Reconciliation

2020

### Prayers

† Blessed is our God always, as it is now, was in the beginning, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. ... in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Devoted[[1]](#footnote-1) Spirit. Amen. Through the prayers of our Devoted Ancestors, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us and save us. Amen. Glory to You, our God, glory to You.

† Εὐλογημένη ἡ Βασιλεία τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος, νῦν καὶ ἀεί, καὶ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων. Ἀμήν.

† Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Devoted Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, You are everywhere and fill all things, Treasury of blessings, and Giver of life: come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity, and save our souls, O Good One.

† Devoted God, Devoted Mighty, Devoted Immortal, have mercy on us (three times).

† Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Devoted Spirit, as it is now, was in the beginning, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

“εἰ οὖν ὑμεῖς πονηροὶ ὑπάρχοντες οἴδατε δόματα ἀγαθὰ διδόναι τοῖς τέκνοις ὑμῶν, πόσῳ μᾶλλον Ὁ Πατὴρ Ὁ ἐξ Οὐρανοῦ δώσει Πνεῦμα Ἅγιον τοῖς αἰτοῦσιν Αὐτόν.” — Luke 11:13

“If therefore you, evil rulers, had known to give good gifts to your children: how much more, The Father out of Heaven will give [the] Devoted Spirit to them [if] they ask Him?”

“Ὁ Θεός, ἱλάσθητί μοι τῷ ἁμαρτωλῷ.” — Luke 18:13

“God, let me, the sinner, be pardoned.”

Ὁ Πατὴρ, ἱλάσθητι ἡμῖν τοῖς ἁμαρτωλοῖς.

“Father, let us, the sinners, be pardoned.”

“Ἰησοῦ, μνήσθητί μου ὅταν ἔλθῃς ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ σου.” — Luke 23:42

“Jesus, let me be remembered when you come in your kingdom.”

“Ἰησοῦ, μνήσθητι [ἡμῶν] ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ σου.”

“Jesus, let us be remembered in your kingdom.”

“David ascended in the Ascent of Olives, ascending and weeping, with head covered, he went barefoot; and each person with him covered his head, so they went up, ascending and weeping.” — 2 Samuel 15:30 LXX

“The sowers will reap in joy. The ones going, went and wept, casting their seeds; yet, the ones coming, will come in exultation, carrying their sheaves.” — Psalm 125:5-6 LXX [126:5-6]

“Send away your bread on the surface of the water: because, in a multitude of days you will find it.” — Ecclesiastes 11:1 LXX

“Indisputably great is the good-worship mystery: Who was clearly displayed in [the] flesh; Who defended righteousness in [the] Spirit; Who was witnessed by messengers; Who was proclaimed internationally; Who was believed cosmically; Who was taken up in Glory.” — 1 Timothy 3:16

“…: for, prophecy came, not by human will: but, being carried by [the] Devoted Spirit, humans, spoke from God.” — 2 Peter 1:21

“These [Bereans] were better-begotten than the [people] in Thessaloníki; who welcomed the Word[[2]](#footnote-2) with all enthusiasm: daily examining the writings if He might have it so.” — Acts 17:11

“Similarly, younger people, be submitted to [your] elders; all of you be clothed with humble mindedness toward one another: because, ‘God opposes [the] proud; but, gives grace to the humble.’[[3]](#footnote-3) Therefore, be humbled under the strong hand of God, so that He would exalt you in due time: casting all your care on Him: because, He cares about you.” — 1 Peter 5:5-7

Be clothed with mental poverty, Peter says: for, humility and poverty are very close companions.

### Introduction

“I know that with my arrival[[4]](#footnote-4) fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the little flock. Out of you yourselves men will stand up, speaking well established perversions[[5]](#footnote-5), to wrench away the disciples after themselves.” — Acts 20:29-30

### Backdrop

This paper began with the title, *Reconstructionism, An Analysis of its Failures*. We were looking for places of suitable fellowship, which were becoming more difficult to find during the COVID-19, Panic of 2020. Our research led us to studies of the Reconstruction Movement, which were thrilling…. At least until we discovered that the Reconstruction Movement itself was splintering. That led to questions about why it was splintering. In spite of such questions, we were convinced that we needed to pick up the pieces, and try again. That’s how great an idea the Reconstruction Movement was! Since, another attempt involved gluing the pieces back together, we decided to call it, *Reconciliation*.

We may not have succeeded in finding the path to Reconciliation: but, we tried. We got the topic under consideration and discussion. We hope to have found solutions for a few pieces of the puzzle. We hope to have encouraged others to take up the same quest. We strive to do everything in our power to be obedient to Christ. We earnestly seek the power of the Spirit in all things. Make no mistake, it is Christ alone Who has reconciled us with the Father: we are simply seeking the path He has provided… the path the Spirit directs. This is where we, at first, began:

### Failures of Reconstructionism

Origins

Any analysis of Reconstructionism must begin with Adam and Eve. God has punished them with an indefinite time-out[[6]](#footnote-6) from Paradise. God’s plan of Redemption and Reconciliation is not yet disclosed. Will Adam and Eve accept their punishment in rebellion or remorse?

Reconstructionism is such a compelling idea that Adam and Eve, having been expelled from Eden, would immediately begin to reconstruct every possible memory they had of Paradise. They imitated the nurturing of plants, considering carefully what they recalled about how plants grew. They treated animals similarly: but, animals were not yet an approved food source. Reconstructionism is one of the major strategies of human survival.

They yearned for the Tree of Life, but could not approach, either it, or the Tree of Knowledge any longer: not that these were necessarily literal trees… we can’t be sure of what we do not know. The Tree of Life is evidently Christ Himself, with reference to His Crucifixion, or something very much like that, buried in a mystery we cannot resolve. The Tree of Knowledge is some sort of test to obey or not to obey the Law of God… or something similar. Since Christ is the Will of God, the two trees together seem to express a kind of trope pitting the Will of God against the will of man… “a riddle, wrapped in enigma”, hidden in mystery.[[7]](#footnote-7) Part of the problem is that we do not know what we do not know: so, what we suppose is largely conjecture… at best, educated guesses.

Adam and Eve, in their reconstructed little world are immediately confronted with the tragic failure of having one son murder another: thus loosing both sons at the same time. The murderer begins his own reconstruction: but this world view is all downhill, even though it includes several indications of inventive genius: city building, animal husbandry, music, metallurgy, and probably more.[[8]](#footnote-8) By all mental and physical standards, Lamech’s civilization is vastly superior to anything else on earth: but, his “seventy times seven” could be a subtle hint that he is engaged in organized war against the other children of Adam.[[9]](#footnote-9)

Adam and Eve begin a third time with Seth. Even though this produces some positive results, around 1656 to 2242 years later or so, the world or the bulk of the world had to be destroyed before it overwhelmed what little was left of goodness in the world.

***About these numbers.***

These are two numbers arbitrarily taken from representative manuscripts: but, we really have no idea. The surviving manuscripts are so far removed from the actual history that we don’t even know in what language they were written.[[10]](#footnote-10) With all the translations involved, the dates could have very easily been cobbled up: especially, from the confusing Sexagesimal (sixty) base numbering system of the Akkadians… even though we still use a relic from this system (60 seconds, 60 minutes, 24 hours, 30 day months, 12-13 month years). So, any pretense, that we know exactly what is going on here, is pure fiction: a little humility is necessary.

