

# **Managed Cooperation Theology**

**A Tiny Light to Ignite Revival**

**By  
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## Acknowledgements

To Whom I am grateful

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**Managed Cooperation Theology**  
**The Spark to Ignite Revival**

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## Preliminary Remarks

*Personal Testimony, Theology, Concepts, Definitions, Generalities, Presuppositions and so.*

### I. Personal Testimony

I believe God has been preparing me for this work for most of my life. My parents were members of the Church of Christ. I grew up with four-part harmony congregational singing because the Church didn't believe in instrumental music. The worship quality was far better than today. I loved the singing. It was very uplifting and worshipful.

My christian life started with asking Jesus to be my savior, and being baptized when I was twelve years old at a church camp. I was an ordinary kid and didn't get into much trouble. My first interest in the Bible came in the third year of high school. Our pastor was selling family type Bibles, big ones, and I bought one. I didn't read it all that much but I filled out the family information section. I have kept it all these years. I am now sixty-nine years old.

I went to church through the time I was in the Army but stopped going when I got out and started going to college. It wasn't until 1975 that God started tugging again at my heart strings. I started missing God. And, one Sunday, I realized I had left God, and I became afraid I would die and go to Hell before I rededicated my life. So I ran to the nearest Church of Christ and rededicated. But I was still not born-again. I went to church for a while but my unbelieving wife would not go with me so I went alone.

In September, 1976, when my oldest daughter was four years old, and youngest daughter six months, their mother decided she wanted a divorce from me. I was devastated. I didn't know what to do. I was going to church but God was not very real to me. Some months before, a youth pastor was going around our neighborhood calling on people to talk about God. He talked to me but I was not buying it.

After my wife had divorce papers served, I wondered what to do. I

thought I would leave her and the kids, just run to Alaska, where my brothers lived, and start over with a new life. But I knew I really shouldn't abandon my children, so after two weeks of pondering, I finally decided I needed to stay around and try to make it right with her and the kids.

But when I made that decision to stay, I also was forced to acknowledge that I was a failure. This was my second failed marriage. I felt terrible. It was a Sunday, so I decided to go to the youth pastors church near our house. I talked to the pastor and he agreed to come over that evening.

He came to the house and I told him about what I have told you. He said that before I could make it right with my wife and kids, I needed to make it right with God. I said to him, "What has God got to do with any of this?" He said to me that if I would ask God to forgive my sins, He would forgive me and would manage my life. **God managing my life!** The pastor said *my* responsibility was to do what God said in the Bible, and God would make my life successful by His standards.

This is exactly what I needed; I was a failure, and I needed the God of the universe to manage my life. I asked God to forgive me and to take responsibility for success of my life. That night I was rebaptized, and a tremendous burden was lifted off my back.

I didn't have to worry about managing my life anymore. I didn't have to worry about being a failure anymore. I didn't have to worry about making a living, owning a house, being retired, none of it. It was now God's job to take care of me. It was my job to **be** a man of God. I have sought to be a man of God ever since. I started to be a man of God by **studying**. I was living alone, after the divorce, and I *studied* three hours a day, every day for a year. The youth pastor disciplined me, one on one, for that year. At 35 years old, I went to the high school bible study that he taught. I learned right along with the kids. My appetite for the Word of God was voracious. My bible has been rebound twice (the one my mentor gave me). Its nearly worn out a third time. I was a failure and I wanted to be different. God had a purpose and a plan for my life all along. I didn't know it then, but I just trusted God to make my life successful by His standards. I began to want to study future prophecy because it interested me. I have discovered some things of value for the future. They can be viewed on my

website, “[www.soulsurvival.info](http://www.soulsurvival.info)”. God has given me talents and the desire to do for Him. As the years went by, I saw His hand greatly on my life. My life has not been easy but both my daughters have grown up with God in their lives, and both have married christian men who walk with God, and both are raising their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. They, serving God, are my greatest joy in life.

When I was done with the book on my website, God revealed the need for the book which you are now reading. With the inception of this book, I began to see what His plan was for me more completely. More so, where I am going.

Moses, the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, spent the first forty years of his life learning that he was a “somebody.” He spent the second forty years on the backside of the desert, learning he was a “nobody,” and the third forty years learning that God could take a “nobody” and make him a “somebody.” I feel like how Moses might have felt towards the end of his life. This job is daunting. But God and I are a majority; because He has prepared me for this my whole life. That is why I can write this book. God is with me, and I with Him.

## **II. Theology**

### **Defined**

I follow Ryrie’s definition, page 13: “. . . Theology, then, is the discovery, systematizing, and presentation of the truths about God.”

### **General Theology**

Dr. Charles C. Ryrie’s book on “Basic Theology” is a standard work of some importance among lay people who are not professional theologians. What he says is both foundational and written in a non-technical way. I would like to quote him as follows, page 10:

“The phrase ‘sound doctrine’ that Paul (the Apostle) uses means healthy doctrine (e.g., 2 Tim. 4:3; Titus 1:9). Healthy doctrine or healthy theology is always expected to result in holy living. When Paul prayed for churches, he prayed of an increase in knowledge, for he realized that this would produce holy living (e.g., Phil. 1:9-11; Col. 1:9-10). Healthy theology is expressed not only in creed but in fruitful living, and holy living must be based on healthy theology.

“How theology affects my life or your life is our personal and individual responsibility. But to conform our lives to the image of Christ is the ultimate goal in studying theology. Yet in the final analysis no book can do that. Only God and you can.”

Healthy theology is my own goal as well as Dr. Ryrie’s.

### **The Varieties of Theology**

Ryrie suggests various ways to catalogue theologies; page 13.

(1) By era; i.e., patristic theology, medieval theology, reformation theology, modern theology.

(2) By viewpoint; i.e., Arminian theology, Calvinistic theology, Catholic theology, Barthian theology, liberation theology, etc.

(3) By focus; i.e., historical theology, biblical theology, systematic theology.

### **A Problem Theology**

It seems to me that all writers and contributors throughout history offer opinions as to the nature of God and christianity with the idea in mind that they are doing a service to God and mankind.

Unfortunately, with all the diverse and opposite opinions many are wrong; some are right, some are of minor consequence, and some don’t matter much at all. In our world today, in North America, I believe healthy theology is a big issue.

I see the 21st century church, at large, as unhealthy. We have little to no effect on the secular society. We have only a little more effect on church parishioners.

In my opinion, the church is unhealthy because the church has embraced an unhealthy theology.

The unhealthy theology has fostered unhealthy spiritual attitudes toward holy living and evangelism. The unhealthy attitudes have produced spiritually weak christians and inconsequential impact on secular society.

My message in this book is why, how and what we should do differ-

ent. I, in faith, am praying for revival.

### **My Theology in General**

Since I want my opinion to be heard in the christian forum, and since I am unknown, as to what I believe, it seemed prudent to give you some idea what kind of christianity I believe.

I can say that I tend to have a Arminian point of view. The points on which I differ with Arminianism is significant but generally compatible. The only exceptions to that might be the issues which I address. That would be the part which I personally contribute.

I will endeavor, as I write, to note any significant differences. Other than this, you can depend on my being orthodox, in the sense of balanced, like Dr. Ryrie. I hope you will agree.

I will do my best, with the Holy Spirit's leading, to *honor* God, and uphold His reputation, in this effort to convince christianity to be different and produce a healthy church which honors God. I believe in "Managed Cooperation Theology".

### **Managed Cooperation Theology**

Managed Cooperation Theology would qualify as a by-viewpoint classification. It has some connection with Arminianism although it is distinctly different. I will explain the differences later.

Managed Cooperation Theology is systematic in the sense that one can correlate the data of biblical revelation; as a whole, in order to explain systematically the total picture of God's self-revelation.

Managed Cooperation Theology could be considered modern theology in the sense that it was conceived in the modern era.

## **III. Definitions**

### **Managed Cooperation Theology Defined**

Managed Cooperation Theology is the name I have chosen to call this message which I have to offer.

Quite simply, God manages; man cooperates.

It is God that manages my life, and should manage all christians lives. As I cooperate with Him in my life; in the same way, all christians should cooperate with His management of their lives.

But that is not what is happening. Christians, for the most part, don't cooperate with God in God managing their lives. Some don't even know God wants to manage their lives. So why would they cooperate in doing so? God and I hope to start a movement to change that.

### **Glorify**

I know the meaning of the word "glorify," used in conjunction with glorifying God, means to reflect the glory which God possesses to others.

I have an uneasiness that "giving God glory" may not be proper terminology. We can give Him honor, worship, credibility, praise, and other accolades but I'm not sure we can give Him glory.

Glory is given to a person of lower rank and status *by* a person of higher rank and status. It doesn't seem to be applicable the other way around. I may be wrong, or making a distinction unnecessarily; however, I don't feel comfortable glorifying God. I use the word honor above because I think that is more appropriate.

### **The Creation**

Since I will be talking lot about "the creation" in this work, I want you to know what I mean. I use that word not to mean the process of creation but as the name of the universe in its entirety. This includes the outer universe with stars and so, our solar system, the Earth, all on the Earth that is animal, vegetable, or mineral. This especially includes mankind.

### **Natural Man**

The natural man is the man who has not been regenerated. He has not believed that Jesus Christ is God in the flesh.

### **Orthodox**

I use this word to refer to generally accepted beliefs in the protestant

evangelical church.

### **Pre temporal Predestination**

This is the doctrine that says God, before the foundation of the world, decided who would go to Heaven and who would go to Hell. Although, now days, some would not agree that God destines people to Hell.

### **Type**

Two stories or points of theology which refer to each other. One may be figurative or an event in history. A common type suggests Jesus is the “Lamb” slain for the sins of the world. This refers to the passover lamb slain so the death angel would pass over the first born of Israel at the time of Moses. Just as the blood of the lamb saved the first born, so Jesus saves the sinner from death. Thus the passover lamb is a “type” of Jesus.

## **IV. Presuppositions**

The Bible is the watershed presupposition as Ryrie said. It is the final authority on matters pertaining to God. I embrace that.

Speaking of systematizing presuppositions, Ryrie suggests caution in one area of correlating scriptural ideas (Basic Theology, page 18):

“ . . . when logic is used to create truth, as it were, then the theologian will be guilty of pushing his system beyond the limitations of biblical truth. Sometimes this is motivated by the desire to answer questions which the scripture does not answer. In such cases (and there are a number of crucial ones in the Bible) the best answer is silence, not clever logic, or almost invisible implications, or wishful sentimentality. Examples of particularly tempting areas include sovereignty and responsibility, the extent of the Atonement, the salvation of infants who die.”

In defence of my message, I will show how this has happened with respect to the doctrine of Pre temporal Predestination (theory of pre-

destination prior to creation).

## **V. Writing Style**

I will write in two different styles in some chapters. The first style is just a narrative which acquaints you with the concepts in an easy to read format, no proofs. After that a review of the same material, in greater detail, and with reason why I believe the concept.

This style allows readers to study at various depths without losing any content. Some may just want to read the narrative and skip the authenticating reasons. Some may want to peruse the evidence on some particular point. Scholars or pastors may want to read everything. It will all be there in succeeding degrees of detail. A person just stops reading at whatever detail level happens to interest him, and goes on to the next chapter without missing any content. This style allows a great range of audience applicability for the book without boring somebody or curtailing evidence.

## **VI. Bible Usage and Quotes**

All quotes and usage will be from the New American Standard Version, The Lockman Foundation, 1975.





## Introduction

### A Doctrinal Tripping Hazard

#### The Sad State of Christianity

There is an old song that goes, “Are we weak and heavy laden, cumbered with a load of care?”<sup>1</sup> Originally, this was a lament of a individual about his mother. Today, it is a lament of this individual for the evangelical church of our day.

Observations on Church Planting, by Peter Wagner.

There are 195 million non-churched people in America, making America one of the four largest “unchurched” nations in the world.

In spite of the rise in mega-churches, no county in America has a greater church population than it did ten years ago.

During the last 10 years, combined communicant membership of all Protestant denominations declined by 9.5 per cent (4,498,242), while the national population increased by 11.4 percent (24,153,000).

Each year 3,500 to 4,000 churches close their doors forever; yet only as many as 1,500 new churches are started.

These statistics are alarming. If these trends continue, the church soon will be non-existent.

One author has suggested the church in North America lacks “spiritual purpose” and “missional vitality.”<sup>2</sup> I certainly agree! Under the heading of “lacking spiritual purpose,” I see additional reasons why

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1. “What a Friend we have in Jesus,” Joseph M. Scriven, 1855, and Charles C. Converse, 1868.

2. “The Present Future,” Reggie McNeal, p.xv.

the church stumbles under it's heavy load of care.

A division exists between the generally accepted theory of how people are saved, and what is taught from the face (what you see) of Scripture on how people are saved. Most pastors teach the face of scripture which is correct. However, the theologians, in my opinion, have supported a doctrine which is in error. As a result, a doctrinal tripping hazard has crept into the church.

*This doctrinal tripping hazard is believing that godly men have no real influence on salvation.*

Proponents say, it is God alone that produces believing faith and salvation. Man has no part. This belief has come out of history and has become orthodox doctrine.

## **Westminster Theology**

This notion came from John Calvin, who lived in the 1500's. Later, it was developed by others. In brief, it came as a result of a counter-argument to Arminianism. Arminianism said that belief and salvation came as a result of man choosing to be saved by his own effort. And, God's part is to convict and persuade. Calvinists immediately countered with the idea that belief and salvation comes from God alone. Calvinistic type theology stuck, in a watered down version, and became orthodoxy to this day.

I believe the revealed truth is that belief and salvation come as a cooperative effort between God, godly men, and natural men; not just God alone or not just by man alone with some help from God.

The foundation of Calvinist theology is the doctrine of "Unconditional Election."<sup>3</sup>

It says that God has predestined some people to Heaven and foreordained many people to Hell. Since mankind has been so predestined and foreordained, they have been particularly designed, by God, such that each person will fulfill his individual destiny to Heaven or to Hell. The number of souls going to Heaven or to Hell is so certain and definite that neither number can be increased or decreased.

If God so predestines and foreordains, it means I have no real influence on belief or salvation. And neither does anyone else. Yet we

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3. "The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination," P. 84.

are admonished by Jesus to:

“go into the world and preach the gospel to all creation.

He who has believed and is baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.” (Mark 16:16)

This passage teaches that as godly men, Jesus wishes us to preach, and teach the gospel so men can have the opportunity to be saved.

If Westminster theology is correct, God is putting us through some kind of exercise. Telling us to preach, as if we have an influence on belief and salvation, and knowing all the time we have none. It means God is just using us to complete some game He is playing. This is not honest nor loving. Since God *is* honest *and* loving, this theology *must* be incorrect. If the vestiges of Westminster theology are true, look at the implications for the church today.

The pastor can preach, the congregation can witness, the missionaries can evangelize, but its all for nothing. Because at some unknown time, in some unknown venue, for some unknown reason, God does something special. That special thing is secret, exclusive, done by Himself; which causes belief and salvation. On the other hand, God denies that same something special, to many other people, which destines them to Hell. This theory is very demotivating.

When people who are honestly following the admonishment to preach the gospel, sense that God saves by means not including them, they feel their effort is futile. And if this theory is correct, witnessing in whatever form, is in fact futile. It is no wonder there is lack of “spiritual purpose” and “missional vitality” in the church today.

Calvinism is what I call “God-Alone” theology. I will refer to it later, from time to time.

Someone may say, Oh no, that’s not the way it works. What really happens: the pastor preaches, the congregation witnesses, the missionaries evangelize, but it’s all for nothing *unless* God intervenes in a heart.

But if God intervenes in a heart, then man and God are working together. That’s not God working alone. This option is not possible under the theory of “Unconditional Election.”

God and man working together is taught on the face of scripture, which is the whole truth! I call “God and man working together” “Managed Cooperation Theology.” I will refer to it later.

But a proponent of God-Alone theology may argue, the way it

actually works is: pastors preach, congregations witness, missionaries evangelize and God just gives the illusion of intervening. But He causes belief in whomever He wants, whenever He wants and however He wants.

Can't say that. That argument causes God to appear dishonest (James 1:17). God does not lie or tell half-truths (Heb. 6:18).

Salvation by God alone theology, in my opinion, is 95 percent correct. Salvation by God alone has enough error, such that the church in North America, perhaps other places, is weak, ineffectual, and makes God nearly irrelevant in this generation. This needs to change.

The problem with God-Alone theology is it causes doubt. Just like in the Garden of Eden. It causes doubt in our role as christians; doubt in our commitment to do the work of God as defined on the face of scripture; doubt in the integrity of God, and doubt that the face of scripture is truth. These are serious issues.

The hint that man has no real influence on belief, causes doubt in our role as christians. Why should I make an effort to witness if it might not do any good anyway? Why should I witness to my brother, if God might not name him among the elect? If I, as a man, have no influence on belief and salvation of others, it makes no sense for me to bother. How do I, as a witness, handle the conflicting ideas of "who-soever will," and "God only saves who He wills?" I don't know what God really means by these two ideas. Maybe God has some hidden reason for giving unclear direction and information. Did the translators make a mistake somewhere in how the Bible was interpreted? These doubts are real. This is the underlying message of God-Alone theology. Just what the devil wants us to believe. We see it in a declining christianity today.

The main problem is: many pastors half-believe the theologians, and half-believe the face of scripture. They have attended seminaries, which promote God-Alone theology. Then they get their own congregation, study for themselves, and begin to believe in the scriptures which indicate man does have a part in bringing people to a relationship with Christ. I imagine most pastors don't even recognize the existence of a difference between theologies..

Since pastors are true to all their convictions, they end up preaching messages, at various times, with elements of both views. These messages lack singleness of purpose and a call to solid commitment.

For example: Let's say this particular pastor, on this particular day,

is influenced equally by his God-Alone theology, and his Managed Cooperation theology. He will preach on II Cor. 5: 20.

“Therefore, We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.”

This pastor can't, in good conscience, implore his congregation to beg people to be reconciled to God. He's not sure he should beg. After all, men are saved by God alone doing something, not pastors begging. So the pastor preaches a diluted message of witness-to-your-friends. He does not include a call to repentance because only God convicts someone in His own time, for His own reasons.

Satan has succeeded in changing the message of urgency to a message of passivity; a message of personal responsibility to a message of; if its going to happen, God will do it. Never mind, that God might be convicting someone's heart at that very service.

The poor pastor preaches his message and goes away believing he's done a good job. He doesn't realize he's been deceived. He doesn't know he's been neutralized. Satan does this Sunday after Sunday, to pastor after pastor, in church after church. This doctrinal error has lead the way in producing church irrelevancy in North America. Here is the critical issue.

Calvinistic type theology exalts the sovereignty of God over the love of God. This means God's majesty is perceived as more important to Him, than is His love to Him. This idea appears in their summation of the purpose for man, “The chief end of man is to glorify God.” On the surface, this sounds very lofty but underneath, it implies that God subordinates love to sovereignty. I believe the Scripture teaches that God's sovereignty is subordinated to His love. This is readily seen in the torture and death of God's Son on the cross by evil men. This is readily seen in the *greatest* commandment; Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength.

## **Arminian Theology**

The nation is divided between Calvinist type theology and Arminian type theology. The Arminians believe that man accepts salvation by godly men's and the natural man's own efforts. That is not to say the Holy Spirit does not convict. Arminian's believe the Holy Spirit convicts but the person makes the decision to act in faith. Arminianism is

the same as Managed Cooperation Theology in that respect.

However, Arminian theology also exalts sovereignty over love. That means that God's sovereignty is more important to Him, than is love to Him. This is seen in the ideas that obedience to Him is more important than devotion. That *doing*, is more important than *being*; what you do, is of more value than who you are inside. I am sure these beliefs vary, depending on to whom you talk. But the point is your theology needs to exalt love over sovereignty. This will allow people to see that loving the Lord your God, and loving your neighbor as yourself are the grandest values a christian can have. Obedience is secondary.

## **Needed Changes**

The biggest change needed is to match the orthodox theory of how people are saved, and what the face of scripture says about how they are saved. These two must match in order for christians to have a single spiritual purpose and unified direction. It is only when we are all going the same direction, do we gain momentum. Momentum is required to have an impact on our society.

*What I am offering: that belief and salvation are a work of both God and man together.* Belief and salvation are not just a work of God alone. Belief and salvation are not just a work of man alone with some help from God.

Because belief and salvation are a work of both God and man together, man's role in the process, takes on an importance not felt in a hundred years. God is alive in our midst! We are serving by true faith once again.

The pastor can preach, the congregation can witness, the missionaries can evangelize, and we get results! The Holy Spirit will ignite holy passions for God like never before. People come to know the Lord, get baptized, get active, grow in holiness; everyone wants to be a part.

When people believe they are truly in partnership with God Almighty, in a work to help Him, in a work that is worthwhile for eternity, they feel honored and blessed to be a part of it

But God's role takes on an even bigger significance. When I commit to Him fully, He feeds back to me that He is there. I feel His presence. I feel His love. He works in peoples lives miraculously. We

need to see God's face to turn the church from nearly dead to vibrantly alive.

We see this excitement about God and men working together in some present day mega churches. Certain godly men seem to have caught God's Spirit in their life to the degree that He has blessed their ministry.

One pastor I have seen, exhorts the congregation to do great things for God, go to great lengths for God, and accept the great blessings of God. He calls sinners to repentance, people to be baptized, and the congregation to holiness. He obviously believes in God and man working together, and he tells them so. We need to bring back orthodox theology to match the scripture. Managed Cooperation Theology matches the scripture.

## **Managed Cooperation Theology**

Salvation is accomplished by God, godly men, and the Natural Man working together to bring each new soul to belief, faith and eventual maturity in love for God. God has provided salvation for everyone, but a Natural Man's thinking can only be changed by that individual opening himself to the possibility of God's truth not yet known. If he so opens himself; exposure to, belief of, and faith in, God's truth and ways are possible. This is how God and the natural, unregenerate man cooperate.

God's choice of certain individuals unto salvation before the foundation of the world was based upon His foreseeing that they would respond to His call (Romans 8:29-30).

Men constrained by the love of God are believers who are spiritual descendents of those taught by Jesus. These men cooperate with God to lead other men to Christ and love for God. As an unregenerate man allows himself to be exposed to God's love, mercy and grace, at some point; a paradigm shift in his thinking will take place. This shift is accomplished by the Holy Spirit convicting men of sin, righteousness and judgement.

His thinking transfers from believing his own way is right, to believing that God's way is right. His point-of-view changes. He begins to see life from a whole new perspective; God's perspective. This is called being "born-again."

That is when this individual passes from death to life. That is

when this person inherits the promises of God. That is when this person begins to appreciate God. That is when this person begins to act in faith; that is, believing enough to act upon that belief. From there, faith either increases or decreases; based on more relationship, or less relationship, with Jesus Christ.

Recognizing Christ's loving acts on the cross and God's mercy and grace, cause us to want to follow His direction. This is accomplished by perceiving the contrast between the goodness of God and the evil of man. It is this contrast which brings proper perspective. Those who will not open themselves to the possibility of God's existence and goodness never see the contrast between good and evil. They see the evil side of man but not the good side of God. Thus, they thwart the efforts of God and godly men to show them the worth of God.

The Holy Spirit's function is to convict men of sin, righteousness, and judgement. However, He cannot be perceived by an individual unless the person is cognizant that such a representative of God exists. Otherwise, the Spirit's voice sounds the same as thoughts generated by one's own brain.

God allows sin in the world in order for man to perceive the contrast between the goodness of God and the evil of man. This contrast will indicate to man his need for God's knowledge and character to manage his own life. The Holy Spirit will then have the tools to convict a man of his previous folly. The people who do not open themselves to the goodness of God, will not see the difference between good and evil. And, the Holy Spirit cannot show them a contrast which they do not have. Thus, they don't perceive the draw of the Holy Spirit.

He who has come to faith has the *promise* of salvation. The promise is conditional in the sense that one must have faith at the end of life, as well as, when one first believed. Faith is variable. The closer the relationship to Jesus, the greater the faith; the closer to Satan, the world or the flesh, the lesser the faith. If relationship with Jesus is neglected, conceivably one could cease to believe Jesus is God. One comes into the family of God by believing Jesus is God. One goes out by no longer believing Jesus is God.

Thus, the belief and salvation process requires the cooperation of God, the Father, and His plan; God the Son, His sacrifice and Earthly teaching; God the Holy Spirit, His teaching and convicting role; Godly men to evangelize, instruct and shepherd; and last but not least, the nat-

ural man who is cooperatively open, not closed, to hearing the truth of God. These are the ingredients to the recipe for true belief and salvation, and a more real christianity.

This is a warning. If orthodoxy does not change to match the scripture, the church, at large, will surely become “weaker and more heavy laden,” until it is non-existent. However, I do *not* believe orthodoxy will fail christianity. I believe theologians will change.

## **Changing Brings Revival**

This is my vision for the future of Christianity in North America; that is, if Godly men will embrace the idea of Managed Cooperation Theology.

The first thing that happens, godly individuals get excited about being a part of God’s team. *They realize what they are doing is important to God; themselves, and people to whom they minister.* This is not just going to church and warming a pew. Excited people breed more excited people. As a result of godly peoples faith, you will begin to see God’s hand appear at various times in various places.

