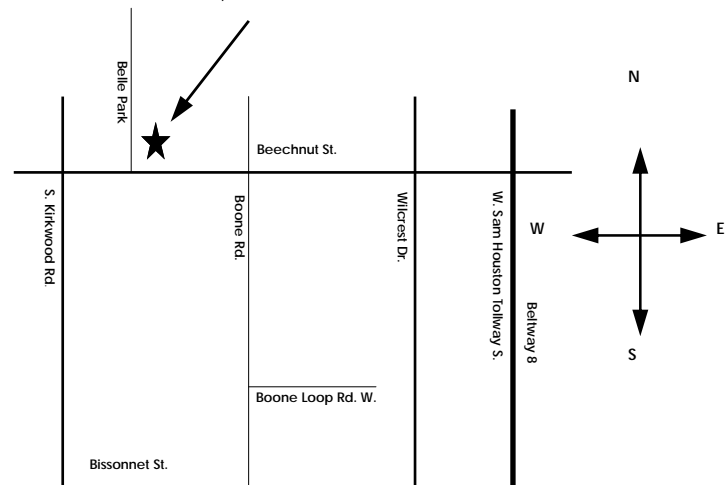
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PREFACE

As systems of thought are developed over time, it is not uncommon to see the emergence of a paradigm that gains acceptance without question. The originators of such paradigms are often men of such stature, their contributions so important, that the framework from which they started is never questioned. Such is what has occurred in the study of dispensationalism. The individuals who advanced this important system, men such as Darby, Scofield, Ironside, and Chafer, utilized a theological system that in essence limited the questions that would be raised. Because of this limitation, the crucial question that needed to be asked (i.e., "Why the Church?") was never answered. As a theological system, dispensationalism has only one fundamental question to answer. Why has God raised two priestly people, Israel and the Church? While dispensationalists have correctly identified the *differences* between the Church and Israel, they have not explained why there are two people who have been called out. It is the inability to adequately answer this question that has brought classical dispensationalism, as an intellectual movement, to a dead end. As a result, many theologians have questioned the importance of dispensationalism. Indeed, many theologians have either compromised or rejected its major tenets.

Due to the nature of the theological system formulated by these men, this paradigm developed and God's Plan for creation in ETERNITY was ignored. Simply put, dispensational theologians today accept without question the premise that the eternal state is the END of God's government and creative process. The theological system under which dispensationalists have labored is Calvinism. Unfortunately, the Calvinistic school, while admirable in many respects, never fully grasped the need for creature freedom in God's Plan. It is this lack of appreciation for freedom in God's Plan that led theologians to focus on what God was doing in time. They, in effect, overlooked the fact that what was occurring in time had an ETERNAL purpose. Because they believe history stops at the close of the Millennium, they have not fully understood the purpose of the Church. It is ETERNITY that gives the Church Age meaning! Indeed, as Erich Sauer has written, "(the kingdom of God as the future kingdom of glory is the inheritance of the church. The sanctified in Christ will inherit the kingdom. They will enter into it. It is the goal of their pilgrimage)". Many dispensationalists believe that mankind 'ends' at the close of the Millennium because they cannot fathom how carnal man can coexist with God, in perfect peace and harmony. Yet it was this same view that led to a rejection of the Millennium by Augustine and eventually led to the rise of Amillennialism! Therefore, while the dispensational school has correctly asserted the reality of the coming Millennium, it has done so at the expense of a greater truth—the eternal Kingdom of Christ and His Church.

Only when this great truth is understood and incorporated can dispensationalism (as a theological system) be complete, and God's Plan for the Church

make sense. Then, and only then, will God's **entire** plan for creation be seen in its entirety.

Rev Ed Pfenninger, MA. THM.

INTRODUCTION

Why am I here? Where am I going? Why was man created? If there is a God, why did He allow man to fall? If God is omnipotent, why does He allow Satan to exist in his creation? If God is love, why does He threaten us with hell? Why can't God just make every thing all right? Why, why, why? Questions like these have occupied the minds of man for thousands of years. Countless volumes have been written trying to answer these questions. Yet we are no closer to an answer today than we were when these questions were first raised thousands of years ago.

Why is it that man is so preoccupied with himself? Why do we feel that the universe revolves around us; that life itself is in some way tied to our existence? Could it be that God placed some sense of destiny, some instinctive sense of purpose, in all mankind?

It is the intent of this short exercise to proffer a comprehensive theological response based on the essence of God. It is the belief of the writers that only when these questions are asked with a definitive understanding of the nature of God can the Christian arrive at a biblically acceptable answer. Any system of belief in God must adhere to the position that God created all things in a state of perfection. The natural question that follows is the question that we shall use as the introduction to this exercise: "why did a perfect God allow sin to enter His perfect universe"?

Why did a perfect God allow sin to enter His perfect universe?

God's attribute of omniscience dictates that nothing has happened or will happen, can happen or did happen without His prior knowledge. His omnipotence dictates that if He did not want it to happen, He could have prevented it from happening. With these two statements in mind, we can only reach one conclusion when the above question is asked. **God did not create perfection and allow it to become corrupt without a purpose.** The problem is how can a creature know the purpose of God? **Psa 40:5:** *Many, O Lord my God, [are] thy wonderful works [which] thou hast done, and thy thoughts [which are] to us-ward; they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee; [if] I would declare and speak [of them], they are more than can be numbered.* **Isa 55:9:** *For [as] the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.*

Yet scripture declares emphatically that God wants those who are His "ambassadors" (2 Co. 5:20) to know His purpose and to have a detailed knowledge of His will. **1Co 2:10:** *But God hath revealed [those things He has prepared] unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea,*

the deep things of God.

If we were to go back 1000 years or more in time, bringing with us some marvel of our technological era, how would we explain what it is to those whom we are visiting? For purposes of illustration, we shall use the automobile. If the car were in pieces, lying all over the ground, could an ancient people have any idea how the finished product would appear? So also is the Plan of God. Whether "in pieces" or completed, only He knows "what it is" and "why it is." He has, however, recorded His complete plan in an instruction manual called the Bible. The Bible is the instruction book detailing how to assemble the car, with descriptions of what each part is and how it functions. The last two chapters of Revelations present us with the completed automobile. What we must realize is that what we see as the last is actually the first, the end is actually the beginning. Until the parts are put together the car has no purpose, it cannot function. The vision of eternity must be clearly seen if one is to know the complete purpose and Plan of God. The parts must be put together if we are to understand what the purpose is. All things that have transpired since the beginning of time have been allowed to happen in order to bring His eternal purpose to its "**BEGINNING**". All things have happened so that through the incarnation of Christ, the church could be created.

2Ti 1:9: Who hath saved us, and called [us] with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,

Eph 3:10: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly [places] might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,

Eph 3:11: According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:

God has revealed Himself to creation.

Through both the Word of God and creation, we know His eternal Godhead. The purpose of this introduction is to focus the reader's attention on his need to grasp the complete plan and purpose of God as it is revealed in the Bible. The plan and purposes of God can only be understood when viewed from God's standpoint. Only when the essence of God becomes the foundation for His works in creation can the child of God comprehend the "manifold wisdom" of His plan and purpose. That His purpose is tied to His essence is the one truism that seems to have escaped the church in its pursuit of the rationale behind God's creation of man and the church. Scripture has given us ten attributes of God which reflect His essence. With these ten attributes, all that God has revealed of Himself to man can be seen: Omniscience, Omni-

presence, Omnipotence, Veracity, Sovereignty, Immutability, Eternal Life, Righteousness, Justice and Love.

- 1. Omniscience** means that God's Plan was known to Him at all times; there was never a moment when God had to reflect in order to decide what He was going to do. He has always known the who, what, when, where, and how of every moment of time, be it past, present or future. It also follows that through his omniscience, everything that has happened has been in accordance with His plan and that creation has not been allowed to chart its own course outside of His knowledge. The fall of both Satan and man therefore became necessary events for God to achieve His "eternal purpose" and ultimate goal, the creation of the church (Eph. 3:10-11).
- 2. Omnipresence** means that He has always been everywhere, all the time. One can travel a million years into the future and God is there; further, He was there before one's travels even began. He watched with much longsuffering as creation fell, making Himself a personal witness of the fruit of freewill when left to its own devices. The pain that He suffers is unimaginable when we realize that He is present when we carry out our most hideous sins against one another.
- 3. Omnipotence** means that God has the power to do whatsoever he determines to do; all power that exists finds as its source His power. He has the power to destroy everything that he has created, and He most certainly had the power to stop creation from falling from a state of perfection to its present state of corruption. However, it is because He has not used His power that creation continues to sink to lower levels of sin and destruction.
- 4. Veracity** means that God is incapable of lying. What He says is always true because He only knows truth. He who speaks a lie speaks it to gain some advantage or to promote something other than the truth. God, who has all advantages in His essence, does not need to promote Himself. There is nothing above Him and nothing below Him that threatens His rule. Veracity is tied to His omniscience; He who has always known all things does not need to manipulate the present in order to secure the future.
- 5. Sovereignty** means that God is ruler of all that exists. As creator of all, every creature owes total obedience and allegiance to Him. Unlike an earthly ruler who must rely on others to carry out his decrees, God's Word is backed by His omnipotence so that whatever He declares comes to pass. Whenever He allows some entity (be it angel or man) to carry out His decree, He is allowing His glory to be shared. But He--who can do all things and to whom all things owe both their creation and their contin-

ued existence--does not need anyone to do anything for Him.

6. **Immutability** means that God does not change. Once He has decreed something it must always be as such. He who knows all things need never change anything that He does, for all that He does is perfect and complete. Since He knows the outcome of every situation, He only chooses that alternative which is the absolute best. Therefore, He never changes either His spoken Word or His living works since they are perfect when first transacted. To alter anything would mean that He did not know the outcome from the beginning.
7. **Eternal Life** means that God's life is life. It has always existed and always will. Creature life (soul life with the attribute of freewill) is only everlasting--it has a beginning but no end and is dependent on Eternal life for its existence. Eternal Life is life that has no beginning or end and is not dependent on anything for its existence. The gift of Eternal Life to believers is what separates the church from all creation, including the Old Testament believer who will have a resurrection body but with everlasting soul life.
8. **Righteousness** means that God is Holy; He is the only supreme good. His goodness is eternal and without end, it is beyond any description creation could ever conceive. His essence clearly declares that He who knows all things chooses the best alternative at all times. When Christ in His humanity declared that no one is good but God alone, He was stating the fact that God is all goodness. He does not seek anything for His own advantage. It is the righteousness of God that sets the standard that all creation must live by. His righteousness is tantamount to the legislature of our own government. However, coupled with His omniscience, He decreed laws that would allow all creation to enjoy a relationship with each other as well as with Him.
9. **Justice** means that as a judge He can never make a bad judgment as it relates to creation. All of His judgments are perfect and fair.
10. **Love** means that God is predisposed to fellowship. He wishes to share happiness with all He has created. Before creation began, it was the intent of God to share His love and happiness with creation without creation having to face the only judgment possible from His justice: DEATH. He does not wish to condemn, but to bless. Volumes have been written about the essence of God, but we shall only use these brief definitions of His essence for this exercise.

God created angels and man with freewill.

Verification of the truth that God is the author of all creation and that He

gave some of creation freewill is not necessary. Further, it is not necessary to prove that angels had freewill. The fact that Satan and one third of the angels fell is proof enough. However, the order and time of creation does need a brief verification.

First, let us note that man was not present when God laid the foundation of the earth. Job 38:4-7 declares that the "sons of God", referring to angels, were there and that they shouted for joy. The identification of the "sons of God" is again verified in Job 1:6: "**Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them**", and again in Job 2:1: "**Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the Lord**". Therefore the angels, and not man, were present when God created the physical realm. The implication of this fact is that the spiritual realm existed before and outside of the physical realm. What should be asked at this point is when did Lucifer fall and how long did it take him to get one third of all the angels to follow his corruption. The correct answer to this question is the only way to arrive at the truth regarding the reason for the creation and fall of man. Further, the original physical realm was created perfect. Omnipotence does not need time (evolution) in order to bring something into perfect existence from nothing, Omnipotence speaks and "it just is" (see Appendix).

Isa 45:18: For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it **not in vain**, he formed it to be inhabited; I [am] the Lord; and [there is] none else.

Second, the universe is countless millions of years old; it was created as diverse as the planet where we now live. (see "The GAP Re-Visited"). That God would create a universe limitless in measure yet void of life is unreasonable at best. We at Charis Seminary believe that the fossil evidence of life on this planet proves that our planet has always supported life. However, we also believe that man was created by God no more than 7,000 years ago. Therefore, we must reconcile the difference between the millions of years of earth and universal history and the limited amount of years of human existence. Again scripture gives us our answers, for Gen. 1:1 holds the account of creation and Gen. 1:2 holds the account of the restoration after the destruction of our planet.

Gen 1:2: And the earth was [became] without form, and void [tohu va bohu]; and darkness [was] upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

The above verse (Gen. 1:2) declares that either the world was created under water or there was a great flood before God created man. Not only was it a flood, but it became one solid mass of ice "*and darkness [was] upon the face*

of the deep". The absence of all light also implies the absence of all heat. Furthermore, the word "deep" is the same word used in Gen. 7:11 during the time of Noah's flood. If Genesis 1:1&2 are both speaking of the same act, then God created the earth encased in solid ice. Obviously something happened between verse one and verse two that caused the earth to be destroyed.

Science is correct when it proclaims that this planet and the universe have existed for millions of years. The fossil evidence declares that **God left proof** of the world that existed prior to the creation of man. The fact that we are able to see countless galaxies as far as 1,000,000 light years away implies that the earth has at least existed that long. The recently launched Hubble telescope has sent us pictures of galaxies many millions of light years away. That light could not be seen unless many millions of years had allowed it to travel here. What must be answered is: **Why such a GAP?** *Why is it so hard for the Christian to believe that the diversity of life that existed on this planet before him as well as the diversity of life that exists on it with him is proof enough that God has created a Universe full of life?* Suffice it at this point to say that man was created last in the order of creation. But, as Scripture declares, "**the last shall be first**".

The above 2 points present some interesting questions to the Christian. Questions, that when viewed in light of the essence of God, can have but one answer. This exercise will conclude with the answer to "**WHY SUCH A GAP**".

- 1. Why would God create creatures with freewill and why did He allow that freewill to run its course and eventually turn against Him?** Through freewill, sin entered creation and because of sin all creation faces judgment from the essence of Him who created it.
- 2. Why did he create angels and other life first, only to let it be destroyed?** Angels and other forms of life once lived in sinless perfection without death. There were no carnivores at the beginning of the dinosaur age; they were created perfect, remember that God is not the author of death. Animals today did not eat meat until after the fall. We may therefore extrapolate that there was some kind of UNIVERSAL FALL that led to, among other things, the existence of carnivores during the dinosaur age.
- 3. Why does man, the last of creation, hold such an important place in creation?** Psalms 8:4: What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? Scripture even declares that we, the last, will be judges of the first. 1Co 6:3: Know ye not that we shall judge angels?