Any pretense that MT preserves even the “Hebrew” of 516 BC, let alone the paleo-Hebrew of 1010 BC, is pure wishful thinking. The very thought process behind MT is corrupted by so called Oral Torah. MT is defiled by Niqqud. There are numerous evidences of text tampering.

If there were any legitimacy to MT, scholars would have copied or otherwise found means to preserve text evidence. Instead, they let the evidence turn to dust, leaving only a small memory; they contrived a standardized version, letting all other voices die: such is the fate of dead languages.

LXX, in contrast, preserves hundreds of copies, has libraries of compiled evidence, as well as other data from numerous translations: this is the witness of a living language. If you really want to do Old Testament analysis, you must begin to do it in Greek, because there is too little “Hebrew” evidence to consider.

***Back to our discussion.***

We can easily count the names of the known individuals trying to do the right thing… with their wives and children, possibly less than 50.[[11]](#footnote-11) At the event of the Flood, only eight are known to be left alive who are worth saving. This contrasts to a potential of sixteen million to eight billion people who were destroyed, according to our silly guess.[[12]](#footnote-12) One thing for sure, everybody aboard the ark knew that the only reason they were still alive was the grace of God. The whole incident is memorialized in an Eternal Covenant of Grace.

We might conclude, by this time, that the idea of Reconstruction is a failed whale, completely outside of human grasp. Yet, despite the colossal failure of the Israelite movement following Moses, and David; beside the crushing failures of the Church, after the Crucifixion of Christ: man continues to attempt Reconstruction in a seemingly endless cycle of failure. Mankind seems to be universally driven by ideas of Reconstruction… Reconstructionism.

Why? Why does mankind keep on failing? Why does humanity continue trying? These and other related questions perplex us: but, they are also the driving force behind our effort.

Still, Reconstructionism is a very good idea. The purpose of our Analysis of Reconstructionism is not to criticize it; but, to figure out what went wrong, and do it better the next time: for, we ourselves do not possess unlimited and perfect knowledge. Far from it! We, like you, are no better than explorers and wanderers lost in God’s magnificent and nearly infinite forest. The best any of us might hope to grasp is less than one millionth of the whole. We have left a trail of our wanderings in God’s woods; this trail is as accurate as we know how to make it: yet, we ourselves are only too painfully aware of its myopia, its inadequacy, its inability to grasp the whole Truth. The only way we can come close to a grasp of the whole Truth is by the teaching of Christ, through the Spirit, and the participation of all believing and spiritual Christians together as a team. So, by all means, let us find flaws; let us attempt the repair of these flaws; then, let us begin again: for, Reconstructionism compels us also. Thus, we would approach the Father in much fear, meekness, and trembling. This is what we mean by Reconciliation.

Causes

There are several causes for the failure of Reconstructionism. We examine a few of them here: for, these must be reversed if we would find Reconciliation. We may have overlooked other significant causes. Only you, in the hands of Almighty God, can be the judges of success in this quest for Reconciliation.

***Attempting a Godless Start***

“In the beginning, God made the heaven and the earth.” — Genesis 1:1

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him not one thing was made that was made.” — John 1:1-3

“He Who was from the beginning, Who we have heard, Who we have seen with our eyes, Who we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of Life…” — 1 John 1:1

“Be still, and know that ***I Am*** [[13]](#footnote-13) God: I will be exalted among the Gentiles, I will be exalted in the earth.” — Psalm 45:11 LXX (46:10 KJV)

“Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those under the law: that every mouth would be silenced, and the whole world would become responsible to God.” — Romans 3:19

We could multiply verses that compel us to begin with God. The point is that many attempts at Reconstruction have begun elsewhere: many did not seek God first. Some did not even seek God at all: thus, they were doomed to failure from the start.

A prominent example would be the Westminster, *Confession of Faith*, which begins with the Bible instead of with God.

All who follow this course of action have ended in hopeless fracturing. The path of Reconciliation requires that we begin with God. Recognizing that…

* He is our Creator, we are merely creatures;
* He is our Provider, we are merely dependant;
* He is our Savior, we are merely needy:
* these, and more, make all the difference.

The recognition of God’s infinitude in contrast with our minuscule finitude sets the right tone of humility for us as we approach any subject. If we can keep our focus on the right things we might just succeed at Reconciliation. This is where we must begin… on our knees….

“Therefore, God also highly exalted Him. He graced Him with the Name above every name: so that, at the Name of Jesus every knee would bow, in heaven, on earth, and under earth; and every tongue would confess, Lord Jesus Christ, to the glory of Father God.” — Philippians 2:9-11[[14]](#footnote-14)

***Declaring a False Dogma***

“I saw a scroll, written inside and on the backside, sealed with seven seals, in the right hand of the One[[15]](#footnote-15) sitting on the throne. I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the scroll, and to unseal its seals? No one was able, in heaven, on earth, or under the earth, to open the scroll or to look in it. I wept abundantly, because no one was found worthy to open the scroll, or to look in it.” — Revelation 5:1-4

Because of the location of this unopened scroll in the right hand of God the Father, we conclude that this is the only inerrant and infallible declaration of Divine Dogma[[16]](#footnote-16) in the entire universe. It renders all other statements of dogma invalid… null and void. Human dogmas accepted in various churches have resulted only in division and strife because they do not conform perfectly to this Dogma. The dogmas introduced during the reign of Constantine are seriously flawed: they split the indivisible Church. The dogmas written into Justinian’s code were used to persecute all who held differing opinions, which led to further divisions in the indivisible Church. The dogmas proclaimed at Nicaea, Constantinople, Ephesus, Chalcedon, and in Canon Law cower ineffectively in the presence of this Divine Dogma. Before this Divine Dogma, all the dogmas proclaimed at Trent, Augsburg, Geneva, Zurich, Dortrecht, Westminster, Niagara, and elsewhere are similarly defective: all they have ever done is cause and/or reinforce division in the Church.

We cannot directly know the contents of this Dogma, or possess it: because, we are unworthy to unseal it, or read it. It is so pure, it reveals the defilement and uncleanness of our human hands: it makes the hands unclean. Neither is any angel, as perfect as angels are, worthy to unseal or read the scroll of Divine Dogma.

We are not even free to pick and choose whatever we wish from this indivisible, inerrant and infallible scroll of Divine Dogma; we are not free to use enlightened thinking, or other arbitrary logical standards, to reduce this Dogma to a list of essentials or fundamentals, as some mistakenly attempt to do.

This necessitates that all other dogmas made by angels or humans be set aside if we wish to seek the peace and unity of the Church in Reconciliation.

“One of the presbyters said to me, Do not weep! Observe carefully! The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David,[[17]](#footnote-17) overcame[[18]](#footnote-18) to open the scroll, and its seven seals. I saw, in the middle of the throne, among the four living creatures, and among the presbyters, a standing Lamb, as having been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent into all the earth. He came and took [the scroll] out of the right hand of the One sitting on the throne.” — Revelation 5:5-7

Because of this expressive and graphic picture of the relationship between the Father and the Son, we understand that both of them are in perfect agreement and harmony about this inerrant and infallible Divine Dogma. Elsewhere, we read of Christ’s claim, that He did exactly as the Father wished, and said whatever the Father proclaimed. Yet, because of His perfect obedience, we understand that Christ Himself is the immortal and uncreated Son and Word of God.