Pastors will start calling for people to repent from their sins; because pastor now realizes someone may open their heart to the gospel, and the Holy Spirit may convict that person of his sin. And he, pastor, needs to be ready to take advantage of that tender heart and teachable spirit. This may even happen while pastor is entreating them to repent.

By faith, pastors will teach congregations that God will do more than we ask or think; because they realize *He* wants them to be successful, because *He* gets the benefit and the glory! That is, another soul to appreciate and love Him; another soul to seek and save others.

Results are immanent because God and pastor are working for the same goal. Pastor is preaching, *believing* that the Holy Spirit *is* moving in the congregation. Not that the Holy Spirit *might* move.

Believing the Holy Spirit *might* move is not faith at all. God does not bless (give results for) anything but true faith. Because, what is not of faith, is sin (Rom. 14:23). Sin is wrong thinking.

The second level is churches growing; not staying the same size or shrinking. It is the desire to, and hope of, seeing God’s hand that motivates. Seeing God’s hand in our lives and churches, provides enthusiasm for spiritual thoughts, action, habits and destinies.

The third level is bigger churches and greater ministry. Who knows, maybe mega churches will be common in *all* cities of North America in not-to-many years.

The remainder of this book is dedicated to providing details of how and why Managed Cooperation theology is Biblical truth.

## **Part I**

### **The Context of Creation**



## Chapter One

### The Revealed Heart of God

*God cares more about you loving Him,  
than He cares about you obeying Him.*

#### Getting Back to Our First Love

This book is about rekindling the christian's fire of love for Jesus and our fellow man. I present God as He has revealed Himself to me. My understanding may not encompass all His wonderfulness but what He has revealed to me is truly remarkable. He has revealed to me what He desires most from christian brothers and sisters; for them to love Him personally with all their heart, soul, mind and strength; and second, love their neighbor as themselves. Presently, many people believe what He desires most is for godly men to make disciples. This is the wrong focus.

Some ask, "How does a sovereign God administer His love?" That is a very difficult question, and some believers, because of their Calvinist theology, must be intellectually honest, and answer that question. I suggest that a better question is, "How does a loving God administer His sovereignty?" The difference between these two questions, is the difference between two or more distinctly different theologies.

It is the theology we hold, at whatever level of knowledge, which influences our thinking, and hence, our closeness to Jesus. God honors and blesses faith which is true to the Scriptures. One's theology, although it is derived from the Scripture, isn't necessarily the one God intended. We see, in fact, at least two distinctly different theologies; Calvinism and Arminianism, which both purport to be truth. They both can't be right because God only has one message. He has the message of Jesus Christ. However, good christian men disagree on what that message specifically says. I personally believe there is a **third message**, a variation on Arminianism, one which fits the scripture better than either of those popular views. I am saying there is another way to view the Scriptures, in a systematic way, which yields a closer, more precise view of the heart of God.

The problem, which the church at large faces, is that Christians are having little to no effect on our society. Men like Reggie McNeal, in his book, "The Present Future," have talked about this problem of an impotent Christianity. He believes church leaders must think differently about how Christians "do church." I agree, but I believe there is more to the problem than just changing how we "do church." I believe we must change our theology; to a theology which better aligns with the theology which Jesus actually taught. That is; a biblical theology which better describes and uplifts the values of the heart of God.

Before I get into what specifically should be different, I want to give you a scenario, which I experienced, that demonstrates what I perceive as the real heart of God in action.

## **My Encounter With Jesus**

In 2005, my good friend Bob, asked me to go to a men's retreat with him. He wouldn't tell me too much about the weekend, although he was not being secretive. He was willing to sponsor me 100% but I still didn't know if I wanted to take the chance. Our friendship and my knowing that he was a solid Christian, told me that if he said it was life changing, I should go. So I did, and it was one of the greatest and most rewarding Christian experiences of my life.

I live way East of Phoenix, Arizona, and he lives on the North side, but He drove about 60 miles to pick me up and 40 miles back, to take me to the send-off point. Right away, I noticed people took my luggage; tagged the bags and put them on the bus. We had a nice potluck dinner, and the leader welcomed about twenty of us first-timers to the weekend. The leader introduced each man, by name, as he came up to the front to be recognized. After the reading of each name, as each strode up, there was great applause of approval bestowed. That was unusual I thought; but pleasant. We then boarded the tour bus to the cheers, wild clapping and other sounds of rejoicing. It continued until the bus pulled out.

The ride to the camp, near Prescott, was uneventful but I met somebody sitting next to me. We talked a little on the two and one-half hour ride but most people were quiet and somewhat apprehensive about what we were getting into.

Upon arrival, we were greeted by probably forty or so team mem-

bers cheering wildly and whistling with obvious gladness to see us. The team supports the men who experience this weekend for the first time. We got off the bus, and went into a room where coffee, cool drinks, and cookies were being served. Meanwhile, many of the team were unloading the baggage from the bus and stowing the gear in our assigned bunk area. Some team members were socializing with the “first timers” and getting to know them. It was hard to believe they were treating us so well.

After a time, we were led up to the chapel. As we sat down, we could see at the front of the room, a big cross, 6” x 6” beams and seven feet or so tall. It had a red satin drape symbolizing the presence of Jesus. One of the leaders gave a talk on “why are you here?” He asked that we think about our personal walk with Jesus, afterwards asking for introspective contemplation and silence. The silence was to last until chapel the next morning. Everyone walked solemnly back to the dorm and went to bed; accompanied by silence.

The next morning, at 6:00 AM, we were quietly aroused and softly instructed to get dressed and ready for chapel. The team lined the walkway, spaced some ten feet apart, between the dorm and chapel buildings. They would do that every time the group moved between buildings. This symbolized the protection of God in our movements.

Chapel was a time of meditation. One of the leaders read the story of the three glances of Jesus toward Peter on the night of His betrayal, where Peter denied Him three times (Luke 22). The story ripped at my heart, knowing I had denied Him at times in my own life. We had communion; a time to think about Jesus dying for our sins. We then had a time of worship where a man led us into a time to appreciate Jesus in a contemplative mood of song. It was wonderful to worship that early in the morning.

One wonderful brother, short, bald headed with a beard, who looks very jewish, sounded a rams horn. He explained that in the Old Testament, the shofar was sounded whenever Israel needed God’s power to overcome (Neh.4:20). Now, this man sounds the shofar to ask God to overcome sin and bring love and healing to our group. After the shofar is sounded, everyone shouts with a great shout, “Hallelujah!!!” This was repeated whenever a significant event took place.

Afterward, we went for a group picture, hearty breakfast, and thence to a room set up with tables seating six men each. Each table had an attendant whose job was to get soft drinks, coffee or any other

needed thing for everyone at the table. They were delighted to keep everyone at their table supplied. All weekend, while in this room for instruction and worship, the table waiters served us with everything. They waited on us hand and foot.

Each man introduced himself, saying his, and his spouses name, where they go to church, and their favorite vacation spot. Table assignments were made with each man having his place.

We were all dressed very casually in levi's, sweat shirts and so, but when the first instructional speaker came in, he was wearing a suit, white shirt and tie; with a small red carnation boutonniere. He looked very pastoral. He was a team member who has worked, off and on, for three months getting ready for this weekend.

The team has Saturday meetings where they bond as team, practicing their talks, getting organized, praying, worshipping, fellowshiping and sharing meals together. There is great preparation made to bless the first-timers.

Just before the talk, in a prayer room, four or more men pray with the speaker to ask God's blessing on the talk, and that God will open the ears of all who hear.

As the speaker starts, a prayer of meditation is read by all, and a candle lit to symbolize the presence of the Holy Spirit. Many of the instructional talks involve the personal testimony of how the speaker came to know the Lord, or how the topic was involved in the speaker's life. Some of the testimonies are exciting and truly exceptional; one man shared that he was a hit man (professional assassin) for the mexican mafia, and how God saved him out of that terrible life. After each talk, the speaker went back to a special prayer room where the same prayer group thanked the Lord for words said, concepts heard and the Holy Spirit experienced.

The rest of the day was spent listening to talks given on various subjects. The talks were interspersed with worship and dinner. Friday evening at chapel, after worship and communion, there was a special time where the team members washed the feet of the first-timers. Men washing the feet of other men; a tremendous gesture of love and devotion. Many said that the foot washing was the most meaningful part of the weekend. The team who served, like Jesus, humbled themselves to wash the feet of their first-time brothers. This act of love was communicated clearly. This is how the love of Jesus is seen in its wonderful simplicity.

The support team was a ratio of two team members to one first-timer. They did everything for the first-timers. At meals, the team fetched food and removed trays, as well as cleaned up after. The team served the first-timers in everything; all three days.

The second and third days were similar. Each filled with worship, instruction, service, and devotion in the most humble of circumstances. Jesus was among the people, and we felt Him, because the whole time was devoted to activities which promoted the Holy Spirit's presence and filling. There were more and better surprises, which I won't talk about, that made it unforgettable and life changing. This was my initial Tres Dias weekend.

At the end of the weekend, all the first-timers were filled with the love of Jesus because they experienced the love and devotion of the team filled with the Spirit of God. When they arrived for the weekend, they were individuals separated unto themselves. When they left, they were unified together, one in the bond of Christ's love.

The team was by no means left out. Many team members say serving is more fulfilling than the initial experience. I agree. I have since served on team a number of times. I am amazed how one man, loving another man through Jesus, can cause him to experience God. Men experience the love of Jesus first hand. There is forgiveness of sins asked, and forgiveness of sins given. At one point, everyone is asked to write down on a small piece of paper, the sins for which they would like forgiveness. These papers are folded and nailed to a big cross. Thereafter, they are burned, symbolizing God forgetting their sins, to remember them no more. These acts are strong motivating exercises which demonstrate the mercy, grace and love of Christ. **Men get to experience God in their life!** There is a similar weekend for women also.

This kind of experience needs to permeate all christianity. This kind of mercy, grace and love needs to fill the churches of America. This kind of experience emanates from God Himself! This is what God is all about. He loves me and shows it through His Spirit. Then people who dare to believe and look, can see who God really is to them. The one side of this experience coin is the first-timers who are blessed, which have never experienced the true love of Jesus before. For them, the reality of Jesus comes alive. They are touched to the core of their christianity. This experience is truly life changing.

The other side of this experience coin is the effect of the Holy

Spirit on the team who serves. The serving experience, with manifold blessing, begets more desire for serving. Why, because serving a God which you can experience, brings reality to Jesus and the christianity which He represents. My experience serving in such ways, immeasurably increases my love for God. Because, I see God working in people's lives! He is real! He is the wonderful savior of my soul who loves me. He shows me He is completely good, and wants nothing but blessing and happiness for me, and for all who love Him. This is new life! This is the news that God wants "good" for me, through Jesus Christ. He is the good news of the gospel, which we can experience by being close to Him, for a significant period of time. In this case, sixty or more men all going the same direction, at the same time; for a weekend, into the arms of Jesus. That is the heart of God in action.

### **What Makes this Spiritual Weekend Work?**

- (1.) All of the team believes that experiencing the mercy, grace, and love of Jesus Christ transforms peoples lives. This is what makes this weekend successful.
- (2.) The weekend is overseen by committed christian men. There are usually three men designated as spiritual overseers who are ordained pastors. All other team members are laity. Most, if not all, the team are fully committed to Jesus Christ.
- (3.) Nearly every first-timer believes that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. And the ones who don't, are spiritually handicapped, and thus they may not be as touched. Although those who are not believers, come to see, at least, the worth of Jesus Christ, and that the team is committed to Him and them. Some non-believers have come to believe during the weekend. The witness that God loves them is very strong indeed.
- (4.) Another major factor is the three days of time allotted to concentrated effort devoted to seeking the face of God. There is introspection of self, acknowledgement of sin, seeking of forgiveness, celebration of personal absolution, celebration of grace in communion, appreciation of Jesus' horrific sacrifice, worship of the savior, fellowship with brothers, enjoyment in knowing you spent time doing something worthwhile for the weekend, and the peace of God knowing Jesus approves of you and what you did. These things are not trivial but are

life changing for team and first-timer alike.

## **Why isn't this Type Attitude and Witness Common in Every Church?**

Why aren't churches everywhere accepting and learning from this type example? In the Tres Dias group I am associated with, there are over thirty different congregations represented. All the team, and all the first-timers come from one of these congregations. Apparently, none of these churches, as an individual organization, accepts the premise that demonstrating the mercy, grace and love of Jesus Christ produces changed lives. If they did, they would support the Tres Dias organization. At least, the churches would support the group to which I belong, but they don't. If we find the answer to why churches don't support these type groups, which in turn, produce such great results in peoples lives, we will also find out what needs to be changed in church thinking. There seems to be three issues that are involved.

### **Issue # 1**

The popular forms of theology now practiced, do not approximate closely enough the theology which Jesus espoused and practiced. This has caused God to not bless the faith of the people in those churches; because God only blesses the practices of true faith; meaning that whatever is not of true faith is sin (Rom.14:23). Blessings of true faith are: (1) new people coming to know the Lord; (2) people being built up in knowledge of the Word, and love for God, and (3) christians having a greater impact on the society for Christ in their locality. We don't see these blessings, today, to any great degree. We see the opposite; the overall shrinking of christian influence in churches and society.

If a certain theology proposes a slightly off-base view of God's heart, that off-base view produces thinking and practices which are not consistent with the original thinking and practices of Jesus. However, because a group believes his particular thinking is God's will, good men defend their beliefs. They are honest in standing up for what they believe is right and godly. This is honorable, and they *are* men after God's own heart. The problem is they may be honestly wrong in one way or another.

I see this happening in epidemic proportions all across North

America. There are so many versions of theology that christianity is fragmented and divided into thousands of little churches. They all have their own versions of what God is like and what He is about.

### **Issue # 2**

The divisions caused by differences in theology, and none of them close enough to the thinking and practices of Jesus, have caused a lack of unity in the bond of love (Col.3:14). The lack of unity in the bond of love causes people to not work together, but as individuals, if they work at all. Churches usually do not work together in a cooperative effort between congregations. This is sad because Satan's plan of divide and conquer is working.

Christians not working together in the bond of love do not produce the synergistic influence of great numbers of people working together for a righteous cause. For example, the righteous cause of a church or churches manning a booth at the local fair, where they pass out "living water" in the form of small bottles of water which remind people that Jesus loves them. The workers pass out cards which advertise the location of their church. Another righteous cause is many christians working together to promote christian ethics in government policy. At the present time, the voice of Christ is sadly lacking in political arena of our country.

### **Issue # 3**

That christians have left their first love (Rev. 2:4). Christians have become apathetic about their christianity. They see little excitement or enthusiasm in serving their God. This is the issue to which Reggie McNeal addressed himself. He pointed to the churches; they must do something different.

I believe this is mostly a result, not a cause. It is the result of wrong theology (issue #1), church fragmentation and the lack of unity in the bond of love (issue # 2). The lack of sufficient Godly blessing, because of issues one and two, has sapped the life out of nearly all christian people over the years. After all, it is God who gives life!

It is God who must revive His Church. God will rebuild His Church in North America, but as christians, we must cooperate in true faith. That is, faith in a message that is close enough to His original message that God will bless indeed.

With the small amount of life giving Spirit available today in our

churches, it is no wonder people have left their first love. As the scripture says (Rev. 2:4-5), remember from where you have fallen and repent. More importantly, theologians and church leaders must repent, re-evaluate their theology and church practices. They must change to that which the Lord Jesus Christ will bless with new converts, converts being built up in the knowledge and love of God, and the society being effected by Christ's influence. That will set the stage for individuals to return to their first love.

## **To What, Do We Change?**

The majority of this book is devoted to answering that question. Just like Webster's Dictionary, I need to start at the beginning. But I also need to tell you where I'm going. As I have alluded to above, the two popular theologies, Calvinism and Arminianism, do not approximate closely enough the thinking and practices of Jesus. Thus, God has not blessed the practices which their thinking represents.

### **Calvinism Very Generally**

Calvinism, by its theology, portrays the picture that the sovereignty of God (being boss) is most important to Him. It is summed up in their statement: "The chief end of man is to glorify God." Other statements imply that God is all important and man is nothing. The theology, at the same time, by default, implies that the love of God is secondary to His sovereignty. In other words, how does a sovereign God administer His love for mankind? Calvinism attempts to answer that question, but the answer is insufficient when Calvinists declare that God passes over those not predestined to Heaven. Thus, many people go to Hell who He has decided not to save. He **could** save them, but He does not.

How can God allow most of mankind to go to Hell when He could save them, and still say that God is love? This is grossly inconsistent. This is why Calvinism fails the test of truth. Calvinism does not represent the character values of God accurately. Calvinism says that the chief end of man is to glorify God. Scripture says the chief end of man is to love the Lord your God. Calvinism stresses sovereignty, scripture stresses love. Calvinism, as a theology, projects and exalts sovereignty as God's chief value. Thus, churches who hold to Calvin-

istic type theology, don't exalt love for God and neighbor. They exalt some other value if any at all. Therefore, God does not bless their efforts to any great degree because their efforts have the wrong emphasis. Lack of God's blessing allows a lack of unity in the bond of love. A lack of unity allows only individuality with little of God's blessing, and this results in what we see; the pitiful condition of christianity which is under Calvinistic influence.

### **Arminianism Very Generally**

The Arminian doctrine of Conditional Election exalts the idea that God elects to salvation, before the foundation of the world, the person whom He foresees, that will believe in Jesus Christ. However, in the Arminian view, as I understand it, God's sovereignty is still more important to God than is His attribute of love. If this is true, then the practical outcome with respect to godly values, imparted to churches holding Arminian theology, is the same as churches holding Calvinistic type theology. That is, love for God is not the primary mover of the church. Some other value is the primary mover, which God does not bless, which results in the same pitiful Christianity which exists under the Calvinistic influence.

### **Managed Cooperation Theology Very Generally**

I contend that divine love is a more important attribute to God than is His being boss. In other words, how does a loving God administrate His sovereignty? One of the ways is, I believe He shares it.

God is sovereign over all; but delegates some of His sovereignty to each person. I believe the scripture teaches He has given each individual sovereignty, over that person's own life. This means that since God has given man sovereignty over his own life, God will influence, but not control, what a man does with his life. The gifting of sovereignty to mankind has both authority and responsibility connected to it.

The authority inherent in the gifted sovereignty, is to be capable of loving or not loving God and others. God is love, and in order for men to love, and since we are made in the image of God, He must have given us the capacity to love. However the gift of sovereignty has a down side; many people will not choose to allow themselves to become acquainted with God and His goodness.

The responsibility inherent in the gifted sovereignty is that men start out in life biased in their thinking against God. However, if a per-

son **allows** himself to become acquainted with God, and **cooperates** with Him to some degree, over some period of time, God the Holy Spirit, will demonstrate His mercy, grace and love in that person's life which gives the person a view of the "goodness" of God. This is new information, which the person never had before; a view of God. When an increasing amount of godly information gets to a "critical mass," the Holy Spirit can contrast the person's original point of view of "evil," and the new view of God's "goodness," which the Holy Spirit uses to convince that God is good.

Continued cooperation with the Holy Spirit yields the perspective that one's life is better managed by God than managed by self. This is how one comes to believe, through faith, that God is worthy to be loved. God's worthiness to be loved will cause additional love for Himself in the individual. The reward for man loving God is God's own desire to take the lover-of-God to Heaven.

The additional responsibility is that if you **don't** allow yourself to become acquainted with God, and you **don't** cooperate with Him over time, you **will not** be exposed to His mercy, grace and love. Since you didn't allow the godly input, you remain ignorant of God's mercy, grace and love. Therefore, you miss out on seeing the "goodness" of God. If you don't see the goodness of God, you are left with your original point of view of a world that does not involve God; that is, the world of "evil." It is only by the contrast between the "goodness" of God and the "evil" of the world, that the Holy Spirit can show you the perspective that God is "good." Thus, you will have no perspective about the truth of God which tells you that He is worthy to be loved. That means you are willingly ignorant, and you will die in your sins. At the judgement, the reward for willing ignorance is banishment away from God forever. How extremely sad.

### **A Continued Overview**

How a God, perfect in love, administers His sovereignty is the question which I will attempt to answer more fully in this rest of this book. And hopefully, answering this question will also tell you what to change and: to what; do we change.

When asked by the scribes in Mark 12:28-31, "What commandment is the foremost of all?" Jesus answered, "The foremost is, 'Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your

mind, and with all strength.’ “The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” Since love is His foremost commandment, love is His highest calling.

For us, in our day and time, should we be loving the Lord our God and loving our neighbor like the group did in the description of my encounter with Jesus? Is that an example of God’s directive? Is that an example of the true message of Jesus? Is it possible that christianity could be as simple and direct and uncomplicated as showing a bunch of men the love of God? And the result be that they praise God, love Him and turn other men toward doing the same? Eureka!! I have found it!

### **The Discovery**

Managed Cooperation Theology is the theology which matches the message of Jesus with the practices of Jesus. It is the theology which will allow all churches to come together because of its simplicity and conformance to scripture. The central tenet is to love God and love your neighbor. The Job of christians everywhere is to create ways to show love to God and to the people with which you come in contact. The example is doing what the group did which put on the Tres Dias weekend, my encounter with Jesus. That is a sample of the kind of activity that **all** christians should promote.

### **The Needed Theology Change**

I believe the reason churches don’t do that now is their theology. The Calvinist and Arminian theologies exalt different priorities. They exalt values which are not: love God - love your neighbor. That is not to say they don’t value love at all but that those theologies don’t uplift love for God and neighbor as the number one priority. A reason for existence if you will. The other theologies view sovereignty as a more important value to God than love. But as I have started to show, love is more important than sovereignty.

I believe that if christianity, at large, can see their way clear to reject Calvinism and Arminianism in favor of Managed Cooperation Theology, there will be a revival in North America the like of which no one has ever seen.

### **The Resulting Change in Churches**

Over a period of time, as a more scriptural message appears, as an updated more relevant theology emerges, church leaders will consider adjusting their basic church theology.

When the theology of a church changes to Managed Cooperation, the whole focus of the church will change from doing whatever, to exercises in love of God; maybe through worship, maybe through a passion play, a thousand other ways which people create to show their love. Their focus will change to loving their neighbors through projects sponsored by the church. The church will see that God will bless, and wants them to create weekend retreats such as Tres Dias, the one I went to in my encounter with Jesus. Churches will see results in converts.

People will be built up in the true knowledge and love of God. The result of this acting in faith to love God and love thy neighbor will be blessed by God for all society to see. They will know you are christians by your love.

Seeing God's blessing will cause the renewing of commitments of people who have left their first love. Then christianity will be renewed. Then christianity will be blessed by the loving God which wants to build His church. But He will only do so by true faith in love for God, and love for your neighbor as yourself.

It is my prayer for christianity that they lower the banner of sovereignty and raise the banner of love; love for God and neighbor. Amen.



## Chapter Two

### Love and God's Purpose for Man

*What single asset does God possess after Armageddon, that He did not possess before creation?*

“God is love” the scripture says. Love is not just a nice trait for God, but it is His very nature and character. It is His most important attribute of all His attributes. Love existed among the **Trinity** before the foundation of the world.

The **Fatherhood** of God is apparent throughout the scriptures. Fathers love their children, and most would give their life for their children. Because the scripture says so, and because we are made in His image, and we love our own children; therefore, we can be sure He loves His Children.

The overwhelming love of **Jesus the Son**, dying on the cross for our sins, demonstrates His extreme love for us. He chose to die the excruciating torture and death to be with the redeemed forever; rather than not go through the torture, and be separated from the redeemed forever.

The **Holy Spirit** pours out the love of God into our hearts. The **whole Trinity Godhead** is all about loving relationship. That is the true message of Jesus. The true message of His teaching.

### Love

Love can be defined as the concern for the good, and betterment, of another. That concern can take the form of devotion, admiration, warm attachment and many other descriptions.

God is love. This statement expresses the essence of the character of God. Yes, God wants honor and praise for what He does and who He is. But what does God require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God (Micah 6:8)? Nothing else! He wants fellowship with you and I. This idea expresses the point of all creation.

To understand what God wants from us and how we should think

of Him, must be derived from the fundamental beginnings of God's revelation to us. These are given in early Genesis. How God made man reveals much about who man is, with respect to God, and what reasons God had to design man as He did.

I am saying that the essence of God's character; *love*, and *His central purpose for the creation*, show his intended theology. Looking at these two factors give much insight into His intended plan. All other theology emanates from those two factors.

## **Types of Love**

The New Testament outlines three forms of love.

### **Agape Love**

“Agape” love (reference type “A”) is that type which originates from the attributes within the lover, the one who loves. The primary motivation is the character of God. The one doing the loving has some level of the character of God within. Feelings may be associated with this type, but they are not the primary motivation. An example may be: devotion; why Mother Teresa tended to the poor and sick in India for much of her lifetime.

### **Phileo Love**

“Phileo” love (reference type “P”) is that type which is given by the lover but whose reasons for loving are the attributes which reside in the one who is loved. I show love to the one loved because she is pretty, funny, likes me, etc. This kind of love may be felt but primarily, it is experienced.