These three questions have been reverberating throughout human history with seemingly no answer from the creator. But God has not been silent. What was written has been fulfilled; through the Church He has revealed His eternal purpose and manifold wisdom in allowing **the freewill of creation to be the catalysts of the Incarnation.**

At the beginning of this introduction it was stated that the Plan of God was analogous to building a car. The car has a purpose, but to the ancient mind what a car is and what its purpose is could not be known. So also is the Plan of God. However, what we do know is what He calls "His car." Rev 21:3: *"And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, **the tabernacle of God [is] WITH MEN**, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, [and be] their God"*. God and not man shall build the last tabernacle of God. Next to the mystery of Godliness, this is the greatest mystery in creation. The church is called the "temple of God." 1 Corinthians 3:16: *Know ye not that ye are the **temple** of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?* (see 2 Co. 6:16 & Eph 2:21). Therefore we could substitute the "Church" for the "tabernacle of God"... *"Behold, **Church of God [is] WITH MEN**"*. In Rev. 21:9b, the angel tells John, *"Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife"*. He then takes John to the New Jerusalem, the city where the mansions of the church are built. Further, Rev. 21:22 says there is no temple in the city. God is the temple of the city, and His temple is the Church.

The last tabernacle will be the place from which God will forever live with men and from which He will rule creation. **The last tabernacle is the church.** As was stated before, we must examine the END as the BEGINNING and by doing so we realize that all universal history is to date nothing more than God creating and implementing the BEGINNING of His eternal purpose. The Church has always been the eternal purpose of God. As was stated by Professor Pfenninger, we have not given enough attention as to "WHY THE CHURCH?"

One final thought is necessary before we begin our exercise. It is found in Rev. 21:24-22:2.

Rev 21:24: And the **nations** of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the **kings** of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.

21:26: And they shall bring the glory and honour of the **nations** into it.

21:27: And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither [whatsoever] worketh abomination, or [maketh] a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Rev 22:1: And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

22:2: In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, [was there] the tree of life, which bare twelve [manner of] fruits, [and] yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree [were] for the healing of the nations.

At first glance, the bolded portions of the above verses present us with many difficulties. But in reality these verses sum up the entire Bible and should be viewed with all scripture. In relationship to our analogy of the car they are tantamount to filling the car up with gas and turning the key. The importance of arriving at a clear understanding of these verses cannot be overemphasized, for they present to us the beginning of God's eternal purpose.

All history has been leading up to the time when these verses would become reality. Beginning with Rev. 21:24, the words "nations" & "kings" are of particular interest. "Nations" is found three times in the above verses; it comes from the word **ethnos** {eth'-nos}, and is translated *Gentiles 93 times, nation 64, heathen 5, people 2*. The dictionary defines it as *1) a multitude (whether of men or of beasts) associated or living together 1a) a company, troop, swarm 2) a multitude of individuals of the same nature or genus 2a) the human race 3) a race, nation, people group 4) in the OT, foreign nations not worshipping the true God, pagans, Gentiles 5) Paul uses the term for Gentile Christians*.

Further, use of this word in Rev. 22:2 proves that some of the citizens of these nations will need the leaves of the tree of life for medicinal purposes. The Greek word is **therapeia** {ther-ap-i'-ah} *household 2, healing 2*; and is translated *1) service rendered by one to another 2) spec. medical service: curing, healing 3) household service 3a) body of attendants, servants, domestics*. Luke uses **therapeia** in speaking of the work of our Lord in **Luk 9:11**: *And the people, when they knew [it], followed him: and he received them, and spake unto them of the kingdom of God, and **healed** them that had need of **healing***. That this word means physical healing of a bodily disorder is evident. The problem for many is that we are talking about a time when there will be no more sickness, a time when it is claimed that only those with resurrection bodies will be living. Only flesh and blood are in need of healing, and scripture says: **1Co 15:50**: *Now this I say, brethren, that **flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God**; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption*. Yet with this verse [**Rev. 22.2**] having a prominent place of being in "the end that is the beginning," we must re-evaluate our belief that only those with resurrection bodies will be in heaven.

We also find in: **Rev 20:5&6**: *But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This [is] the **first resurrection**. Blessed and holy [is] he that hath part in the **first resurrection**: on such the **second death** hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years*. The "first resurrection" is the end of the resurrection of the righteous. The *second death* mentioned in the above verse is called the "Great White Throne Judgment" and takes place at the end of the millennium. There are no righteous in this final judgment, only those who will make their final home in the lake of fire.

Now as we all know from our Lord's discourse in Matthew 25, only sheep

entered into the millennium and they enter in with human bodies. These sheep will re-populate the earth. The millennium will be the true golden age, with extended life for those with human bodies. Man will truly enter the space age. At the end of the millennium, when Satan is loosed, two-thirds of mankind will revolt against Christ on the throne. The rebels will be destroyed by fire from heaven and will take part in the second resurrection or **second death**. Only those condemned to eternal fire will be in the second resurrection. But what of those who do not take part in the rebellion? Many of them will have been born during the millennium. They would have followed the rules of that age and, having not rebelled, will have no part in the second resurrection.

These are the ones who will comprise the nations of the eternal kingdom. Having bodies of flesh and blood, they will become the final promise to Abraham of a seed that will be as numerous as the stars, infinite in number. Why do we not see the essence of God in this act? That which God uses in establishing His kingdom (*man*) becomes holy. Does not He declare this Himself by proclaiming that even Egypt will have a place in the eternal Kingdom (Isa 19)? So mankind, being used of God to introduce His Son and ultimately to create the Church, receives an eternal place in the universe. Mankind will populate the planet that is to be the capital of a Universal Kingdom. The home world of the human race is the new planet earth, where the city of God dwells and where the temple of God (the Church) has many mansions. The Theocratic Kingdom of God in eternity will be no less diverse with His created wonders and multiformity of life than this present world.

In conclusion we return to the question, **“why did God allow sin to enter His universe?”** This exercise will prove that it was only through God, permitting freewill to fail, that He could save freewill from His essence. Further, once creation was safe from His wrath, He could fellowship with all creation through the Church by means of Christ Jesus our Lord.

It is our hope that the following brief exercise will challenge the world of theology, as well the layman, to re-investigate the purpose for the Body of Christ. We should **not** be included with believers of any other dispensation. **THE CHURCH IS THE END ASPIRATION OF THE PURPOSE OF GOD. *Through His grace we are no longer citizens of the material world in which we now live.*** The Church has become the very presence of God throughout the universe, and through our rulership creation itself will find freedom to live before the presence of the One who is MOST HOLY. **Rom 8:21** *Because the creature (creation) itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty [freedom] OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD.*

In His Matchless Grace
Larry B. Patrick THD.
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CHAPTER ONE

PROPOSITION ONE:

Creation involves all creatures that have free will, both angelic and human.

Our key passage is **Rom. 8:19-21**

*19 For the earnest expectation of the **creature** waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.*

*20 For the **creature** was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope.*

*21 Because the **creature** itself also **shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.***

*22 For we know that the whole **creation** groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.*

Biblical interpreters have differed widely on the exegesis of this passage of scripture. The understanding of this entire segment of the eighth chapter of Romans lies in the meaning ascribed to the word "creature". This word comes from the Greek word ktisis {ktis'-is}, and is rendered *creature* 11 times, *creation* 6 times, *building* 1 time, *ordinance* 1 time. It therefore has the following meanings, depending on the context of the verse in which it is found:

- 1) the act of founding, establishing, building, etc.
- 1a) the act of creating, creation
- 1b) creation; i.e., thing created
- 1b1) of individual things, beings, a creature, a creation
- 1b1a) anything created
- 1b1b) after a rabbinical usage (by which a man converted from idolatry to Judaism was called)
- 1b1c) the sum or aggregate of things created
- 1c) institution, ordinance

Each of the above meanings lends understanding to the reader as to the exact meaning of the text. In 1 Pet. 2:13, "ordinance" is substituted for creature or creation, for that is what is meant based on the context of the verse. We as Christians were to be subject to the laws of man, for human government was a divine institution established by God. So it is the context of the verse that determines which English word is used to illustrate what the author was saying in the original language. In consideration of our original verse, William S. Plumer (in his commentary on Romans) wrote of the word "creation:"

“..... that the word with or without qualifying adjectives is used to denote men indiscriminately, Christians, the universe, anything made, the irrational creation, any result of creative power.”

Therefore, the exact meaning of the word in this verse is dependent on the context or surrounding qualifiers. Unfortunately, the surrounding qualifiers have not proven useful in the interpretation of this verse, since there is no theology to back up what those qualifiers suggest the verse is saying.

There are 5 main qualifiers in the verses under consideration:

1. “earnest expectation”; vs. 19
2. “waiteth for”; vs. 19
3. “was made subject”; vs. 20
4. “not willing”; vs. 20
5. “into the glorious liberty”; vs. 21

The sum total of these modifiers suggests that the “creature” or “creation” spoken of is a creation that has freewill. The identification of these creatures is a subject of much theological debate. Most theological minds today believe that Paul is using a figure of speech called “personification,” and that **nature** is given the qualifiers usually ascribed to a person. Calvin states:

“I understand the passage to have this meaning---that there is no element and no part of the world, which, being touched, as it were, with a sense of its present misery, does not intensely hope for a resurrection.”

The list of those who hold to this interpretation is a “who’s who” of the theological world. However, it is not possible within the scope of this exercise to debate all the potential meanings. One can only examine how a theological perspective, which allows the end of the work of God to explain the beginning, would interpret this word. Therefore, whether we allow personification or not, the real issue is the freewill of the “creature.”

To begin to understand this passage and the Plan of God, one must understand how to reconcile freewill with sovereignty. ***Why did God give creation freewill, especially when He knew that freewill would lead to sin?*** It is crucial to understand that God (in creating rational beings) had created, in effect, a “*problem*” for Himself. That problem was Freewill. However, God opined that freedom for his creatures was so important, He was willing to die to preserve it.

God had perfect love with the other members of the Godhead before creation began. It was His desire to share that relationship with creation. However,

He knew that in order to truly love, there must be freedom to choose. Since the capacity of creation to fellowship with God and freely share His love requires that creation possess freewill, it was the purpose of God to create beings who, of their own freewill, would choose Him. This presented a problem since creature wisdom, no matter how vast, is not omniscient. Choices are made based on the circumstances of the moment. A wrong choice meant **certain** banishment and death from God who, as perfect Righteousness and Justice, could do nothing else but condemn anything less than perfect. But, as God Himself declared, it is not His will that any should perish. **Therefore, God purposed a way to preserve creature freedom without violating that freedom, and to secure eternal peace and harmony.**

God had a plan. **He knew that freewill for creation would demand redemption for creation since all freewill ultimately rejects sovereignty at some point (Ex 26:15-21).** God purposed to resolve the problem of freewill despite what it cost Him. In addition, for God to fully share His love with His creatures, He also had to deal with the vast chasm that separated creatures from Him. He had to find a way to commune with His beloved creatures. Even in their perfection before the Fall, God could only commune with them through an intercessor or while cloaking His glory. To fully reveal himself meant certain death for man (Ex 33:20) and angel. In short, God needed to find a way to allow the creature to have freewill and still maintain harmony in His Kingdom, and God desired to bridge the chasm that existed between Himself and His creation. **The Cross resolved the first problem. Christ and the Church would resolve the second.**

It is important to recognize that God must be *physically* present for all his creation to see (Jn 14:9). The Angelic revolt, the history of the Old Testament, and the final uprising at the close of the Millennium proves beyond a shadow of a doubt that creatures need God's PHYSICAL presence. In fact, what makes those involved in the first resurrection special is that they operated through faith, never seeing God physically. (Hab 2:4). Indeed, one of the unique qualities of the Church is that we do not live by sight but by faith (2 Cor 2:7). In eternity, however, God will be physically present, residing in the New Jerusalem. However, it is also stated in Isa 9:7 that His government will be ever-increasing. Since the Lord Jesus Christ in His humanity can only be physically in one place at one time (obviously, as God, He is Omnipresent), what about those humans who are far away? Those who are filling up God's ever-expanding universe? Will they be left without a physical presence of God? In order to resolve this dilemma, God created a special creation; a creation called the body of Christ--The Church. It is *this* body that will be physically present throughout the universe representing the Godhead as the exact image of Christ (Col 1:18; Eph 5:22-23; Jn 17:21-22; Col 3:10). *For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the church (Eph 5:30-32).*

Having now shifted our focus INTO eternity we can now correctly interpret Romans 8:19-21. But first, we must correctly interpret a passage that has been improperly used as a proof text by those who believe that government ends where eternity begins. The passage often cited is 1Cor 15:28: "*And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, **that God may be all in all.***" The words "*Panta en pasin*" (in expanded translation) read "*God may be over all things and in all places.*" Only in comparison with two other verses can 1 Cor 15:28 be understood. The exact same phrase (*Panta en pasin*) is found in Col 3:11: "*Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond (nor) free; But Christ (is) all*"; and (2) Eph 1:23: "*Which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all*". Let us first consider Col 3:11. What is the passage referring to? It is referring to the fact that in the Church, Christ is over all (members of the Church) and in all (members of the Church). Whereas in Eph 1:23, the message is that the Church, filled by Christ, now fills everywhere "*the fullness of him*" (cf Eph 4:10). Thus, when 1Cor 15:28 is viewed in the light of these two additional verses, it is clear that 1Cor 15:28 is referring to the fact that through Christ (*the Image of God*) and the Church (*the Body of Christ*), THE TRINITY HAS NOW ESTABLISHED A PHYSICAL PRESENCE THROUGHOUT THE UNIVERSE. *This* is the meaning of the 'great mystery'! God has not only reconciled creation permanently to Himself by making peace via the Cross, but will forever keep the peace *through* the Church.

Current theological assumptions (see also Preface) that God's government ends at the close of the Millennium (using 1 Cor 15:28 as a proof text for this) are flawed since these assumptions must presume that God would be satisfied with a finite number of creatures to love. In fact, it is also often assumed that those who do not succumb to Satan's appeal at the end of the Millennium will themselves receive a resurrection body. Yet there are only two resurrections. One before the Millennium begins (for believers), and one at the end of the Millennium (for unbelievers). There is, however, no verse that ever explicitly details what happens to the billions of people who go into eternity. There is no reason why they could not enter into eternity in their human bodies and continue to reproduce in order to fill the universe. Therefore, what we find is that a new dispensational paradigm is required; one that looks INTO eternity as the *PURPOSE* for time.

It is only by understanding God's purpose in giving freewill to His rational creatures (also accomplished for His pleasure) that we can fully appreciate why God has gone to such great lengths to preserve freewill (2 Cor 3:17, Gal 5:1). We must also conclude that while Christ's rule will be eternal with the Father (Rev 22:3), it must be a *real* kingdom, one that will never cease to grow with new life (Isa 9:7). In this vast unlimited kingdom, the Church will have delegated authority and intercessory responsibility (a definition of 'Elohim'), and the office of a royal priest. The Church will insure that freedom will never again result in destruction (tohu va bohu). *This* is what crea-

tion has been waiting for! "Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." (Rom 8:21); and "God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect" (Heb 11:40). THIS IS THE GLORY OF GOD'S PLAN!