The scroll speaks of a mystery in the Father-Son relationship, far beyond any written records, as we know them. The Son Himself is the Divine Dogma of the Father to the Son: to Whom all other dogmas must bow and fall. The scroll represents the secret mysterious relationship between Father, Son, and Spirit, about which we know, only from second hand sources. Is there a way to enter into this mystery: that is the question of questions?

The rest of chapter 5 is devoted to hymns praising the Father and the Son. This worship is accompanied by harps and incense, showing that neither instruments of accompaniment nor incense are outside of the Divine Dogma. The Son is worthy to take His throne beside His Father: because, He has accomplished everything, exactly as His Father willed.

Reconstruction fails: because, declarations of false dogma, are used as a substitute for the Eternal and Uncreated Divine Dogma: division is the inevitable result. Reconciliation can only succeed by abandoning all man-made dogma, which is inherently false, and by earnestly seeking to do God’s things, God’s way: human methods always result in failure. We cannot climb over the wall to get into Paradise: we will always be discovered and thrown out.

***Teaching a False Doctrine***

“I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals. I heard, one of the four living creatures, like a clap of thunder, saying, Come.” — Revelation 6:1

As Revelation 5 speaks to us about the indivisible, inerrant and infallible Divine Dogma in the person of Christ Himself; even so, Sound Doctrine,[[19]](#footnote-19) and the authority, to present it, is evinced by the Son unsealing the seven seals. He, The Lamb, alone is worthy to open the seven seals: which is to say that Christ alone is the only person qualified to teach, to present the Sound Doctrine of the Divine Dogma. Thus, the only inerrant and infallible doctrine is the sword that flows from the mouth of Christ.

False doctrine also causes division and divisiveness. Christ calls us to forgiveness and Reconciliation.

***Attempting False Access***

“Knowing this first, that any written prophecy does not come from one’s personal interpretation: for, prophecy came, not by human will: but, being carried by [the] Devoted Spirit, humans, spoke from God.” — 2 Peter 1:20-21

“In response,[[20]](#footnote-20) Jesus said to him, Amen, amen, I tell you, unless someone would be begotten[[21]](#footnote-21) from above,[[22]](#footnote-22) they are not able to see[[23]](#footnote-23) the kingdom of God.” — John 3:3

“In response, Jesus [said], Amen, amen, I tell to you, unless someone would be begotten out of water[[24]](#footnote-24) and Spirit[[25]](#footnote-25), they are not able enter into the kingdom of God. That having been begotten of the flesh is flesh. That having been begotten of the of the Spirit is spirit.[[26]](#footnote-26) You should not wonder that I said to you, it is necessary for you to be begotten from above. The wind blows where it wishes. You hear its sound; but, you had not known [for a fact] from where it comes, [or] where it goes. So are all being begotten of the Spirit.” — John 3:5-8

“If therefore you, evil rulers, had known to give good gifts to your children: how much more, The Father out of Heaven will give [the] Holy Spirit to them [if] they ask Him?” — Luke 11:13

The Apostles prayed for fifty days after Christ’s Resurrection, before the Spirit came at Pentecost.[[27]](#footnote-27) This is the only reliable, true, and trustworthy means of human access to the mystery of the Divine Dogma and Sound Doctrine of Christ. All other means: such as human logic and reason are unreliable, treacherous, quicksand… doomed to fail. We must be taught by God Himself: this is the Spirit’s specific task.

“…: for, since in the wisdom of God the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the proclamation to save those who believe.” — 1 Corinthians 1:21

The proclamation is Christ’s: it is the sword pouring from His mouth.[[28]](#footnote-28) The only publisher and teacher is the Spirit, Who teaches our incapable and impotent human spirits.

“The Spirit Himself bears evidence with our spirit, that we are the children of God.” — Romans 8:16

“Now, the Companion, the Devoted Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My Name, this One will teach you all. He will remind you of everything that I said to you.” — John 14:26

“Now, when He, that Spirit of Truth, comes, He will guide you into the whole truth: for, He will not speak from Himself; but, whatever He hears, He will speak. He will announce the coming things to you.” — John 16:13

“Now, you are not in flesh, but in spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now, if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.” — Romans 8:9

That’s right, the Spirit is the only means of access to this mystery of Divine Dogma and Sound Doctrine. If you are not in constant communication and communion with the Spirit in this way, Paul claims that you have no right to call yourself a Christian. You are not saved. The incessant silly attempt of humans to access the Divine Dogma and Sound Doctrine by any means other than the Spirit has only resulted in the additional failure and fracturing of the churches. Human effort apart from the Spirit can only bring about the collapse of proposed Reconstruction systems. There can be no Reconciliation without the power of the Spirit guiding us to Christ.

***The Goal of Access***

“In response, Jesus said to him, you are the teacher of Israel; and you do not know these [things]?[[29]](#footnote-29) Amen, amen, I tell you that what we had known [for a fact], we speak. What we had seen, we [give in] evidence. You[[30]](#footnote-30) do not receive our evidence. If I tell you [about things] on earth, and you do not believe; how will you believe if I would tell you [about things] in the heavens? No one had ascended into the heaven, except the one descending out of the heaven, the Son of Man.[[31]](#footnote-31) Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert; even so, it is necessary [that] the Son of Man [is] to be lifted up: that all believing in Him would have eternal life: for, thus God loved the world; so, He gave His only-begotten Son; that all believing in Him would not be destroyed; but, would have eternal life: for, God did not send the Son into the world that He would judge the world;[[32]](#footnote-32) but, that the world would be saved through Him.[[33]](#footnote-33) The one believing in Him is not judged; yet, the unbelieving one is already judged: because, he had not[[34]](#footnote-34) believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God. Now, this is the judgment: that light had come into the world. People loved the darkness rather than the light: for, their works have been evil: for, all practicing[[35]](#footnote-35) worthlessness hate the light. They do not come toward the light, that their works would not be exposed.[[36]](#footnote-36) Now, the one doing the truth comes toward the light, that his works would be showed forth openly, that they are working in God.”[[37]](#footnote-37) — John 3:10-21

The human mind, left to its own, rejects all such evidence; it cannot accept the obvious physical evidence, because of its prejudicial wicked presuppositions; it cannot begin to understand the weightier spiritual evidence, which talks about deeper truth. So, the trope of Moses and the Serpent as it pictures the Crucifixion is completely missed; once the trope is missed, the defeat of Satan by Christ’s death on the Cross cannot be understood: failing to see these we do not see Crucifixion as the instrument of Glorification… the path of victory is via embracing defeat… down is up… the whole work of God is counterintuitive to mere human minds.

The Spirit leads us directly to the Door or Gate of the sheepfold, which is Jesus. Jesus opens and shuts as He wills.[[38]](#footnote-38) He opens to all the Father draws by the Spirit;[[39]](#footnote-39) and bars entry to all false professors.