This kind of love is rather temporary. Because if the object of love stops being pretty, pleasant, funny or whatever the lover admires, the lover stops appreciating. Because the reason for appreciating is gone.

When two people love each other in only this way, this kind of love is not sustainable over time. It becomes a downward spiral of diminishing love returns. Eventually, this kind of love disappears if not built up by agape love.

The Natural Man loves in this way. When two people get married with wonderful hopes of being happy ever after. It doesn't work out,

and many divorce because “love” is no longer present. What happened? Not enough love (A), selflessness, and too much love (P), which eventually degenerated.

One of the benefits of agape love is that it produces Phileo love. When the lover (A) does something from his heart, because of his own character, not because of the object, the object receives the love. Receiving the love (A) from the lover causes love (P) to be experienced in the one receiving. Which means the recipient attributes the love (A) received to the other person, the lover. Of course, this is the definition of phileo love.

For example, If my wife because of her godly character, loves (A) me by fixing a wonderful candlelight dinner, that love causes me to want to love (P) her back. Maybe I’ll fix and hang the broken picture. She did something for me out of her godly character, but I want to do something for her because she did something for me. My response has nothing to do with her love (A) in this case. Her love comes across to me as love (P) attributed to her person. This is how agape love in her, produces phileo love in me. And, her love (A), I may perceive as love (P), which does not do her character justice.

### **Eros Love**

“Eros” love (reference type “E”) is motivated by feelings of warm attachment which might be experienced between young people “in love.” These feelings are physiological in nature. The feelings present themselves to the lover, and go away from the lover, as the situation changes from hour to hour. This love usually is temporary and unstable, but may be supplemented by attributes seen in ones “better half;” phileo love.

### **The Nature of Love**

The nature of love is that it is intangible. It is a state of mind. It must be voluntarily given. It cannot be extracted. Even God Himself cannot extract love if it is not already present to be given.

Love has the component of creativity to it. In the desire to please the recipient, one uses all ones resources for the betterment of the one loved. This includes creativity.

If love (any type) is not present neither will creativity, good attitude, desire to please, feeling of worth for the object, or desire for the betterment of the object be present. If some level of love is not

present, then indifference or some level of hate will be present. Because indifference or hate *is* present, if love is not present, then if something is given, it will be indifference or hate, not love. The presence of love, indifference, or hate is mutually exclusive; only one at a time can be in someone's consciousness. This is why love can only be given if it is present. If it is not present in the heart, something else is there.

### **God Loves Man**

You have heard that God is love (A). The very character of God suggests our relationship to Him. God loves with the type of love (A) which comes from His perfect character. He embodies all the fruit of the Spirit: love (A), joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control. This is not to say that God doesn't love (P or E) sometimes.

"For God so loved (A) the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever should believe on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." This means God loved us so very, very much that He was willing to sacrifice His Son! Could you sacrifice a son? I can't say for sure I would. But Abraham did. And God the Father did for me.

Jesus died on the cross to gain salvation for us. Part of the testimony of love that the cross presents is this: He was willing to die on the cross to secure life *with us* for eternity; rather than, not endure the cross and live *without us* for eternity. That is love (A) with perhaps some love (P) because of the joy set before Him (Heb. 12:2) when we are together.

God loving (A) me makes sense because I know I want to be loved (A, P, E). It feels good to be appreciated for what I have done. I want my wife to be proud of me. I feel loved (P) when she gives me a big hug and a kiss only because she feels like it. I enjoy seeing her face light up with pleasure when I do something for her that she can't do easily for herself. And, just as we enjoy appreciation, so does God.

He deserves appreciation for who He is, what He has done, what He is doing now, and what He will do in the future.

I love (P) Him because He is good; as opposed to evil. He is good in every way, and there is no shadow or grey areas in His character. I can not love (A) to that standard, but I respect that He can. However, in Gal.5:22, it says that the fruit of the Spirit is love (A), joy, peace,

patience, etc. This means that if I cooperate, the Holy Spirit will provide love (A) and the other fruit of the Spirit.

God's love (A) for me is not based on who I am (Philo). It is based on who He is; His perfect character.

Because God has perfect character and infinite knowledge, I can feel safe. I feel safe because I know He will not violate any aspect of His perfect character. Therefore, He will always deal with me in love (A) and fairness. I may act like a spoiled child but He will always correct me in love (A), with mercy and grace.

God loves (A) me and wants to have a personal relationship with me, and with all who want to have a relationship with Him. God wants us to love (P) Him but He wants us to love (A) Him also, because agape love is permanent. God wants us to love (A) Him forever.

### **Man Loving God**

God is sovereign over the creation and therefore, sovereign over us. Each person has an opinion of God. Man's opinion of sovereigns, or powers greater than himself, depend on how the greater power has treated the underling.

An individual's opinion of God, or any sovereign, could be anywhere along the spectrum between hating Him, to indifference, to Loving Him dearly. Whatever the opinion, it belongs to the individual who formed it. It is what it is. His opinion is a product of his influences and thinking processes. Man's thinking processes control his action. God can control man's action as he would a robot but not his love (P) as in appreciation. It has to be given, as I said earlier.

In a person just becoming acquainted with God, loving (P) God involves acts of giving (obedience, appreciation, honor, worship) as opposed to not giving them. We see in the Bible that loving (A, P) Him means to obey.<sup>4</sup>

In other places, we see that loving (A, P) Him is to walk in all His ways (Duet. 19:9). In still other places love (A) of God means to love (A) others (Eph. 5:2). Serving God in faith is loving (A) Him (I Thess. 1:3).

When God checks to see if a man loves (A, P) Him, He looks into the man's heart, He is jealous if obedience or worship is given to another god that should be given to the one True and Living God (Ex.

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4. Duet. 7: 9, 30:20; I John 5:3

34:14).

The aspects of love (A, P), as defined above, imply loyalty to Him rather than any other god. This means that at least a partial definition of love (A, P), from His point of view, involves choosing *Him* over other gods (Ex. 20:3).

Loving (A, P) Him is more than that, it is involving yourself for His betterment. It is preparing yourself to think and act like Him.

As a loving (A) father, is there anything more your kids can do for you, than do as you ask? If they would just do that, wouldn't you feel they loved (P) you? If they go further and say, "Dad, I think your the greatest!" Would you think they loved (P) you then? And if you are a superdad, maybe your son might say, "Dad, I want to be just like you when I grow up." How much more loving (P) can a child be? If the child now goes on to become like Dad, the love (P) may become love (A).

Similarly, there is no higher compliment that we can pay our God than wanting to **be like Him**. This is not wanting to **be like Him**, like Satan. Satan wants to **be like God** in the sense of possessing His powers and sovereignty. We want to **be like God** in the sense of copying His character, some of His knowledge, and enjoying Him, His world, and His future.

The bottom line is God wants us to love (A) Him, and if we get to know Him, we will see that He is good. We also see the evil of men, including our own sins. The Holy Spirit showing the contrast, causes us to start to appreciate and eventually love (P) Him. If we continue to love (P) Him, He will develop love (A) in us over time. That is what Jesus was trying to instill into His Disciples. See John 21:15-17.

15) "So when they finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon, son of John, do you love (A) me more than these?' He said to Him, 'Yes Lord; You know that I love (P) you.' He said to him, 'Tend my lambs.'

16) "He said to him again a second time, 'Simon, son of John, do you love (P) me?' He said to Him, 'Yes Lord, You know that I love (P) You.' He said to him, 'Shepherd My sheep.'

17) "He said to him the third time, Simon, son of John, do you love (P) me?' Peter was grieved because He said to him a third time, 'Do you love (P) me.' And he said to Him, 'Lord, You know all things; You know that I love (P) You.' Jesus said to him, 'Tend My sheep.'" - John

21:15-17

(Speaking of verse 15) This interchange suggests Jesus was asking if Peter loved Jesus with the kind of love which emanates from Peter's godly character. His answer implies, no, he loved Jesus with the kind of love (P) which emanates from the object of his love, Jesus. The inference is that Peter did not have the character development to love in the way God loves (A).

(Speaking of verse 16) Jesus repeats the question asking if Peter loves Jesus because of qualities in Jesus. Peter indicates he does. Jesus says, Shepherd My sheep.

(Speaking of verse 17) Jesus repeats the question a second time. Apparently, Jesus wanted to be sure what kind of love Peter had for Him.

In English, these verses don't seem very important. But when you add the Greek meanings it takes on much more significance. Jesus was checking to see if Peter had grown from loving Jesus, because of the attributes of Jesus, or whether Peter loved Jesus because of the attributes within himself. This transition is monumental because Jesus wants all His disciples to love (A) Him forever with a love (A) which will last forever.

## **God's Purpose for Man**

Since we are made in God's image and likeness, and we have reasons and purpose for what we do, it makes sense that God has reasons and purpose for what He does; especially for such a tremendous project as the universe and all life (i.e., the creation). It is not possible that God would give man some attribute like the ability to reason and have purpose without Himself already possessing those attributes.

Purpose and reasons are similar. I have reasons for doing things, which lead to fulfilling some purpose. I buy raw wood which I cut, nail, sand and stain to fashion into a mantle which I install over my fireplace. The reason I do those activities is to make the mantle. Making the mantle fulfills the sub-purpose of decoration for my house. But my real purpose for decorating is my *desire* for a nice looking, comfortable home.

It must be the same way with God. He made us to fulfill a desire for a people who would love Him. But getting people to love Him is a

complicated process for which this explanation is just the beginning.

He made the universe as a source of wonderment for us and a context in which to house the solar system including Earth. The Earth is beautiful, and is a context to house the firmament. The firmament shows God's handiwork and His vast creative genius. All this God called "good" but His crowning achievement was "man" which He called "very good" (Gen.1:31).

God calling man "very good" makes mankind special in His mind compared to the rest of the creation. Why is mankind special? It is because men are the only creatures with which God could have a personal relationship. The whole Bible is about the relationship between God and man.

Since the Bible is about relationship, that means God must have made man with, at least, the *potential* to have relationship with Him. And, if so, what would that potential involve and look like? I will get to the answer to that in the following chapters. For now, suffice it to say I will show how man has the *potential* to love God.

In the search for a central purpose for creation, how can we go about finding one if there is one? Part of the answer can be found in the question: what does God get from the creation project that He did not possess before the creation project started? Before the Creation, the angels existed with God. Then, He created the Earth and Mankind. Several thousand years of human history have now elapsed, and people can look forward to judgement. Some time, says the Apostle Peter, the Earth will burn until it is consumed (II Peter 3:10). What benefit did God get from the Creation? What is the one thing which God possesses *after* Armageddon that He did not possess *before* the Creation existed?

### *People who love Him!*

If that is all He gets out of the Creation, it must be His highest objective. Isn't that our highest objective too? We want to be loved by others.

We, and certainly God, are not naive enough to believe that He expected *all* people to love Him. The fact that we see only a few people who love Him, and many people who don't love Him, in our own lifetime, probably is typical of all of man's history. Since He knows everything; thus, He must have known it would only be a few, a rem-

nant, who would love Him.

Let's look, for a moment at all the multitudes of people who will go to Hell. They are people who don't want a relationship with God for whatever reason. God will put them away from Himself in a place where they can be together with others similar to themselves. This means after judgement, God treats people who don't love Him; much differently than those who *do* love Him. The implication is that He *doesn't* want to deal with them anymore. The implication is also that people *who do love Him* are much more valuable to Him than we realize.

What we have so far is: (1) God loves man; (2) God wants man to love Him; (3) Man was made with the potential to love God; because, men love various people in their lives already; (4) There are men who love God living now; I am one of them. Perhaps you are too; (5) the only asset which God gets out of the creation history is a people who will love Him forever.

### **The Central Purpose for the Creation**

If we can accept that: (1) God loves man; (2) and man loving God with all his heart, soul, mind and strength is what God wants most from us; (3) Man was made with the potential to love God because men love various people in their lives already; (4) and then after Armageddon, the only asset that God gets out of the creation history is a people who love Him forever; leads to: ***Before the foundation of the world, God desired a people who He could love, and who would love Him forever.***

If this Central Purpose is indeed what God wants to fulfill through the creation, how could He implement a plan which would accomplish that purpose? Since the scripture says, (II Peter 1:3) “. . . that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, . . . .”, and since we can see and understand the physical world around us, I believe between the two, we can discern the genius of God. Why He made people like He did. We will start to look at that in Chapter Three.

### **Evidence for the Central Purpose**

The evidence for believing that God desires a people who He will love and who will love Him forever lies in several areas of discussion; the

person of God, the character of God, the will of God, distinguished godly opinion, and what assets God gets, as a result of the creation, after judgement.

### **The Person of God**

God is love (A). - I John 4:8, 16

“. . . the love (A) of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.” - Rom. 5:5

“But God demonstrates His own love (A) toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” - Rom. 5:8

“And because you are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, ‘Abba!’ Father!” - Gal. 4:6

(Jesus speaking to the Father) “. . . I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, that the world may know that Thou didst send Me, and didst love (A) them, even as Thou didst love (A) Me. - John 17:23

### **Pre-creation Love within the Trinity**

(Jesus speaking to the Father) “. . . for Thou didst love (A) Me before the foundation of the world.” - John 17:24

### **The Character of God**

God keeps His Covenant of loving kindness with those who love (A) Him. - Duet.7:9, Dan. 9:4

“For God so loved (A) the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.” - John 3:16

“We love (A), because He first loved (A) us.” - I John 4:19

Love (A) of God given to us - Romans 5:5

### **The Will of God**

God wants fellowship with man - Gen. 3:8

God wants a people for His own - II Sam. 7:23

“But know that the Lord has set apart the godly man for Himself.” -  
Psalm 4:3

Man commanded to love (A) God - Duet. 6:5

Duet.10:12-13,

Duet. 11:13

Luke 10:27

### **God's Foremost Commandment**

36) “ ‘Teacher which is the great commandment in the Law?’ ”

37) “and He said to him, ‘You shall love (A) the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’

38) “ ‘This is the great and foremost commandment.’ ” - Matt.22:36-38

Repeat of foremost commandment - Mark 12:29-30,

### **Right Relationship Between God and Man**

“And we have come to know and have believed the love (A) which God has for us. God is love (A), and the one who abides in love (A) abides in God, and God abides in him.” - I John 4:16

### **God has purpose for His Activities**

“ . . . And let the purpose of the Holy One of Israel draw near and come to pass, that we may know it.” - Isaiah 5:19

“And the land of Judah will become a terror to Egypt; everyone to whom it is mentioned will be in dread of it, because of the purpose of the Lord of hosts which He is purposing against them.” - Isaiah 19:17

## **Purpose for Christ Dying**

Salvation of Believers - John 3:16; Romans 5:8-10

## **Eminent Godly Opinion**

Dr. Francis A. Schaeffer has this to say:

‘When someone asks me the Christian answer to this question of purpose, the reason for man’s existence, I would always take them to the first commandment of Christ. In passing, let us note that there is no reason to think that the first commandment: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength” (He footnotes Mark 12:30; Duet. 6:5) is merely a first command uttered by Jesus. We know it is not so because He quoted it from the last book of Moses, the book of Deuteronomy. But we can say something more. Surely it is the first commandment because it is the one that expresses the purpose of Man and, individually, my purpose.’ (The God who is There, p. 146).

Since this is His foremost commandment, it follows that it is His highest objective for man.

## **God’s Single Net Asset from the Creation**

The doctrine of salvation says God will take a people who love Him to Heaven. As far as I can see, people who love Him is the only asset that God gets out of the creation project.

This is not trivial, its huge! Maybe billions of people are involved.

## Chapter Three

### The Design of Man and His Planned Fall

*If God has **not** given me sovereignty over my own life, then me giving Lordship back to Him has no meaning.*

#### Loving God Requires the Capacity to Choose

Since God wanted man to love Him; necessarily, God had to design man so man could have, at least, the capability of loving Him.

In order to love God meaningfully, we must have the choice to love or not love Him. That's because the nature of real love from the heart is voluntary. Love results from a motivating decision to act for the betterment of another. Therefore, love requires the capacity to choose and reason.

We can only show love when its present in our heart. It must be given from a heart that *wants* to give it. If love is not present, then the alternatives; indifference or hate will be present. Of course, there are all varying degrees of love, indifference or hate. So anyway, love must be freely given.

But even God chooses, I believe, not to extract love if not present. I hesitate to say He cannot, because some may think I am impugning God's sovereignty. The situation is He doesn't; because to do so is not loving. If He did, He would violate His own loving character. Besides, can you order the heart to love, or do you just order outer action? If God were to force man to obey, man's heart would get hard and resentful. Wasn't this proven with peoples attitudes under the Mosaic Law?<sup>5</sup> However, there is another possibility.

He also could have made people with free agency but control the environment such that they were manipulated into doing the creator's will (hypercalvinism?).<sup>6</sup> Thus He could control all things but present to the creation the appearance of choice.

This plan would produce love in the creature for the creator until

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5. See Isaiah 65:2, Psalms 95:8-11

6. Calvinists believe that "since God has infinite understanding and ability, His plan must extend to every detail of the world's existence." See The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination, pp. 13,23.

the creature discovered the truth. Then what would he think? Doubt!<sup>7</sup> The creature would end up questioning his own love for God. He might even feel manipulated, used or defrauded. At best, man would only love God for a finite time period.

As you will remember, God wants man to love Him forever; because Heaven is forever, not just a finite period of time. The following is what hypercalvinism offers as systematic theology. That God Himself, before the foundation of the world, determined who, where, and why every man goes to his particular destiny. But later, as men live their lives, God provides the appearance that the individual chooses to love God. This theory makes God out to be liar.

For this reason, Calvinism cannot fulfill the central purpose for the creation.

Since love cannot be taken or extracted, God has gone to tremendous effort to create conditions which will persuade people to love Him. Let's look at the mechanism of "choosing" a little closer.

## **Personal Sovereignty**

The capacity to choose means the capacity to make decisions between alternatives.<sup>8</sup> We know the "will" chooses in the best interest of the overall person because God said "...for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes it and cherishes it, . . ." (Eph. 5:29). Which means, among other things, that since I control it, I treat it good.

I do not see man's will as an entity in itself, like the mind or emotions, but it is a decision process which the mind uses to choose between various alternatives.

The decision making process chooses in the best interest of the overall person based on the inputs at the time. Let's take a simple example like getting up in the morning.

The body jerks to consciousness at 6AM as the alarm goes off, and immediately inputs come streaming into the intellect (mind).

I still feel tired (he unconsciously attaches some degree of importance to that feeling) . . . I didn't get my usual amount of sleep (I only

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7. Satan to Eve in the Garden: "Hath God said ...." Genesis 3:1

8. As Lorraine Boettner puts it, "By a free and responsible agent we mean an intelligent person who acts with rational self-determination." -"The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination", p.208.

got 6 hours) . . . Work is such a bummer these days (my boss is such a jerk) . . . Maybe I should call in sick . . . But, I need the money . . . I guess I better get up. So you get up and go to work.

The decision making logical process chose the best alternative for the whole man based, in this case, on a responsible thought pattern.

Intuitively, we see that we make sovereign decisions over our own life. And that is why God can say in all fairness that we are responsible for the decisions made in life. Therefore, in all fairness, He can hold each of us responsible to love Him or not love Him.

God is sovereign over the creation (Psalm 103:19). God made man in His image (Gen. 1:26). And a part of that image is the element of sovereignty over ones own life. I suggested that in Chapter One. I get to choose what I will do with my own life. That is, I am in control of those aspects of my life which is within my power to control (Dan. 4:36, 11:4). If God has not given me sovereignty over my own life, then my giving lordship back to Him has no meaning. Sovereignty over my own life is necessary to choose to love, or not love, God. Personal sovereignty is necessary for God holding me responsible for my thoughts and actions.<sup>9</sup> That is, sending me to either Heaven or Hell because of what I have done in my life.

## **Mans Sovereignty and His Fallen Nature**

God created man, Adam and Eve, in His own image. This means we have some of His attributes. We have the capacity to choose, reason, learn and create in order to have the capacity to love Him. Inherent in these attributes is the instinctive desire for sovereignty over one's own life. Its the same kind of sovereignty that God possesses but ours is only over our own life. His is over everything.

God is ultimately sovereign; that is, He relates all other things to Himself.<sup>10</sup> He forms opinions and makes decisions based on His perfect character and infinite knowledge. Everything He does is in harmony with Himself.<sup>11</sup> He forms opinions and makes decisions about the creation, the sum of which, describe His nature.

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9. Parable of money usage, Luke 19:11-27

10. Is.40:1-31; I Tim.6:15; Rev.11:17; Understanding Man, pp.35-36.

11. Ibid, p. 35; Ps.50:1-6,12; Job 40:1-14

Since He is sovereign over the creation, His nature defines the perfect nature (i.e., the standard of perfection). This means that any nature not in harmony with His nature is imperfect, different, incongruent or, in religious words, "sinful" or "fallen." Ryrie quotes Buswell, "Sin may be defined ultimately as anything in the creature which does not express, or which is contrary to, the holy character of the creator."<sup>12</sup> But here is the problem.

Man also forms opinions and makes decisions about the creation. Only his character is flawed and knowledge finite at best. And, He doesn't realize he is missing God's perfect character and infinite knowledge. But he just goes right ahead and forms opinions, and makes decisions anyway.

Because man has been separated from God since Adam, man's opinions and decisions are different than God's. Because, they are based on incomplete information and flawed character. These conditions cause man to form opinions and make decisions not in harmony with God's opinions and decisions. This gives men a different point of view which is not shared by God.

This is terrible because the more decisions made and opinions formed, not in harmony with God's opinions and point of view, the more blinded man becomes about the truth of God.<sup>13</sup>

In short, man's thought patterns get further and further from God's thought patterns (Rom. 8:5-9). Therefore man's opinions and point of view, which describe man's nature, becomes different from God's nature (Mark 7:14-21). Thus, man has a "fallen" or "sinful" or "evil" nature when he thinks differently than God over a period of time.

This is one of mankind's basic problems. ***Each man believes he can successfully manage his own life without God's help.*** In fact, he assumes it. And he doesn't realize that God's knowledge and Spirit are the missing components between his thinking and God's thinking. And therefore, *he* makes decisions about his own life without consulting God, and believes it's normal.

The "fallen" or "sin" nature of man, that so many pastors and writers refer to, is man's capacity to choose, reason and learn combined with sovereignty over his own life; add to that, finite knowledge and imperfect character, all producing a recipe for thinking and doing one's

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12. Basic Theology, page 212.

13. See Eph.4:17-19; Rom.1:20-24; Pro.16:25.

own thing (Pro. 21:2).

This all means that God made us in His image capable of independent thought and action so we would be capable of loving Him. But along with that, *God decided He would accept the constraint that man would exercise sovereignty over his own life.* That is, man doing His own thing; even if he didn't love God. It is this condition which makes the salvation process so difficult for God and men.

Thus, being *capable* of loving Him is one thing, but *actually choosing* to love or not love Him is quite a different matter.

## Knowing Good and Evil

The definition of "good" is the opinions and decisions of God about life, love, and spirituality which define His nature. These are given to us in the Bible.<sup>14</sup>

The definition of "evil" is the opinions, decisions and actions of man. While not all of man's thoughts and actions are "bad," the sum total of man's opinions, decisions and nature is different from God's opinions, decisions and nature.

To actually choose to love God for all eternity, it would be necessary for man to know both "good" and "evil" and still choose to love God.

Without knowing both "good" and "evil," man could not be sure God is telling him the truth. Or for that matter, be sure demons are lying to him.

Experiencing only "good" or only "evil" restricts your contrast of the definition of "good" and "evil". How bad is "evil"? How good is "good"? How good is "evil"? How evil is "good"? Without a contrast, you don't know.

For example: a boy is in the kitchen while mom is cooking. Young Mr. Curious reaches out to feel the hot stove. Mom exclaims, "Don't touch it! It's hot." The boy believes mom and withdraws his hand. Without any experience of how hot is heat, he is susceptible to the question, "what is hot?" He continues to believe for a time.

One day, when mom has her back turned, his curiosity about heat overcomes his fuzzy perspective of what "hot" means. So he touches

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14. God is love - I John 4:16; Fruit of the Spirit - Gal.5:22-23; The divine nature - II Peter 1:4-8;

the burner. He is singed and thereby experiences the heat. He now has an appreciation of fingers that don't hurt that he didn't have before. He has a new experience. Of course he is not willing to sacrifice another finger to find out what "hot" means, because now he knows.

He has gone from a "believer" to a "knower". (I will use these terms later). Beforehand, his curiosity and doubt caused him to question mom's claim. Afterwards, there was no longer any question. Before his burner experience, he doubted mom's word. After his burner experience, doubt was taken away. He now has the contrast of hurting fingers with fingers that don't hurt. The contrast tells him that mom was right, and not to touch the burner again.

This is the way God will persuade us to love Him forever. He will dispel Satan's question; "hath God said . . . (Gen. 3:1)" forever by allowing us to get "burned" by the experience of our own "wrong thinking" and blessed by accepting His revealed "right thinking." The contrast between the two tells us we want a blessing and we don't want to get burned; in Hell. Therefore, I want God's ways in my life.