Now let us consider our passage again. We stated that there were five qualifiers to help us understand what God is declaring to us. The first and second are "the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for...". As demonstrated previously this creature is a person. As stated before, even personification ascribes this creature as a person. One who looks with his neck stretched forth, anxiously awaiting for the sons of God (the Church) to be fully manifested. But we believe verse 20 declares who these creatures are.

We have stated that freewill presented a problem for God. Because freewill is not omniscient, all decisions will arise out of some frame of reference and will be based upon the circumstances of the moment. Eventually, all creation could and would make a decision that would alienate them from the essence of God. Since God is outside of time, He could see that all creation was doomed to destruction. Yet without freewill, creation could not freely share in the love of God. To some extent, freewill could be called vanity, for with it comes the certainty of destruction from the very one who—because of His infinite Love—bestowed freewill upon creation. Certainly this is part of the vanity mentioned in **Rom 8:20**, our third and fourth qualifiers. "*For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected [the same] in hope.*" An expanded translation of this verse might read "*For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of their own freewill, but by the council of Him who subjected [the same] because it was their only hope.*" The "vanity" of this verse is not just the inherent flaw in freewill, but the trafficking of Satan mentioned in Isa. 23:8. Satan's "trafficking" was only possible because of the gift of freewill along with the determined council of God that allowed freewill to run its course.

In the introduction, we demonstrated that angels were created by God prior to the creation of the physical universe. We also know that the fall of Satan (who convinced one-third of the angelic host to join him in his revolt) had transpired by the time God created man.

The fall of Satan, as recorded in Eze. 28:2-19 reveals many important facts about freewill. Verses 12-14 record the position and status Satan enjoyed as "the anointed cherub that covereth." Satan was given privileges awarded to no other angel. He stood before the creator as the High Priest (vs. 13) of the angelic kingdom. However, no verse is more revealing than verse 15: "*Thou [wast] perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.*" Satan had freewill! God had bestowed upon Satan, in addition to all of the other angels, the **right to choose**. Although we are not told how long Satan lived in sinless perfection, the word "trafficking" sug-

gests that he was given time to convince as many as he could to subscribe to his views. We do not believe that God gave him an open forum a few days after He created man, and that at this forum he convinced one-third of the angels (who had just witnessed the creation of a limitless material realm) to revolt against such a powerful God. We do surmise, based on the age of the earth, that it was at least a few *million* years. However long it was, the wisest of God's created beings began a systematic approach to convince his angelic brethren. Satan had fallen, and he was propagating his own views and beliefs. Verses 16 & 17 continue the account and even allow us to speculate as to why he fell.

16 By the multitude of thy merchandise [**same word as traffic in vs. 18**] they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned; therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God; and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.

17 **Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty; thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness.** I will cast thee to the ground; I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee.

As Moses was to the people of Israel, so also was Satan to the rulers of the angelic realm. Angels, as the first sons of God, were the original rulers of the Universe. Being created spiritual creatures, they could move between the spiritual realm and the physical realm, and had bodies that could not be destroyed by anything in the physical realm. But as the rulers go, so goes the kingdom. As the highest of all angelic rulers, Satan was permitted access to the presence of the Almighty without restriction. The glory of the Almighty was therefore upon him as it also was upon Moses whenever he left God's presence. His inherent beauty was magnified many times by the glory of the Almighty that shown upon him. It was this enhanced glory that appropriated him even more reverence than he already elicited from his fellow angels. So as scripture proclaims, his beauty and position caused him to see himself as a god. *How ironic that what Satan has coveted for millions of years, God freely gives to those who become part of His demonstration of His wisdom and grace through belief in Christ Jesus.* Eventually, Satan began to wonder why God had not questioned him about his thoughts. Satan might have thought to himself, "if God was truly omniscient, He would know what I am thinking." But God suffered Satan to continue his thoughts, for GOD HAD A PLAN. Satan began to share his thoughts with other angels [trafficking] and even questioned the omnipresence of God, because God did not stop him. But God suffered Satan to continue, for GOD HAD A PLAN. Again, we do not know how long the trafficking was allowed to continue; all we know is that *"creation was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected [the same] in hope."* Yes, GOD HAD A PLAN. Paul declares that the longsuffering of God toward creatures of wrath is to justify his wrath

on such creatures and to prove His power. **Rom 9:22** [What] if God, willing to shew [his] wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction...". It seems unthinkable that God needs to prove anything to a creature, but this same idea is reiterated in **Eph 3:10**. *To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly [places] might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.* We are further enlightened as to God's creative work through His use of the free-will of His creation in time. **So God allowed Satan as leader of the first universal kingdom to corrupt creation, for this was creation's only hope.** IN-DEED ... GOD HAD A PLAN!

Therefore, the "creature" and the "creation" of Romans 8:19-20 must be or at least include the angelic host, not just those who had fallen through the "trafficking" of Satan, but also those who had heard and rejected his lies. It is through this same angelic host that God is now "...by the church" proving the "*manifold wisdom of God.*" All seeds of doubt, any clump of leaven that might have been planted by Satan, must be forever removed if freewill is to have a chance of living in hope.

Our last qualifier is "*into the glorious liberty of the children of God.*" Current theological thinking defines this "liberty" as freedom from the bondage of corruption. Obviously the verse declares this. But upon further investigation and application of our foundational sentence that the end explains the beginning, a new freedom becomes evident: freedom from the judgment of God as the consequence of corruption. That freedom from judgment is quite valuable to creation is evident. The repercussion or consequence of corruption is death. The penalty of death is "once and for all" removed from creation by the death of Christ. The scope of this thought is so broad that it cannot be adequately expounded upon in this exercise. For now we will just state that the rulership of all creation by the "children of God" will be based on the standard of God established in the Old Testament, coupled with the death of Christ. It will be the freedom to make an imperfect decision based on the circumstances of the moment, without having to face the only possible judgment from a righteous God—the judgment of death. The Church, who will rule and judge the angels and all of God's creation, will judge with the same grace with which we were judged. Not just the grace that saved us while we were yet sinners, but the grace that keeps us while we continue to commit sin.

Was freewill a problem for God? Certainly not, for God would not have brought creation into existence if the same was doomed to be destroyed by Him. No, GOD HAD A PLAN. God knew that **Freewill demands redemption for creation, because all freewill will ultimately reject sovereignty at some point (Ex. 26:15-21).**

CHAPTER TWO

PROPOSITION TWO

Freewill demands reconciliation between God and creation (as well as redemption), because all freewill ultimately rejects Sovereignty [Divine Will] at some point (Ex. 26:15-21).

1. Prophetic Evidence

a. The Tabernacle in the wilderness:

Ex 26:19 And thou shalt make forty **sockets** of **silver** under the twenty **boards**; two sockets under one board for his two **Tenons**, and two sockets under another board for his two **Tenons**.

The tabernacle was designed after the pattern of the temple in heaven where the presence of the Most High God dwelt. It therefore reflected prophetic truth which was declared by God in the heavenly design of the temple, a design that existed before the foundation of the world (remember that the heavenly or spiritual realm was created before the physical realm). The truth declared in the **Tenons, boards and sockets** was declared before creation began. The Temple stood on the redemption metal of silver, united to the temple by the hands (Tenons of wood) of a creation that did not yet exist (**The God-Man Jesus Christ**). That God was going to unite with creation (the board overlaid with gold) so that he could redeem what was not yet created and had not yet fallen, was therefore part of the divine Plan of God. The whole Temple evidences the fact that **FREEWILL DEMANDED REDEMPTION BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD**.

The board of the Tenon also represented the Church. That Christ did not need redemption goes without saying. Since the temple stood on the redemptive metal of silver, it is indicated that this was a redeemed temple, which was once separated from God. However, since the heavenly temple has never been separated from God (and again, Christ did not need to be redeemed), some other temple was in the mind of God before He created the heavenly one. The church is the final temple of God and was therefore the creation that the Father was prophesying would one day be redeemed. But we must remember that when the heavenly temple was built, the physical realm did not yet exist. Indeed, it would be millions of years after the creation of the physical realm that the material (man) from which the last temple



would be built was created. Further, when the material (man) was created, he was created perfect and did not need to be redeemed.

In redeeming the board, God made a fallen but now redeemed temple His dwelling place. Since something that is in a state of separation from God cannot redeem itself, The Tenons must represent the means of redemption for the Board. Therefore, the Tenons, which are inserted into the Board and the silver, must represent the person (tenons) and redemptive work (silver) of our Savior Jesus Christ. The result is that the Tenon becomes the foundation of the Board by becoming one with the silver as well as one with the Board. Likewise, the Board becomes the Body of the Tenon and both share the nature of Divinity (overlaid with gold). **NOTE: A detailed study of the dimensions and the materials that were used in the construction of the temple will reveal the complete Plan of God for creation.**

b. The prejudgment of Adam before he sinned:

Gen 2:17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely **die** [Heb. “**dying thou shalt die**”].

The prejudgment of Adam was unlike that of the angelic host, who were initially judged after the war in heaven and completely judged with the death of Christ on the cross (John 12:31). Adam’s prejudgment declared something for which the heavenly host was not prepared; namely, that God would use the occasion of the fall of man to announce His own entrance into creation and the final judgment of Satan. From the time that God announced that there would be a “seed of woman,” mankind (the last created being with freewill) has been the most important creation molded from the hands of God. Indeed, the total O.T. Biblical account can and should be viewed as the history of the witness protection program of God for the “seed of the woman” that was to come from the human race. The human race was protected from the threat of extinction through the Flood in Noah’s day. The family of Abraham (Israel) was protected from the threat of Egypt. With every judgment and subsequent disciplinary action of God, the nation Israel was protected until the witness was born. Even during the life of Christ, the witness was sheltered until He gave His final testimony by dying on the cross.

However, it was the temple in the wilderness designed after a heavenly pattern that declared the purpose of God, a purpose that existed before creation began. God purposed to redeem creation from the threat of total destruction, even before creation (angelic) fell. Greater still, it was that same heavenly temple that declared that God would raise the redeemed creation to the status of being one with God. These two prophetic evidences, the temple and the pre-judgment of Adam with its subsequent announcement of the

seed of woman, clearly show that God planned to reconcile creation to Himself by making creation a part of Himself. He declared all of this while creation was yet without sin. How ironic that it was declared in the very heavenly temple in which Lucifer served as the “guardian cherub the covereth.”

2. Historical Evidence

Historically we know that freewill requires redemption because angels and man have exercised their freewill to accomplish ends that are not in accordance with God’s perfect will. Once a creature has exercised his freewill to foment a purpose other than the purpose of God, the creature stands defenseless before the Father, awaiting judgment. Now all we need to do is look at the death that exists throughout all creation to know that there is nothing that creation can do to reconcile itself back to God. Indeed, the natural man accepts the imperfection of creation as the natural order of things. The laws of redemption require that the one to be redeemed must pay a price for his redemption—in this case, death. Otherwise, someone who is not in bondage must pay the price in order to redeem the one in bondage.

Throughout human history, as early as Cain, Satan has perverted the mind of man into dreaming up false systems as a way of appeasing the wrath of God. Yet each of these systems successively strengthen the conclusion that only He who has been offended can remove the consequence of the offense. So it was that Christ, who came as God in the flesh, propitiated (satisfied) Himself and reconciled creation. History now becomes the empirical proof that an omniscient God knew (before He created beings with freewill) that this freewill would demand to be reconciled, because of the limitation inherent within freewill.

3. The existence of freewill establishes the potential for the corruption of creation.

When God decided to create beings with freewill, His omniscience foresaw the problem for creation. He knew that freewill without omniscience would ultimately lead to circumstances in which it would make a decision in opposition to His own will. Freewill without coexisting Omniscience will ultimately lead to bad decisions because the multifarious results of a single decision can only be known by God. Therefore, even though creation was created in a state of perfection, the potential for sin always existed. It is this inherent weakness within freewill that required God to have a plan of redemption for creation before it even existed. As briefly pointed out earlier in this exercise, Satan was not created with any flaws. God could not create anything less than perfect. However, perfection did not keep Satan from exercising his freewill to choose against the will of God. Neither did perfection prevent one-third of the angelic host from falling under the influence of Satan’s traffick-

ing.

Even though angels are not direct beneficiaries of the saving work of Christ, they will live in the kingdom of the liberty of the children of God. This “liberty” is not freedom from sin, which is an inescapable byproduct of freewill, but “liberty” from the ultimate consequence of sin. After the “Great White Throne Judgment,” which is a judgment by God with only one ultimate punishment, the children of God will share all judgment with Christ.

We, the resurrected “Body of Christ,” as rulers of the eternal kingdom of God, will judge all creation in that kingdom according to the grace of God and the laws and principles established and revealed to creation in the Bible.

4. The freewill of creation was subjected to the vanity of Satan’s trafficking.

Eze 28:16 & 18. *By the multitude of thy **merchandise** they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned; therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God; and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. (Vs. 18) Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy **traffic**; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee.*

The “trafficking” [calumniator or slanderer] of Satan included the marketing of his viewpoint, his political aspirations for himself as well as his designs for the rest of Creation. Satan’s trafficking also includes a vicious, slanderous, malicious attack on the person of God. Satan tore God down in the eyes of the angelic creation in order to promote himself and advance his plan over God’s Plan. He presented the angelic hosts with an alternative to God’s Plan. Our Lord declared that Satan was a liar from the beginning of creation (**John 8:20**) and yet he was perfect in all his ways until he fell (**Eze 28:15**). What lies did he spread as he trafficked among the angels? No doubt he lied about God’s character as well as God’s Plan.

Rom 8:20. For the creature was made subject to **vanity**, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected [the same] in hope...”.

The word creature [ktisis] could be translated as “creation”. As we have already noted, this verse must include the angelic kingdom. An expanded translation of this verse might read: “For the creation was subjected to vanity [the vanity of Satan], not of their own freewill, but by reason of Him [God] who subjected creation because it was the only hope.” When the angelic kingdom is included, the entire portion of Romans 8: 19-23 introduces one

of the great mysteries of the Bible, namely:

Rom 9:22 [What] if God, willing to shew [his] wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction...”.

The long-suffering of God mentioned in the above verse is directly linked to the “hope” of Rom. 8:20. God refrained from executing His judgment on creation and allowed the unfolding of history, both angelic and human, to become part of His creative work in the production of that which was creation’s only hope, namely, “**the sons of God**”.

Man was not created to resolve the angelic conflict. The angelic conflict was allowed (long-suffering) to happen so that God could permanently resolve the conflict between Sovereignty and Freewill by becoming part of Creation through man! Christ is the only thing that the justice of God can never condemn, and we receive the same benefit, as the following verse declares: *In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and **unblameable and unproveable** in his sight...(Col. 1:22)*. The exercise by Lucifer of his freewill against God produced the vanity to which all creation becomes subject. The vanity of Satan became the root cause of the broken relationship between God and creation and, as such, demanded a plan of redemption and reconciliation in order to restore that relationship. Since God was “not willing that any should perish,” He could not simply annihilate creation. **HIS OWN ESSENCE DEMANDED A PLAN.**

2Pe 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, **not willing that any should perish**, but that all should come to repentance.