The Spirit immediately teaches us the things of Christ, including His Crucifixion as pictured by Moses and the serpent: “the Son of Man [is] to be lifted up”. The play on words in, lifted up, discloses not only that Christ will be lifted up in Crucifixion, but also that He will be lifted up in Glorification: we must lift Him up; we must Glorify Him. The purpose of this lifting up is to bring eternal life, which is the gift of the Father’s love. The Father’s primary intention for humanity is not destruction and judgement: but, life and salvation. The Spirit’s first work is to bring us to Christ and thus, in the Word and Work of Christ, reconcile us with the Father.

The ancients said of the work of Christ, “God became man, so that man might became god.” You should realize from this that the Spirit, through Christ has done more than bring us back into spiritual Paradise. The Spirit has brought us into the very presence of God, within the very mystery of Divine Dogma that we discovered in Revelation 5; and has given us a first glimpse into that Divine Dogma.[[40]](#footnote-40) That which is impossible and inaccessible to us in Revelation 5, which we are unworthy to even touch, is now opened to us through a door of Grace, by Christ and the Spirit.

Salvation is begotten from the Father’s love for His children. The work of Christ in Salvation, empowered by the Spirit’s guidance and teaching, was always a part of the secret Divine Dogma, which is now revealed to us in the writing of John. This is the first goal of our access to God by the Spirit. Being thus reconciled to the Father, we can now be reconciled to our fellow humans and to the world.

If we truly seek Reconciliation, we will only find it as the Spirit guides us to the Son and the Father. This is the goal of access.

***False Content***

We do not possess this infallible and inerrant Divine Dogma except in the mystery of the Spirit: but, we have somewhat imperfect human manuscript copies of what it says through sure words of prophecy.[[41]](#footnote-41) Today, except for what we have termed the Beatific Vision, these surviving manuscripts, taught by the Spirit, are as close as we can possibly get to inerrant and infallible Divine Dogma and Sound Doctrine, in the form of recorded human writing.

These manuscripts have never been either infallible or inerrant; they are copies, many generations removed from the original prophetic utterance; they are good, they are valuable, they must be respected: yet, they are far from perfect… we don’t even have consensus for any archetype constructed from them.

Most of Christendom insists on the primacy of the Masoretic Text (MT); this was not the view of early Christianity; it is the worst manuscript tradition of all, and the farthest removed from any “Hebrew” prototype: it has little evidence to support it.[[42]](#footnote-42) The best and oldest witness to a “Hebrew” prototype is the Septuagint (LXX) collection of manuscripts, which preserves a “Hebrew” prototype that is many centuries older than MT. This “Hebrew” prototype is actually Block Aramaic[[43]](#footnote-43), in biblical use from around 516 to 200 BC, when it was superseded among the Jews by LXX. Prior to this the paleo-Hebrew was in use between 1010 and 586 BC: the period from 586 to 516 BC is an indefinite transition period caused by the Babylonian Captivity. Paleo-Hebrew does not appear to be in existence before 1200 BC, around the time of Jephthah, at the earliest. Language use among the Israelite peoples is unknown prior to that date. Because, Akkadian cuneiform is witnessed by the abundance of the Amarna Letters as the language of international diplomacy, written from Cisjordan during the fourteenth century BC, Akkadian cuneiform is the most likely language choice for Moses and the Exodus. However, there are numerous other possible choices: Egyptian, Luwian, Sumerian… to suggest just a few of the many possibilities.

Today, we have little choice, other than to focus our efforts on LXX manuscripts and their analysis. LXX is the Bible used by Christ and His Apostles. This is far removed from the false practice of the bulk of Christendom, emphasizing MT.

Since the Spirit is our best and primary teacher, we should give greater consideration to what He teaches. Reconciliation is approached through the love of Scripture; while, at the same time abandoning the myth of biblical inerrancy. Only the Divine Dogma and Sound Doctrine as taught by Christ are infallible and inerrant: Bible manuscripts only approach this ideal, and that from a great distance. The Spirit is the infallible and inerrant Person, Who, brings us into the Presence of the Father and the Son for a glimpse at this Truth; and for the correct understanding of the biblical writings.

***False Emphasis***

The modern churches have largely abandoned the practice specified by Dr. Luke, who shows us that Christ teaches about Himself from the Old Testament, which was the only Scripture available in that day; and from the breaking of bread, which we know as Communion. Thus, these two emphases form the broad outline of Christian worship. Yet, the Old Testament is rarely read today; if it is read, Christ is not preached from it; and Communion, with its lessons, and purpose may be neglected entirely. There is nothing inherently wrong with preaching from the New Testament: but, when that preaching becomes completely disconnected from the Old Testament, it begins to assume false values.

“[Jesus] said to them, O thoughtless, and slow in heart to believe on all that the prophets said. Was this not necessary that the Christ [was] to suffer and to enter into His glory? Beginning from Moses and all the Prophets, He explained to them in all the writings the [things] about Himself.” — Luke 24:25-27

“Their eyes were opened. They knew Him. He became hidden from them. They said to one another, was not our heart burning in us, as He talked with us in the road, as He explained the writings to us?” — Luke 24:31-32

“They began to describe [things] in the road. How He was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.” — Luke 24:35

“He said to them, These are My words that I told to you, while I was still with you, that it is necessary that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, Prophets, and Psalms,[[44]](#footnote-44) concerning Me. Then He opened up their minds to understand the writings,” — Luke 24:44-45

Reconciliation can only be found when we do God’s things God’s way. We must return to earnestly seeking Christ from the Old Testament. We need for Christ to be made known to us in the breaking of the bread. We need to put an end to services without Christ searching Old Testament readings and without Communion. The priesthood of the Church should not put up with such unbiblical deviations, which are only destructive of Reconciliation.

Leadership

***Priesthood***

“[The infants of God] themselves as living stones, are built a spiritual house into devoted priesthood, to bear up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” — 1 Peter 2:5

“Now you [are] a chosen people,[[45]](#footnote-45) a palace priesthood, a devoted race, a family[[46]](#footnote-46) of belonging: so that, you could proclaim the excellences of the One Who Called you out of darkness into His marvelous light….” 1 Peter 2:9

“He made us a kingdom, priests to God and His Father: to Him [be] the glory and the might into the ages of the ages. Amen.” — Revelation 1:6

“You made them a kingdom and priests to our God. They will reign on the earth.” — Revelation 5:10

“Happy and devoted [is] the one having part in the first resurrection.[[47]](#footnote-47) On such the second death does not have authority: but they will be priests of God and of Christ. They will reign with Him thousands[[48]](#footnote-48) [of] years.” — Revelation 20:6

All who are begotten from above by the Spirit of God are priests. These, when they become of age, need to accept their office and begin to carry it out. There does not seem to be any laity in the New Testament; neither can we find a professional ministry: we find love gifts being given to those who are worthy of honor, not professional salaries. Any Reconciliation of the Church will have to deal with these issues for it to succeed: ultimately, these priests must decide.

***Priestly Armaments***

Priests must be properly equipped and prepared for conflict. Their defensive posture means resisting persecution, and often ends in their personal crucifixions. This armor of Reconciliation is only put on with intensive prayer.[[49]](#footnote-49)

“Finally, be empowered in [the] Lord, and in the rule of His strength. Be clothed with the whole defense[[50]](#footnote-50) of God, to be empowered to stand against the methods of the devil, against you. Because our struggle is not against blood and flesh, but

* against the archons,
* against the authorities,
* against the world-rulers[[51]](#footnote-51) of this darkness,
* against spiritually active evil in the heavenlies.