Satan's question to the Garden couple is the essence of doubt and unbelief in God and His plan. But first, let's look at how Lucifer *may* have become Satan, to see why Adam and Eve doubted God; to see why you and I doubt God.

## **How Lucifer May Have Become Satan**

What I am about to relate in this section is an *educated estimate* regarding how Lucifer *may have* degenerated from glorious angel to perverted satan. What I relate may not be 100% truth. You be the judge. You can read about Lucifer in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28.

Before Adam, God created a heavenly kingdom. Among His creations were the angels and His masterpiece Lucifer, Star of the Morning, Son of the Dawn (Ezek. 28:12). He was perfect in form and character Ezek. 28:12, 15). He had charge over all God's heavenly creation with only God his superior.

Prior to his rebellion, he knew no sin (Ezek. 28:12, 15). He knew "good" but not "evil" because it had not been invented yet. All his choices were God's choices. All his options were options which had God's blessing.

Because he could choose, reason and learn, he had the capacity to

*create* options not given him by God. But what is unique is that Lucifer could not have known beforehand that he could rebel because a contrary thought pattern had never come about before. All his options were "good". No matter what decision he made, it was God's will, and therefore good. Let me illustrate.

Let's say you put your small son in a playpen, and give him four new toys. At first he is delighted. No matter which toy he chooses, it is one you wanted him to have. But eventually he gets to know all the toys well. So it was with Lucifer, making choices between "good options" and learning all about God's creation for him.

Back in the playpen, the child, knowing the toys well, begins to get bored, which prompts creativeness. His abilities to choose, reason and learn, developed by the toy room, cause him to wonder about, then desire a toy that he does not now have. The baby starts to fuss. So it was with Lucifer, he developed, on his own, an option that God did not present to him.

At some point, Lucifer discovered, as God knew he would, that he could choose to follow his own invented option or follow God's option for him. This was new to him! This was very interesting! Now he knew something that he didn't think God knew. After all, he just invented the option!

Since Lucifer had not yet fallen, he had no experience different from what God's options gave him. He had no reason for not choosing his new invented option because he had sovereignty over the creation. Lucifer had charge of the whole creation; that is, absolute power over the creation second only to God (Matt. 4:8, 9).

This situation presented enormous internal "decision maker"<sup>15</sup> pressure for his new interesting option and little pressure for God's "old hat" option. So he chose his own way and went on to choose his own way at other times.

Thus, His absolute power coupled with imperfect thought patterns (different from God's) and finite knowledge led him away from God to become Satan, an antigod. He went from Lucifer, with a one-sided perspective of "good," to Satan, with a two-sided perspective of "good" and "evil" (Matt. 4:8-9). After knowing both "good" *and* "evil," he chose evil. Satan thought he was smarter than God by inventing new options when, in fact, he did as God expected. He thought he could

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15. See explanation under "How People Make Decisions," p. 49.

win mankind away from God. That is why there is no redemption plan for fallen angels. While knowing “good” and “evil,” they chose evil (Jude 6). Satan became God's tool, to cause man to choose clearly, between the true and living God, and a little god; the self.

## **Why Adam and Eve Doubted God**

Enter Adam and Eve; the innocents who knew nothing of all these goings on. Adam and Eve had a similar situation to Lucifer before their fall. They had the capacity to choose, reason and learn (Gen. 1:26) in order to love or not love God.

They also had a one-sided perspective; knowing only "good". Their sphere of knowledge consisted of only that which God provided for them in the Garden. That which God wanted them to have. That which was “good.”

The one thing that Adam and Eve lacked was the contrast between good and evil (Gen. 3:5-7); they didn't have enough truth to conclude that God was right when He said that they would die if they ate from the tree of the Knowledge of good and evil. God couldn't give them a contrast without revealing the knowledge of evil. This is the whole point; the lack of the “good” / “evil” perspective. The lesson is that truth only has *significance* as truth, when contrasted with *known* untruth on the same subject. Consider the little kid who burned his fingers.

Before he burned his fingers, he didn't know the pain associated with hot. He also didn't realize that pain free fingers constitutes “good.” But afterward, there would never again be any question about what hot meant. The pain, provided the “evil” side of the contrast. It was the same way with Adam and Eve.

Since they had no contrast, no perspective of known untruth, they weren't sure God was telling them the truth. Or for that matter, that Satan was telling them a lie. For a while, they were “believers” of the “good” God revealed, but not "knowers." “Knowing” comes only from having the additional perspective of the “evil.” side of the contrast.. Hence, they were vulnerable to Satan's question; "Hath God said, You shall not eat...? (Gen. 3:1)"

Previously, they assumed God was right, but now there was some question. This situation prompted them to examine both sides of this

new question in preparation of a decision. They were going to decide whether or not to eat.

*This subtle change is the root of man's basic problem; transferring decision making authority from God to self.* I believe the following is how people make decisions.

## **How People Make Decisions**

God made us with a Body, Soul and Spirit. These are all of the components of a whole person.

### **The Body**

The Body is our flesh. The part which houses our inner being. In computer terms, it is the hardware.

### **The Soul**

The soul; that is, our mind, will and emotions are the part that make us *like* other individuals. If we looked at the soul in computer terms, our "mind" would be analogous to the operating system and the application software which actually do the reasoning. Into the mind stream inputs, which have various degrees of importance attached, used in the process of forming an opinion or making a decision. We have our logic section that suggests what is reasonable. We have our long and short term memories that provide data which is applicable to the decision at hand. We have our sensors which provide inputs regarding the world around us at the time. We also have emotions that have an effect on the present decision and / or acceptance of data as facts.

That portion of the soul, the so called "will", in my humble opinion, is a decision process; not an entity, which weighs the viable alternatives of any formulation or decision question. Each alternative has more or less important aspects, which in-effect, apply pressure on ones decision-maker (will) for or against a decision for that particular alternative.

When we are listening to, and have to interpret, what someone else says or does, we take it all in and accept or reject the ideas as our perception filters the data.

Our perception is mostly governed by previously accepted information about life. That is, a person interprets each new piece of data in

light of what he has previously accepted. This process tends to lend stability to one's life and yet it allows a person to discard old data and put new data in its place. This includes old beliefs replaced by new beliefs. This includes pagan beliefs replaced by Godly beliefs.

In addition to thoughts generated by our own mind, the Holy Spirit and demonic spirits also provide external inputs which affect our decisions.<sup>16</sup> They come in the form of thoughts that appear as our own. One of the major issues of the christian life is how do we tell the Holy Spirit's whisper from a demonic whisper? The answer to that question is: we discern between Satan's and the Holy Spirit's whispers by comparing them to the scripture. The scripture is the truth. *This is a major reason for learning Scripture; to prevent deception.*

Over time, a body of data is accumulated in the form of life memories and experiences. In the end, what we accept as truth now, puts pressure on our decision-maker for succeeding opinions and decisions.

### **The Spirit**

The spirit (heart) of a man is the disposition of the soul as measured by the nature of ones life memories. Is he a "health nut"; or "an old softy"; or maybe "an animal lover"; these are examples of dispositions of the heart. It is the spirit of a man which makes each individual *unique*.

Now, the "spirit" of a man, in the Biblical sense, is the character of those life memories with respect to God. Does the character of my life experiences reflect the nature of God and oneness with God? Or is my image more like an animal? Is it the character of my life to put God before self, or vice verse? Am I committed to God or committed to self? With these parameters in mind, let's get back to Adam and Eve.

### **Decision Making**

Pressure on Adam and Eve's decision maker came from wondering what "dying" might mean. God said, (paraphrase) the same day that you eat you will die. But they lacked information about the consequences of dying. And God couldn't tell them what "dying" meant without revealing the knowledge of the "evil" side of the contrast between good and evil. But without an awareness of the consequences

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16. See Luke 12:12; John 14:16,17,26; Acts 5:3,4; I Kings 22:20-23

of dying, not much godly fear would be produced in them. Without godly fear, pressure on their decision-maker (Will) against eating, would be low.

Decision-maker pressure *for* eating the forbidden fruit was moderate to high because satan appealed to their physical senses (lusts). These sensory inputs applied more pressure to the decision-maker because they had previously experienced "good" things to look at (lust of the eyes) and things that "taste good" (lust of the flesh). The assertion that "it was good to make one wise (pride of life)."<sup>17</sup>

Since their lust applied more decision-maker pressure than Godly instruction applied to their decision-maker, they decided to eat.

Before the decision was made, they probably spent time thinking about the lusts. This was their downfall because the mind set on the flesh is spiritual death (Rom. 8:6). That means, when your mind is preoccupied with concerns of the flesh, the world, or the devil, you are *not thinking* about God and the things of the spirit.

They did not have the wisdom <sup>18</sup> necessary to properly run their own lives without God. But they thought they did. *This is man's basic problem then and now: making decisions about life without a Godly perspective.*

If you were a Fox News reporter, standing at the entrance to the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve were driven out by the cherubim, and you ask them about their decision to eat; they would probably say it was the wrong choice but it seemed like a good idea at the time. Have you ever said that?

What was different? (1) They are now out of the Garden and (2), God is gone. They have a contrast between good *and* evil they did not have before. Like the little kid with burned fingers, they have become "knowers" rather than just "believers". They have a new perspective. There is no longer any question; "Hath God said...You shall not eat from it lest you die?" They now **know** that "dying," means separation from God, and no garden!

They now **know** the definition of "spiritual death"; that is, physical separation from God. Physical death would come later. But for now they have three bigger problems.

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17. I John 2:15-16

18. Pro.2:1-5, 6-9, 10-13; Knowledge of truth, administrated with the character of God equals wisdom demonstrated. I Corinthians 1:30

The *first* "bigger problem" is that God must allow them and all men to *physically die*; in fulfillment of His promise that if you eat, you will surely die (Gen. 2:17). In other words, sin leads to death (Rom. 6:23); spiritual death first then physical death later.

The *second* is the garden couple and all men are separated from God which is *spiritual death*.

And the *third* "bigger problem" is: man still isn't to the point where he can *love* (obey, appreciate, and worship) *God* for all eternity. The "Natural (unregenerate) Man", born since Adam, cannot love God because you cannot love whom you do not know. And from whom you are separated, you cannot come to know on your own. Therefore, it is not possible for man to know or love God.<sup>19</sup>

To get a perspective on why man needs salvation, let's take a look at each of these "bigger" problems.

## **The necessity of Physical death**

Normally, we think of physical death as a person ceasing to exist. It is like a wind-up toy that is alive until it runs down. It stops.... If you watch the toy or corpse long enough, it will deteriorate until it disappears.

Physical death is a separation of the soul and spirit from the body. When the body dies, the soul and spirit does not just cease to exist like the memory of a switched off computer. It moves to the spirit world (Luke 16:22-25; II Cor. 5:1-9). However, men who are still alive can no longer perceive the soul or spirit of the dead person. It is gone from the body as far as the live person is concerned.

You may have heard people talk about out-of-body experiences, where the consciousness looks down upon the still body but ends up reentering the body. This may be true but when death is decreed by God, the soul and spirit leave until judgement. The soul and spirit is reunited with a spiritual body at one of the two coming resurrections after which is judgement (Rev. 20).

Physical death is a method for God to control the propagation of the otherwise overwhelming sin in the world. God had to prevent Adam, and everyone since, from eating of the Tree of Life (Gen. 3:24).

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19. This is why, to this extent, Calvinism's Total Inability doctrine is correct.

Barring everyone from the Tree of Life created physical death.

Suppose God had allowed people to eat from the Tree of Life. They would not die. But neither would ungodly thinking end. If people were born but did not die, the population of the world would have been hundreds of trillions by now. All of the planet's people would be contaminated over and over again with ungodly thinking and actions. The overwhelming, ever increasing mountain of sin filled hearts would unmercifully squash any pittance of Godly thinking that might arise (Gen. 6:5-13). God's purpose for the creation could never be realized.

From this, we can see that physical death provides for an end of the preponderance of ungodly thinking on the earth (James 1:15). Unfortunately, it also ends Godly thinking.

With physical death, people born since Adam can choose, without undue pressure from society, to open themselves to Godly influence. Therefore, physical death is really a loving part of God's plan. It is a door opened to the next life.

## **Man's Separation from God**

As you will remember, we left Adam and Eve just outside of the garden. Here they sit, Eve softly weeps. Adam, sitting on a small bundle of personal effects, stares into a rather bleak landscape; miles and miles of nothing ... No shelter, no way to make one ... wet and hot ... so lonely ... what are we going to eat ... how could she be so dumb to listen to that snake ... I wish we had listened to the Lord. Where is He anyway?

As sad as it seems, it was *necessary* for God to physically separate Himself from them and men since. Because man would corrupt the place of God's abode by God having to put up with the disunity of man's different thinking.<sup>20</sup>

Besides, the test of whether man will, or won't, love God needs to be tested in a neutral environment. How neutral would the test be with the Almighty God, and or Satan, breathing down your neck every two minutes (Ex. 19:12-23)?

The test wouldn't be fair to man and wouldn't accomplish God's

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20. See Isaiah 59:1-2, 64:7; Ezekiel 23:18; Amos 3:2-3; Romans 8:7; Hebrews 12:14

goals.<sup>21</sup> Thus God had to physically separate Himself from the garden couple.

Now out of the garden, they had a contrast between “good” and “evil.” They understood how “good” life was in the Garden, and they also understood how “bad” life is now, out of the Garden. This contrast, which could insure their loyalty to God forever, was useless because they were separated from Him. This means they were alone, out-of-contact, lost and away from the presence of God. Just like us.

In the absence of God, what would they think about? Naturally, it would be their situation around them. What would their kids think about? The same thing. However, would their kids think about God as much as Adam and Eve, given no contact with God? Probably not. Thus, the idea of God, in succeeding generations, would eventually die out. Scripture bears that out; man’s corrupt ways brought about the flood.

If this happened to Adam and Eve, when they previously had perfect character but limited knowledge, then it could happen to others in history.

This means that men born since Adam and Eve also have a *one-sided* perspective. They only have the perspective of “evil.” Because Adam and Eve became separated from God, their children never experienced God. They only have the dubious benefit of their parents *faith*; that is, the stories, thoughts and actions about God as guidelines. Over time, since their parents thoughts are different from Gods thoughts, their own thoughts are even further from God's. This is why you see a moral decline in society as the generations pass.

Whereas Adam and Eve, before the fall, knew only "good" and had fellowship with God; after the fall, generations knew only "evil" (thoughts different from God's) because they were separated from Him. Thus, men born since Adam, if they ever do hear about God, are back in the same situation as the garden couple; in the position of making a decision about God’s truth while in the midst of doubt. The doubt being produced by Satan and his demons. *This is an impossible situation for man.*

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21. If God pressured man, then as we saw before, compliance would not be true love.

## **Impossible Situation for Man**

Two factors cause him to never love God, and thus he has to suffer the eternal consequences.<sup>22</sup> The first is that from Adam on, we were separated physically from God. The second is that from Adam on, we were separated spiritually.

Why? Because our thinking processes came to be different from God's by: (1) Adam and Eve's wrong thinking; by (2) our ability to invent new thought options, and by (3) Satan influencing our thought patterns away from God's thought patterns. These factors cause man to form opinions and make decisions resulting in ever diverging thought patterns away from God's thought patterns.

The ultimate end is no possibility to think like God again; much less act like Him, and so there is no possibility of restoration to God's presence by our own effort. Even the concept of God is lost in generations past. We are lost, wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked (Rev. 3:17); just like Adam and Eve sitting at the edge of the garden. Without God's guidance, man is destined for greater and greater debauchery and inhumanity to man. And so every man, each one, you and I; all families included, are headed for Hell.<sup>23</sup> *But this is also an impossible situation for God.*

## **Impossible Situation for God**

For God's desire to be accomplished, that is obtaining a people who would love Him forever, He necessarily had to create them capable of choosing to *not* love Him, expose them to the concept of rebellion, allow them to rebel, separate them from Himself, and then set up conditions such that they would choose His leadership, instead of continuing their own rebellious leadership.

In addition, men would have to be "knowers" not just "believers" that God's thinking is best. This means men would have to *experience* God as well as "believe" in Him. But the Natural Man can't experience Him because the Natural Man is separated from Him.

Therefore; if God was going to have a people that would love Him

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22. This view assumes no salvation plan yet, because I am establishing the need for one.

23. Permanent separation from God; the second death, Revelation 20:6,10

forever, then He would have to take the initiative to: (1) overcome physical death; (2) bridge the separation gap over spiritual death; between God and Man; and, (3) devise a way for man to love Him; all without violating any aspect of His perfect character.

***It is these conditions which established the necessity for God's salvation plan for mankind through Jesus Christ.***

## Chapter Four

### God's Answers to Impossible Situations

One God, one Saviour, three Dispensations,  
one key to understanding biblical history.

Before the foundation of the world, God thought about how man should be made in order for him to love God. In Chapter Three, I talked about what God took into consideration. But there is much more to how He would get man to love Him forever.

- \* God gave the **maximum incentives** of Heaven and Hell.
- \* God provided **salvation in general** which incorporated answers to the three problems of persuading man to love God forever. That is, overcoming physical death, overcoming spiritual death, and loving God forever. The salvation plan is complicated by the fact that God deals with mankind differently in three different periods of time (dispensations). I will explain those as I go.
- \* God gave Himself, **Jesus Christ, the first, center and last**, to demonstrate His awesome love and justice for us.

#### Maximum Incentives

Since God wanted a people to love Him forever, and the project was of the highest importance, and choice was involved, He designed the maximum reward, Heaven; and the maximum punishment, Hell. The positive cannot be further opposite from the negative.

Heaven is the maximum *reward* that anyone can imagine. Pleasure, peace, non fatiguing work, everlasting life to the fullest. Sports, parties and joy abound forever.

We will be able to talk face to face with Christ about all the questions we have about this life. Why this happened or that happened. God made Heaven to provide the maximum incentive possible to persuade men to draw near to Him, and want to go there.

Hell is the maximum *punishment* that anyone can imagine. Pain, strife, arguments and fighting are all that people experience. There are probably periods of calm, which deepens the contrast of pain and suffering, and causes dread of the next session of agony. God makes Hell

to be the maximum incentive possible, to *not go there!*

Some day, at the end of God's persuasive effort, He will take to Heaven those people who have chosen to love Him.

And one thousand years later, those who do not want His love and grace, will be separated to outer darkness forever (Matt. 22:13). Perhaps outer darkness is a Black Hole, which has a gravity so strong that light cannot escape (no reflected light off any object within). There, people will have an eternity to contemplate their folly.

People who not only ignore His love and grace but despise God to the degree of working against Him, will get launched into the sun, the lake of fire, forever (II Peter 3:7).

If you think about it, Heaven and Hell don't make much sense except in the context of incentives. If we really have no choice to go one place or the other, then why should they be drastically different? Since God is love, couldn't He just put ones He didn't want to keep, off to themselves but not necessarily into a Hell. That would be more loving on His part, if He really makes the decision where everyone will go. Since He did make Heaven and Hell drastically different, deliciously good and horribly evil, lends credibility to the idea that there really is choice; and hence the *need* for drastic incentives. This evidence speaks against Calvinism. Because if people are chosen by God to Heaven, then what point is there to incentives?

This plan involving Hell may sound harsh but most people agree; even if they don't realize it. Do you want others around you causing trouble? It dampens your joy. Anger and strife make you feel bad. That's why God wants to avoid trouble and strife. They make Him feel bad too.

God simply wants people to accept Him and appreciate Him for who He really is; the Creator, Manager, and loving sovereign.

He owns the universe just like a man owns *his* property. And, He loves what He has made. Further, since Jesus is the owner, He is also the central figure of all history. I say owner, not from a pride standpoint, but that it takes the sacrifice of God to redeem the world. There is no one else besides God, angels and man. Neither angels nor man is worthy to redeem the world only the God/Man, Jesus Christ (Rev. 5:9).

## **Salvation In General**

As you will remember in Chapter Three, Adam and Eve faced three "bigger" problems as they were driven from the Garden: (1) physical

death, (2) separation from God, (3) and, for men living after Adam and Eve, they still are not able to love God. These three “bigger” problems for man, also turn out to be problems for God, which only He can solve. Hence the need for a salvation plan.

The general plan of salvation takes into consideration *how* God will solve those three “bigger” problems at different times in history. I am going to outline three fundamental ways God and man interact over all of Bible history. Over time, men have recognized that God has dealt with mankind differently in different periods of history; theologians have termed these periods, dispensations.

The first “bigger” problem, physical death is the separation of the body from the soul and spirit. How God solves this problem is the same in all three dispensations. This means I can discuss physical death by itself because it applies the same to all three dispensations.

However, I must talk about “overcoming spiritual death” and “loving God” within the context of each separate dispensation; because the methods of solution are different in each dispensation.

## **Overcoming Physical Death**

Physical death is the separation of the soul and accompanying spirit from the body. Apparently, at death, the soul and spirit are between bodies; meaning the soul and spirit has left the old body but God has not yet provided a new body. So the presumption is there is some middle state of existence. Since I don’t know see that situation addressed in scripture, I will leave the situation at that.

God defeats the problem of physical death by rapture<sup>24</sup> if the person is alive, or by resurrection<sup>25</sup> if already dead. If alive, and a person is taken physically to Heaven, then that person will not experience physical death ever. He has bypassed that experience. If dead, resurrection allows life to come back into a new body. The Bible has noted the instances of rapture and resurrection.

The rapture of Enoch in the seventh generation from Adam.  
- Gen. 5:24.

The rapture of Elijah. - II Kings 2:11-14.

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24. Rapture is the physical taking up of a live person from Earth to Heaven.

25. Resurrection is the bringing a dead person back to life with a new body.

The resurrection of Jesus - Luke 24:1-14

The pre tribulation rapture and resurrection of the church - I Thess. 4:13-18.

The posttribulation rapture and resurrection of the church - Rev. 14:14-16

Physical death was imposed by God, in His infinite wisdom, to protect the lives of people who love Him. It prevents the otherwise overwhelming preponderance of “evil,” from squashing any pittance of love and goodness which might appear in the world. I mentioned that in Chapter Three.

God’s authorization for rapture or resurrection of the righteous, is their faith in the atoning death of Jesus the Christ (Rom. 5:15-19). The unrighteous people will be resurrected long enough to stand at the White Throne judgement; but after that, they will face a second death (Rev. 20:15-20; 21:8). This is how God overcomes physical death.

### **Three Dispensations**

Bible history can be divided into three periods of 2000 years each plus a 1000 year Millennium rest. Each period illustrates one of three fundamental ways that God and man can relate.

Any interaction between God and man, in any age, is either the “work”<sup>26</sup> of God or the “work” of man. Examples of “work” are; God creates, and man sacrifices a burnt offering.

And, any work done by God or man will be at the direction of God or man. Either He directs or we direct, what work will be done by either party. In other words, God's “will” or man's “will” guides the work of God or man. Examples of “will” are; God gives the ten commandments. Man says, I will go fishing today, I will not go to church.

Given those conditions, God and man can interact in only four possible ways. This means, for the purpose of persuading man, the interaction is either: (1) Man's will - Man's work; (2) Man's will - God's work (absurd; God will not do Man's will because it violates His sovereignty);<sup>27</sup> (3) God's will - Man's work; (4) God's will - God's

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26. I define work as any action or activity that God or man can do. If only two parties are involved, then whatever happens between them must be the work of one or the other.

27. Duet. 4:39; Isaiah 45:7; Acts 17:24-25

**Figure One - Design in God's Interaction with Man**

<b>Man's Will Man's Work</b>	<p>ADAM - a type of Christ. Rom.5:14</p> <p><b>CONSCIENCE</b> - GOD ALLOWS MAN TO LOVE GOD ON HIS OWN</p> <p>2000 YEARS</p>	<p><b>No awareness of sin</b></p> <p>Demonstrates man will go bad under his own leadership. Acts 14:15-17; Rom. 1:18-25, Rom. 5:13-14</p>
<b>God's Will Man's Work</b>	<p>ISAAC - a type of Christ. Heb. 11:19</p> <p><b>PROMISE AND LAW</b> - IF YOU DO GOOD, YOU GET A BLESSING; IF NOT, NEUTRALITY - IF YOU DO EVIL, YOU GET PUNISHED; IF NOT, NEUTRALITY</p> <p>2000 YEARS</p>	<p><b>Awareness of, but no power over sin</b></p> <p>God promises redemption. God gives the Law to show man he needs redeeming. Gal. 3:19-24</p>
<b>God's Will God's Work</b>	<p>JESUS CHRIST - The Suffering Servant - Christ in you, the hope of glory. Col. 1:27</p> <p><b>GRACE</b> - GOD PERSUADES MEN TO LOVE HIM</p> <p>2000 YEARS</p>	<p><b>Awareness of, and power over sin</b></p>
<b>Rest</b>	<p>JESUS CHRIST - The King</p> <p>1000 YEARS</p>	<p>GOD PROVES HE LOVES MAN</p>

work. See Figure One on the next page.

We can see these three ways of relating all through the scripture. They correspond to three of four periods of Bible history.

From Adam to Isaac is the first period. From Isaac to the first coming of Jesus is the second period. From the first coming of Jesus to the second coming of Jesus is the third period. Each period is approximately 2000 years long. The fourth period is the 1000 year Millennium rest. Prior to Adam was creation; after the Millennium rest, is the unknown of eternity. Let's look a little at each dispensation.