At the beginning of this second point we stated that *freewill demands reconciliation and therefore redemption between God and creation, because all freewill will ultimately reject sovereignty [Divine Will].....at some point.* But we have already stated that the condemned cannot redeem himself. Furthermore, since all creation is ultimately under condemnation, the plan as well as its execution must come from someone outside of creation. Therefore, the plan of redemption and its execution can only come from God. Our third proposition, therefore is, **Redemption / reconciliation of creation demanded a divine and eternal resolution of the conflict between sovereignty and creation’s freewill in order to preserve freewill and thus perpetuate creation.**

CHAPTER THREE

PROPOSITION THREE

Redemption / reconciliation of creation demanded a Divine and eternal resolution of the conflict between Sovereignty and Creation's freewill in order to preserve freewill and thus perpetuate creation.

1. Freewill rejects Divine will at some point in time.

We have already shown that the inherent inadequacy of freewill lies in the finite nature of its decision making process. Without omniscience, each decision must be based on the circumstances of the moment coupled with a finite frame of reference and an understanding of the laws of God. It is this inadequacy that potentially brings every creature into condemnation from corruption. In fact, freewill often makes decisions which—based on the information available at the time of the decision—appear to be good decisions, yet the ultimate result is sin or evil. The freewill of creation often makes decisions which are self-destructive simply because the creature is not omniscient.

Therefore, creation was never doomed to destruction because from eternity past, God had a plan to prevent it's destruction. **God had a plan to save creation from His own perfect Holiness before creation ever existed.**

God knew, even though creation did not, that when He created beings with freewill, there would have to be a contingency plan to deal with the eventuality of creation exercising its freewill outside of Divine (Sovereignty). **Perfect freewill for creation would be to choose the will of God.** Freewill does not mean one can do anything, anytime, anyplace. Perfect freewill should always choose in its own absolute best interest. This means that freewill should always choose God's will, since God always wills the absolute best for His creatures. But as it is today, so it was then. No one has the mind of God. No one can know His perfect will save His Spirit, which lives in us! Without the indwelling of the Spirit of God, the first creation had to return to the heavenly temple to know if every decision was absolutely perfect. **Through the church, the temple of God is now and will be in creation!** We will elaborate further on this point later in the exercise. For now, we will follow the logical sequence and consequences of freewill that chooses its own will over the perfect will of God.

2. Rejection results in corruption.

Gen 6:11 *The earth also was **corrupt** before God, and the earth was filled with violence.*

Gen 6:12 *And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was **corrupt**; for all flesh had **corrupted** his way upon the earth.*

After the fall of Adam in the Garden, the capacity of freewill becomes evident: the murder of Abel by his brother Cain; the taking of two wives by Lamech; the false reasoning by Lamech that he would be avenged by God seventy fold if any one took revenge on him after he had committed murder. All of these things God allowed to happen, for until that time man had only been given one law by God, and that law had already been broken. However, we learn from the episode between Cain and Abel that God still spoke directly with man; and though we are not told of any other laws, we do know that man had been taught that God required a sacrifice of blood from a fattened lamb.

Finally, by the sixth chapter of Genesis, all flesh save Noah's had corrupted itself before the Lord. Again we see that the long-suffering of God waited until freewill had proven itself. During this age, referred to as the age of conscience, man was permitted to do whatever seemed right to him. If God had not destroyed man at this time, eventually even the progeny of Noah would have become corrupt [*note the sin of Ham after the flood*]. But the corruption of one small planet is nothing compared to the universal corruption caused by Satan and one- third of the angelic host.

3. Corruption results in condemnation and judgment.

Gen 6:5 *And God saw that the wickedness of man [was] great in the earth, and [that] every imagination of the thoughts of his heart [was] only evil continually.*

Gen 6:6 *And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.*

Gen 6:7 *And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.*

Many people do not like to think of God as a god of judgment. It has even been said that the bloody God of the O.T. who ordered the death of men, women and children, is not the same as the Christian God we worship today. We prefer to view Him as a lovable Santa Claus, ready to forgive and bless us if we just accomplish more good than evil. But remember that all of the attributes of God must ever be kept before us, lest we err in our understanding of His ways. As a judge, God must act within His essence. When a law or command is decreed, He is bound to that law as the Sovereign Immutable

King. The Love of God can not force Him to violate His essence, by forgiving broken commandments. The penalty prescribed by His Righteousness must be met or He violates His Essence and becomes less than perfect, less than God. What Righteousness demands cannot be swept under a rug and simply forgotten. The following verse tells us that He expects no less of His people who have been given the authority to judge:

Lev 19:15 Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty; [but] in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbor.

Therefore the Holiness of God, namely His righteousness and justice, is a great threat to creatures whose relative righteousness is less than His absolute righteousness. Although God established laws in the O.T., which carried various degrees of punishment, these laws were only applicable as long as God was not executing the prescribed punishment for any infraction upon the offender. From the Fall in the Garden to the death of our Lord, God had postponed the prescribed punishment demanded by His essence. Instead of punishing the actual offender, He executed His wrath upon a flawless substitute. His Justice must be satisfied before His Love can fellowship.

4. **Broken relationship demands reconciliation.**

2Co 5:19 To wit, that God was in Christ, **reconciling** the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

Heb 2:17 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto [his] brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things [pertaining] to God, to make **reconciliation** for the sins of the people.

The Greek word for reconciliation in Heb 2:17 is *hilaskomai* {hil-as'-kom-ah-ee}; it means 'to render one's self, to appease, conciliate to one's self, to become propitious, be placated or appeased, to be propitious, be gracious, be merciful, to expiate, make propitiation for'. It is in the middle voice, which means that **the true beneficiary of reconciliation is He that produces it**. In Heb. 2:17, Christ produces the action of the verb and in His Humanity receives the benefit of being a merciful high priest, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. But in His deity, the benefit is quite different. Reconciliation, as a work of God, allows God to fellowship with creation regardless of the imperfections of creation; therefore, God receives the greater benefit. **God knew that in order for Creation to live in His presence with freewill, He must allow**

freewill to sin so that He could free Creation from the threat of extinction from the hands of its Creator. How marvelous are the ways of God, how unfathomable is His wisdom! Reconciliation permits fellowship; therefore, broken fellowship demands reconciliation. Either God must provide the means of reconciliation whenever creation is alienated from God, or creation must face the ultimate punishment demanded by God's essence.

Eze 45:17 And it shall be the prince's part [to give] burnt offerings, and meat offerings, and drink offerings, in the **feasts**, and in the new moons, and in the sabbaths, in all solemnities of the house of Israel: he shall prepare the sin offering, and the meat offering, and the burnt offering, and the peace offerings, to make **reconciliation** for the house of Israel.

Many theologians would prefer to remove the last eight chapters of Ezekiel, rather than try to understand what God is teaching about His Eternal Plan. An examination of Eze 45:17 will help us understand the eternal Plan of God. We have stated that broken fellowship demands reconciliation, and it does. But reconciliation is a result of something, not a cause for something. During the Church Age, the ministry of reconciliation left to the church is to declare the work of Christ on the Cross. When this age ends and the tribulation is over, the age of the Millennium begins. The penalty for sin, as it is today, has already been paid. But freewill shall continue to sin, and sin causes broken fellowship. The object lesson that mankind will learn through the modified yet re-established temple services is that broken fellowship requires reconciliation. More importantly, they will learn that **reconciliation demands redemption**. Finally, man will learn at the end of the 1000 years of peace that even with perfect environment, extended life, and perfect health, man will still choose against God. Corruption requires reconciliation. Not one person will live a completely perfect life. *The only difference will be that the penalty for corruption will have already been paid so that only the requirement for reconciliation will be necessary. [Note, offerings are not burnt during the millennium, they are boiled; Christ's throne is atop the brazen altar].*

5. Reconciliation demands redemption.

Eph 1:7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

Col 1:14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, [even] the forgiveness of sins.

Heb 9:12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption [for us].

For there to be true reconciliation between two individuals, that which caused the broken relationship must be addressed. In all cases, someone

must forgive the other for a broken trust. In this case, God had to find a way to forgive man without jeopardizing His essence. The above scriptures declare that Christ Jesus is that way. Through Christ, God was able to propitiate His Holiness and forgive those who had committed the offense. **Rom 8:1** *[There is] therefore now **no condemnation** to them which are in Christ Jesus, who **[because they are in Christ now]** walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.* So now, as scripture declares: **Rom 8:33&34** *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? [It is] God that justifieth. Who [is] he that condemneth? [It is] Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.* Through Christ, God has redeemed man and built both a body and temple for Himself. Through the body and temple of God, the universal creation may now be reconciled to God.

How did God's treatment of man differ from his treatment of angels within His plan? First, the angels were all created at one moment in time. Angels were created as a finite number in a state of perfection, whereas initially only two humans were created. However, through reproduction human beings have the potential to become infinite in comparison to the number of angels. Second, God withheld judgment of the angels from the time of Lucifer's corruption to the end of his trafficking campaign when Satan and one-third of the angels were condemned by God. In the case of Adam and the woman, God pronounced His judgment for sin before any sin occurred. He said, "if you use your freewill to choose against My will 'dying thou shalt die.'" Since Adam is our corporal head, the rest of humanity is **graciously** judged **in** Adam. **We are all born in sin.**

The long-suffering of God allotted the angels time to decide for or against God, long after the trafficking campaign of Satan was launched. They had time to change their minds. They likely had millions of years to ponder the sinful notion of rebellion and to meditate on the evil plan of Satan. Yet they were not judged until the rebellion reached fruition. Christ declared in Matt. 25:41 that the Lake of Fire was prepared as a consequence of that judgment. Satan and his followers were told that their penalty was to spend the rest of Eternity in the lake of fire. The realization and fear of this sentence is what led to the postponing of God's judgment and is the reason Satan and the rest of the fallen angels are still "out of prison" at this time. Satan, no doubt, had brought the essence of God into question. His line of reasoning is one that is still being used today. ***How can a God of Love destroy His creatures?***

With the creation of man came the prohibition not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. However, we are not told of any prohibition given to the first rulers, the angels. Satan might have used the following line of reasoning to try and gain a reprieve for himself and his followers:

'If you had given me a warning of what would happen if I chose against your

will, I never would have sinned. You let me go on believing I could be like you, assuming that you really are omniscient, without the slightest warning of the consequences of my actions.’ He might have turned to the angelic assembly at this point and declared in a resounding voice, “**Why did You allow me to subject my brethren to eternal damnation?** If you are truly the God of love, you should have stopped me before I did such damage. Were You just amusing Yourself with us for some unknown purpose?”

Rom 8:20 For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected [the same] in [because it was their only] hope. Although we do not know the exact attack that was brought against God by Satan, we know from scripture that because of this attack, a seed had been planted in the righteous angels that God must now remove. *Eph 3:10* To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly [places] might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.

So, Satan’s trial would go on until God presented a witness that would put an end to his accusations. That witness, who is Faithful and True, is the seed of the woman, Jesus Christ. **At the end of His testimony, He pronounced, “Now is the prince of this world judged.”** Satan didn’t realize that the last witness against him would be God. “If you are the Son of God, the seed of the woman promised to man, the final witness—prove it by turning these stones to bread and feed yourself.” The Lord testified in response that the freewill of man is subject to the freewill of God by saying, “my meat is to do the will of Sovereignty, of Him for whom I have come to be a witness.” Jesus passed the cross-examination of Satan, who broke off the questioning and reserved his right to re-examine the witness at a later date.

The entire length of history spanning from the creation of man to the appearance of the final witness was a necessary process aimed at bringing about the testimony of the final witness. Satan thought that he had won the victory after his cross-examination led to the fall of man. But God said, “No; the trial is not over till I bring my final witness.” So in the mean time, as human history unfolded, Satan’s strategy shifted to preventing the final witness from testifying. If Satan could prevent Christ from testifying, he would win the appeal trial. God as the prosecuting attorney intervened on behalf of His witness and instituted the first witness protection program. God protected His witness in the judgment of the flood, in the judgment at the tower of Babel, and during the period of captivity in Egypt (by enabling the Jews to cross the Red Sea.) All of these events should be viewed as significant **only** in regard to the end effect of each—the final witness was protected.

Christ was the first stone of a building that was the ultimate demonstration of the manifold wisdom of God. Christ as the “corner stone” of creation was the beginning of the final witness. The Church is the completion of the final witness. Further, it is through the church that the rest of Creation is set free from the conflict of freewill and sovereignty. Man is not the issue in the crea-

tion. Man was only brought about to produce the final witness. Yet, man is the issue as it relates to the incarnation. It has always been God's intent to enter Creation through man. Also, it is from man that God will raise up rulers "after His own heart" who will become the judges of creation, freeing creation from the threat of destruction from the power of the Immutable Righteousness of God.

Still, the real issue in creation is freewill and the resultant potential for sin. The problem is solved through Christ and the purpose of the plan is realized through the Church. The Church becomes the basis for perpetuation of creation and *for the freedom of creation*. Christ in the church prevents the essence of God from being attacked by freewill because God will now dwell with creation in His holy temple. The Church and creation will have access to the presence of God by means of the sons of God. Christ in the church protects creation from the essence of God; God is appeased when He sees Himself (Christ) in creation, in us. Before time began, freewill demanded redemption, and the plan for redemption was always hidden with God.

Therefore, the resolution of this apparent contradiction (freewill vs. sovereignty) must originate with the infinite wisdom of God. Creation's finite mind can only recognize an insolvable problem. However, from God's viewpoint of omniscience, there never existed a problem. He was still in the process of creation, waiting, when through history He would create the great mystery of godliness. *Rom 11:33 O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable [are] his judgments, and his ways past finding out!*

“ It is the advent of evil into God's creation that set up a conflict within the attributes of God. Holiness condemns sin while love seeks to save the sinner...It is within the very nature of God that the adjustment between the attributes has been wrought. ‘God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself’ (2 Cor. 5:19). Divine love, though so measureless in itself, is ever amenable to divine reason and divine righteousness. The adjustment between holiness and love, as these attributes are affected by sin, though wrought out in time and at the cross, was anticipated from all eternity” L.S. Chafer, Vol. I, Pg. 206

That freewill demanded redemption before the foundation of the world cannot be denied, but redemption does not resolve the great problem between freewill and sovereignty. Redemption alone did not require the second person of the Trinity to come into creation. The explanation of the reasoning behind God's way of redemption is found in marriage (“***two shall become one flesh.***”)

CHAPTER FOUR

PROPOSITION FOUR:

Through creation itself must come the resolution of the ageless conflict between Sovereignty and Freewill.

As in any organism, no member or part, however minute can be fully understood aside from its relation to the whole; so, in scripture, every paragraph and sentence is part of its totality, and must be studied in relation to all the rest. The text will be illuminated by the context of scripture immediately preceding and following. Every occurrence and utterance should be studied in its surroundings. How, why, when a word was spoken or an act done, helps to explain it...Hidden relationships must be traced like underground roots and subterranean channels.