Through this take up the whole defense[[52]](#footnote-52) of God, that you would be empowered to withstand in the evil day, and accomplishing everything[[53]](#footnote-53), to stand. Therefore, stand

* with truth, being wrapped around your hips,
* with righteousness, the breastplate, being clothed,
* with the Gospel of the peace in readiness, having [shoes] under the feet,
* with faith, the shield[[54]](#footnote-54), taking up everything in which you will be empowered to quench all the evil flaming missiles,[[55]](#footnote-55)
* with salvation, the helmet, also receive,
* with the sword of the Spirit, which is the speech[[56]](#footnote-56) of God,

Through every prayer and request, praying earnestly[[57]](#footnote-57) in every season in [the] Spirit, in this [prayer], untiring in all persistence and request for all the devoted….” — Ephesians 6:10-18[[58]](#footnote-58)

A common approach to this passage is to see the list of adversaries as a series of demonic orders. There is a tendency to anticipate dwellers from space. While, this is not entirely incorrect, we wonder if it misses the main point.

The Gadarene or Gerasene or Gergesene Demoniac[[59]](#footnote-59) has myriads of demons inside himself. These are cast into swine that then drown in the sea. Paul’s point must be that we engage these demonic forces close at hand, not from a great distance.[[60]](#footnote-60)

Paul writes of the “heavenlies” but this cannot be in reference to moons, planets, and stars. No, he has reference to the spiritual realm, distinct from, but mystically engaged with our physical realm: which, spiritual realm, includes angelic and demonic creatures, as well as the human spirits of both evil and good people, all close at hand.

This is our struggle. This is hand-to-hand combat. It is up-close and personal. Within the context of Ephesus, Paul can only have a few things in mind:

* the officers of the city and Roman governments;
* that opposition to Christ stemming from the local synagogue leadership;[[61]](#footnote-61)
* adversarial pagan temples; and the like.

This is a politically[[62]](#footnote-62) sourced, spiritually resolved issue. Paul insists that the human hierarchies around them, with which they must deal on a daily basis, are demon influenced, and even demon possessed. We engage all of these primarily through prayer.

If this is the nature of Roman culture, and it is; how are we to apply this to our own American and World culture, since our American culture was deliberately designed and patterned after the Roman, and we dominate the World?

Since this is the case, in these days of aggravated political strife, we would be exceedingly naïve to believe that the underlying cause behind all this strife is not satanic demonism. We are foolish if we believe that we struggle against different forces than those that engaged earlier Christians in the Roman culture. The probability that many of our politicians and other public figures, even some of our church leaders, are demon influenced, or even demon possessed is great. All parties are infected. Every church has tares sowed amid the wheat. No one is exempt from danger or harm. We identify part of this evil when we discover open defiance of the spiritually interpreted Law of God. Where the battle is: there we must take our side with Christ and the Spirit.

We prepare ourselves by praying on each element of defensive armor: truth, righteousness, Gospel, faith, salvation, God’s speech.[[63]](#footnote-63) Only when these are well prayed on and in, can we say we have begun to prepare for being attacked.

The first step is arming ourselves with truth. To do this, we must be begotten from above: else, we will have no connection to Truth. To do this, we must engage our enemies in earnest and persistent prayer. This is the only path of Reconciliation.

***Priestly Challenges***

“The fruit of the Spirit is

* love,
* joy,
* peace,
* patience,
* kindness,
* goodness,
* faith,
* gentleness,
* self-restraint.

There is no law against these things. So, Christ’s [body or people] crucified the flesh with the sufferings and the longings. If we would live in Spirit, we should also walk in Spirit. We could not become [seekers] of empty glories, challenging[[64]](#footnote-64) one another, envying each other. Brothers and sisters, even if a person would be captured in some side-fall; you, the spiritual, restore this person in a spirit of gentleness; watching yourself, lest you also be imperiled. Carry each other’s loads, thus you will fulfill the law of Christ.” — Galatians 5:22-6:2

I’m not very fond of this passage; not nearly as fond as I once was: for, it examines my heart and gives me the doctor’s diagnosis… the teacher’s grading card. I’m not very pleased with the results.

* love: C-, perfunctory, gets the job done without affection.
* joy: F, a real sour-puss, a grump and grouch.
* peace: D, always in turmoil over some issue or other.
* patience: D+, excessive attention to finishing now, has trouble waiting on God, sometimes tries to play God.
* kindness: C+, inconsistency, kind to animals, not so much with people.
* goodness: D-, only externally, rotten at the core.
* faith: C, very weak.
* gentleness: F+, with things only.
* self-restraint: B-, mostly fear driven, can be a real loose cannon.

These verses emphasize that what was begun in the Spirit, must now continue in the Spirit.

“… The Father out of Heaven will give [the] Devoted Spirit to them [if] they ask Him” — Luke 11:13

The necessity of spiritual regeneration in all Christian lives, which is spelled out in detail in John 3, must now be applied with boots on the ground. This is a painful march with Christ; so, Paul urges us to remember that our flesh is already crucified with Christ: we need not fear our human sufferings, or cater to our human desires… as much as possible, we are to try to set these loads aside.[[65]](#footnote-65)

So, since we were brought to life by the Spirit, we continue to walk by the Spirit. Little-by-little, God cures our heart condition, replacing it with His new creation.

Thus, we are not to seek the fleshly glories of this evil world. Unfortunately, the bitter strife between Alexander’s leading generals, Ptolemy and Seleucus, continued to rage down through the centuries, imprinting itself on the Church even earlier than the fourth century, when it informed the writing of the Nicene Creed… as well as in the fifth century at Chalcedon. The Seleucids loved the name Antiochian. The Ptolemies reveled in Alexandria. These manifold strifes remain with us, unhealed to this very day. Evidently, many Christians still love worthless fleshly empty glory.

Paul reiterates what Jesus taught immediately following the Lord’s Prayer in Matthew. All of us, in our walk with Christ, occasionally trip and fall headlong into the ditch. This is a full-fledged side-fall. It is not the time or the place for the priesthood to get up on its high horse, proclaiming its self-righteous indignation and superiority. This is the time when the priesthood must get down in the ditch to help our brother or sister get out of the mud, putting them on their feet, and on the road again. Reconciliation is hard, disgusting, distasteful work: but, we’ve got to do it. Now, after nearly two-thousand years, we are still not out of the ditch.

The problem with struggling in the ditch is that its dangers threaten, not only, the life of the victim: but also, the lives of the rescuers. We need to be wise and wary in this weary work: it’s dangerous soul-threatening toil.

***Other***

The selection and training of bishops and presbyters is beyond the scope of this paper. Suffice it to say that these must demonstrate their spiritual maturity and gifts to the satisfaction of the priesthood.

Arbitrary Practices

Several arbitrary practices have divided the modern churches. We will only look at a few of these that persist from the Reformation onward. When such practices are made into dogma, denying church membership to some, refusing service at the Communion table to others, coercing consciences without cause; forming a distinct fellowship that refuses fellowship and co-communion with any others: these are wildly out of bounds and anti-Christian.