**The Period of Conscience**

From Adam to Isaac, God allowed man to work out his own will (Option One). I have called this time the period of Conscience; where God gave an example of the shedding of blood, as an atonement for sins, to Adam's family. The plan of salvation was communicated in the heavenly constellations.<sup>28</sup> God left the responsibility of seeking,

following and loving God, to man. Man gets to direct (Man's Will) and man gets to "do" (Man's Work).

God's witness of the Savior to come was given in the arrangement of stars into constellations. Originally, the 12 signs of the Zodiac told of His first coming as a suffering servant and His second coming as King of Kings.<sup>29</sup> The stars were those people's form of Bible. Since then, Satan has polluted the witness of the stars into the present form of paganism known as Astrology. And with the advent of concrete and pavement, people do not have occasion to gaze at the stars for extended periods as they once did. So, in these days, that form of Gospel is not widely known. Job, who lived before Abraham, knew about a redeemer, and believed he would be resurrected (Job 19:25-27).

God overcame **physical death** in this period by the rapture of Enoch (Gen. 5:24; Heb. 11:5), and by the resurrection of Job (Job 19:25-27) in the future.

Since God, in this period, left it up to man to appreciate and love God because of what was made (the creation), God judged love for Him by the following standard given in Romans 1:20.

"For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, has been clearly seen, (in the stars) being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse."

This means that people like Job could love God because of the magnificence of the creation and the gospel written in the stars. **Spiritual death** was overcome, in this period by a witness of God everywhere in creation.

We also know that God judges sin in this period by the standard given in Romans 2:14-16.

"For when Gentiles (everyone not a Jew) who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them, on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus."

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28. See the book: "The Gospel in the Stars"

29. See "Gospel in the Stars", p.10-12

This means they had instinctive knowledge. The way people knew what to do and not do, is the “Golden Rule;” do unto others what you would want them to do unto you. And conversely, don’t do to them what you don’t want them to do to you. This is how people know that murder is wrong: they don’t want to be murdered. The same with other aspects of the Ten Commandments. **Love of God**, in this period, came out of their appreciation of the creator for the magnificent creation which He had made.

### **The Period of Promise and law**

From Isaac to the first coming of Jesus, God allowed man to work out God's will, Man's Work. This is the period of Promise / Law; where God gave man promises (incentives) and law (commands) that could cause man to seek, follow, and love Him. Some say promise and law are different ways of dealing with man. I suggest they are the same, one is the positive aspect, the other is the negative aspect.

A promise says if you do good, you get a blessing; if not, you get neutrality. A law says if you do evil, you get punished; if not, you get neutrality. So they are just positive and negative sides of God's will and man's work.

God gave man the Gospel during this period via promises to Abraham (God's Will). God promised that through Abraham's seed all the nations of the world would be blessed (Gen. 12:3). God repeated the same promises to Isaac and Jacob (Israel). In another way God gave the gospel to Abraham, the substitutionary sacrifice of the ram for Isaac (Gen. 22:9-11).

God defined through Abraham that if a Jew wanted to become included in the family of God, and go to Heaven, then he must be circumcised. Through this ritual a person would communicate his desire to God to be in the family of God (God's will, Man's Work - positive side). This is action by faith. Doing something painful and somewhat eccentric as a sign of commitment to God. This is similar to baptism today, where we produce witness to the world and God, of our commitment to Jesus Christ.

In this period, we also see examples of God **overcoming physical death** by rapture in the taking of Elijah (II Kings 2:11-14). Jesus, in the same period was resurrected after three days.

**Overcoming spiritual death** came through the witness of Abraham, through his lineage, and through the prophets.

At the Exodus, Moses gave the law (God's Will) concerning things to do and not do (Man's Work). The gospel lay in the picture of sacrifice of the passover lamb. And it was repeated and amplified by keeping of the various laws. **Overcoming spiritual death** came through God's witness to Moses. It came from Moses to the people through the miracles performed by God throughout their wanderings; passing through the Red Sea, etc.

The acts of animal sacrifice provided temporary forgiveness of sins. The animal sacrifices looked forward in time to when the perfect sacrifice, Jesus Christ, would die for the forgiveness of all sins, of all mankind, in all periods of history. Meanwhile, just as the passover lamb caused the death angel to pass over the house which applied the blood; so it was, that death from sin (Gen. 2:22; 3:3) would be passed over, if the fathers would sacrifice the lamb each time it was appropriate. In effect, the sacrifices said to God, "Please forgive me for my sins, and I give my lamb, my temporary payment, looking forward to the time when **You** will die to redeem me from Hell, the full payment for the penalty of my sins." This was God's Will, Man's Work - negative side.

**Loving God**, in this period, would follow from people appreciating God for including them in His family, and for Him forgiving their sin; which provided freedom to be close to Him.

In later years and during the time of Christ, circumcision and sacrifice lost its significance in providing gratefulness to God. It became just something people had to do. For one reason or another, the priests did not teach people that they should be grateful to God for allowing them into the family of God through circumcision. The priests didn't teach that people should be grateful to God, for forgiving their sins through sacrifice of animals. All those actions became just things to do which were expected. The promises became like law. The law became a contest to see who could keep it the best. Thus, the righteousness of God became the self-righteousness of man, and gave God no appreciation or love.

### **The Period of Grace**

From the first coming to the second coming of Jesus, is the period of Grace (God's Will, God's Work). God has *worked* out His own *will* in the affairs of men. It is characterized by God's *will*, Him wanting people to love Him, and God's *work*, Him coming to Earth as a man, to

seek and save that which was lost.

God's *will* has been written in the New Testament. God is *working* out His own *will* in the lives of men via the Holy Spirit and godly men. Jesus started the work, and the work continues through godly men who are the spiritual descendents of Jesus and the Apostles.

He accomplished His will by leaving Heaven, coming to Earth as a man with no personal powers (John 5:19-24). However, Jesus spoke the words of the Father and did the works of the Father, because the Father gave Jesus the Holy Spirit without measure (John 3:34).

Here on Earth, He declared Himself to be God in the flesh. He lived a sinless life in the midst of sinful men; and was a blessing to everyone. Only a few appreciated Him. Many did not believe Him, and thought He was an imposter.

After three and one-half years of ministry and doing good, men tortured and killed Him in a most horrible way. Through that agonizing experience, He could have called down enough angels to kill everyone in the world. But He did not. He asked the Father to forgive them instead. Thus He proved that God loved man. *Loving man while they were torturing Him.*

He died and was buried. But this is not the end of His life. In the time of Adam, God said, "In the day that you eat, you will surely die." That was the decree that declared that death was the result of disobedience (Gen. 3:3-5). But those words also imply continued life for obedience.

When it came to Jesus, He was sinless. But yet He died on the cross. That was wrong! Death was only for sinners. Life was decreed for non-sinners. Since Jesus was sinless, but He died, the Father could not, by His own Word, leave Him in the grave. Therefore, the Father was obligated to act on Jesus' behalf, and raise Him from the dead.

The resurrection proved that God validated the ministry and life of Jesus. And hence, it proved the validity of the promises of Heaven to those who believe through faith. The later taking (rapture) of Jesus up into the clouds (Luke 24:50-51), demonstrates that which is *said* to be done for His church, *will be done* for His church (I Cor. 15:50-54; I Thess. 4:16-17). Thus, **physical death** is overcome, and will be overcome, in the period of Grace.

Jesus promised that those who love God and love their neighbor through faith in Him, He will take to Heaven forever. And if we coop-

erate fully, He will provide the persuasion and point-of-view necessary to accomplish **loving (A) God** fully.

God **overcomes spiritual death** in the period of Grace by God asking for man's cooperation in learning about Him. Since the natural man has no true knowledge of God, he must cooperate to listen to get that basic knowledge from whatever godly man is willing to impart that knowledge. That witness might come in the form of personal evangelism, or it might come in the form of going to church. In the section below, I go over how God overcomes spiritual separation.

### **Overcoming Spiritual Death in the Period of Grace**

God's goal is to persuade you to love Him. This requires a change in the natural man's thinking and actions. Whereas before one knows anything about God, one's thinking and actions did not include concepts of God. You knew and cared nothing about Him. Getting acquainted with God, coming to believe and have faith in Jesus Christ, is what it means to overcome **spiritual death** (separation from God). This is a process. The process is called Reconciliation and Sanctification.

As I said in Chapter Three, since Adam and Eve were displaced from the Garden, the "Natural (unregenerate) Man", born since Adam, cannot love God because you cannot love whom you do not know. And from whom you are separated, you cannot come to know on your own. Most people all through history, never come to know about God. Therefore, it is not possible for man to know or love God by himself.<sup>30</sup>

The biblical explanation of how God overcomes separation from Himself, in the age of "Grace" is given in the whole New Testament. The most succinct explanation is covered in the Book of Romans.

Separation from God (spiritual death) is defeated by the process of using all three of the following components. (1) "Initial Cooperation," which allows a person to hear and expose himself to theory about God, but it is not yet accepted as fact; (2) "belief," which is acceptance of some facts about God; (3) "faith," which is believing enough to act upon the belief in the finished work of Christ. This whole process is called "learning." Its the same process children use to become educated in schools about the tools of life. Learning about God is no different than learning about geography; except for the Holy Spirit which does His convicting and educating part.

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30. This is why, to this extent, Calvinism's Total Inability doctrine is correct.

**“Initial Cooperation”** is the idea that a man will listen when initially confronted with the basic concepts of God. This is man’s part. In order for a person to listen, to hear about God, they must be open to listening, reading or both. Since God has allowed man sovereignty over his own life, this is man’s part. Man is in control of whether or not he will listen; not God. God will not violate the sovereignty of man to force man to listen in order to hear. If He did, this would not be loving, and would therefore, compromise God’s character and holiness. Many times people don’t listen because they are “dull” of hearing (Is. 6:10; Matt. 13:15). They are not really listening intently, perhaps day-dreaming or uninterested, for whatever reason.

The people who have a need in their life may listen. Children will usually listen and take in the concepts because they are used to having teachers tell them about new concepts.

Initial cooperation to listen is extremely important. One can never know the truth about God without listening or reading (Rom. 10:17). I believe christianity needs to put more emphasis on initial listening from an evangelism standpoint.

**“Belief”** is the intellectual acceptance of certain facts concerning God. As one allows himself to be exposed to God’s “light,” the Holy Spirit will demonstrate the contrast between the “good” of God, and the “evil” of the world and of the man’s own heart. This perception is what tells him that he wants God’s blessings and doesn’t want Hell. This perception is brought about by the Holy Spirit in His convicting role. Again, the person must cooperate long enough to receive the teachings of Christ. That is man’s part in belief. The Holy Spirit’s part is to convict of sin, righteousness and judgement.

The concepts taught on the surface of scripture is just the way believing and faith happens. There is no Godly magic by which some people believe and some people don’t.

“But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised” (understood, I Cor. 2:14). Before a believer becomes a person of faith and born again, this person, and all people, start their life not knowing about the theory of God. I say “theory”, because when a natural man, a man not born again, initially hears about the concepts of God; that’s all it is, a theory. It is a like a 15th century man hearing that the world is round for the very first time. Even if the man is open to the possibility, he does not know whether to

believe it or not.

How then, does anyone come to believe and call upon the name of the Lord? “How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?” (Rom. 10:17). The writer asks the rhetorical question knowing the implication is that those elements are necessary to come to faith. “So faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ.” (Rom. 10:17).

Men come to believe by allowing themselves to be *open* to the theory of God and Christ. And, the goodness of God, as revealed by the mercy, grace and love of Christ, draws all men to Himself (John 12:32). Exposure, over time, to the Word of God gives man an alternative world view, in which, he might believe. Once he has a certain quantity of alternative theory, the Holy Spirit begins to bring about an exchange of lies for the truth (Rom. 12:2 and John. 16:13). This is the process of renewing of the mind which transforms a persons point-of-view.

“**Faith**” is believing the facts of God to the degree that you will act upon that belief. This requires much dedication, love and cooperation from godly men. Conviction of a believer is many acts of godly men and the Holy Spirit over time in a person’s life. The new believer must cooperate to learn enough additional theory, long enough, to be convicted by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will be right there waiting to act, at the right time, upon what one has learned. One of the basic concepts is repentance.

Repentance is the idea that a person must change his life’s direction. He may not know how to change direction, he just knows that his life needs to change, to be conformed to the image of the Son. It is in this phase of “belief” that a man must face his own personal sin, and perhaps his first act of faith.

Facing and confessing one’s own sin can be very difficult. It carries with it the idea of shame; especially if it involves other people. It is kind of like standing on top of a cliff, and God is telling you to jump off. And if you jump, Jesus will catch you before you hit the bottom. He will catch you in the sense that He, and the others whom you have offended, will forgive you and you won’t have to pay the consequences of your sin. On the other hand, if He does not catch you, it would be like you hitting the ground, being injured or dying, by having to suffer the humiliation of people looking down on you because of the shame of

your sin. Many times, the guilt is too much to risk. Only a great love shown by christian brothers, and God Himself, can overcome such shame.

But God, and most other people are gracious, and if you will confess your sin, most people, and God for sure, will forgive your sin and cleanse you from all unrighteousness (I John 1:9). Confessing is very important because it takes away the wall of separation between you and God. Afterwards, you don't have to hide from Him anymore. You feel clean before Him. You know He is pleased with you.

In confessing your sins, on the negative side; you must also confess that Jesus is God, and that He is manager of your life, on the positive side. It is a sign to yourself, God, and the demons that on such and such a day, you left the old sin life behind, drove a stake in the ground, and went forward into a new life with Jesus as manager of your life. The stake marks the time of your decision.

Mark 16:16 says:

“He who has believed and is baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.”

Believing enough to act on your belief is faith. This means that if you back up your words of confession with the action of baptism, that demonstrates your faith. This means you become a partaker in the *promises* of faithful people. And, there are many promises. I always ask a new believer to be baptized because it starts him out on the right path to further acts of faith.

However, the old habits and sins of the unregenerate life still persist in the life of the person wanting to change. Invariably, the new christian tries to live the christian life by sheer will power. It is not long before he learns he cannot live the christian life by himself. This experience is usually very discouraging, and causes one to doubt the truth of christianity. It doesn't seem to be working!

Soon if he is blessed, some godly man will tell him that the christian life cannot be lived without God doing the changing. God allows this experience so the man learns that he needs to “abide in Christ” for success (John 15); he can't do it alone. When a man trusts God in faith for some issue, God will reveal Himself to the man by doing something which only God could do. This Godly action, seen by the man, feeds back to him the insight that God is real and working in his life.

When this trusting by faith and Godly action happens a few times, a man's point-of-view changes from a "believer" to a person of "faith." In the same way, when a man realizes that God will act in his life, if only the man will trust God enough to act; this causes a change in point-of-view. This change in point of view is caused by the conviction of the Holy Spirit. *Over time, it is a paradigm shift in ones point-of-view, and resulting life change, which is referred to as being "born again."*

### **The Meaning of "Being Born-Again"**

I hear pastors, every now and then, preach about being "Born Again". That term doesn't convey much meaning for me. I know that the technical term is regeneration but even the word regeneration cries out for explanation.

Unger says Regeneration is, "the spiritual change wrought in man by the Holy Spirit, by which he becomes possessor of a new life." He goes on to say that Regeneration, ". . . is the change from the state of depravity, or spiritual death, to that of spiritual life." I don't think his definition helps much. It doesn't explain what actually happens inside a person that makes that person different.

You will remember the twelve spies Moses sent into the promised land. The bible says that Joshua and Caleb had a different point-of-view than the other 10 spies (Num. 13:30-31). They thought the land could be taken and the other ten spies thought the land couldn't be taken. Numbers 14:24 says Caleb had a "different spirit" than the other ten spies.

Calvinists would say Joshua and Caleb's different "spirit" produced their different point-of-view. Or is it possible that their different point-of-view, concerning God's help in taking the land, produced a different spirit?

Could it be that the Holy Spirit used their previous Hebrew training to convince the two that, with God's support, Israel's grasshopper army (metaphor for small), could beat the giants? In contrast, the other ten spies did not believe that God would be involved. And, in judgement, they did not factor in God's support in taking the land. Therefore, they saw defeat, with only their own small army fighting giants. The difference is point-of-view about God working in their everyday life. It is the same today.

I suggest to you that to be born again is to gain a new point-of-view about life; a point-of-view different than what you previously had; a Godly point-of-view; a point-of-view different from the world. A point of view about the God of unlimited power, that will actually be involved in your life (Matt. 17:20). When the bible says, “. . . old things have passed away, behold, new things have come” (II Cor. 5:17). Its not that life around you has changed; its that your own point-of-view *about Gods action* in your life has changed.

In John 3:3, when the Lord said to Nicodemus, unless a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God, all Nicodemus could think of was obstetrics! He did not make the connection that Jesus, as God, was doing something new in his life, and in the lives of others in the world. He was changing their point-of-view with respect to God’s involvement in their life.

What was going on with Nick? He said in verse two, “Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.” Nick seemed to realize, at least intellectually, that Jesus was connected with God. But apparently, he didn’t have enough personal conviction to trust that Jesus, as God, was establishing a new kingdom. In other words, he didn’t believe enough to act upon his belief which is the definition of faith. Joshua and Caleb believed enough to act upon their belief. They were men of faith.

Is it possible that regeneration and being born again is another way of saying that one has enough old thought patterns changed, such that a new point-of-view about life emerges? I believe so!!

### **Loving God in the Period of Grace**

Once regenerated, if we continue to cooperate and take responsibility for doing what God asks, the Holy Spirit will gradually accomplish the changing of our heart (our spirit) to the divine nature (II Peter 1:4-8). God changes our nature from a sinful nature to the divine nature through “Managed Cooperation.” Managed Cooperation is the process of setting apart the person of faith such that the person sees the hand of God operating in their own life.

Managed Cooperation is just that. God manages and men cooperate. Sometimes this concept is called “Lordship.” In the first century, under the discipleship of Jesus, He taught, and the disciples followed. It is the same today. God manages; we cooperate. Jesus walked; the

disciples followed. Jesus directed; they complied. Jesus said do; and they did. Nowadays, godly men (mature disciples) lead, and the new disciples follow.

God does the management, we just follow Jesus by seeking **first** the kingdom of God and **His** righteousness (Matt. 6:33). That is our job. His job is to manage; that is, to provide and make us successful, by His standards.

He has our future under control. He is responsible for our success by adding “all these things” (Matt. 6:33). All these things, are the things you need to make your life work correctly (food, shelter, clothing, etc.). God’s goal is to make your life successful by His standards. See Jeremiah 29:11:

“I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare, and not for calamity, to give you a future and a hope.”

This means your future will be guided successfully by God. Jeremiah 29:11 equals future success. But you have to trust Him for the outcome. Trust God for what you need and He will provide. See Matt. 7:7-11.

“Ask and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. “For every one who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it shall be opened. “Or what man is there among you, when his son shall ask him for a loaf, will give him a stone? “Or if he shall ask for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!”

This means God will take care of you. Your Father in Heaven loves you, just like you love your sons and daughters. Remember, Jeremiah 29:11 equals future success, so trust Him for it. Our tendency is to worry about the future, managing our life again, forget it! We did that unsuccessfully for years. See Matt. 6:31-33.

“Do not be anxious then, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘With what shall we clothe ourselves?’ “For all these things the Gentiles eagerly seek; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.” But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these

things shall be added unto you.”

This means don't concern yourself about how to make your way successful in life. That is God's job. Your job is to seek God and His righteousness. This is such a hard concept for responsible adults to grasp. They have been taught from children to think for themselves (manage their own lives). That is one of the major deceptions of our society. You must manage your life because no one else will do it for you. **WRONG!!** God will do it for you, and do a much better job of it. See Proverbs 3:5-6.

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding, in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your path.”

This means He will direct. If you will trust God, whatever happens to you in life **is** God's will for your life. Because if you are trusting, He **is** directing. The implication is that if some circumstance comes into your life, and you are trusting, that means the circumstance is there because God **wants** it there. Usually, its there because God wants you to learn something by dealing with the situation in a godly manner. This is how He teaches you and everybody. See Hebrews 12:11.

“All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who are trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.”

This means that trials and troubles are not for your destruction, they are for your training!! Remember, Jeremiah 29:11 equals future success, but you have to continue to cooperate. Depending on God like this is the meaning of faith.

He accomplishes changing your heart to the divine nature by managing your life for you. Since God has infinite wisdom and perfect character and He loves you, He can manage your life better than you can. The difference between your thinking and His thinking is sin! You must allow Him to manage, in order to reap the benefit of His infinite knowledge and perfect character. He will manage perfectly. So when you get to Heaven, God will beam at you and say, “Your life came out just exactly the way I wanted. “Didn't I do a good job? “I am so pleased that you allowed Me to be God in your life.” Another way to look at it is; God is our loving heavenly Father, shouldn't we as His children, allow the Father to guide us into spiritual adulthood? Of course we should. Cooperating with God to draw near to Him, leads

Him to draw near to you (James 4:8).

“**Knowing**” is acting in faith for a long enough time, that God feeds back to you confirmation of the truth of your faith. the confirmation usually comes in the form of God doing unusual things over and over again. Things like, in the case of a poor man, he prays for food, God provides money from where none was expected.

When this kind of experience happens over and over again, God becomes real by experience. Just like the little kid who burned his fingers. We need that confirmation from God to survive spiritually.

The bottom line is that if you will trust Him to manage your life, He will make it a success *by His standards*. The result is you become conformed to the image of His Son, you take on the divine nature, you will love God, and you will be welcomed into Heaven accompanied by great glory.

### **Jesus, The First, The Center and The Last**

The significance of this section is to reinforce the truth of the three dispensations. The genius of God is demonstrated in that, all three periods are punctuated with the appearance of Jesus, either in similitude (type) or in person.

Jesus can be seen in the sacrifice of the animal as a covering for Adam’s sin; in the sacrifice of the ram instead of Isaac; in the sacrifice of the Passover lamb; in the sacrifice of Jesus for the world; and in the sacrifice of men for themselves at Armageddon. Men who fight against God, will be destroyed by God at Armageddon. Since they haven’t asked for His forgiveness, to escape destruction, they will be destroyed. Thus, they will have to pay the price of their own sin.

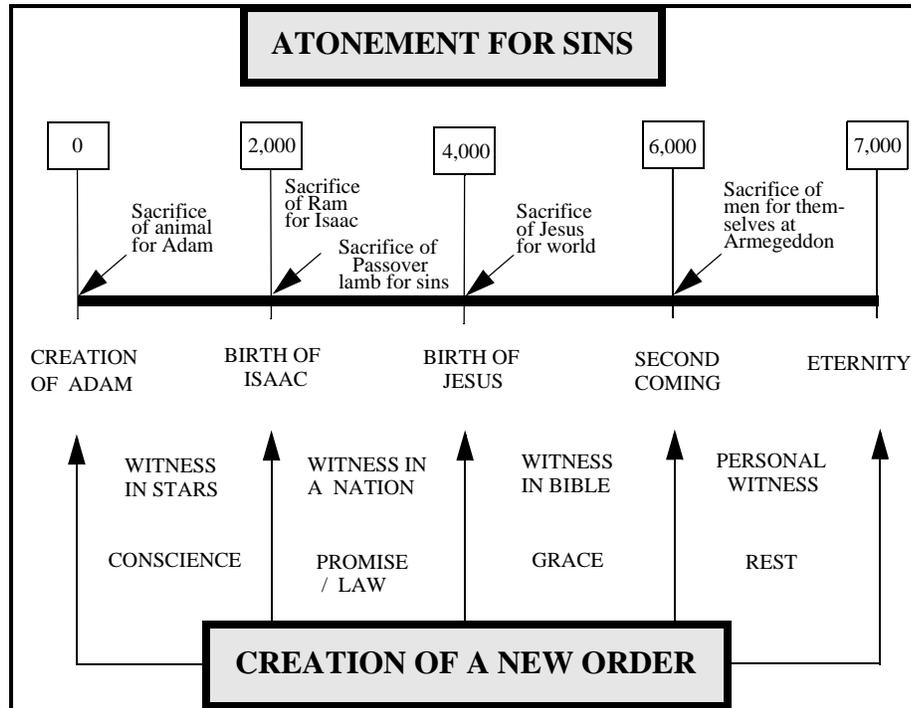
Jesus Christ, God incarnate, the most important “man” to ever live, stretches His influence over the entire time of mankind.

He is the First and the Last, the Alpha and Omega, the First Adam (Rom. 5:14) and the Last Adam (I Cor. 15:45). Jesus is First in the sense that he existed before the earth was created (John 1:1-3, 14; 8:58). And Adam is a type, in contrast, to Him. Jesus is the Last in that He will return to establish a literal kingdom upon the earth.

Not only is Jesus the first and last in the absolute sense; but in “type,” He is also the first and last of each dispensation. But before we see how, let's define a “type.”