--A. T. Pierson, D.D.

In order to support our proposition, we must answer the crucial question regarding what the Bible means when it describes man as reflecting God's image. Surprisingly, until recently theologians have sadly neglected this area. Yet, it is the image that holds the key to understanding God's purpose in creating man, as well as the entrance of God into creation as the God-man, Jesus Christ.

Even before creation God ordained that man should be conformed to the image of his Son - the image that is, which is His Son; for the Son Himself is the Image of God. Accordingly God created man in or after His own Image. Conformity to the Son purposed before the beginning, is there at the beginning, and for fallen man is redemptively achieved through the same Son in the Divine Image. The end is not only at the beginning but also BEFORE THE BEGINNING (emphasis ours). Always it is in and through the Son. From eternity to eternity Chrisiformity is God's purpose for creature, man. And because it is the end willed by God it cannot fail of fulfillment.

The True Image,
Philip Edgumbe Hughes

Indeed, as Hughes observes, "the doctrine of the Image of God is the key to

the factuality of the Incarnation no less than to the understanding of the true nature of man" (*Image*, p. 214). It is clear that man, created in God's image, was created a little lower than God Himself (Ps 8:5) for a special purpose—a purpose that includes Christ, the Church, and Eternity. As Phillips aptly translates, "*the whole of creation is on tiptoe to see the wonderful sight of the sons of God coming into their own.*" (Rom 8:19)

It is the purpose of this chapter to look at key verses in both the Old and New Testaments which explain the image. However, we will look at the image differently than most theologians have in the past. We will look at the image as it pertains to being *both* male and female, and how *that* image is reflected in Christ and His Bride, the Church.

One of the most neglected aspects of the interpretation of Genesis is the account of man being created in God's image (Gen. 1:26-27). As a result, the fact that this image was found in the unity of two separate beings, male and female (Gen. 1:27), has been largely overlooked. We shall see that they were created as one, and yet also as two. This is a crucial point in understanding God's Eternal Plan.

First, let us note that the word used for the creation of the woman is not the same as the one used for the creation of Adam. The word used in the creation of the woman is *bana* (Gen. 2:22). This word, however, seems to be rarely translated according to its literal Hebrew meaning, which is "to build." Thus, we see that the woman was literally built for Adam, coming from him (Adam), and not from the ground as he (Adam) was. What makes this so unique is that unlike the animals, who individually received their life from God, the Woman seems to have received her life from Adam. God never breathed life into the woman; instead, He took living tissue from Adam and with that tissue built woman! We will note the true significance of this in relation to the creation of the Bride of Christ, the Church, (Eph. 25-32). Indeed, as we shall see, there is a very significant connection between the Genesis account of the creation of man in God's image and God's perfect image, Christ and the Church.

Further proof is found in one of the more obscure verses in scripture, Mal. 2:15: "And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth." There is much confusion over how this verse should be translated. To understand this verse in its primary sense we must relate it back to the Genesis account of creation. When the verse is viewed as discussing the unique relationship between the man and woman in marriage, and that they become one (ECHAD), then the verse must be translated "Did not God make them one?" The importance of the use of the word ECHAD will be noted shortly, but first let us look at the word "residue." If we compare the account given in Gen 2:22 with this verse, we can see that the life of the

woman was in Adam and a body was built for her from his body. Of all the species of animal life on this planet, each was created with a separate body. Only man was created and then woman built from the body of man. Thus in Gen 2:24, when God brought the woman to Adam, he immediately recognized that she had come from him! He saw that he and the woman shared a bond that no other creature had access to. It was for this reason that a man would leave his closest physical relationship (mother and father) and unite with one who would complete this unique bond. It is in this bond, this unique relationship between two separate beings, that we must look to find the image of God.

Returning to the word ECHAD, used to denote 'one' in our passage, we can note that this word has a special meaning, which stands out in the Hebrew, but does not translate well into the English. We find this word in Deu. 6:4, referring to the Godhead:

"The Hebrew word used here for 'one' is never employed except in connection with a COLLECTIVE body. (The word) ECHAD, means a COMPOUND UNITY, and would be used in such expressions as 'cluster of grapes' and 'all the people arose as one man'. The Hebrew word for 'one' which means an absolute unity is YACHEED, and would be used in such an expression as ONLY ONE; but this word is never once used to express the UNITY OF THE GODHEAD."

All About The Bible, Sidney Collet,

p. 163-64

The image of God is found in the unique relationship that only exists between man and woman—the two becoming one, not just in body, but in spirit. It is this that makes us different from the angels, who are never described as being in God's image and are specifically noted by Christ as not taking part in marriage (Matt 22:30). Thus, while angels have intellect, sensibility, and will (the traditional way of explaining the image of God in man), only mankind was created both male and female and has the ability within that relationship to imitate the most unique relationship that has ever existed, the Trinity itself. ONLY MAN HAS THE ABILITY TO UNITE WITH HIS FEMALE MATE AND BECOME WHAT THE TRINITY IS – **UNITY (ONE) IN COMPOUND.**

WHY did God create man in this unique image? To answer this, we must note the attribute that defines the relationship of the trinity, which is love. It is love that is the root motivation behind every action God takes, even the Cross (John 3:16). Of course, this is not to deny the other attributes of God, such as Righteousness and Justice (Ps. 89:14). However, amongst the Trinity (each having the same essence), they are able to share unlimited and unrestricted love. Is it any surprise that God, seeking to share His happiness with His creatures, would duplicate this relationship in the creature, so that

the creature may experience to some extent the love that exists only between those who have the same essence? However, God was not content with creatures who could only share a similar type of relationship that the Trinity shared. God intended to bring the creature into that special relationship with the Godhead itself! Not only would this be the ultimate expression of God's love and the sharing of His happiness, it would be through this special relationship with finite creatures that the rest of creation would be freed (Rom 8:19-23). And upon whom has God bestowed such a great honor? The Church—the Body and Bride of the God-Man, Jesus Christ.

Thus, we can conclude that by entering into creation, **Jesus Christ has become the link between the creator and the creature.** What God has accomplished through the Incarnation and the creation of the Church is nothing less than bringing the finite into intimate union with the infinite. Is this not what Christ prayed would happen in John 17? And isn't this the relationship John explains we are experiencing when we are filled with the Holy Spirit in 1 Jn: 16-17? This is the final purpose of God, the ultimate expression of His Love—to become part of the creation through the Incarnation, and then to pull out part of that creation into the unique relationship of Christ, the Father and the Holy Spirit. Is this not the very hope that creation has been waiting for, so that through the Church “in the end, the whole of created life will be rescued from the tyranny of change and decay, and have its share in that magnificent liberty which can only belong to the children of God ”? (Rom 8:21, Philips translation)

Only God's wisdom could, despite continual rejection by His creatures, bring creation into union with Himself. Without tampering with the volition of the creature, God used creature freewill to accomplish what He intended from the beginning. Despite the revolt of Satan, the fall of Adam, and Israel's rejection of her Messiah, God is even now completing His Plan for Creation.

In summary, **THE TRUE IMAGE OF GOD IS FOUND IN THE MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP.** The joining of two into one results in a compound unity, and thus reflects the unique relationship within the Trinity. Christ Himself (in Matt 19:4-6) alluded to this fact when he linked Gen 1:27 and Gen 2:24, stating that once two were joined they were one flesh, and therefore should not be separated. In fact, He points out that it is God who joins them. Thus, this relationship is not merely physical, but spiritual and must not be broken. Secondly, this relationship is itself similar to the type of relationship that exists between Christ and the Church. Christ is the second Adam (1 Cor 15:45-47). The Church is both His body (Col 1:24, Eph 1:22) and His bride (Eph 2:22-32)—**THE SECOND EVE.** Like the woman, the Church is being built. Thus, the marriage relationship represents in its unity the perfect relationship that exists when we are brought into union with Christ (2 Cor 13:5). We are one with Christ and have been brought into the most selective relationship that will ever exist, the Trinity. The Church, and only the Church (through its relationship with Christ) has a bond with the Trinity that no other creature

will have. We are Christ's very flesh and bones, just as the woman was built from Adam.

We are therefore partakers of the Divine nature. "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Pet 1:4). God has in the Church finished what He began in Genesis 1:27. Through Christ, God has made a creature in His image. Throughout eternity, this creature will represent Him, rule with Him, and intercede as priests for the growing, free creation—in addition to sharing in that perfect love that exists between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

At the beginning of this theological exercise, reference was made to the fact that the student must always hold the essence of God before him when he studies God's Word. God's essence requires that He can never be less than what He is. As long as creation, having freewill, had the potential to make decisions contrary to the will of God, creation faced the possibility of destruction from His holy essence. Therefore, God not only had to have a plan to redeem creation, He also had to bring something forth in creation that he could never condemn. Hence, **FROM GOD'S CREATION, GOD HAD TO CREATE ... HIMSELF!**

CHAPTER FIVE

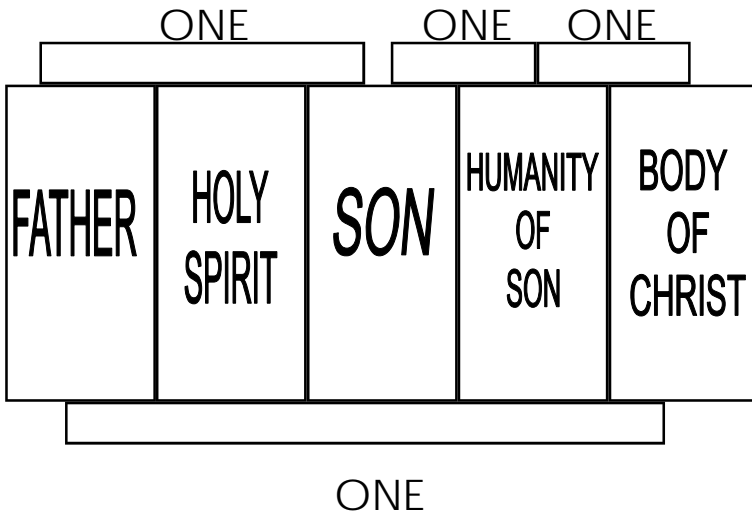
PROPOSITION NUMBER FIVE

A. From God's creation must come ... GOD.

God became flesh,
so Man could become god-Athanasius

1. Historical Evidence

THE IMAGE OF GOD IN ETERNITY



The number five represents grace. Through the union of the humanity of Christ and the marriage of Christ and the Church, the oneness or 'ECHAD' of God is five-grace personified. GOD'S IMAGE, WHAT CAN BE SEEN OF GOD BY CREATION, WILL BE FOUND WHEN SOMEONE VISITS HIS TEMPLE; HIS TEMPLE IS THE CHURCH

We have now reached our fifth and final proposition and have come full circle. Beginning where everything must begin (with God), we are now ending where everything must end (again, with God.) This full circle is how the Plan of God **must** be approached if we are going to see the Plan of God, not as time-bound man imagines it to be, but as it was truly conceived by God (beginning from, and ending in eternity!)

We began with the essence of God and demonstrated that it was love that motivated God to create rational creatures. Moreover, we noted that freewill is a vital component of rational nature (for there cannot be personality without freedom). It was to preserve this trait which led God to construct a plan that made it necessary for Him to enter into creation itself. We have also seen the proof that God **always** had eternity in His mind from the construction of the Tabernacle, a form of the true one in heaven. This antitype depicted the reality of God redeeming His creation from corruption. Finally, we have discussed the fact that the central point around which the Plan of God revolves is the creation of a creature in God's image. We have shown that the fact that man was made in God's image is rooted in the marriage relationship. Yet marriage in time is but a type of the greatest marriage relationship, that which exists between Christ and the Church. Thus, we must now conclude where we started, with God and the final goal of His Plan: the sharing of His infinite love with an infinite population of rational creatures.

At the close of the Millennium, those who have passed the last test will enter into eternity. Not all will rebel against Christ when Satan is released once again. Those who don't, will repopulate the new heaven and earth. However, as man moves further and further into space during the eternal age, will he forget God? This is one of the great lessons learned throughout history, the need for man to see God in order to obey Him. Indeed, one of the facts that amazes the angels is that man is capable of not seeing and yet still obeying (1Pe.1:10). Still, this obedience is the exception, not the rule. Only in the Millennium, with Christ present and ruling with a rod of iron, does man obey (Ps.2). Will God have to destroy once again those who have forgotten and rejected Him? Will He be forced to destroy vast areas of His creation again as penalty for rebellion? No!

God has prepared Eternity such that never again will any part of His universe have to be destroyed. Mankind will be ruled and guided as it moves into space by a divine aristocracy, an aristocracy made for the heavens (1Cor.15:48). It is the Church who will both rule and intercede on behalf of mankind, pleading the sacrifice of the Cross for their failures. Moreover, in the same resurrection body as Christ (Phil.3:21), they will represent God in the outer areas of His limitless Kingdom.

This will then be the role of the Church: to rule and protect all creation and mankind as he fills the universe. Why is it that God must send out rulers in the universe who have the same resurrection body as Christ? It is this question that leads us to our final proposition: ***from God's creation, God had to create...Himself!***

As we have shown in the previous propositions, God (before He began to create) looked down the corridors of time and saw nothing but destruction for creation. He was then confronted with only two options. One, He could limit His creation to a specific number and when that number was reached, crea-

tion of rational creatures would cease. We believe that this first option, while accepted today by most theologians, would not be acceptable to God. It would not satisfy His infinite love. God is not a God of limits and boundaries and cannot be thwarted in satisfying His own desires. No, we believe a second choice had to be found. Option two was to enter creation Himself as a man, pay the penalty for sin with His own death, and then pull a portion of mankind into union with Himself to “partake of the Divine nature” (2 Pet.1:4). As we shall see, only *this* Plan could accomplish what God desired—unlimited creation.

Thus, when God began to create He had two phases to accomplish. First, in order to reconcile God and man, God had to become one with both. This is the miracle of the Incarnation. Then since the penalty of sin is death (Rom.6:23), Christ had to endure this punishment in order to permanently end it (Isa.53:5). This was accomplished at the Cross (Jn.19:20). Finally, with the resurrection and ascension of Christ, God began the second phase of His Plan. This consisted of the forming of a body of co-rulers, to share in the responsibility of the protection of the universe (Rom.8:17). Why is this necessary? If mankind, remaining in its fleshly body (*as we believe those who survive the Millennium will continue to do—living as flesh and blood men*), now begins to repopulate the heavens, man will move further and further away from the New Earth toward the furthest outreaches of the universe. Indeed, some will have already traveled to other worlds during the millennium. However, as men with old sin natures, sin will continue to be a factor that must be addressed.