We must be very careful here; because, there are issues in this modern age that should exclude others: for this very reason, the World Council of Churches (WCC)[[66]](#footnote-66) has failed to provide a legitimate path to Reconciliation. We must find the way to exclude that which the Bible clearly excludes, and provide loving toleration for the things which the Bible does not clearly exclude.

We are not advocating that “everyone just love one another”. Loving one another requires laying down our lives for the unworthy, which we also are: but, loving one another does not require, that special fellowship or koinonia, shared only among sincere Christians, be spread about carelessly in the world. We are not to cast our pearls before swine: such as anti-Christs, atheists, practicing evildoers. We are to hate the sin; yet, love the sinner: this involves helping one another become separated from our sins and our love of sinning, which takes a lifetime of hard toil. So we must be patient with one another: but, there is a biblical limit to our tolerance. Being patient with each other never means that we approve of sin: not our own, not anybody else’s…. We do not turn flagrant sinners into officers in the churches.

Here is the ruling of the priesthood[[67]](#footnote-67) of the whole church[[68]](#footnote-68) on earth together with its Apostles[[69]](#footnote-69) and Presbyters[[70]](#footnote-70).

“Thus, I think not to trouble those from the Gentiles turning to God: but, to write them, to abstain from pollutions of idols, fornication, strangled[[71]](#footnote-71) [things], and blood.” — Acts 15:19-20

“…: for, it seemed good to the Devoted Spirit, and to us, not to impose on you a weight larger than these necessities: to abstain from idol sacrifices[[72]](#footnote-72), blood, strangled [things], and fornication: out of[[73]](#footnote-73) which protecting yourselves you will do well. Be well![[74]](#footnote-74)” — Acts 15: 28-29

For the Law is obeyed spiritually, by grace through faith, and not by works of flesh.[[75]](#footnote-75)

“Which one thinks day parallels day[[76]](#footnote-76); yet, which another thinks, each day [individually][[77]](#footnote-77). Let each person be fully persuaded in his own mind.” — Romans 14:5

So, the principle of freedom reigns in the early church. No one is free to force their opinions on another; thereby coercing and wounding another’s conscience; thus driving others away from the fellowship (koinonia) of the Father, and Christ, through the Spirit. No one is free to divide the fellowship (koinonia) into separate groups. There is only one Church that worships together, town-by-town. Only those things which are clear from Scripture have any force. It is equally clear that the Scripture, taught by the Spirit, must be understood spiritually by grace through faith, and not as works of flesh.

***Worship***

The so-called regulative principle of worship[[78]](#footnote-78) cannot be found in Acts 15; in fact, Acts 15 forbids it. The multiplication of this and other rules is just warmed-over Pharisaism, that results in unnecessary church division and blocks the path to reconciliation. We are not free to establish our own man-made dogmas, or to impose our teachings on the sound doctrine of Christ. We may hold individual preferences: but, we are not free to impose these preferences on others, coercing tender consciences.

***Baptism***

There is nothing in the Bible that requires baptism by immersion. There is nothing in the Bible that forbids baptism by pouring (affusion) or sprinkling.

We are all greatly indebted to the prodigious labors of A. T. Robertson, noted Bible grammarian and lexicographer: yet, his ideas of baptism err in not providing weight from verses, either in Hebrews[[79]](#footnote-79), or from the Old Testament.

Hebrews 9:10 specifically states, βαπτισμοῖς (baptisms), which are then elaborated and specified as sprinkling in verses 13, 19, 21; as well as 10:22; 11:28; and 12:24: which is also the standard practice throughout the Old Testament.

We are not saying that you should not have a personal preference for immersion or pouring or sprinkling. You may have any preference you wish and we will honor your choice and receive you as a brother or sister in Christ. We will not require you to be rebaptized, unless you were baptized by an anti-Christian cult, such as Mormonism[[80]](#footnote-80).

Nor is there anything in the Bible that limits baptism to confessing adults. That may be your preference; please keep it to yourself: let others freely decide what they wish to prefer and accept them as brother or sister without complaint. Biblically, baptism replaces circumcision: it signifies membership in the covenant community of Christ. It cannot possibly signify faith: since, eight-day old children cannot have developed self-aware faith of their own. The baptism that saves is the baptism of Christ with the Spirit, not with water. It is the evidence of the Spirit active in the lives of others that matters most; this is that for which we most look; this is that which completes and perfects all water baptisms: this is what saves. Age is not a factor. The Spirit’s will is the decisive factor.

The early church has a document called the *Didache*[[81]](#footnote-81), which shows considerable freedom in the church. Nevertheless, the *Didache* is not Scripture and must not be treated as such.

It is corrupt to make a dogma out of baptismal preferences, forcing these practices on others, and excluding them from fellowship and communion. Let them be perfected by the Spirit. The Reconciliation of the churches cannot be achieved if open practices of water baptism are not sincerely in effect. We must continually seek the Spirit.

***Communion***

There is nothing in the Bible to suggest that Communion is to be closed, or must be closed. Communion remembers Passover, or Pascha, or Pesach. The idea of Pesach is open to all the circumcised community, Jews and circumcised Gentiles alike. The greatest Passover in the Old Testament may very well be Josiah’s Passover.[[82]](#footnote-82) Even the unclean from the Northern Kingdom were invited: none were turned away, none were refused. Let us take a lesson from this about Communion: for, 1 Corinthians 11:23-32 requires self-examination, not limitation. And if anyone doubts their own heart, there is always confession immediately prior to Communion. So, let us not reject any of the baptized at Communion: for, the word itself signifies common-union. Wherever, the Spirit is actively present, let us proclaim that Christ is in our midst, and let us celebrate our Reconciliation by breaking bread together in open Communion. And let our Reconciliation be sincere: for, the churches cannot be healed by disagreement and fracturing.

***Music***

There is a great diversity of Christian music throughout the world. Let the priesthood patiently and wisely set aside that which has no biblical base or distorts the biblical meaning or emphasizes a denominational opinion. Let all else be embraced.

There is nothing in the Bible that forbids instrumental accompaniment. Let everything that has breath praise the Lord (Psalm 150).

This is a silly thing over which to divide churches or coerce consciences or make into dogma. Let there be freedom.

***Evangelism***

It has always been popular to exaggerate evangelism fads. The Morality Plays of the fifteenth and sixteen century are a case in point; these sought to frighten people into the Kingdom of Heaven: many modern practices still ape this unbiblical tactic.

There are also numerous canned attempts at evangelism. These have the advantage of being easy to learn and use. Their excessive employment has the same outcome as any other canned sales job: sooner or later, the audience becomes aware that this is about advertising and sales, not about evangelism. The result, as often as not, may be a “burned over district”. These canned attempts, though possibly of value if used judiciously, are not Scripture. The basic evangelism technique of the Bible is Ephesians 6:17… learning to use the sword of the Spirit, which is the speech (not word, but, ῥῆμα) of God, which is the speech of Christ… learning to use the speech of Christ, with gentleness and respect, pointedly applied to specific problems… this is biblical evangelism. The fundamental evangelism message of the Bible is John 3… you must be begotten by the Spirit from above. Canned evangelism programs must not be turned into dogmas by which we divide the Church.