Types are models or similitudes that have common elements with other descriptions of events in biblical history. One of the more com-

**Figure Two - Design in Bible History**



mon types; picture Jesus as the Passover lamb. You will remember that God, via Moses, asked each person to sacrifice a lamb and apply the blood to the lintel and two door posts, so the death angel would pass over their house and not kill the firstborn (Ex. 12:1-13). Thus, by their faith in doing so, their firstborn was saved from death. That's where the Passover Feast celebration came from. The sacrifice of the lamb under the law looked forward to Jesus, "the Lamb" (John 1:29). And 1500 years later, we find Jesus sacrificed by the Father so that whoever might trust in Jesus might be forgiven and saved to Heaven. Thus the Passover lamb is a type of Jesus Christ and His work on the Cross.

The type adds meaning to the identity of Jesus and our relation to Him. In this way, we can relate more easily to the concept of savior. Now, the following shows how Jesus is the first and last of each period or dispensation.

From the fall of Adam (when Adam and Eve ate) to the sacrifice of Isaac is about 2000 years. We know that Adam is a type of Christ (Rom. 5:14; I Cor. 15:39-49) as is Isaac a type of Christ (Heb. 11:19). Adam dying spiritually (on the day he ate, Gen. 2:17) is a type, in con-

trast, of Jesus' sinlessness. We see in Genesis 3:21 that God slew the animal and made a covering for the garden couple that demonstrated His grace. Likewise, God made a "covering" for you and I that by Jesus' blood, shed on the Cross, we might be shielded from God's wrath. Therefore Jesus, in type, is the "first" of this dispensation. See Figure Two above.

We see Isaac as a type of Jesus' sacrifice. You remember how Abraham and Isaac went up on the mountain at God's request to sacrifice his only son on an altar (Gen. 22:1-19). The sacrifice of Isaac corresponds to the sacrifice of Jesus. And in type, Jesus is the last of the dispensation of Conscience. Thus, Jesus is the First and Last of the period of Conscience.

In the period from the sacrifice of Isaac to the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross is also about 2,000 years. Since Isaac is a type of Jesus, we see that "at the right time" (Rom. 5:6) the type was fulfilled in the actual death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, He is also the first and last of the dispensation of Promise/Law.

In the period from the first coming to the second coming of Jesus is about 2,000 years. Here we easily see that Jesus is the first and the last of this dispensation of grace. The Second Coming will complete a total of 6000 years of time. With the additional 1,000 years of rest in which Jesus applies His government to mankind, where He will *prove* that God's way is best (Rev. 20:6). He will truly be the First and the Last; the Alpha and the Omega.

The significance of this observation about Jesus, the First and Last, is that it defines how Jesus, the Christ, the God-man, is the **center of all** biblical happenings through-out history. Jesus, as this demonstrates, is the center of God's plan for the salvation of mankind. Jesus is God come in the flesh. "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under Heaven given among men, by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Jesus of Nazareth, who is called Christ, is the first, the center and the last of all time.

## Summation

This chapter demonstrates how and why there are just three dispensations or fundamental ways in which God has interacted with mankind. Since Jesus is the First and Last of each dispensation, means He defines dispensations. There are three dispensations not seven. His involvement with each dispensation lends credibility to this particular

dispensation definition.

These dispensations limit the scope of how God will deal with mankind, and how He will get a people to love Him forever.

He overcomes **physical death** by very long life, rapture, ascension and resurrection.

**Separation from God** is overcome by believing, by faith and by knowing.

The real impetus to **loving God forever** comes from God's example of love to man. God will get people to love Him by illustrating the difference between the *good* of God and the *evil* of man throughout Bible history. God illustrates "good," man demonstrates his "evil" nature. It is the contrast between "good" and "evil" that tells a man that God is good and preferable in the long run. Evil tells a man that sometimes its fun, but it leads to pain and death.

The Holy Spirit convicts in three areas of faith; (1) the personal *sin* of the man, and mankind in general, (2) the *righteousness* of God, and (3) the *judgement* to come. From the contrast between good and evil, the Holy Spirit produces conviction. As a result of conviction, man perceives that God's way is better, and that he needs God to manage his life.

When Managed Cooperation is employed; loving God and loving one's neighbor naturally follows. That is the faith needed by Christianity for God to show Himself great among us, once again.



## **Part Two**

### **Changing the Theology**



## Chapter Five

# Managed Cooperation Theology and Unity

*Managed Cooperation today is similar to following Jesus around in His day. He directs and you do.*

### The Central Purpose Implications

Before the foundation of the world, God desired a people who He could love and who would love Him forever.

It is the implication of this central purpose which is important. This implication suggests what christianity should be about. Christianity should be about persuading people to love God. This is so, because God will not extract love. Therefore, He chooses to persuade men to love Him. This is accomplished through the theology which Jesus taught which I have characterized as Managed Cooperation Theology.

Managed Cooperation Theology defines that salvation is a work of both God and man together. God manages and men cooperate. The Holy Spirit instructs through the word, and men learn. The Holy Spirit prompts men to act, and men accept the hint and do as He suggests. Godly men, who are spiritual descendents of Jesus and His Apostles, ask men to be disciples.

God's highest priority is us loving the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our mind, and with all our strength. And the second is to love our neighbor as ourself. *These priorities are the sum total of the marching orders of God's army. Love God. Love your neighbor.*

Loving God is expressed by devotion to Him personally. I said in Chapter One, My Encounter with Jesus, what that was like. We need to grow this idea of personal devotion to Christ.

Making disciples is devotion to both God and your neighbor. Obviously, it is the betterment of God's inheritance, and it is the betterment of the disciple going to Heaven.

Loving your neighbor is expressed by devotion to his betterment. Loving your neighbor tells him God cares. It opens him to spiritual communication.

### **Central Purpose Implications about Non-Believers**

Christianity should be about showing people that God exists, that He is good, and that He loves them, that He is the rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (Heb. 11:6). Christianity should be about showing people that if they will cooperate with God in getting to know Him, they will see that He is “good,” and He will reveal Himself to them. And, then they can appreciate Him for being “good.”

#### **“Initial Cooperation”**

It must be emphasized; that because non-believers don’t understand much about God, they must cooperate with godly men who are trying to acquaint them with God. We need to tell them why they should listen. The reason they should listen is to taste and see that the Lord is good (Psalm 34:8). It’s like mathematics, you can’t learn about it if you don’t listen long enough and apply yourself. Its the same with knowing God.

Accentuating love to the unbeliever is essential because they distrust organized religion in general, and “people selling something” in particular. Its hard for people to believe that someone is doing something just for their benefit. Going to extreme measures to show them the love of God, is the only way a witness can get through. This is because it is the kindness of God, which leads them to repentance (Rom. 2:4). It is the mercy, grace, and love shown by the witness which they will attribute to God, because; they reason, God has produced that love in the witness.

Many people don’t listen because they don’t think God is relevant in the society. And they don’t want to waste their time. Most reasons for not listening have to do with demons working in peoples lives. The main problem to belief is getting people to listen, in order to hear. To listen one must be open to finding truth. If one assumes he has the truth already, he is fooling himself. He will not be open. Jesus said it is not the healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick. He said, “I have not come to call the righteous but sinners.” (Mark 2:17).

**What christians need to do is pray that God the Holy Spirit will break the demonic bonds which prevent the Natural Man from listening.** Contrary to the belief of some, the Holy Spirit will influence but not to the degree of insuring or preventing ones salvation.<sup>31</sup>

On the other hand personal sin, family troubles, sickness, cancer,

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31. See Chapter Six, Three Possible Theologies

accidents, financial problems; and sin in general, tends to make some people come to the end of themselves. They may need someone like the God of the Universe in their life to solve their problems (like me). These may listen and hear (Matt. 13:16; Rom. 11:8).

Other individuals may be against God. God says don't cast your pearls before swine (Matt. 7:6). These may never open themselves to Godly concepts. If they don't, they pay the price.

For any and all of these, you can pray that God will soften their heart. This is the first opportunity for God and godly men to work together in a potential believer's life. That is why we pray for them (Matt. 5:34). We pray that God might rebuke the evil one to open their eyes and ears (Luke 10:17; Rom. 10:1).

Many times Christians expect too much from the Natural Man. Belief and faith are big steps in a person's life. It means abandoning much of what one has thought of as normal, right and ok.

Love and encourage the potential Christian. Do not judge the person's past; it might be forgiven. Just help the person walk in whatever "light" he will accept (John 1:7). Tell him what God has done for you. Loving him, and letting him see you loving God, is the best you can do.

### **Central Purpose Implications about Beginning Believers**

Christianity should be about *demonstrating the love of God* to beginning Christians. That teaches them to love God by copying to others what was done to them, and for them.

Christianity should be about *cooperating with God; believing in faith* that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, and that in *faith in Him* is life everlasting. And, that one must *accept Him as savior* and *be baptized* to demonstrate your commitment to Him.

We need to instill commitment to *cooperation with God* in allowing Him to manage the beginner's life by example.

That *one must clean up one's life*. And if one cooperates, that causes God to make one's life better than it was before cooperating. They can then, appreciate Him for that. That also gives them feedback that God will do more for them in response to their further acts of faith. That makes them feel good about cooperating further. These values must be actively taught, in church preaching, in Sunday school, and in home groups.

### **"Belief"**

Belief is the intellectual acceptance of certain facts concerning

God. As one allows himself to be exposed to God's "light," the Holy Spirit will demonstrate the contrast between the "good" of God, and the "evil" of the world and of his own heart. This contrast is what tells him that he wants God's blessings and doesn't want Hell. The conviction of perception is produced by the Holy Spirit.

The following are the basics that one must accept. They may not be accepted all at one time. In fact, they will probably be accepted over time. But they all must be accepted to be regenerated (born again) by the Holy Spirit.

- \* That God exists - Gen. 1:1, 26
- \* That God rewards those that diligently seek Him - Heb. 11:6
- \* That God loves you - John 3:16
- \* That God wants to have a personal relationship with you - John 17:3
- \* That God will take to Heaven those that love Him - I Thess. 4:16-17
- \* That God will banish to Hell those who do not love Him - Matt. 10:28
- \* That man is separated from God - Hebrews 7:26, See Chapter Three, Man's Separation from God
- \* That man is his own boss - Proverbs 14:12, See Chapter Three, Sovereignty
- \* That man is a sinner - Romans 3:23, See Chapter Three, Man's Sovereignty and his Fallen Nature
- \* That Jesus Christ is the only provision for love and fellowship with God - John 14:6; Romans 5:8
- \* That Jesus died on the cross to provide forgiveness of my sins - Matt. 26:28
- \* That we must individually accept Jesus Christ as savior of our soul - John 1:12, Romans 10:9-10
- \* That we must turn away from our sinful ways and embrace God's ways - Acts 17:30
- \* That we need God's management of our life - Rev. 3:17-18
- \* That we must individually accept God as manager of our life - Proverbs 3:5-6; Jeremiah 29:11
- \* That our job is to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and everything else will be added unto us; by God's excellent management of our life - Matt. 6:33, Jesus said, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will

come in to him.” (Rev. 3:20) This means everyone, not just the elect.

The opening of the door, is the opening of the door of your heart. God only requires that you cooperate with Him. If you will go two steps with Him, He will go three steps with you. “O taste and see that the Lord is good; how blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him.” (Psalm 34:8)

The things above are what a man must believe. After becoming aware of these things, a man must cooperate with the prompting of the Holy Spirit to *act* upon this knowledge.

### **Central Purpose Implications to People of Faith**

Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength; and your neighbor as yourself. We must retrain ourselves to view that mandate as our highest priority. All activities should lead to those ends. Everything we do must revolve around this mandate.

Christianity should be about demonstrating personal cooperation with God; such that God manages ones own life; that is, we depend on Him to make our life successful. Cultivating the relationship with God causes more appreciation for God. It also causes Him to appreciate you more, such that He will reveal Himself more. Cooperation through relationship, causes all levels of love between Jesus and Man (John 15:4-5). Then, while cooperating, we must communicate that we are cooperating, such that others will see the good example.

Beginners in the faith, need to hear about how people of faith are cooperating with God in their lives. This means leaders need to make it popular via testimonies about how God is working in peoples lives. A testimony might relate how the person had a great financial need. And how the family trusted God to meet the need, and how there was no known way the need would be met. But just in time, God came through to meet the need in an extraordinary way. Testimonies of God’s love are extremely important to the spiritual health of the christian individual and church.

It seems that church leaders don’t take advantage of this spiritual resource because they may feel there are not enough testimonies around. And, maybe there are not many during these spiritually lean days. Leaders must promote activities which encourage people to trust in faith. Leaders need to be creative in doing so.

Being creative is what is so special about loving God and people. We need to encourage creative expression of love for God. We need to

encourage creative expression of love for our brothers and sisters. We need to encourage creative expression of love to the unbeliever.

This means we need to find creative ways to bless God! This could be done through blessing individuals personally, like the pastor, and other leaders; honor them because they guard your souls (I Tim. 5:17 with Heb. 13:17).

## **Teaching Individual Faith**

Faith is believing those facts to the degree, that you will act on that belief. Your first act of faith may be to thank Jesus for forgiving your sin and express your intention to follow Him. It could go something like this:

“Lord Jesus, I want to know You personally. Thank You for dying on the cross to forgive my sins. I open the door of my life and accept You as my savior and Lord. Thank you for giving me the promise of eternal life. Take control of my life, make me successful, and make me the kind of person You want me to be.”

The second step of faith is to be baptized (Acts 2:38). It is the confirmation of your confession of faith; believing and acting on that belief. It is the first thing Jesus did (Matt. 3:15; Mark 1:9; Luke 3:21). Being *baptized* based on ones confession of faith will certainly make God take notice (Luke 15:10). It is a start. From then on, it is one issue of faith after another.

### **Faith is Variable**

There has been some question about how faith works. Some scriptures suggest that faith is a gift from God. But those are in reference to the spiritual gifts (I Cor. 12:9). Some other scriptures suggest faith comes by hearing and the Word of God (Rom. 10:17); such that something in the person causes faith.

Calvinists would have us believe all faith is from God alone, and has nothing to do with what a man thinks for himself. Someone, coming from a Calvinistic perspective, has said that the Holy Spirit gives out faith, but sometimes we don't trust; however, faith is there in the background just waiting to be exercised. I guess, somewhere along the line, in some unknown way, God touches the person such that the faith

is initialized and exercised.

I have a real hard time believing in the God alone explanation. Let's look at the case in point, Gen. 17:17. The angel of the Lord was telling Sarah and Abraham, God would give them a son.

“Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, ‘Will a child be born to a man one hundred years old? And will Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?’”

Their reaction suggests they thought the idea was ludicrous. Does this mean they had faith but did not trust at the time of the news from the angel? Does the faith come from God which was resting in the back of their minds, just waiting to be exercised? Then, why did they laugh? Did God touch them in some unknown way; and where there was scorn, now there was faith? This does not sound like the way people really think.

It sounds like Abraham was being honest. The verse says his reaction came from his heart. It seems like he really thought that was a crazy notion. But later, they had sex, they did what was necessary to produce the child Isaac. Is it possible that as they thought it over, they changed their minds; and decided to believe God and cooperate? Then later, they gained the faith that they really didn't have while listening to the news? I think so.

### **A Review of how we think**

The soul; that is, our mind, will and emotions are the part that make us *similar to* other individuals. If we looked at the soul in computer terms, our “mind” would be analogous to the software which actually does the reasoning. Into the mind stream inputs which are weighed in the process of forming an opinion or making a decision. We have our logic section that suggests what is reasonable. We have our long and short term memories that provide data which is applicable to the decision at hand. We have our sensors which provide inputs regarding the world around us at the time. We also have emotions that have an effect on the present decision and / or acceptance of data as facts.

That portion of the soul, the so called “will”, in my humble opinion, is a decision process; not an entity, which weighs the viable alternatives of any formulation or decision question. Each alternative has more or less important aspects, which in-effect, apply pressure on ones

decision-maker (will) toward a decision for that particular alternative.

When we are listening to, and have to interpret, what someone else says or does, we take it all in and accept or reject the ideas as our perception filters the data.

Our perception is mostly governed by previously accepted information about life. That is, a person interprets each new piece of data in light of what he has previously accepted. This process tends to lend stability to one's life and yet it allows a person to discard old data and put new data in its place. This includes old beliefs replaced by new beliefs. This includes pagan beliefs replaced by Godly beliefs. This is the process by which God changes peoples thinking.

In addition to thoughts generated by our own mind, the Holy Spirit and demonic spirits also provide external inputs which affect our decisions.<sup>32</sup> They come in the form of thoughts that appear as our own. One of the major issues of the christian life is how do we tell the Holy Spirit's whisper, from a demonic whisper, from our own generated thoughts? The answer to that question is: we discern between the whispers by comparing them to the scripture. The scripture is the truth. *This is a major reason for learning the scripture; to prevent deception.* The comparison of Scripture to other ideas produces a contrast between the two. The contrast between the two is highlighted by the Holy Spirit which convicts concerning sin, righteousness and judgement. But the demonic spirits do the same thing; they try to persuade men to think and do against God.

Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of Christ (Rom. 10:17). The Holy Spirit works in our mind to produce the godly point of view which is gained by a cooperative effort between the man and God working in our heart. The Holy Spirit counteracts the inputs received by the demonic powers.

Whatever is not of faith is sin (Rom. 14:23). This means that whatever thinking patterns incorporate ideas of faith; are true and godly, but the patterns which do not originate in faith are false and ungodly. When any thought pattern comes into the mind, it is compared to whatever thought references are available and applicable in memory. Some reference patterns may have a biblical origin, and others may have a non-biblical one. The Holy Spirit and demonic spirits try to persuade the person to accept their respective ideas. Usually this

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32. Luke 12:12; John 14:16,17,26; Acts 5:3,4; I Kings 22:20-23

all takes place very quickly. The result is the person comes to some conclusion regarding the thoughts which were under consideration. That conclusion then becomes a part of the memory of the person. Eventually, thousands of conclusions in memory become part of the persons personality, and spirit. This is how people think.

Faith is variable because more faith or less faith comes from which voice you follow. If you take the word of demons speaking, you will move away from Jesus. If you take the word of the Holy Spirit speaking, you will move toward Jesus. If your overall thinking patterns gravitate toward Jesus, He will have more effect on your life than demons. If your overall thinking patterns gravitate away from Jesus, He will have less effect on your life than do the demons. These forces cause your faith to be variable. The issue is who will you believe? Most people don't realize these forces are even acting upon them. They just hear all the voices as their own various different thoughts.

Here is some insight from the interpretation of the parable of the sower, Luke 8:11-15.

(11) "Now the parable is this: the seed is the word of God.

(12) "And those beside the road are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their heart, so they may not believe and be saved."

These people hear the truth but don't necessarily accept it. The devil speaks to their mind saying things which demean the scripture, and lobbies against believing. He tries to get their mind off of spiritual things, and onto the things of the flesh, world or pride (Rom. 8:6); which causes them to forget the scripture. This means they don't think about the things of the spirit which might produce life and peace. Thus, they reject or ignore, and the scripture is gone from their mind and life.

(13) "And those on the rocky soil are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no firm root; they believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away."

These folks want to believe, and maybe do for a while, but have no support system which they need to get spiritual food. They have no foundation on which to sustain their new belief. The Holy Spirit has little truth to use to convict of sin, righteousness and judgement. They have little knowledge of Jesus, and closeness to Jesus, to sustain the

onslaught of thoughts of the flesh, the world and pride. As a result, the whispers of the evil one lead them back into the temptations, which they find comfortable from before. Over time, they have less and less of Jesus to counteract the increasing temptations of the flesh, the world and their pride. They cannot stand against the demons, and fall victim to the old life of slavery to sin, sickness and death.

(14) “And the seed which fell among the thorns, these are the ones who have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with worries and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to maturity.”

These are nominal christians who believe to some degree, but are more interested in the ball games, climbing the corporate ladder, and worries about their stocks, bonds and 401k's. They don't seem to have time for Christ. The problem is that with little fellowship with Christ. The flesh, the world and the pride of ownership crowds out the Holy Spirit from their mind and heart. This results in depending on themselves, and not depending on God. They are the long term babes in Christ that should be more mature. These people usually have children who don't know God because they are not committed to teaching them about God. These might be called “lukewarm christians.”

(15) “And the seed in the good ground, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance.”

These are the people who believe, cooperate with the Holy Spirit and draw closer to Jesus over time. With their commitment to Lordship and Jesus managing their life, the devil's influence weakens and the Holy Spirit's influence becomes stronger. They are freed from slavery to sin and become slaves to righteousness. They cooperate and the Holy Spirit teaches, convicts and loves. They see God's mercy, grace and love. They tell others about God because they are sold out to God themselves.

Over time, a body of data is accumulated in the form of life memories and experiences. In the end, what we accept as truth now, puts pressure on our decision-maker for succeeding opinions and decisions. Thus, practices of faith promote more faith, non-practice of faith permits removal of faith by the evil one (Matt.13:12). Over time, faith or lack of it, affects your spirit.

The spirit (heart) of a man is the disposition of the soul as measured by the nature of one's life memories. Is he a "health nut"; or "an old softy"; or maybe "an animal lover"; these are examples of dispositions of the heart. It is the spirit of a man which makes each individual *unique*.

Now, the "spirit" of a man, in the Biblical sense, is the character of those life memories with respect to God. Does the character of my life experiences reflect the nature of God and oneness with God? Or is my image more like an animal? Is it the character of my life to put God before self, or vice versa? Am I committed to God or committed to self? Have I trusted God in faith for other issues previously? Do I have a track record with trusting God? Have I trusted Him before on some hard issue? For example, I trusted Jesus to be savior of my soul when I was twelve years old. But I didn't trust Him to be Lord, or manager, of my life until I was thirty five.

What was going on in between? The Holy Spirit was using the time to show me my need to trust Him with managing my life. This demonstrates the same phenomenon that Abraham and Sarah demonstrated. That just because they believed God to move from Haran, doesn't mean they will have the faith to believe for a son from a ninety year old mother and a one hundred year old father.

Increased faith, comes through believing one additional time, what God wants you to do *this time*. You cooperate, assuming God will do what He says He will do. Even if it sounds impossible. Each time you take God at His word, and He comes through, it reinforces your ability to believe Him further. This reinforcement is the Holy Spirit's part. This is the mechanism that He uses to give you the faith which He wills. But you have to cooperate with Him in the exercises. Some people do, and some people don't. But remember the demonic spirits are speaking to your mind also. The spirit you heed is the one who guides your life. So, turn to the Holy Spirit for guidance, for sure. Exercise your faith.

Practice becomes experience. Experiencing God opens one's eyes of "knowing" just like the little kid who burned his fingers. Increased faith or decreased faith is taught in the verses surrounding the parable of the sower. See Matt.13:12, the context is godly knowledge from which faith comes.

"For whoever has, to him shall more be given, and he shall

have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him.”

The variableness of faith is partially dependent on the variableness of godly knowledge. If godly knowledge varies, as the above verse suggests, then faith varies also. Some days you are closer to God than others. Some days you succumb to temptations that you may not on other days. Conversely, some days you would be strong against the same temptations on some days that you indulge on other days.

## **Learning to Allow God’s Management**

Allowing God to manage your life is you doing your part and God doing His part. That is the essence of living where God manages your life.

You can manage your life more or less. You will do a bad or mediocre job. He will do a great job. You have a limited point-of-view. God has an unlimited view into the past, present and future. This makes Him wiser than you.

The situation is that God has allowed you to choose. You can go your own way; or you can go His way. If you are smart, you will allow Him to manage your life. In these very trying times, God managing is especially important.

What most people miss is that God really loves you and wants your best. Like any GOOD parent, loving you involves your discipline. But as soon as you encounter discipline, you tend to bail out. You see the discipline as God not doing a good job, or things not going well, or life out of God’s control (Heb. 12:11).

The problem, is your point-of-view about God managing. Everything that happens to you is under God’s control.<sup>33</sup> The whole idea here is you have to trust God. You must assume that He is working in your life *even when it doesn’t appear so*. You must assume He is managing your life properly even if it appears He is not. This is the meaning of faith.

You *must* assume God is a good parent. If you don’t, you won’t be able to trust Him. God is the owner and operator of the Universe. He loves you. He has the power to make happen whatever He wants. He

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33. Read the story of Job to see this.

will take care of you until your time to go and be with Him.

The biggest problem you will ever have is believing that God is still on your side, even though you are a sinner. God takes care of you but usually it is right at the last minute before you actually have the need. He does that to build your faith in Him. If you need food for dinner, you may not get it until you sit down to thank God for the meal. That's right, you thank Him for it even though it has not arrived yet. That is faith.

God's part is to supply what you need and manage your life.  
**Here is your future, all decreed, and set in stone.**

“I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare, and not for calamity, to give you a future and a hope.” (Jeremiah 29:11)

You want to know your future; as a believer, that's it. Insured by declaration of the God of the Universe for your particular life; your future success. How God does it, is not for you to know. It's His business, it's not your business. It's your business to cooperate!

**First, trust God in everything.** He works for you all the time. “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean *NOT* (emphasis mine) on your own understanding, in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your path.” (Proverbs 3:5-6) If you are trusting, whatever happens to you **IS** God's will for your life. Nothing is out of His control. All is in His control. The hardest thing to do is to believe that. Ask God to help you believe Him.