While sins of presumption cannot and will not be tolerated (Num.15:30), those sins which are a result of weakness or ignorance (Lev.4:1-5:13) must be addressed. This will be the role of those who will govern as Kings and Priests (1Pet.2:9, Rev.1:6). Thus we can see the role of intercession by priests as the principle of protection for mankind in the universe, in eternity (1Cor.15:48). Yet many argue that there will be no sin in eternity. If this is true, why are we made a kingdom of priests (1 Pe.2:5)? Indeed, although commentators on this verse believe the verse is only referring to the priesthood in time, the verse actually points to a future priesthood. The priesthood that Peter describes must be one that functions **both** as a temple **and** “to offer spiritual sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ.” Now since this spiritual temple is a future one, completed in eternity (Rev.21:22), there is nothing to indicate that the priesthood in that verse is only dealing with the present time. Rather, it appears that the priesthood must be a future one and that the spiritual sacrifices are regarded as present simply because the commentators cannot conceive of the **need** of an eternal priesthood. Yet since Peter is discussing a temple that will be completed in eternity (and in which our royal priesthood **will** function), we must wonder for whom are we making these spiritual sacrifices?

Only one conclusion can be reached. The future kingdom will be what God

planned it to be: infinite and at peace (Isa.9:7). The role of the Church will be to function **as priests and kings** in order to keep it that way. Thus, since we will have resurrection bodies and have no more need for intercession to be made on our behalf before God, we will now be performing the same functions that our Great High Priest, Jesus Christ, performs for us today—intercession.

This will then be the role of the Church: to intercede on behalf of mankind and all creation, pleading the work of the Cross, and then meting out the appropriate punishment. Not, however, on the basis of the Immutable Justice which requires eternal banishment (the price having been paid on the Cross), but on the basis of GRACE and love (Heb.12:6).

This aspect of God's Plan, that He can now deal with mankind in grace and love, is in fact the crowning glory of His wisdom (Eph.3:10). Since God knew mankind could not endure His righteousness (Heb.12:29), He found a way to maintain order and peace in His kingdom while still allowing man the freedom to fail. In other words, since God's Holiness is inflexible, a price had to be paid equal to the demand which divine righteousness makes. Only the payment of this price would allow God the freedom to preserve His creation through love. This is the kind of love "which covers over a multitude of sins" (1 Pe.4:8).

We have now concluded that it will be the role of the Church to be rulers and priests. We now return to the question, why **must** the Church be "in the image" of God?

There may be those who wish to argue that it is possible to have a creature ruling the universe that is not in God's image. However, the historical examples of creatures who have failed (Lucifer and Adam) prove otherwise. Indeed, while both were created perfect both failed to obey God and protect the domains given to them. The result was the destruction of the creation that God had created. *Yet, the only cause for their failure was freewill! This is the very quality that God is determined to keep.* Moreover, as we read in Job "If God places no trust in his servants, if he charges his angels with error; how much more those who live in houses of clay, whose foundations are in the dust, who are crushed more readily than a moth" (Job 4:18). We can only surmise that this problem even exists among the elect angels! Thus we can only conclude that no creature with freewill could be trusted to rule and protect what God had created.

Therefore, we are back to the "problem" that God faced when He looked into eternity. He needed to protect the freedom of the creatures of His creation. Yet creatures cannot be entrusted with the responsibility of protection, since they would fail. And since there is only One who can never fail, there can only be one choice. **Only God can be trusted to rule the universe.**

In addition, history has taught us that there is an inherent need for the creature to see the Creator on a consistent basis in order to respond to Him. Indeed, we know from the Old Testament that the Jews quickly forgot God when He did not manifest Himself regularly to them. Thus, while God is omnipresent in Spirit, the creature does have a need for the **physical** presence of God. It is this need that the Church will meet. While the Father and Son rule together in the New Jerusalem (Rev.21:22), and Christ is forever physically present in the City, the Church will be filling the universe. Its presence will serve two functions. First, it will protect the creation from the wrath of God through intercession. Second, it will represent God to the creation. This will be the Church's function as rulers. Thus, not only will the universe be filled with the Spirit of God, but the universe will also be filled with the **physical** presence of God. The Church, indwelt with the Holy Spirit, will physically represent the Trinity everywhere there is life.

From this examination, we are now able to see the need for the unique nature of the Church. We can see the need for the Christian to have the permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Rom.8:11), and why he is made a new a creature in Christ (Gal.6:5). All of this is necessary so that the Christian is "conformed to the likeness of His Son, that he might be the first born among many brothers" (Rom.8:29). Only the future rulership role in eternity explains the essential differences between The Church and the Old Testament saints. It is these differences that result in two types of resurrection bodies (15:48). One resurrection body is made for earth, (for that is where the Old Testament saints will rule), and another for heaven—the home of the Church (Phil.3:20).

The unique role of the Church, to rule with God as His royal representatives in His image, is created through the marriage relationship. This is pointed out by Paul when he writes 'This is a profound mystery - but I am talking about Christ and the church' (Eph.5:32). It is only in the marriage relationship that two separate and distinct individuals unite and become one in spirit. Therefore God, through the marriage of His Son and the Church, has brought into a permanent union Christ and countless millions of Christians, forever uniting them with the Trinity. In this way God has literally recreated Himself!

Indeed, when anyone in eternity sees a member of the Church, he will not only see that individual, but also Christ Himself since our resurrection bodies will "be like His glorious body" (Phi.3:21). And moreover, whoever sees the Son sees the Father (Jn.14:9).

As time moves closer toward the return of our Lord for His Church, more and more theologians are now asking themselves what will be the Church's future. One writer notes, "Another activity of heaven is variously described as 'reigning,' 'ruling,' or 'exercising authority...". Admittedly, in these passages the time of this rule is that period which generally is designated as the millennium or kingdom age on the earth. Elsewhere, however, the New Testa-

ment seems to suggest that this “rule” is **extended beyond the millennium era** (emphasis mine). Joseph Dillow has noted in his fine work, "It is the glorious reign of the servant kings which extends to 'all the works of His hands.'" (This may suggest that one day mankind—the Church, emphasis mine—will rule the galaxies!) Dillow also writes "we may view the present world as the training ground for the aristocracy of the future kingdom, the ruling class of the world to come." Finally, renowned prophecy writer Hal Lindsey has also wondered what the Church will be doing in the future. He writes, "There is no clear indication in Scripture whom we will reign over or whom we will intercede for in our role as priests. But I am convinced that these aren't just idle words dropped into the narrative. If John was told that the believers would rule with Christ, then someone or something needs governing." Thus, as eternity draws near, it seems that God is moving men to look beyond time into eternity. Indeed, until the Church sees that her destiny lies in the timeless future, she will never fully understand the wisdom and glory of the Plan of God. The plan of which Paul was moved to write "Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God ... For from him and through him and to him are all things" (Rom.11: 33,36).

In conclusion, we at Charis Theological Seminary believe that dispensational theology has left one crucial question unanswered: why the church? We believe it is not enough to simply state that the Church is different from Israel and the Gentiles; it must be explained HOW we are different and WHY. In review:

I. Creation was an act motivated by the love of God to share His happiness.

A. While creation includes all creatures, at least two creatures , angels and man, were chosen by God to have both rationality and freewill.

- 1.** Rationality was needed for the creature to understand God.
- 2.** Freedom is part of rationality; the creature must make choices and decisions to seek or not to seek God.

II. Freewill is a “problem” for God. To be free the creature must be able to choose. Yet to choose against God in any way must result in death for the creature. Thus the creature really has no freedom to make mistakes, and God has no freedom to allow decisions to be made against Him.

III. God also found His love limited by the fact that a created being, no matter how perfect, cannot fully fellowship with the Trinity. All created beings have creature life; God has eternal life. There is no affinity between the two. God being perfect desired a perfect relationship with His creation. Yet even omnipotence cannot simply bestow eternal life directly. Thus God found His will bound by His own essence.

A. His Righteousness was demanding that He destroy what

He desired to bless.

B. His own life's essence was blocking the creature from receiving His total love, the love shared by the Trinity.

IV. Since the problems were with God, the solution could only come from God.

A. God Himself must enter the creation as a man and redeem it forever.

1. This was done by Jesus Christ, the second member of the Trinity.

V. God must create a being with His own Eternal Life. God must find a way to give birth to God.

1. This was done through the Church - The Church is taken from the "bone and flesh" of Christ and built into His Bride. Thus it shares the same essence of the God-Man.

2. It receives eternal life - the very life of God.

3. It is a new spiritual species.

4. The Church is in Union with Christ and indwelt with the entire Trinity.

5. The Church now shares the same destiny as Christ - to rule and intercede for creatures in the eternal state.

Conclusion: God had two problems in eternity when He decided to share his love.

A. Freewill versus righteousness.

B. Limitation placed on His ability to share His happiness with creation.

C. Both problems were resolved by Christ, or through Christ.

1. The Cross is the answer to the first problem - God is now free to forgive; the creature is free to err.

2. The Church, Christ's Bride, answers the second; through Christ a new species has been created, one WITH eternal life. God is now free to share His love totally with a created being. He has given birth to His own life and shared it with creation.

The plan is completed with the Church. Creation is waiting for our arrival in heaven to assume our place as rulers in the eternal state with Christ. Man, the creature God chose to reproduce (as opposed to Angels), will do the ruling. Every attribute in God's essence is now in perfect harmony and satisfied. Thus creation will be freed from its slavery of corruption into the glorious freedom of the children of God:

Romans 8:21 *Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.*

Appendix

The Gap Theory

It has long been debated whether there exists a vast period between Gen. 1:1 and 1:2. Advocates on both sides of the issue have eloquently expressed their views while airing skepticism of the opposition. But as pointed out by Professor Pfenninger, neither side has presented its view with an eye toward the Eternal Plan of God. Unless the opposing sides mutually agree on the purpose and Plan of God, neither can reconcile nor modify its position. We at Charis Seminary have chosen the Gap theory because it is the only one that seems to address the Plan of God as it is completely revealed in the Bible. Before presenting the Gap theory, the basis for a gap must be established, once and for all.

Oponents of the Gap say that it was first developed by Dr. George Chalmers of Edinburg University in 1814 in an attempt to incorporate George Culver's concepts of geologic catastrophism into a biblical framework. It was finally popularized in the footnotes of the Scofield Reference Bible in 1917. However it was Arthur Custance (Without Form and Void) who revealed that the Gap Theory had been periodically referred to for centuries. It is this fact that compels us to take a serious look at the Gap. Christian teachers and authors have long alluded to an apparent gap between Gen. 1:1 and 1:2. Long before either George Culver or Charles Darwin had presented their theories on the age of the earth and the evolution of the species, Christians were investigating a gap in the creation account. **So, the original investigation of the Gap had nothing to do with either the age of the earth or evolution.** Unfortunately, no basis for a gap could be found and therefore no real investigation was initiated and completed.

The reason that no one could find a purpose for the Gap lay in the fact that until recently, the Plan of God and the true purpose of the Church were not understood. We have shown in this short exercise that God's Plan revolves around His desire to share His love with creation. Such an action was not possible with an omniscient God who could see that eventually all creatures possessing freewill would make decisions outside of His will. Therefore a way had to be found to allow creation to make mistakes without suffering the terrible consequence of judgment from God's immutable righteousness. Since it has always been God's purpose to share His love with His creatures by entering into creation by means of mankind, one can only conclude that the design of God found the entrance of sin a necessary component of His plan. God's essence dictated how the plan was to be accomplished, and He has recorded enough of His purpose in the Bible for the children of God (operating through the illumination of the Spirit) to understand His plan and purpose.

Christ said that Satan was a murderer from the beginning, and that no truth was to be found in him. These statements deserve careful consideration, for they have a direct bearing on the basis for the Gap. To fully appreciate the words of Christ we must first look at what is revealed about Satan in the Bible. In the following passage from Ezekiel 28, the Lord continues His discourse against the king of Tyrus. However, it is commonly accepted that starting in verse 12, He actually begins talking about Lucifer.

12 Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty.

13 Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold; the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created.

14 Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so; thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.

15 Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.

16 By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned; therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God, and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.

17 Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness. I will cast thee to the ground; I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee.

18 Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy **traffick**; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee.

19 All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee; thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more.

As one can see, there is much unexplored territory in these verses. Verses 12 and 13 tell us that Satan was created perfect in beauty and was given more wisdom than any other created being. Lewis Sperry Chafer states:

“The intimation is that all divine creative power along the two

lines of *wisdom* and *beauty* are represented in this being” (Chafer Systematic Theology, Vol II pg. 41).

He possessed far greater knowledge than all of the other angels, and had a greater understanding of the works of God. The stones used to describe his beauty are only used in this specific combination three times in the Bible:

- (a) in the high priest’s breastplate, representing the way of approach to God;
- (b) in the New Jerusalem, which represents the final glory and final means of approach to God through the “Bride, the Lamb’s wife” (Rev 21:8); and
- (c) as the covering of this great angel.

Further investigation into the meaning of this description is used to validate the position that Satan functioned (in relation to the other angels), as the guardian of the glory of God, as well as in the capacity of a priest (representing the way to God.) Therefore, before his fall Satan both guarded and represented the way of approach to God. **It is no wonder that God laments over the erring of His finest creation of the angelic realm.**

Since we know that Satan was created before the physical realm, he therefore witnessed the creation of man. The real issue is how long after the creation of Satan and the spiritual realm was man to enter the scene?

Verse 14 tells us that God gave Satan two appointments. First, he was the “anointed cherub that covereth,” a position that meant he protected the glory of God from creation. Secondly, he was on the Holy Mountain of God and walked up and down in the stones of fire. We at Charis believe these stones to be the fire before His throne—a representation of His Holiness (justice& righteousness) and the inability of creation to approach Him. Yet Satan was permitted full access, as was also granted to Moses. Chafer states:

“The stones of fire may be the manifestation of that consuming fire which Jehovah is. In such a case, this declaration would suggest that the first estate of this angel was one in which he walked in unbroken relation to divine holiness” (Chafer Systematic Theology, Vol II pg. 42).

Both of these points are backed by the words of God, who said, “and I have set thee so.” Obviously, Omnipotence does not need a guardian cherub. Yet this is the order that God established for the angelic kingdom; for it was from this order that the hope of creation would spring (Rom. 8:20).

Now we come to the verse of both sin and perfection. Verse 15 declares that

Satan was perfect until iniquity was eventually found in him. When Christ declared that Satan was a liar from the beginning, he was not implying that God created Satan a liar. But a secret sin was found in him—one that would become the only hope for creation (Rom. 8:20).

The key to the GAP is to be found in verses 16-18.

16 By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned; therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God, and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.

17 Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness. I will cast thee to the ground; I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee.

18 Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy **traffick**; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee.

As was demonstrated in the exercise (see Propositions One & Two), “merchandise” and “traffick” are the same word. Without repeating what has already been said, Satan began a self-promoting and slanderous campaign against God. God declares that Satan defiled his dwelling places by the multitude of his iniquities. Yet all of his iniquities sprang from the same well, namely his “traffick.” It was his self-promotion that caused his fall, a self-promotion that originated from the vanity of his beauty, which God allowed to spread because it was creation’s only hope (Rom. 8:20). If creationists are correct, the trafficking of Satan began after the creation of man. This would imply that God gave Satan an open forum to openly debate his views to the angelic host at one time. Certainly no trafficking (or “going about,” as the word implies) would have been needed. That millions of years probably transpired becomes the only reasonable response to the many centuries of inquiry addressing the apparent GAP that exists between Genesis 1:1 & 2.