***Prophecy***

Only God knows the future absolutely. It is not for us to know the times or the seasons. Prophetic Scripture is often written in coded language which is very difficult to decode. Let there be open discussion. Let there be differences of opinion. Let these not be made into dogma. Let these not be the basis for forming a denomination. Let there be peace. We do not know what the future will bring. This is not something over which to coerce the consciences of others. This is not something over which to divide. Doc Hendricks[[83]](#footnote-83) used to advocate pan-millennialism: it will all pan out… there is wisdom in that. Let there be freedom.

***Opinions***

My doctrine is a statement of my opinion: you may take it or leave it. I pray earnestly, minute by minute, that my doctrine would be faithful to the doctrine of Christ. I look to the Devoted Spirit to lead me into all truth… that I might, by any means possible, say and write exactly what He wants me to say and write. You, with Christ, as His Body, are the judges of how many blunders I’ve committed. Do not follow me: follow Christ. Don’t listen for my voice: listen for the Spirit.

***Empires***

Ever since 313, the Church on earth has been busy building empires: almost all of them patterned after the Roman empire. Today, there are roughly 30,000 of these.

The standard joke is about a group of Christians from the same denomination who die and go to heaven. On their introductory tour with Peter, they spot a single fortress, walled and armed, on one side of the road. What’s that, they ask. Peter replies, that is (he names their specific denomination), they think they are the only ones up here.

We have systematically made Christendom into 30,000 Empires; each in its walled and armed fortress. We have tried to fill heaven with 30,000 armed and waring Empires.

We do not serve Emperors, many of them, we serve a single King, Jesus, Who, reigns with His Father, and the Spirit. Eternity is not a Heavenly Empire patterned after Rome, which is doomed to fall.[[84]](#footnote-84) It is only One Heavenly Kingdom, which was prefigured by David, the humble shepherd-king. Most emperors make us die for them. Our King died for us.

***Conclusion***

Let us not be divided over any of these issues. Let the infallible Divine Dogma reign supreme. Let the Sound Doctrine of Christ be proclaimed. Let us approach these with humility and poverty: for, we are still unworthy to touch them. Only the grace and power of the Spirit has brought us within the Godhead to begin to observe these mysteries from a distance. Let us not pretend that we have achieved full knowledge. We will grow closer as we continue.

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter. Let us gather together in the baptism of Christ with the Spirit; with the teaching of Christ, especially, if not always, from the Old Testament[[85]](#footnote-85); around the koinonia of Communion at which all are welcome. Let the churches be reconciled on the basis of these issues.

Let all the true churches of earth be Reconciled into One in Christ. Amen

[[86]](#footnote-86)

1. Holy is usually found in this location: but, holy has lost whatever sense it may have had in the English language. Lexicographers have led us to believe that words like holy and sanctified mean: to set apart for special use. We are testing the word devoted, along with alternatives consecrated and dedicated, for suitability. Please let us know what your preferences are. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. They welcomed the apostolic preaching about Jesus, the Word of God Himself, following Jesus’ teaching described in Luke 24, and elsewhere. Jesus taught them about Himself from the Old Testament. These teachings of Jesus where what they verified from the writings they already possessed. The Bereans were not concerned with verifying the Old Testament; they were verifying Jesus from the Old Testament. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Proverbs 3:34 LXX [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Paul refers to his arrival in heaven; which would be a departure from earth. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. These διεστραμμένα are in the perfect passive: the most likely source of these is Jewish fables, such as Oral Torah. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Isn’t this an interesting parallel with the way we deal with children today. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Winston Churchill: <https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/riddle_wrapped_up_in_an_enigma> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Genesis 4:17-24 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. In any case, some sort of unidentified or unspecified inflation or intensification is involved in contrast to the sin of Cain. Genesis 4:24 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. The oldest available manuscript evidence is Greek, called the Septuagint (LXX). The many LXX manuscripts were based on a language called Hebrew, which is actually Block Aramaic, a language that developed sometime after 516 BC. Hebrew (Block Aramaic) seems to have developed from paleo-Hebrew, a form of Canaanite; it’s called the Lip of Canaan in the Bible. Paleo-Hebrew seems to be in dominant use between 1010 and 586 BC: there is no evidence that paleo-Hebrew was invented before 1200 BC. Nobody knows what the manuscripts looked like before 1200 BC; our best guess is that Akkadian cuneiform was used: but, there are several other possibilities. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. The names listed in Genesis 5 are the only evidence. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. There is no mystery about how we arrived at this guess. We took the very basic idea of 1% growth, supposing that human fecundity hasn’t really changed much since creation; this represents a doubling time of seventy years. Then we applied the law of exponential growth to arrive at two target numbers, which were finally rounded down. What these numbers say, is that in all probability, many people died in the Flood… millions of people… possibly even billions of people. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. ἐγώ εἰμι [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Isaiah 45:23; Romans 14:11 [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. This is obviously God the Father. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Dogma is that which must be believed in its entirety. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. We do not expect to find either a lion or a plant root hidden within these powerful metaphors: we expect the uncreated Son and Word of God, Christ Himself alone. Neither is Christ the stem coming from David’s root: rather, Christ is the root from which David and all else grows. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. He conquered death by death. The play on words concerning conquest contrasts those who conquer by domination, with Christ and His Christ-like followers, who overcome by embracing the cross. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Doctrine means teaching. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. aorist passive [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. subjunctive [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. This word is an adverb: abovely. The translation, born again, agrees with the context about entering a mother’s womb to be born a second time. The translation, begotten or born from above, engages the context about being begotten out of Spirit. Begotten emphasizes the Fatherhood relationship; born emphasizes the motherhood relationship. We are “of the Father’s love begotten”.

    <http://www.lutheran-hymnal.com/lyrics/tlh098.htm> [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. If the only thing involved here were the function of a physical eye, John would have used the verb, βλέπω. The verb John chooses means to take careful observation with a view to collecting evidence or facts. It is closely related to the verb which means know for a fact. Indeed, the two verbs may stem from the same root: for, the exercise of the one, produces the other. But, we are not etymologists. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. This is a normal physical human birth. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. This is an abnormal miraculous heavenly spiritual birth; in which, through prayer, the Holy Spirit of God begins to dwell within us, communicating and communing with us, teaching our human spirits about Jesus and the Father, mostly from the Old Testament. This kind of evidence is not magic: it requires an active and sometimes painful prayer life… prayer is a toilsome process… not a walk in the park. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Jesus draws a sharp distinction between physical and spiritual birth. There is no evidence here connecting water baptism and Spirit baptism. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Acts 2 [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Revelation 1:16; 2:16; 19:15, 21 [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Every member of the Sanhedrin under Moses was given the Spirit to understand and teach the Law to the people. It is amazing that Nicodemus does not have the gift of the Spirit. It is even more amazing that he does not understand what Jesus is telling him. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. you plural: all of Judaism in general with rare exceptions [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. God the Son claims that He had made this round trip before. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. He would not judge at the time of this sending; this cannot mean that the Son would not judge at a later date. Romans 14:10; 2 Corinthians 5:10 [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. It is wrong to press either the subjunctive or the sovereignty of God on this phrase to claim universal salvation. Christ brings the possibility of salvation for all. Evidently, people have sufficient free will to accept or reject the offer; even though people have no power to do anything about it. God is still Sovereign! [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. The hypothetical, not, is used with the indicative verb. Neither faith nor judgment is hypothetical. Each person’s decision, considered one at a time, is a human hypothetical: because, it is not for us to know the heart of who might believe, and who is a fraud. However, all will decide, one way or another. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. This applies to motivations more than actions. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Works are exposed; workers are rebuked. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. It is not merely the works which are under scrutiny: God searches and reveals the purity or impurity of the hidden chambers of the heart, the honesty and sincerity of motives. There is no place left to hide. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. John 10:7, 9; Revelation 3:7-8 [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. John 6:37, 44-45 [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. It does not seem wrong to us to call this the Beatific Vision. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. 2 Peter 1:19 [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. If you have ever heard the false claim that Hebrew and Aramaic are the only fit languages in which to write Scripture, the following evidence disabuses such silly notions. Isaiah even calls paleo-Hebrew the lip of Canaan (Isaiah 19:18): there is no visible difference between paleo-Hebrew, proto-Canaanite, and Phoenician other than styles of penmanship.