**Second, trust God in everything.** “All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who are trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.” (Heb. 12:11) Trials and troubles are not for your destruction; but for your training. Remember you are taking on the divine nature; and cultivating future success.

**Third, did I mention that you need to trust God in everything.** I guess I did.

**Fourth, and most important of all, trust God in everything.** God will take care of you.

“Ask and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. “For every one who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it shall

be opened. “Or what man is there among you, when his son shall ask him for a loaf, will give him a stone? “Or if he shall ask for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him?” (Matt. 7:7-11)

This is God’s part; to make happen to you what will be best for your training. Don’t bail out, no matter what. Everything that happens to you **is** His will for your life. The next paragraph is your part.

**It is your job to seek first the kingdom of God** and His righteousness, and if you do, all these things; food, shelter and clothes, will be added to you (Matt. 6:33). Not just these things, but much more He will give, because He loves you.

What about if christians have been taken away by God in the rapture already, maybe He doesn’t care about us anymore. That thought is hogwash! It is straight out of the pit of Hell. God cares about you even more than before. Besides there is another rapture for you near the Second Coming of Christ (Rev. 14:14-16).

During the seven year Tribulation, more people will come to love God than in any other period of man’s history. The pressure is on. If you read bible history, it was always during the periods of discipline that people turned to God.

Trusting God is what this 2000 year period is all about. God is asking you to trust Him to manage your life. Will you do it?

Your part is to seek Him first. His part is to provide for you first, and make your life successful.

Your part is to appreciate Him working on your behalf. His part is to provide for your needs.

Your part is to accept, with gladness, whatever happens to you, even death. His part is to provide for your future; life and needs now, and Heaven later. If you would like to start serving Him right now, see Appendix A.

One of the biggest problems for an individual to overcome is: to not lean on your own understanding. You must allow God to cultivate dependence on Him in your life. That is the meaning of cooperation. Since we have managed our own life for so many years, it is hard to give that up.

In reality, first we give God management of our life, in some area, for awhile, then we take it back. We catch our selves doing our own

thing, and we give Him back management. We have to consciously practice dependence. We have to consciously practice just doing *our* job; seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. Let God do his job of providing, and making our life full and successful. That is, not being overly concerned or worrying about it.

As a person of faith, God has a whole curriculum of lessons for you to learn. These lessons are given in II Peter 1:1-11. He also tells you why you should learn them. These lessons help God change you from having an “evil” nature to having a “good” nature; like God’s nature. Peter calls God’s nature the “divine nature.”

The objective of allowing yourself to be changed, to cooperate, is so that when we get to Heaven, we will be enough like God that we will be compatible with Him. Its like a married couple, they need to be compatible with each other to have a happy marriage. We need to be compatible with God to have a happy relationship in Heaven.

**The goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and good conscience and a sincere faith (I Tim 1:5).**

If we just take responsibility for doing what He asks, the Holy Spirit will accomplish the changing of our heart to the divine nature. This is what it means to love God; doing what He asks; and more.

Managed Cooperation today, is similar to following Jesus in His day. You walk with Him from day to day, and you do what He asks as if He were standing beside you; telling you in person. Only instead of Him telling you directly, the Holy Spirit tells you from knowing the Word.

God does the management, we just follow Jesus. He is responsible for our success. This is Managed Cooperation Theology where the rubber meets the road.

**“Knowing”** is acting in faith for a long enough time, that God feeds back to you confirmation of the truth of your faith. The confirmation usually comes in the form of God doing unusual things over and over again. Things like, in the case of a poor man, praying for bread, and God providing money from where none is expected.

When this kind of thing happens over and over again, God becomes real by experience. Just like the little kid who burned his fingers.

One of the great joys of the christian life is seeing God’s hand. Seeing God’s hand is the confirmation that He is alive and working in

your life; and knows you personally. It demonstrates that God is real. We need that confirmation!

These are the implications of the Central Purpose for the Creation. And, if we adopt these suggestions, that sets us up to be one in the bond of love; with the Father, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit and others.

## **Unity in the bond of love**

Unity in Theology brings unity within the church. If we can get together on the essentials of christianity, and agree on what Jesus was trying to accomplish in His disciples, then we have a chance of affecting our society today. We all agree on the gospel; that is, the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. We all agree on the goal of making disciples. What we don't agree on is how to get from here to there.

Some churches use ritual and form to try to unify their people. Some churches use many meetings and lots of social gatherings to unify their people. These methods work to some degree, but are inadequate to truly unify. Jesus is the center of our life. He is the only one who can truly unify. We must gather around God. We must gather in His name around Him. He needs to be the focus of our attention for a significant period of time; at each meeting.

Unity in the bond of love was the concept of Jesus. In His high priestly prayer to the Father, John 17:22-23, He said:

“And the glory which Thou hast given Me I have given to them; that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, that the world may know that Thou didst send Me, and didst love them, even as Thou didst love Me.”

This is the common bond which I experienced in, “My Encounter With Jesus” story I told in Chapter One. These kind of experiences we need to feel the presence of God. To experience His presence is good. But that is not to say experience takes the place of the Word of God. Experience supplements the reality of the Scripture. Experience does not take the place of Scripture. We desperately need to experience the reality of God in our culture.

This means that when the body of Christ, the church, is united, the unsaved world comes to know that Jesus is sent by Father God. The unsaved world also comes to know that the Father loves them. **This is**

**what unity of the body does for the cause of Christ. It causes the unsaved to know the truth via the church.**

At the present time, the church at large is fragmented, there is very little unity between congregations. And, it causes the unsaved to believe that the christian God is of little consequence in life. God must be very grieved. This must be changed. Unity of the church at large, starts with unity between an individual and God. Have you cleared away all sin between you and God by asking any needed forgiveness? Are you right with God? Are you in fellowship with God? Do you love Him?

### **Unity between individuals and God**

Eph. 4:1-6: Paul, the Apostle, calls for the unity of individuals with each other and God.

“I, THEREFORE, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing forbearance to one-another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. “There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.”

This means we all need to be unified together; individuals, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. We need to be unified under the influence of the Holy Spirit who is our common bond. We need to be one in the bond of love. There is a song with those very words which we would do well to sing often. We need to be unified like the group I mentioned in Chapter One, My Encounter with Jesus. It reminds us of our common ground. The world system exalts individuality, Christ exalts unity.

Unity of the individual with Christ is first and foremost. Make sure no sin comes between you and God; keep short accounts. Confess your sin to God; He accepts you the way you are. He can take it, He loves you like a son or daughter. When you are honest with yourself, you grow. When you are not honest with yourself, you delay and inhibit any growth that might come.

Draw close to God, and He will draw close to you (James 4:8). Personally, you can do this by reading and studying your Bible. Listen

to worshipful music, listen to instructional CD's. Allow yourself into a small group bible study. Allow yourself to be exposed to uplifting seminars. Allowing yourself to move toward God, produces appreciation and love in you. The Holy Spirit connects with you as you cooperate. The two of you working together against demonic forces produces unity between you.

### **Unity in the Local Church Service**

What needs to be different, is our point of view regarding God's attitude about *His* wanting disciples. God wants people to be saved and love Him in the worst way. But He won't compromise His integrity about faith to get them to do so. When we don't get results in church, we tend to think its ok. It appears as if He doesn't want to use us to make disciples today. This notion is compounded by the existing Calvinistic theology that says, God alone saves all people. We reason that if God saves alone, He probably doesn't want to save anybody from our church this particular day. So we go on down the road of life deceived to some degree.

What would the church look like if the orthodox theology called for men to cooperate with God, drawing man in to work with God to make disciples, love God, and love our neighbor? If we really believed God was eager for us make disciples, and eager to work in men's lives to help them to become lovers of God, wouldn't that make a difference in our attitudes about church? Of course!

Because belief and salvation are a work of *both God and man together*, man's role in the process, takes on an importance not felt in a hundred years. We would say, God is actually looking to men, to **us**, to do the reconciling of men to God by faith (II Cor. 5:19).

Pastors must speak with authority assuring the congregation that the Holy Spirit, the very presence of God **is** in their midst (Matt. 18:20). The pastor must accentuate that point. It is necessary to convince the congregation that the Spirit is present when they don't see Him, or don't sense Him.

This does not mean believing that the Holy Spirit *might* be there. This is not praying that the Holy Spirit *will* be there. That is not faith. We must believe the scripture that He **is** there; ready and waiting. We must promote an atmosphere which welcomes the Holy Spirits working in our lives.

Although the scripture says, where two are more are gathered in

my name, there I am in their midst (Matt.18:20), nearly no one believes that. What people **do** believe is: its just a church service. Nothing more is going on. Satan has fostered this idea, it plays right into his hand. **We must believe the face of scripture that He is there!** If we don't believe the face of all scripture, its no wonder we can't get christianity right. If we don't believe the face of scripture, we have nothing else to provide truth and guidance. If we don't believe the face of scripture, we might as well go home and shut our mouths. We need to stop this business of picking and choosing what we will and won't believe! Its killing us.

The implication of the Lord actually being in our midst, through the Holy Spirit, can be life changing. For those with issues needing to be solved by doing business with God, His presence is essential. It makes all the difference in the world to everyone, when they really believe God is there. If by faith, church leaders assume He **is** there, it causes them to set up their service as if He **is** there in the flesh. This is the attitude needed to conduct a service where leaders are expecting the movement of the Holy Spirit to appear. That is faith!

Pastors must invite the congregation to confess their sins, make a commitment to Christ, be committed to holiness, fellowship with small home groups, and be involved in ministry. *When pastors make these invitations, the Holy Spirit then has opportunity to convict individuals of whatever they need to change.* Without such invitations to action, people are not motivated to change and be different. It is too easy to hide behind silence. Billy Graham's invitation is what made him so successful; people were faced with the decision to go forward or stay in their seat. The Holy Spirit was working overtime in hearts.

With these changes, it is not just leaders expecting God to do what they should do. It is *godly men* setting up the stage of God's play-house by preparing the heart of men to receive the wonderfulness of the Holy Spirit. **We should be giving to people all the tools they need to form opinions and make decisions about God; and that action, sets the stage for the Holy Spirit to do His convicting work in their heart.** The Holy Spirit convicts concerning, sin, righteousness, and judgement, but the person affected, actually makes the decision to follow the Holy Spirit's conviction. This is how God and man work together toward loving God. This is not Arminianism. This is Managed Cooperation Theology. Many times the person does not follow the conviction of the Holy Spirit. But that's ok. Our job is to make

opportunities that the Holy Spirit can use to convict peoples heart.

God is alive in our midst, and He always was, but now, with these attitude changes, we see Him in our midst because of the decisions made, and lives changed! Results make our hearts soar like an eagle! God is blessing visibly! Hallelujah!! We are serving by faith once again.

The pastor can preach, the congregation can witness, the missionaries can evangelize, and we get results! The Holy Spirit will ignite holy passions for God like never before. People come to know the Lord, get baptized, get active, grow in holiness; everyone wants to have a part. When people believe they are truly in partnership with God Almighty; that He needs their personal service in a righteous cause, in a work that is worthwhile for eternity, they feel honored and blessed to be a part of it. When there is success, which brings hope, people want to be involved with a winning team.

But God's role takes on an even bigger significance. When I commit to Him fully, He feeds back to me the reality that He is there. I feel His presence. I feel His love. He works in peoples lives miraculously because of their increased faith.

**We need to see God** in order to be excited and enthusiastic about the job of making disciples. However, in order for God to work in the congregation, we, and especially church leaders, must believe the Holy Spirit **is** moving within the congregation seeking people who He can convict of sin, righteousness and judgement.

Seeing Him by faith is the only way possible to see Him. People who have much faith get more faith. People who have little faith have theirs taken away (Mark 4:24-25). This principle is a two edged sword. On the positive side, one can gain faith fast if it is exercised but if not exercised, it melts away quickly. The lesson is, keep your faith active. Don't neglect it (Heb. 2:3-4).

We are looking at new life for individuals, and for the larger group, the church. We must **unite** our individual selves with God by practicing our love for Him. We must increase our worship time.

**We need** extended worship in church to adore Jesus. We need to sing with our hearts open to the kind of music that is worshipful; psalms read, hymns sung, and spiritual songs meditated upon (Eph. 5:19). Many of the songs played today do not elicit a worshipful spirit. We need to change that. It is great to "enter His gates with thanksgiving in our heart" but once inside the gates, so to speak, we should pro-

mote a worshipful spirit. Christian music which is not worshipful is just entertainment. God loves to hear our worship but His Spirit needs to fill our heart to connect with Him fully. This usually takes more than a few minutes, a more extended time is needed to develop and maintain worship in the service.

**We need** the Word of God read in open service, to honor God's presence. To thank Him for His presence. To read the Word with reverence is to honor the Word. Honoring the Word, honors the God whose Word it is from. Reading the Word aloud was done in the time of Ezra, the priest (Nehemiah 8:1-8). He was standing above the people so they could see him clearly. Ezra had a podium which he set the book of Law upon. He opened it, and the people stood up. He and others read from the book the whole day. Since I am advocating loving God in deed, I believe we need to honor God in our church services by showing we honor God's Word. We should read the Bible portion which is applicable for the day from the podium while the audience stands to their feet. This is honoring to God, and His Word of life. This practice instills honor and love for God in the youth and beginning christian. Ezra honored God. We should so honor God and His Word these days.

**We need** testimonies of God's movement via the Holy Spirit. This can come in the form of what God has done in years past, or what God has done more recently. In the church service, sometimes this could be five minutes for a more recent anecdote, or ten to fifteen minutes for a more dramatic, life changing testimony. These kinds of moments are vastly enriching to youth and beginning christians. These kinds of moments are what removes the humdrum of everyday church for some people. It makes church interesting and meaningful. I believe we should lengthen the service to an hour and a half. This will give ample time for extended worship and enriching activities.

**We need** special music and drama. Special music and drama draws the unbeliever to come to church just for the interest factor, if not for God. Special music and drama makes church, to some degree, a show. People respond to that; it peaks their interest long enough to become acquainted with Jesus. I used to belong to a large church who did that. All the hype and activities, got people interested in God. God was somebody! He was glorified in that assembly. Many came, at first, just for the activities. But later became influenced by the mercy, grace and love of God. The activities kept people around long

enough to become acquainted with the goodness of God which they later wanted in their life.

Some have argued that such light hearted, entertaining activities, are too much like a show. The implication is the practice is irreverent. I suggest that if the program is such that Jesus would enjoy it, no problem. And if it appeals to people while uplifting Jesus Christ in the process; what's wrong with that? This is an act of love for unbelievers, new believers, and godly men of faith alike. We all enjoy the entertainment side of well done, godly, uplifting productions. God is not a cosmic killjoy. Sometimes people tend to be that way.

**We need** special teaching of the Word; special guest speakers. This is not to say that the local pastor is in any way inadequate. Special speakers could come in the form of missionaries to foreign lands, professors of seminaries on tour with some special relevant message. Usually a well known personage of spiritual significance is appropriate, and draws a big crowd. These kinds of activities say God is significant.

**We need** people praying for the church service, during the church service; that the Holy Spirit will move in peoples hearts at the times of decision opportunity. Prayer is needed for the pastor to have words and his heart filled with the Holy Spirit, to deliver the message that God wants him to give; even if he had something else in mind. Prayer is needed to uphold the worship pastor to sing, praise and play to the glory of God during his time to lead.

**We need** a special prayer service time where everybody prays for the destruction of Satan's strongholds and fortresses which have been built in loved one's lives. It could go something like this. Announce in the service that everyone who has a loved one or friend needing prayer, write the name on a piece of paper and it would be collected in the offering baskets. These would be brought to the front and emptied into one container. The elders would come forward, and someone would read a prayer similar to the one in Chap. Eight, Prayer for the Lost and Oppressed. Everybody would pray as the prayer was read. This prayer will help destroy the influence of the demonic powers on the loved ones of the congregation. The prayer which was read would be made available to everyone at an information table for use at home.

**We need** the pastor to implore people to be reconciled to God during a time of invitation. Billy Graham really got it right when He asked people to come forward to make a commitment to Jesus as their Lord

and Savior. The song, “Just as I am,” was the perfect introduction to coming. It helped the heart to be soft to the gentle nudge of the Holy Spirit.

The pastor and leaders of the local church cannot predict who will want to make a commitment to God or when. But they do anyway; therefore, assuming an invitation is not needed. I believe it is imperative that the pastor take the last five minutes of his sermon on Sunday to offer an invitation to come forward and pray with someone, or make a commitment to Christ. This is a tremendous benefit to the heavy hearted, and to the person on the verge of making a commitment to Jesus at the prompting of the Holy Spirit. We are remiss in loving God if we don’t offer opportunities to be reconciled to God.

Some have said that if such emotional occasions are offered, that our christianity is too emotional; as if emotion is negative. Feeling passionate about our love for God is good; not bad. The people who say such things are also the people who tend to believe the sovereignty of God is more important than the love of God. This is unfortunate. Emotion is a big part of the passion which people feel for God. But on the other hand, emotionalism overdone is out of balance also, and must be tempered with the prudence of sober thoughtfulness about Scripture.

**We need** to come in contact with the experience of His suffering occasionally, just to appreciate what He did. This could be done by showing clips from the movie, “The Passion of Christ,” and the pastor speaking on the subject. Maybe, a scene could be set on stage with a cross or whipping post appropriately decorated with the reminders of His suffering; the pastor speaking of His love for us all. Afterwards, an invitation to pray with someone about sins needing forgiveness would be in order. Perhaps a communion time would be appropriate after such a scene.

**We need** to serve communion often to remember His sacrifice. People need to *experience* appropriately, the forgiveness associated with the body and blood of Jesus. It could be as simple as two elders standing at the front, one holding the bread and one holding the cup. As people file past, they take the bread, and the elder says, “The body of our Lord broken for you.” And, as they continue to the elder holding the cup, the person dips his bread into the cup, as the elder says, “The blood of our Lord shed for you.” The person departs to his seat and partakes as he or she goes.

**We need** to practice as many other appropriate activities as cre-

ative people can invent. These activities uplift and unify the body. All these activities express our love to God.

### **Unity Between Leaders and the Congregation**

In the thirty or so years I have been in various churches, I have seen a reluctance on the part of elders and other leaders to draw in members of the congregation to share in the works of ministry. That is, you may see deacons not in charge of anything or responsible for much. Usually there is lots to be done, or could be done; but elders seem to be afraid, to some degree, of losing their control. So they hesitate to delegate. They hesitate to take on any more responsibility than is necessary. Thus, they don't need help in managing their respective responsibilities, if indeed they have any individual responsibilities. In short, there is a tendency to not share leadership. This may be attributed to overcautious thinking, fear of loss of control, no perceived need for more workers; maybe all of the above at one time or another.

It seems to me that if we have people willing to do the work of ministry, elders should be forward looking enough to plan goals, events and tasks such that the workers can be busy doing something worthwhile. If leaders don't, they are not asking Jesus what the church should do next. They are not leading properly.

There are lots of people around who are willing to do things. It seems to me, the leadership culture needs to change. Loving God and our neighbor is people using their gifts for the building up of the body. I perceive church leaders needing to do a better job of planning what can, and should be done; and then set about to *ask* people to share in doing those jobs. That is the work of building up of the body in strength, and in numbers. One of the requirements however; is elders must delegate authority and responsibility; and, be sure and *ask* people to do the work of the ministry.

### **Unity Between Congregations.**

Unity brings synergy. Unity of the Spirit of God with our spirit, in large numbers of people, creates a phenomenon known as synergy. When synergy is present, it creates a sense of the Spirit that can be felt and experienced not found in a small group or in an individual.

One of the common ways we see this phenomenon is at the Super Bowl. There, you see fifty thousand fans yelling and screaming and rooting for their team. Synergy can be seen where someone or group

starts the action called, “the wave;” where a group stands up, waves their arms, and sits down again. In the next section another group does the same. This same action goes around the stadium and it looks like a wave going around. Everybody works together to create this wave because its fun and contributes to the feeling of the spirit of the game. Its a part of the enjoyment of attending such events.

Another one of the positive ways we have seen the synergistic effect is with Promise Keepers. That was a great thing to experience. Fifteen thousand men worshipping their God in unison. It was a spark of the Holy Spirit too wonderful to behold. The atmosphere of the stadium was electric with the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Another example is a Billy Graham crusade. He simply preaches Jesus Christ and Him crucified. The Holy Spirit uses the thousands singing to God which promotes the Holy Spirit to work powerfully in the hearts of people. Singing, “Just as I am,” people pour out from their seats to confess their sins and make commitments to Christ. The synergy of thousands of christians together in unity, produces a collective spirit, in conjunction with the Holy Spirit, which can be experienced in no other way.

This kind of experience must be arranged by churches working together. It cannot be done by individual churches alone.

Its functions like this which get the attention of the whole city, and perhaps the whole country. That is when we become relevant to the nation.

This is possible if the Community Churches will work with the Methodist Churches, the Baptist Churches work with the Churches of Christ and similar alliances form to do great things for God; under the unity of the Spirit in the bond of love.

### **Expressions of Love to Unbelievers**

I have talked about love for God, and how we might relate to Him as individuals; in a local church setting; and as congregations working together to accomplish a common goal. Now I want to offer some ideas about how we might love our neighbor as an individual one on one, and in group to group settings.

As an individual, one on one, we try to find opportunities to show the love of Jesus to each other. Jesus had an encounter with the woman at the well which is a good example. See John 4:6-26.

He equated water that quenched one’s thirst to “living water” that

quenched the thirst of the soul. The analogy was an interesting way to lead into a conversation which had great significance to her family. We can also use creative ways to start conversations of great significance.

Around our home or anywhere, random acts of kindness demonstrate the kind of love Jesus had for people.

- \* You might see your next door neighbors trash can out on the street after its been dumped. Put it away in his yard for him. If it is out regularly, put it away every week for him. It may produce an opportunity to tell him why you do it for him. That is, you are expressing to him that the God of the Universe loves him.

- \* Give a tip to your hair stylist. For some years, I have given my hair stylist a healthy tip. I don't have much money but she does a good job, and I know she appreciates it. We talk about spiritual things, and I know she sees God in the kindness of my tip.

- \* The next time you see a disheveled person, standing by a traffic light off a freeway exit, holding a shabby cardboard sign, give Him a few dollars in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, who is called Christ.

- \* The next time another driver tries to beat you out of a parking spot at the mall, let him have the spot, and give them a blessing as well.

- \* If your mother-in-law starts to give you a hard time about something; say nothing, walk over to her, give her a big hug, and in the sweetest way you can muster, tell her you love her. This is very disarming. She may never recover.

- \* Hold doors open for people. Most times they appreciate it.

- \* Call and or write to people who have shared a need. Many times, their need causes their heart to be soft toward God. You can step in as God's ambassador (II Cor. 5:20).

These are some ways to minister to the people you meet every day. You must be on the look-out for such opportunities. The most important thing is try to be creative in how you love. You never know when someone will want to talk about spiritual things. All you have to do is be loving.

**By group to group** I mean the occasion where a group from the church will go to minister to a group in the world forum.

State fairs, local fairs, gatherings of local artists there are lots of opportunities to minister in groups where the love of Jesus can be presented.

- \* Buy small bottles of water that can be given away to people on

a hot day. The bottle might have an invitation to the local church; with the address and times of the services on a label. The impetus to read the label could come from the quote about Jesus being the living water, and a short explanation about what that quote means. The bottles are given away with an attitude of love, not wanting anything in return but just being a blessing to people. If persons want to talk about the church or spiritual things, certainly there should be people available to share answers.

\* “Take a Spiritual I Q test” the sign would say. The booth was designed to ask people to answer questions about their knowledge of general religion and christianity; a five minute written test. It is graded and scored. The answers ranged from simple to difficult. When they were finished taking the test, a mature christian would sit down with the test taker and talk about the answers. There was enough variety in the test, to guess where the person was coming from spiritually. This exercise opened the door to many interesting and mutually beneficial conversations about Jesus. Many times people believed in reincarnation, or Mohammed; these conversations always turned to Christ sooner or later. There were people praying while the conversation lasted, and praying for God to bring open minded people to the booth. Several times in my experience unbelievers made commitments to Jesus, believers straying away from God recommitted their lives. Many people received blessing, a loving, listening ear and literature to enhance their interest in Jesus. This was a great way to make people feel comfortable while talking about God.

That is what we must accomplish. Try to find creative ways for people to feel comfortable while talking about spiritual things. Find ways that unbelievers can give themselves “permission” to talk about God.

## **The Theology That Jesus Taught and Practiced**

Jesus started His public ministry by going to the synagogue and declaring who He was and what He would do in Israel. This defined who He was and what He was there to accomplish. He went in, stood up to read, and someone handed Him the Isaiah scroll. He read Isaiah 61:1 and part of verse two.

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He anointed

Me to preach the gospel to the poor. “He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are downtrodden, to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord.”

Then He closed the book, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down.

This action demonstrates His purpose and goals in total. All of what He was about; and therefore what we should be about, is summed in that brief action. Later, in the foremost commandment (Mark 12:28-30), He made the summation of all that He was to accomplish. From the above, we can see His purpose in ministry consists of five goals.