The following statement by John C. Whitcomb (*The Early Earth*, page 142), demonstrates the confusion of placing the fall of Satan **at** or just before the fall of man.

.... The Gap Theory assumes that carnivorous and other animals were living and dying not only before Adam, but even before the fall of Satan. But could death have prevailed in the animal kingdom in a sinless world? Does not the Bible indicate

that “the creation was subjected to futility,” and that it “groans and suffers the pains of childbirth” as a result of the Edenic Curse, which came *after* Adam’s fall (Rom. 8:20-22)?

The two prevailing thoughts of present theology are clearly seen in Whitcomb’s statement. First, that the “creature” referred to in Romans/Chapter 8 is nature. But as we have already demonstrated in Proposition One of this exercise, a creature possessing freewill is clearly indicated and was most likely angelic. Further, since Adam and Eve lived childless before the fall, some other “vanity” must be the source of the “hope” that the “creature” (*angelic*) was subjected to.

Secondly, that carnivorous animals (including the dinosaurs) lived during the first or Adamic age. Throughout history, the established Church has been the main opponent of scientific advancement. It was the Church that dogmatically refused to accept the facts that the earth revolves around the sun and that the world is not flat. So again we see the Church wasting valuable energy defending a position (the dinosaur question) that need not be defended. Carnivorous dinosaurs lived on this earth long before man. They were not created carnivorous. However, just as the animal kingdom became carnivorous after the fall of Adam (who was ruler of this earth), the dinosaurs became carnivorous after the fall of the ruler of a much larger kingdom (or at least the pre-adamic planet earth.) No fossilized human skeletons have been found co-existing with dinosaur skeletons, and no missing link has been discovered. Rather than argue that the age of this planet is seven to ten thousand years old, we should be explaining why God created man to resolve a conflict that existed before either the spiritual or physical realms were created—the conflict that existed between Sovereignty and Freewill. Was this world created in solid ice as Genesis 1:2a implies (“*and darkness was upon the face of the deep*”), or was it restored for man to inhabit as Genesis 1:2b declares?

While we applaud the work of our creationist brethren in Christ, we ask them to take a fresh look at the evidence in light of the five propositions presented in this exercise.

In His Matchless Grace

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Historical Evidence of The Gap Theory Pre-Geologic Age

Almost without exception, the Gap Theory is credited to Dr. George Chalmers of Edinburg University in 1814. Supposedly Dr. Chalmers introduced this theory in an attempt to harmonize the Genesis account with the vast periods of time demanded by Uniformitarian geologists. It is then claimed that George H. Pember further elaborated the theory in his work (Earth's Earliest Ages) in 1876, and the theory was finally popularized in the footnotes of the Scofield Reference Bible beginning in 1917. Today, it is said that only pin-heads and nitwits of dubious scholastic background maintain a belief in the "Gap Theory". If, as it is today asserted, the theory can only be traced back to Dr. Chalmers, then the statement of its reason for introduction should not be discounted. On the other hand, if the theory antedates both Dr. Chalmers and any Uniformitarian geologist, then it should and indeed must be investigated by any serious student of scripture to determine why such a Gap exist.

Mark E. Howerter, in his work "Creation vs Evolution: The Gap Theory Explained", follows the now accepted view when he wrote:

Uninformed Christians have propagated two theories that have tried to reconcile the Bible with evolution. They have done this because from kindergarten through graduate school it is taught that evolution is a proven scientific fact. Christians have swallowed this hook, line and sinker. They have tried to get God out of a bind, so to speak, because the Bible is in direct contradiction with the theory of evolution. People who take the Bible seriously and literally have introduced two theories to explain how the Bible and Evolution can be reconciled. These theories are commonly known as the Gap Theory and the Day-Age Theory.

Again, the above statement is typical of the majority view of the "informed" world of Christian theology and treats anyone who holds to the Gap Theory as being a child-like uninformed Christian. It is further and again insinuated, that the theory was developed in order to reconcile the Bible and evolution. However, D. F. Payne, in his paper published by Tyndale Press entitled, "Genesis One Reconsidered", makes a brief statement which alludes to a different view than that of the majority: "*The 'gap' theory itself, as a matter of exegesis, antedated the scientific challenge, but the latter gave it a new impetus*". The right question to such a statement should have been, 'by how long did it antedate the scientific challenge, and how explicit are the earlier references.' Arthur C. Custance rightly asserts in the book entitled "Without Form And Void." "*If its antecedence can be established with any certainty, one then has to find some other reason than the threat of Geology for its*

having arisen".

It seems fair to state that if the Gap Theory was an accepted view held by earlier Christian commentators, it was presented without any intention of refuting a geological challenge to the veracity of the Holy Scriptures. It must therefore have arisen either because of a careful study of the original text of Scripture had given intimations of it, or perhaps due to some ancient tradition about the after-effects of the catastrophe itself. Why then has modern Christianity continued to assert that the Gap Theory is of modern origins? But, lest we get ahead of ourselves, let us continue our search backwards to find the true origin, if any, of the Gap Theory.

History records that during and after the Babylonian Captivity, the Jewish people began accumulating the comments and explanations of their best-known teachers of the Old Testament. These teachings were gathered together and are called the Midrash, the oldest pre-Christian exposition of the Old Testament. Louis Ginsberg, in his work entitled, "The Legends of the Jews," recorded this excerpt from the first chapter of Genesis:

"Nor is this world inhabited by man the first of things earthly created by God. He made several other worlds before ours, but he destroyed them all, because He was pleased with none until He created ours."

Another noted reference is to be found in the writings of a student of Akiba ben Joseph, namely Simeon ben Jochai. Akiba ben Joseph was president of the rabbinical school called Bene Barek near Safsa. He was executed by the Romans in 135 A. D. His student is traditionally ascribed the authorship of "The Book of Light" or the Sefer Hazzohar, sometimes simply called the "Zohar". The work represents opinions held toward the end of first century and thus represents views widely held during the time of our Lord. There is a comment on Gen. 2:4-6, which reads as follows:

"These are the generations (i.e., this is the history of...) of the heavens and the earth.... Now wherever there is written the word 'these' (אֵלֶּה) the previous words are put aside. And these are the generations of the destruction that is signified in verse 2 of chapter one. The earth was Tohu and Bohu. These indeed are the worlds of which it is said that the blessed God created them and destroyed them, and on that account, the earth was desolate and empty."

Another source that reflects Ginsberg's Jewish legend is found in the earliest Aramaic version of the Old Testament, known as the Targum of Onkelos. The following translation is found of Gen.1:2:

“אִי הָרָאִתָּה הַתְּאוּמָה הַאֲסֻרָה וְ”

The English rendering of the above translation would read “and the earth was laid waste.” We therefore have an interpretation of the original Hebrew of Gen. 1:2 that leaves little room for doubt that Onkelos, as well as the general belief of that time, believed that something had occurred between verses 1 and 2 which reduced the earth to a desolate condition.

Furthermore, evidence is found in that the Jewish scholars who wrote the Massoretic Text, incorporated “indicators” to guide the reader to correct punctuation. One such mark is called “Rebhia,” which is classified as a “disjunctive accent” intended to notify the reader to pause before proceeding to the next verse because there is a break in the text. A mark of this kind appears at the end of Gen. 1:1. Custance states, “It is one indication among others, that the initial waw which introduces verse 2 should be rendered “but” rather than “and,” a dis-junctive rather than a con-junctive, 14. Professor E. J. Young also remarked about the pause thusly: “The word ----- (at the end of verse 1) is separated from what follows by means of the disjunctive accent *Rebhia*, and so we are to let our thoughts dwell upon it before passing on to (what follows).”

It seems clear so far that there was a continued belief in a period of time existing between Gen.1:1 and 1:2. Although none of these points taken individually carry overwhelming evidence, together they do require the truly serious student to further investigate the possibility of a gap. The one thing that seems evident is that those who held this view did not believe it needed to be defended. Instead, there seems to be various legends built around the knowledge of a gap incorporated into the late Jewish and early Christian belief systems. That no defense was necessary validates the wide acceptance of this view during and before the time of our Lord.

Further evidence is found in the great work “*De Principiis*” written by Origen, who lived from 186 to around 245 A. D. While discussing Gen. 1:1, he states:

“It is certain that the present firmament is not spoken of in this verse, nor the present dry land, but rather that heaven and earth from which this present heaven and earth that we now see afterwards borrowed their names.”

Obviously, Origen believed some time period existed between verses 1 and 2, for he later comments that the condition resulted from a “disruption,” which he described by using the Latin verb *dejicere*, “to throw down”. As wide spread as the works of Origen are read by those who have identified themselves as the informed, why no notice is given to this statement of Origen when discussing the Gap Theory is quite puzzling. Yet, the evidence does not stop there, for as we shall see, there is a continued body of writings

up to the time of Thomas Chalmers in the early nineteenth century.

Origen made no attempt to explain why this “casting down” had happened. In fact it wasn't until some years later that the first writing was published to try and explain why there was a Gap between Gen. 1:1 and 1:2. Strangely enough, it was an English poet named Caedmon who is credited with the first explanation of what might have happened between Gen. 1:1 and 1:2. In this work, Caedmon presented the view that man had been introduced in order to replace the angels that had corrupted themselves and ruined the earth. Today, R. B. Thieme, Jr. teaches a modified version of this belief in his book, “The Angelic Conflict.

Caedmon lived in England and is considered the earliest of the Anglo-Saxon Christian poets. The only information concerning Caedmon is in the *Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation (731)*, by the English theologian Saint Bede the Venerable. According to Bede, Caedmon was an illiterate herdsman, who had a vision one night and heard a voice commanding him to sing of "the beginning of created things." Later, Caedmon supposedly wrote the poem about the creation known as *Caedmon's Hymn*, which Bede recorded in prose. Bede further states that Saint Hilda, the abbess of a nearby monastery (now called Whitby), recognized Caedmon's poetic ability and invited him to enter the monastery as a lay brother. Caedmon spent the rest of his life at the monastery writing poetry on biblical themes. In the Bodleian Library at the University of Oxford is a manuscript containing the so-called Caedmon poems. It is now agreed that many of the poems in the Bodleian collection were probably written later than Caedmon's poetry. The only work that can be attributed to Caedmon is "Hymn of Creation," which Saint Bede quoted. It survives in several manuscripts of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* and contains several dialects.

Caedmon's work was originally written in Old English verse, but was translated into prose by Lawrence Mason, in the “Yale studies in English” series edited by Albert S. Cook and Henry Holt in 1915. The following is taken from lines 14-35, 68, 79, 80, 92 f., 114.

“These angelic hosts were wont to feel joy and rapture, transcendent bliss in the presence of their creator; then their beatitude was measureless. Glorious ministers magnified their Lord, spoke his praise with zeal, lauded the Master of their being, and were excellently happy in the majesty of God. They had no knowledge of working evil or wickedness, but dwelt in innocence forever with their Lord: from the beginning they wrought the heaven nothing but righteousness and truth, until a Prince of Angels through pride strayed into sin: then they would consult their own advantage no longer, but turned away from God's loving kindness.

“They had vast arrogance in that by the might of their multitudes they sought to wrest from the Lord the celestial mansions. Then there fell upon them, grievously, the envy, presumption, and pride of the Angel who first began to carry out the evil plot, to weave it and promote it, when he boasted by words – as he thirsted for conflict – that he wished to own the home and high throne of the heavenly kingdom of the north”.

According to this portion of the poem, fallen angels were responsible for the catastrophe or ruin seen in Gen. 1:2. Upon which, the Lord cast them “that had committed a dire sin” (line 46) into a specially created “joyless house of punishment,” banishing them from heaven (line 68). Of significant interest is line 92f, which states that the “heavenly seats” were left vacant by the rebels.

“Our Lord bethought him, in meditative mood how he might again people, with a better race, his high creation, the noble seats and glory crowned abodes which the haughty rebels had left vacant high in heaven. Therefore Holy God willed by his plenteous power that under the circle of the firmament of the earth should be established with sky above and wide water, a world-creation (i.e., as opposed to a heavenly one) in a place of the foes whom in their apostasy he hurled from bliss”.

He further adds that “this broad earth stood Idle and useless, alien even to God himself” (line 105) and concludes that God looked upon this emptiness and “created heaven and earth” (line 114). Although the poem does not take into account the omniscience of God, a reason for the destruction indicated in Gen. 1:2 is indeed expounded. Obviously, this was part of God’s Plan. Pre-Adamic or angelic history was but a precursor to God unveiling His ultimate purpose, the creation of man and ultimately the Church, which is *the last of creation in act, but the first of creation in purpose*. Anyone reading all that has been stated up to this point must admit that both Jewish and early Christians believed that order existed long before Day One of the Creation Week. Although Caedmon does not clearly state where the disorder or ruin on earth came from, it seems clear that he believed it was associated to the rebellion in heaven.

The next record of the Gap came from Hugo St. Victor (1097 – 1141), a Flemish scholar and member of the Augustinian Monastery of St. Victor. He wrote:

“Perhaps enough has already been debated about these matters thus far, if we add only this, ‘how long did the world remain in this disorder before the regular re-ordering (disposition) of it was taken in hand? For the fact that the first substance of all

things arose at the very beginning of time – or rather, with time itself – is settled by the statement that, ‘In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth’. But how long it continued in this state of confusion, Scripture does not clearly show.

Obviously, Hugo does not equate the work of the first day with the act creation. or at this time should we say, the act of *restoration*. Of particular interest is his statement that this topic was a source of debate, not about its veracity but to the length of time between Gen. 1:1 and 2. Suffice it to say that Hugo had no knowledge of geology or evolution and was not trying to defend the faith from their evils. Yet he believed there was an interval, indeed by his statement, it was an accepted point of doctrine that an interval existed between Gen. 1:1 and 2.

Next, in our line of witnesses is the great theologian, Thomas Aquinas (1226-1274). Aquinas emphatically stated *but it seems better to maintain (the view) that the creation was prior to any of the days (literally, before any day)*”. By this statement, Aquinas did not believe the first day was the first day of creation, for to him, creation came some time earlier.

Thus far, we have followed the order of historical evidence presented by Arthur C. Custance in “Without Form and Void”. It is therefore only appropriate that we now present a mid-summation quoted from his work:

“..... The writers would not have agreed with Usher that Creation occurred 4000 B.C. They might very probably have assented to his chronology as applied to the creation of *adam* but they would have set the creation of the universe (the heavens and the earth) further back in time by some unstated amount. Gen.1:2 does NOT represent the condition of things immediately after the initial creation.... but some time later. None of these writers venture to suggest how long the interval had been. The idea of an earth so old that the period of man’s history pales into insignificance when viewed merely in chronological terms was probably not in their thoughts. One has the impression rather that they saw this interval merely as an interval... not as a period perhaps vastly greater than all the time that has elapsed since. My point here is merely to emphasize that we cannot make anymore of these witnesses than to say that they did believe there was a break in the creative processes between Gen. 1.1 and 1.2. They may have seen it as of quite a short duration.