    <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paleo-Hebrew_alphabet>

    <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phoenician_alphabet>

    <https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/biblical-artifacts/inscriptions/precursor-to-the-paleo-hebrew-script-discovered-in-jerusalem/> [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Many people prefer the more scholarly terms, “square Aramaic alphabet”, or, “square script”, or “Imperial Aramaic”. In any case, among the Israelites, the sequence of development was from Phoenician/proto-Canaanite/paleo-Hebrew to Imperial Aramaic, which is, today, falsely and misleadingly called Hebrew. The name Hebrew is being assumed from the name, Heber, in order to attach a greater significance to the language and people, which significance simply does not exist: it’s false advertising. Here is a detailed discussion of the linguistic development:

    <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aramaic_alphabet>

    <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aramaic_alphabet#Letters> [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. This three-fold name is the real assurance that we are talking about the complete Old Testament. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. They are a new class of chosen people (begetting: of the Father), displacing and replacing the old class of chosen people, which has fallen from grace and has been pruned from the tree of Christ. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. or people [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. The resurrection unto new life by being begotten of the Spirit. The second death, casting into the lake of fire, does have authority over the ordinary or second resurrection of the dead, which all, both good and evil experience: but, even here, the second death has no authority over those who are begotten of the Spirit. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Please note that χίλια is plural, not singular. So also in 6:2, 3, 4, 5, 7; ἔτη is also plural in all six verses: thousands [of] years, or the thousands [of] years. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. <https://hymnary.org/text/stand_up_stand_up_for_jesus_duffield> [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. defensive armor, rather than aggressive armor [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Jesus is called παντοκράτωρ, Almighty, or All-ruler at several places of Scripture. This word is κοσμοκράτορας, emphasizing their inferiority as cosmocrats, and their dependency on fleshly decision making. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. defensive armor, rather than aggressive armor [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. You resist everything that Satan and his minions throw at you. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. The large defensive doorlike shield, rather than the aggressive small target shield, indicated protection and shelter, as well as, very possibly, a door of opportunity in negotiation (we offer an opportunity for surrender to all people enslaved by Satan). [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Evil may refer either to the missiles themselves, or to the person(s) casting them. We seek to avoid the modern deception of blaming everything on the devil. The missiles might be flaming oil, burning rocks, spears, arrows or other objects. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. These are usually brief and pointed portions of Scripture applied directly to an immediate antagonist or problem. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. emphatic reduplication [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. We do not pause to dwell upon the beautiful parallels and repetitions in this Scripture portion: empowered, the whole defense of God, stand and withstand, against… just to glance at a few. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Mark 5:1-20; Luke 8:26-39 [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Think of demonic forces as more akin to an attack by a swarm of nanobots seeking to get inside our heads: disrupting our reason, playing with our minds, toying with our emotions… causing us to feel and see an unreal version of the world. Such an attack takes place in the spiritual realm, rather than in the physical: physical consequences are mere byproducts of the real battle. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Revelation 2:9, 13; 3:9 [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. What? Even church politics? Wherever two or three are gathered together in My name, church politics rears its ugly head. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. We believe that this means Christ’s Truth, Christ’s Righteousness, Christ’s Gospel of the peace, Christ’s Faith, Christ’s Salvation, Christ’s Words, which are the Spirit’s Words, which are the speech of God. Anything less that these is insufficient. We most certainly do not need to be armed with our own pitiful versions of these things. We do God’s things, God’s way, with God’s preparation and provision. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. an invitation to fight or war [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Hebrews 12:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. WCC is known to have had KGB agents in its presidential offices; it has been reported to sponsor prayer fellowship with Christ denying religions that used the opportunity to slander the birth of Christ. Until WCC has freed itself of these charges and/or renounced and repented of its historic behavior, it cannot be considered a suitable ecumenical organization. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. Acts 15:7, 13 (men, brothers), 12 (all the multitude), 23 (brothers) [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Acts 15:4, 22 [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Acts 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23 [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. Acts 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23 [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. This seems to us to be more likely about a practice of strangulation in idol worship, rather than a reduplication about blood. The point is to assiduously abstain from anything associated with idolatry: the pollutions of idolatry being: the idols themselves, temple prostitution, ritual strangulations, and libations of blood. However, it could mean more. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. From partaking of the food during the idol worship sacrifice or service. It is the idol worship sacrifice or service that is defiled, don’t participate: the meat is just meat. It’s the participation that defiles. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Without exception, the entire source of this body of Gentile Christians was some form of idolatry: they came out of, and were formed out of idolatry; and it is very important that they do not return to idolatry. Anything else they need to know will be patiently taught to them by the Spirit in the weeks and years ahead.

    Christianity is a matter of steady growth in Christ. Christianity is not a matter of adherence to circumcision, senseless rituals, and useless regulations, which are not taught in the Bible, nor do they have anything to do with spiritual life: these are altogether worthless superstitions. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. The perfect passive is difficult to render exactly; perhaps something like “Be made well!” suffices: yet, “Be well!” is so much easier. It means, don’t get caught up in unimportant issues or silly superstitions. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. Acts 15:8 (Devoted Spirit), 9 (faith), 10 (not works of flesh), 11 (grace) [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. This idiom appears to mean, all alike. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. This idiom appears to mean, all different: some special; others, not so special. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. This principle maintains that any practice not specifically approved in the Bible is forbidden in public worship: thus, for example, musical instruments are forbidden. Moreover, this is cause for separation from other Christians and Communions.

    <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regulative_principle_of_worship> [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. Hebrews 6:1-6 and Hebrews 9 [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. Mormonism specifically teaches that Adam matured to become God the Father, Jesus matured to become God the Son, and that some of you may mature to become Gods in your own right. Many of their rituals are aped directly from the Masonic Lodge. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0714.htm>

    <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Didache> [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. 2 Kings 23:21-23; 2 Chronicles 35:1-19 [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Howard_Hendricks> [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. Daniel 2 [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. This can be accomplished, in part, by interrelating the Old and New Testaments. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. If you have been blessed or helped by any of these meditations, please repost, share, or use any of them as you wish. No rights are reserved. They are designed and intended for your free participation. They were freely received, and are freely given. No other permission is required for their use. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)