What is important about this statement is that by far, the majority view since the Babylonian captivity is that of an interval between Gen. 1:1 and 1:2. No recognition of the length of that interval was necessarily important in prior

centuries. It therefore seems appropriate to correct at this time a much abused title, that of "*Modern Theologian*." The true *modern theologian* is not those who hold to an interval in Genesis, but the "Young Earth Theorist," who have also demonstrated a lack of excellence in research by not chronicling the long history of the Gap Theory before they claimed it to be developed only as a defense against unproven evolution and scientific geological research as to the age of the earth. In fact, they have opened up a much greater potential for attack against the Veracity of Scripture than what they claim was done by Gap Theorist, and as we shall see, that attack is one that will soon haunt all Christians for years to come. However, there is still a few more pieces of the historical evidence that must be reviewed before we give a final conclusion to this first chapter in defense of the Biblically correct Gap that exists between Gen. 1:1 and 1:2.

As time passed, the question of a discontinuity became crystallized more concretely and was discussed in greater detail by Dionysius Petavius (1583 – 1652), a French Roman Catholic Jesuit Theologian, who was first Professor of Philosophy at Bourges and later Professor of Theology at Paris. Petavius did not believe that the basic elements of which land and water were later made, came into being on the same day that the land and water came into being. Thus we read his words:

“The question of ‘How great an interval there was’ it is not possible except by inspiration to attain knowledge of. Nor, indeed, do I judge those basic components of earth and water, which I have taught originated first of all, to have been fabricated the same day on which had occurred the appearance of daylight, as it pleases certain persons (to believe), but by no means with sound enough reason.”

As can be seen, Petavius believed the basic elements were made long before the actual creation of water and land. Further, in his day, men who would hold to a “young earth” theology were called men that did not have “sound ... reason.”

The evidence does not stop there, for next we come to Benedict Pererius, philosopher, theologian, and exegete, born about 1535, at Ruzafa, near Valencia, in Spain. He entered the Society of Jesus in 1552 and taught successively literature, philosophy, theology, and Sacred Scripture in Rome. He published eight works, and left a vast quantity of manuscripts. The main difficulties of Genesis are met in "*Commentariorum et disputationum in Genesim tomi quattuor*" (Rome, 1591-99). This is a mine of information in regard to the Deluge, Ark of Noe, Tower of Babel, etc. and is highly esteemed by Biblical scholars, even men of such critical bias as Richard Simon (*Histoire critique du Vieux Testament*, III, xii). Concerning the interval in Genesis he wrote:

“Even through before the first day, the heavens and the elements were made subsequent (ie., basic essence of creative activity) nevertheless they were not perfected and completely furnished until the period of the six days: for then was given to them (their) furnishing, (their) fulfillment (filling up), and (their) completion. However, just how long that darkened state of the world lasted, ie., whether it lasted more than one day or less than one day, this is not clear to me, nor (I hold) is it clear to any mortal man unless to one to whom is has been divinely made so.”

The above statement does not attempt to fix a specific time as to the length of the interval, but Pererius does recognize an interval of time of unknown duration during which the world was in a darkened state. Still, the idea of a destruction was not as prevalent by this time as it had been in previous years. That the concept of a destruction had been recognized by early scholars like Alcuin of York is reflected in Alcuin’s edition of *The Book of Jasher* where he rendered the counterpart of Gen. 1:2 as follows: “*So that the face of nature was formed a second time*”. (Alcuin of York (735-804, C.E.) was the creator of the modern alphabet. He was an English scholar who, while head of the Cathedral School of York, wrote a history of England.).

Next, we come to Johann August Dathe—an eminent oriental scholar and biblical critic who became professor of oriental literature at Leipzig in 1763 and who is perhaps best known for his six-volume work on the books of the Old Testament, illustrated with philological and critical notes and edited with the help of the original Hebrew text as well as other Latin versions—translated the second verse of the first chapter of Genesis, “And the earth was made (*facta erat*) a waste and a desolation.” He further comments on the passage as follows:

“*Waw*, before ‘the earth’ cannot be translated ‘AND’ for it would refer back to verse 1, where the narrative has ‘the earth and the heaven were created by God’. Whereas verse 2 proceeds to tell how that the earth, at some uncertain time, had undergone some remarkable change. Therefore *waw* stands for ‘afterwards’ and is so to be interpreted, as it so often is – for example in Num.5.23 and Deut 1.19”.

We therefore, have one more link in the chain of evidence supporting the contention that the view did not originate with Chalmers at all, but predated Chalmers as well as modern geologist by some 2500 years. It was not until 1814 or some 50 years later that Dr. Chalmers attempted to reconcile the Divine and geologic records in an *Examination of Cuvier’s Theory of the*

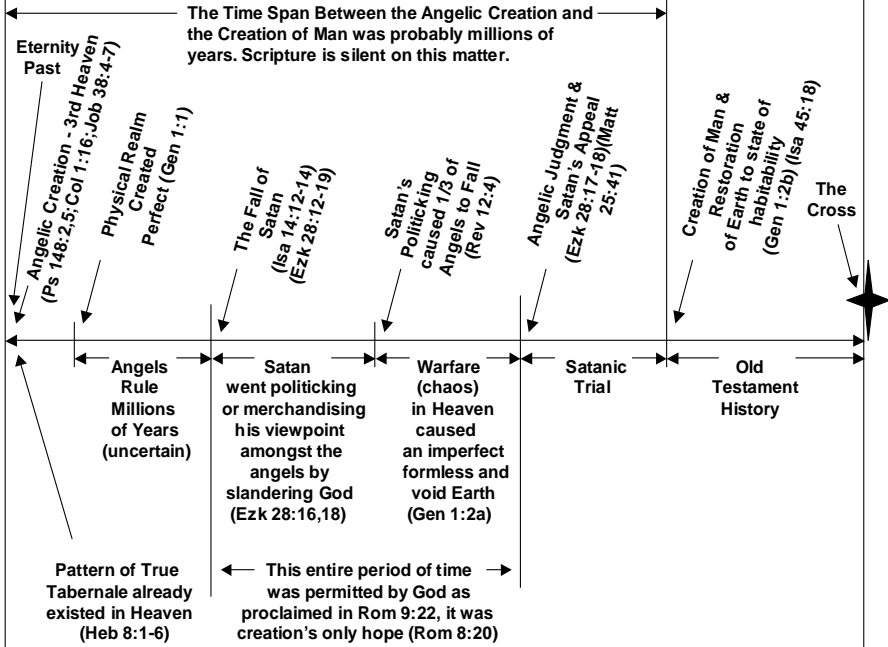
Earth. Chalmers paper stated that the first act of creation was that of creating something from nothing, and that the first day's work recorded in Genesis may have taken place after long periods of time. He further stated the earth may have had "a fair residence of life" but it had become desolate: and that although the sun, moon, and stars continued their existence in relationship to the earth, they had somehow become obscured. In itself, this was no new thought to the very learned theologian of the day, but it did begin a trend in certain Christian quarters which laid emphasis on what is now called the "Gap Theory".

How Chalmers' work became the premier document for proponents of the Gap, and how he became known as the one who popularized this theory is confusing; since at that time, the belief in an interval between Gen.1.1 and 1.2 was already well documented. Even more confusing is why so many "Young Earth Theorist" refuse to acknowledge the real history of the Gap and persist to declare that it is of early origin. However, whether through ignorance and lack of scholarly research, or purposely omitted in order to lend credence to an even more implausible theory of creation, Young Earth Theorist have perpetrated a great injustice to the truth and an even greater injustice to their readers. As we shall later see, only an interval can explain the complete purpose of God in creating man in order to bring His true purpose into existence ... the creation of His Church. For now it can confidently be stated that the belief in an interval between Gen. 1:1 and 1:2 is the foundational belief of the early Church and of Judaism. Science finally caught up with the truth that has always been in Scripture, and even as archeology now proves the accuracy of Biblical history, geologic science proves the accuracy of the origins of this earth as presented in the Bible. "*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth*". The Church was the main opponent to the acceptance of the earth being round and revolving around the sun. I hope history will not record that we were also the main opponents to the scientific evidence as to the age of the earth.

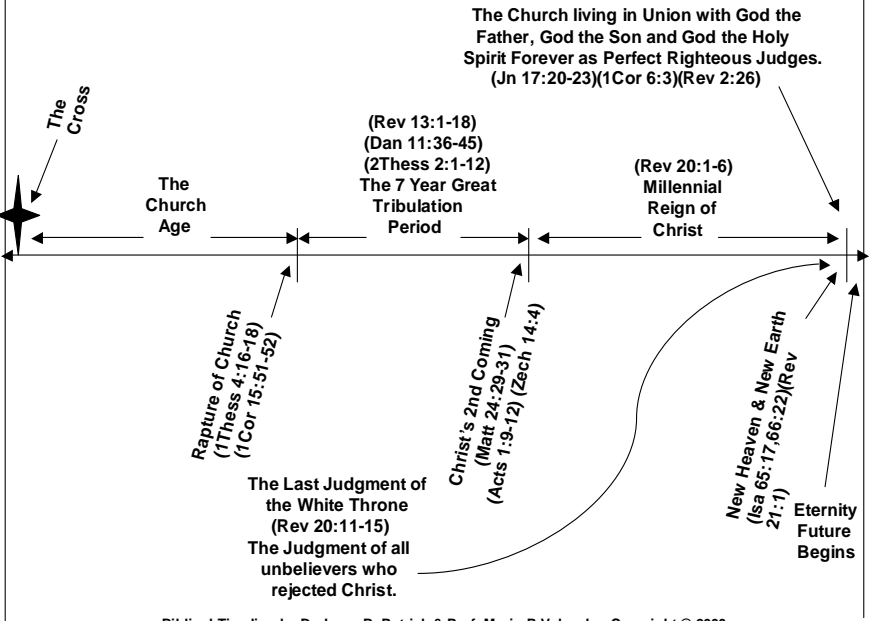
What the true Bible scholar should be doing is determining why man was recently introduced into such an old universe. Since there shall never be a missing link found by science to continue any form of belief in evolution, the next step is for man to begin thinking he was placed here by some alien race. The universe is indeed old, yet man is a very recent addition to it, the question is why. The teleological proof of the existence of God demands that we recognize that the order in the universe also includes time. Since history is a component of time, even the history of the freewill of the creatures that live within time, as measured by the fixed units of measure that transpire within time (ie The rotation of the earth and the moon around the sun, etc.) is an effect who's existence finds its source from a cause. God did not cause Angelic creation to fall. Yet, the fall of the perfect Angelic creation was a necessary part of His plan. Therefore, Angelic freewill became the cause of the fall as a part of God's Plan. Because of that fall, God caused man to be placed in time at what seems to be billions of years since time began. Man is there-

fore an effect *with purpose and plan* caused by God. Only the science of theology can explain mans recent entrance into Gods created universe. As we shall see, God has not left us blind. Yet, only with the recognition of a interval or Gap between Gen. 1.1 and 1.2, can a complete Biblical understanding be sought and eventually found as we look at what God has openly declared to us is the end of the entrance of man.

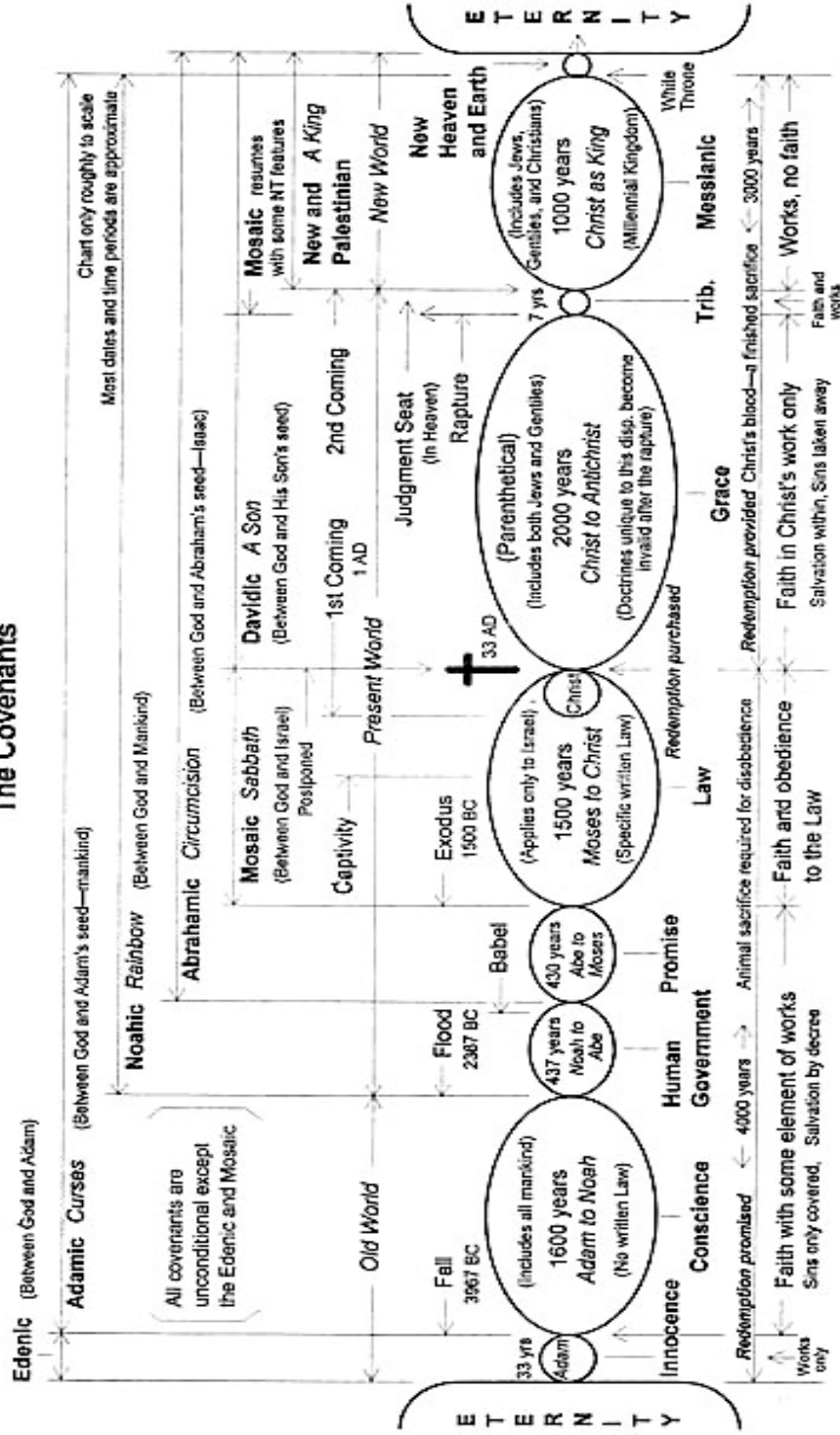
Old Testament Timeline



New Testament Timeline



The Covenants



The Dispensations

The 7 Feasts of Israel