- (1) To preach the gospel to the poor.
- (2) Proclaim release to the captives.
- (3) Recovery of sight to the blind.
- (4) Set free those who are downtrodden.
- (5) Proclaim the favorable year of the Lord.

Matt. 9:35-36 - “And Jesus was going about all the cities and the villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. “And seeing the multitudes, He felt compassion for them, because they were very distressed and downcast like sheep without a shepherd.”

Throughout His ministry, we see that Jesus was moved by compassion to help His fellow man. This tells us we should be moved by compassion for our fellow man. That is, love God for who He is and what He has done for us, and us be moved by compassion to serve our neighbor.

### **Preaching the Gospel**

Preaching the Gospel to the poor. This is not to say that the rich *could* not hear, but the rich seem to have no need or desire to hear (Luke 18:25; Mark 2:17).

The Gospel, in the strictest sense, is the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ; that which Billy Graham preaches. There is also the “Gospel of God’s Grace,”<sup>34</sup> which is all that is involved with the calling of the church out of the world, and into the kingdom of His beloved Son (Col. 1:13). The Gospel of God’s Grace is the practical

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34. Unger’s Bible Dictionary, “Gospel,” p. 420.

application of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ to His church. It is the who, what, where, when, why, and how of the church. You could say it is the “rest of the story.”

### **Proclaiming Release to the Captives**

Jesus came to proclaim release to the captives, and free them **from sin, sickness and death**. The proclamation, because it is a proclamation, means that all who are in Christ Jesus have the benefit of freedom from sin, sickness and death. That is the proclamation. As Christians today, we have the same imputed freedoms. But these freedoms must be appropriated by true faith; just as they were appropriated by faith in His day, under His ministry.

**Sin** Rom. 4:8 - “Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will not take into account.”

**Sin** Rom. 6:6 - “knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin.”

**Sin** I John 1:7 - “but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.”

**Sickness** Matt. 4:23 - “And Jesus was going about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people.”

**Sickness** Matt. 10:1 - “And having summoned His disciples, He gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.”

**Sickness** Luke 13:11-12 - “And behold, there was a woman who for eighteen years had a sickness caused by a spirit; and she was bent double, and could not straighten up at all. “when Jesus saw her, He called her over and said to her, ‘Woman, you are freed from your sickness.’”

**Death (physical)** Heb. 2:14b - “. . . that through death (His) He might render powerless him who had the power of

death, that is, the devil; and might deliver those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.”

**Death (physical)** Mark 5:23 - “and entreated Him earnestly, saying, ‘My little daughter is at the point of death; please come and lay Your hands on her, that she may get well and live.’”

**Death (separation)** John 5:24 - “Truly, truly I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.”

**Death (separation)** John 8:51 - “Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death.”

**Death (separation)** Rom. 8:2 - “For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.”

Jesus sets us free from the bonds which hold men in slavery to sin, sickness and death. Most of the time it is spiritual death; that is, physical separation from God which we are saved from; healing from physical death happens on occasion.

Jesus does the healing. Our Job, as mature Christians, is to set up physical conditions such that men meet Jesus and ask for His healing. Setting up the conditions provides the context in which the Holy Spirit can work.

### **Recovery of sight to the Blind**

Jesus healed people's blindness in at least two ways; (1) physical blindness, restoring literal sight, and (2) spiritual blindness, giving spiritual insight to His disciples and others.

**Physical** Matt. 20:30-34 - “And behold, two blind men sitting by the road, hearing that Jesus was passing by, cried out, saying, ‘Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!’ “And the multitude sternly told them to be quiet; but they cried out all the more, saying, ‘Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!’ “And Jesus stopped and called them, and said, ‘What do you wish Me to do for you?’ “They said to Him, ‘Lord, we want our eyes to be opened.’ “And moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes; and immediately they received their sight, and followed

Him.”

**Spiritual** Luke 6:20-22 - The Beatitudes:

- (1) Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.
- (2) Blessed are you who hunger now, for you shall be satisfied.
- (3) Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh.
- (4) Blessed are you when men hate you, and ostracize you, and heap insults upon you and spurn your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man.

**Spiritual** John 9:39-41: “And Jesus said, ‘For judgement I came into this world, that those who do not see may see; and that those who see may become blind.’ Those of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these things, and said to Him, ‘We are not blind too, are we?’ Jesus said to them, ‘If you were blind, you would have no sin; but since you say, We see; your sin remains.’”

These are some of the concepts that Jesus used to cause men to be free from spiritual blindness. The gospels are full of these counter active concepts which He used to give people light. It is the contrast between the “light” and the concepts of blindness (former thinking patterns) which the Holy Spirit uses to enlighten the hearer.

### **Set free those who are downtrodden**

Many people are sick because of more than a usual amount of demonic activity in their life. They may or may not be sick. They may or may not have visible signs of demonic activity in their life. But usually the downtrodden are oppressed by great infirmity, or mental, or emotional problems, and may have visible demonic activity in their life. They are very pitiful. But Jesus came to set them free from their chronic infirmities and the demonic oppression in their life.

Jesus healed three different types of oppression: (1) Casting out demons which inhabit people, (2) people having demons inside which cause sickness and, or deformity, and (3) dispelling demonic thinking and deception from people. Healing in this area could be termed; freeing their thinking to be different.

**Casting out demons** Luke 4:33-35 - “And there was a man in the synagogue possessed by the spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice, ‘Ha! What do we have to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who You are --- the Holy One of God!’ “And Jesus rebuked him, saying, ‘Be quiet and come out of him!’ And when the demon had thrown him down in their midst, he went out of him without doing him any harm. And amazement came upon them all, and they began discussing with one another, and saying, ‘What is this message? For with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits, and they come out.’”

Jesus cast out demons which set people free from the tyranny of oppression imposed by the demons. This is one of the benefits of faith in Jesus that we might be free indeed from demonic power.

**Demons causing sickness and deformity** Luke 13:11-12 - “And behold, there was a woman who for eighteen years had a sickness caused by a spirit; and she was bent double, and could not straighten up at all. “when Jesus saw her, He called her over and said to her, ‘Woman, you are freed from your sickness.’”

**Freeing someone’s thinking** Matt. 16:23 - “But He turned and said to Peter, ‘Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God’s interests, but man’s.’”

Peter must have been embarrassed to have committed such a faux pas. But Peter had a uncanny way of sticking his foot in his mouth.

In the kingdom of darkness; that is, the whole world system, which Satan controls, dwells the people who are captives to the various sins which are common to man. These people are firmly held in captivity by their sinful ideas of what is right, proper and good. This is not the “good” of God, but the good of what they determine; is good, and fair, and right in their own eyes. Because they have a sense of right, proper and good, not God’s standard, they are actually deceived and ignorant of God. Jesus came to free these from their prison of ungodly thinking and deception. He would transform them into the kingdom of Father’s dear Son.

**Transferring Authority** Matt. 10:1 - “And having summoned His disciples, He gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.”

These scriptures demonstrate another facet of Jesus’ ministry which illustrate His desire to bring freedom to people, such that they can appreciate and love God. I have written a study, given in Chapter Eight, on the subject of Spiritual Warfare. So I will not say more here except to say that Jesus cast out demons, and we can cast them out too.

### **Proclaim the favorable year of the Lord**

To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord, was to proclaim that a Jubilee was in effect (Lev. 25:10-18). Jesus was referring to the day in which all debts are forgiven; all lands sold revert back to the original owners, and the slaves go free. Proclaiming the favorable year of the Lord was Him arriving. He came and started His ministry with the proclamation that, in effect, good news had arrived. See Mark 1:14-15.

“And after John (the baptist) had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.’ See also Matt. 4:17.

The proclaiming of the favorable year of the Lord is the announcement that Messiah had arrived. And indeed He had.

All of the personal ministry of Jesus can be summed in the words, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength; and your neighbor as yourself. For this is what He did for three and one-half years. He loved God in obedience to the ministry, the torture of the Cross, even through the not knowing of why the Father left Him near the end. He loved the Father anyway. He certainly loved all the people He healed through His compassion. Jesus is God, and God is love. Therefore, Jesus is love. That is what we must be about; both to God and our neighbor.

### **Pastors and Leaders Action**

Now, pastors and leaders, its up to you. What will you do with what

you have read and learned? Will you continue to do what you have always done, or will you make some changes? Or better yet, will you think about what you have read, mull it over, pray and ask God what you should do? This involves such sweeping changes, you may want to give it lots of thought before doing anything.

I suggest you arrange for your whole leadership team to read this book. Talk over the concepts. Plan how these principles will apply to your congregation and / or denomination.

## Chapter Six

### The Battle of Theologies

*Church at large: Repent and Change, or Die Out.*

#### The Sad State of Faith in Christianity

The state of the church today in North America is one of weakness in demonstrating God's power; it is ineffectual in making disciples, and lacks real faith to build up body members. Therefore, we see the church fading away.

As christians, is that what we want? No. Is that what God wants? No. Then what is the problem? If we want God's church to grow, and if God wants His church to grow, why isn't it growing, vibrant, and spiritually powerful? The answer is we are not pursuing christianity by true faith.

There are at least four areas of faith which suffer: (1) The orthodox theology is only almost true, which needs to be changed to be 100% true; (2) The church lacks unity because of the existing fragmented theology; (3) Committed christians need to be much bolder in their approach to influencing the society. They are not so because the theology says God does it all; (4) The church needs to promote God's management of the believers life; The church lacking unity and a lack of God's management are a result of not getting our theology right. A lack of boldness is a result of a lack of unity and God's management of our lives. This is why all of practical christianity is dependent on correct theology. In this chapter I concentrate on how and why the theology must be changed. Calvinism must be abandoned, and Arminianism must be changed.

Calvinistic theory says God unconditionally, chooses individuals to Heaven and bypasses the rest which go to Hell. Scripture says, "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). This implies that a man can be saved if he decides to believe and be baptized. This difference between theory and the face of scripture is very confusing. The confusion translates to doubt; just like in the Garden of

Eden. Do I have an effect on peoples lives or does God do it all by Himself?

And, with Calvinism, godly men just go through the motions to “walk people through” a salvation program where some are saved and some are not. God alone, without mans help, designates who is saved, and who isn’t saved. We just try to save them all but never know who is really saved and who isn’t; only God knows.

The result of this theology is the subtle conclusion, “I really have very little effect. Why should I bother?” This effect on people demotivates them. This demotivation is what I see in churches today. Demotivated people don’t waste their energy on a cause which is said to do much good but which is only marginally effective. And since God saves, few people getting saved, implies God doesn’t want to save more people.

**This demotivation, in my opinion, is why the church is so weak and ineffective today.**

Church goers have no real enthusiasm. They warm a pew but are there because they want to stay out of Hell. They believe going to church will do it. What else is there? Others with more faith want to do more, and they do some things to help. Church goers are not more enthusiastic because the pastors and leaders are not more enthusiastic. The pastor’s faith is affected just like everyone else. Maybe more so; after all, they attended the seminaries which teach this theology.

Since christianity is nearly dead in North America, many devoted men are asking why christianity is declining. As they look for answers, where do they look?

In the scriptures, they see Jesus doing miracles which give people reason to believe. God isn’t doing many miracles today, at least not enough to be significant in the society. Some say the age of miracles is over. Most just don’t know why christianity is declining.

They also look to their systematic theology for answers. Westminster Calvinism is the origin of reformation theology which broke off from the Catholic church. It may not be exactly what Calvin believed, but it is most influential today. Maybe it is so influential, because up to now, there has been no other theology which is obviously correct.

Over the years, since the reformation, Calvinism has changed. Now some people believe various parts of the original, others differ on some parts. Not very many people accept it all as originally defined. But the vestiges live-on in our culture. In modern times, the original doctrine has been changed and manipulated. There is really no cohesive, generally accepted theology that makes sense in total. I believe we need to embrace Managed Cooperation Theology.

Our current Calvinistic orthodoxy, by its God-Alone implications, causes people to think that for some unknown reason, God's Spirit does not want to move in peoples lives. Since He is not saving many people, the orthodoxy suggests He doesn't *want* to save many. After all, it is God alone who saves. That is what the orthodoxy preaches. Therefore, it is reasonable to believe, if people are not getting saved, it is because God doesn't want more people saved. This plays right into the devil's hands. This idea is completely false. It means nearly everyone is to some degree deceived.

Someone may say, why doesn't God do something? The answer: God does not honor wrong theology. Salvation is by faith in all aspects of bridging the separation gap between God and man.

Calvinistic type theology dishonors God in the sense that even though God delegates authority to godly men for certain aspects of the salvation process, the theology says he doesn't. But the truth is, He has so delegated: and, we need to repent of that unbelief.

## **Calvinism - A Sovereign Work of God Only**

In my personal study, I have looked at scripture honestly trying to discover God's plan for saving mankind. I have looked at Calvinism as a basis for a systematic theology. But I cannot accept it. I believe Arminianism is closer to the truth than is Calvinism. But both concepts have theory that does not match reality. By this I mean that the theory, including the logical conclusions, do not match *all* of the scriptures when you take them at face value.

At the time of the Reformation, when these theories were introduced, the theory of Arminianism caused such a stir that men got together and formed the theory of Calvinism. These opposing theories caused a great controversy which persists even today.

## Theological Differences Contrasted at a Glance

### Arminianism

#### (1) Free Will / Human Ability

Although human nature was seriously affected by the fall, man has not been left in a state of total spiritual helplessness. God graciously enables every sinner to repent and believe, but He does so in such a manner as not to interfere with man's freedom. Each sinner possesses a free will, and his eternal destiny depends on how he uses it. Man's freedom consists of his ability to choose good over evil in spiritual matters; his will is not enslaved to his sinful nature. The sinner has the power to cooperate with God's Spirit and be regenerated or resist God's grace and perish. The lost sinner needs the Spirit's assistance, but he does not have to be regenerated by the Spirit before he can believe, for faith is man's act and precedes the new birth. Faith is the sinner's gift to God; it is man's contribution to salvation.

### Calvinism

#### (1) Total Inability

Because of the fall, man is unable of himself to savingly believe the gospel. The sinner is dead, blind, and deaf to the things of God; his heart is deceitful and desperately corrupt. His will is not free, it is in bondage to his evil nature, therefore, he will not -- indeed he cannot -- choose good over evil in the spiritual realm. Consequently, it takes much more than the Spirit's assistance to bring a sinner to Christ -- it takes regeneration by which the Spirit makes the sinner alive and gives him a new nature. Faith is not something man contributes to salvation but is itself a part of God's gift of salvation. -- it is God's gift to the sinner, not the sinners gift to God.

### Managed Cooperation

#### (1) Limited Ability

Because of the fall and separation from God, man from the womb is "Natural" and unregenerate, and only possesses finite knowledge and flawed character. However, man goes on forming opinions and making decisions about life, based on what knowledge level, and character traits, he possesses at the time. He doesn't realize he is missing God's infinite knowledge and perfect character. This means, man forms opinions and makes decisions about life and spirituality, that are different from God's. This different thinking is called sin. Sinful thinking is magnified by Satan and His angels. Sinful thinking causes sinful action. Since no man can think like God, all Natural people are sinners. A person's thinking can only be changed by the individual opening himself to the possibility of God's truth not yet known. This truth must be conveyed by godly men who are the spiritual decedents of Jesus. If he so opens himself; exposure to, belief of, and faith in God's truth and ways are probable.

## Theological Differences Contrasted

### Armianism

#### (2) Conditional Election

God's choice of certain individuals unto salvation before the foundation of the world was based upon His foreseeing that they would respond to His call. He selected only those whom He knew would of themselves freely believe the gospel. Election, therefore, was determined by or conditioned upon what man would do. The faith which God foresaw, and upon which, He based His choice, was not given to the sinner by God (it was not created by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit) but resulted solely from man's will. It was left entirely up to man as to who would believe and therefore as to who would be elected unto salvation. God chose those whom He knew, of their own free will, would choose Christ. Thus the sinners choice of Christ, not God's choice of the sinner, is the ultimate cause of salvation.

### Calvinism

#### (2) Unconditional Election

God's choice of certain individuals unto salvation before the foundation of the world rested solely in His own sovereign will. His choice of particular sinners was not based on any foreseen response or obedience on their part, such as faith, repentance, etc. On the contrary, God gives faith and repentance to each individual whom He selected. These acts are the result, not the cause of God's choice. Election therefore was not determined by or conditioned upon any virtuous quality or act foreseen in man. Those whom God sovereignly elected, He brings through the power of the Spirit to a willing acceptance of Christ. Thus God's choice of the sinner, not the sinners choice of Christ, is the ultimate cause of salvation.

### Managed Cooperation

#### (2) Conditional Election

God's choice of certain individuals unto salvation before the foundation of the world was based upon His foreseeing that they would love Him. Godly men are believers who are spiritual descendents of those taught by Jesus. For his whole life, the Natural man has seen the "Evil" of men, including his own. As he allows himself to be exposed to God's love, mercy, and grace, he begins to see the "Good" of God. Now a contrast begins to form between the "Good" of God and the "Evil" of men. This contrast provides the perspective that God is good and mankind is evil. The Holy Spirit now has the tools to convict him of: his own sin; the righteousness of God, and the judgement at the end of time. At some point, a paradigm shift in his thinking may take place. His thinking transfers from believing man's way is right to believing that God's way is right. His point-of-view changes. This process is called regeneration, or being "Born Again." He begins to see life from a whole new perspective; God's perspective. This is when that individual inherits the promises of salvation; begins to appreciate God, and begins to act in faith; that is, believing enough to act upon that belief. Jesus saves those who love Him and remain faithful to the end of their life.

## Theological Differences Contrasted

### Arminianism

(3) Universal  
Redemption or  
General Atonement

Christ's redeeming work made it possible for everyone to be saved but it did not actually secure the salvation of anyone. Although Christ died for all men and for every man, only those who believe in Him are saved. His death enabled God to pardon sinners on the condition that they believe, but it did not actually put away anyone's sins. Christ's redemption becomes effective only if man chooses to accept it.

### Calvinism

(3) Particular  
Redemption or Limited Atonement

Christ's redeeming work was intended to save the elect only and actually secured salvation for them. His death was a substitutionary endurance of the penalty of sin in the place of certain specified sinners. In addition to putting away the sins of His people, Christ's redemption secured everything necessary for their salvation, including faith which unites them to Him. The gift of faith is infallibly applied by the Spirit to all for whom Christ died, thereby guaranteeing their salvation.

### Managed Cooperation

(3) General  
Redemption

Christ's redeeming work made it possible for everyone to be saved but it did not actually secure the salvation of anyone. Although Christ died for all men and for every man, only those who believe in Him are saved. His death enabled God to pardon sinners on the condition that they believe, but it did not actually put away anyone's sins. Christ's redemption becomes effective only if man chooses to cooperate with God in the salvation process.

Arminianism suggests that man is responsible for choosing God's salvation offer with the convicting help of the Holy Spirit. However, Arminians miss the idea that God has shared His sovereignty with mankind. This oversight causes them to miss the concept that loving the lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and our neighbor as ourself, is the central purpose for the creation. Arminianism and Calvinism have in common that both believe that God has not shared His sovereignty with man. This is the principle difference between Arminianism and Managed Cooperation Theology.

Calvinism is inconsistent with the scriptures where God delegates authority to man for the Reconciliation of man to God.

Calvinism has become orthodox theology. Even today, many learned men still cling to the theory of Calvinism even though they have modified many of its strict tenets to better match the reality of the

## Theological Differences Contrasted

### Armianism

(4) The Holy Spirit can be Effectually Resisted

The Spirit calls inwardly all those who are called outwardly by the gospel invitation; He does all that He can to bring every sinner to salvation. But inasmuch as man is free, he can successfully resist the Spirit's call. The Spirit cannot regenerate the sinner until he believes; faith (which is man's contribution) precedes and makes possible the new birth. Thus, man's free will limits the Spirit in the application of Christ's saving work. The Holy Spirit can only draw to Christ those who allow Him to have His way with them. Until the sinner responds, the Spirit cannot give life. God's grace, therefore, is not invincible; it can be, and often is resisted and thwarted by man.

### Calvinism

(4) Irresistible Grace

In addition to the outward general call to salvation which is made to everyone who hears the gospel, the Holy Spirit extends to the elect a special inward call that inevitably brings them to salvation. The external call (which is made to all without distinction) can be, and often is, rejected; whereas the internal call (which is made only to the elect) cannot be rejected; it always results in conversion. By means of this special call the Spirit irresistibly draws sinners to Christ. He is not limited in His work of applying salvation by man's will, nor is He dependent upon man's cooperation for success. The Spirit graciously causes the elect sinner to cooperate, to believe, to repent, to come freely to Christ. God's grace, therefore, is invincible; it never fails to result in the salvation of those to whom it is extended.

### Managed Cooperation

(4) The Holy Spirit Convicts if allowed

The Holy Spirit's function is to convict men of sin, righteousness, and judgement. God allows sin in the world to show the "Evil" of men without God. God wants to show man the "Good"ness of God through the Law and Gospel. The contrast between "Good" and "Evil," indicates to man his need for God's knowledge, character, and salvation. Then, the Holy Spirit has the tools to convict a man of his previous folly, and that he should turn to God in faith. The people who do not **open** themselves to the "Goodness" of God, don't achieve knowledge of "Good." Thus, they can't compare it with their "Evil" point of view to see a contrast. They remain ignorant of God. Thus, they don't perceive the draw of the Holy Spirit or the worth of God; and they die in their sins.

face of scripture. In my opinion, these modifications still don't make the theology viable. In fact, Westminster theology is required in its entirety, to make a coherent systematic theology. Change any part, and the whole theory falls apart.

Since Calvinism seems to dominate the evangelical fundamentalist theology, even in my own church, I will confine my remarks to that the-

## Theological Differences Contrasted

### Arminianism

#### (5) Falling from Grace

Those who believe and are truly saved can lose their salvation by failing to keep up their faith. All Armenians have not been agreed on this point; some have held that believers are eternally secure in Christ -- that once a sinner is regenerated, he can never be lost.

### Calvinism

#### (5) Perseverance of the Saints

All who were chosen by God, redeemed by Christ, and given faith by the Spirit are eternally saved. They are kept in faith by the power of Almighty God and thus persevere to the end.

### Managed Cooperation

#### (5) Failing and Persevering Faith

A "believer," is one who has come to faith, and has the *promise* of salvation. The promise is conditional, in that one must have faith at the end of life, as well as when one first believed. Growing closer to Jesus allows you to gradually take on the divine nature. As you take on the divine nature, God feeds back to you that He is there; and that He knows and loves you. A "believer" is susceptible to deception until he becomes a "knower." If relationship with Jesus is neglected, one may cease to be a "believer," and may again, become, an unbeliever. Unbelievers are unsaved and pay the ultimate price. As you experience God more, you transcend from a "believer" to a "knower." A "knower" is positively sure that God loves and knows him. Once you are a "knower," deception is no longer possible because you have experienced Him. Faith to the end of life is assured.

ory as I understand it. John McArthur jr. seems to be a very outspoken proponent of this popular theory so I would like to use some of his words as representative of what many people believe about Calvinism and salvation. I will also use "The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination" by Mr. Loraine Boettner, as representative of Westminster theology.

The most blatant problem I see with Calvinism is the insistence that salvation, in theory, is a sovereign work of God only;<sup>35</sup> man has no part in it. The Westminster Confession states,

## Theological Differences Contrasted

### Arminianism Summation

Salvation is accomplished through the combined efforts of God (who takes the initiative) and man (who must respond) -- man's response being the determining factor. God has provided salvation for everyone, but His provision becomes effective only for those who, of their own free will, "choose" to cooperate with Him and accept His offer of grace. At the crucial point, man's will plays a decisive role; thus man, not God, determines who will be the recipients of the gift of salvation.

### Calvinism Summation

Salvation is accomplished by the almighty power of the Triune God. The Father chose a people, the Son died for them, the Holy Spirit makes Christ's death effective by bringing the elect to faith and repentance, thereby causing them to willingly obey the gospel. The entire process (election, redemption, regeneration) is the work of God and is by grace alone. Thus God, not man, determines who will be the recipients of the gift of salvation.

### Managed Cooperation Summation

Salvation is accomplished by both God and man working together to bring each new soul to faith and eventual maturity in love for God. God has provided salvation for everyone, but His provision only becomes effective for those who open their heart to the truth of the gospel. The Holy Spirit and godly men lead people to faith. "Believing" becomes "knowing" with experience. Thus, the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit, other Godly men, and the individual being saved, all have a part in salvation.

“. . . some men and angels are predestinated to everlasting life, and others are foreordained to everlasting death.”<sup>36</sup>

This means all peoples destinies were determined before creation. This also means we really have nothing to do with our own, or anyone else's, salvation.

This conclusion is very interesting and informative because it fits right into one of only four possible fundamental theologies between a personal God and Man.

### Three Possible Theologies

In considering who is involved in the salvation process, there are

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35. "We must remember above all that salvation is a sovereign work of God." John McArthur Jr., "The Gospel According to Jesus", p.39.

36. The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination, p.84.

only four possibilities; three practical possibilities. These possibilities are all mutually exclusive. By definition, only one possibility can be true. If one is true then the others are not true. A brief outline follows.

(1) *With neither God nor Man* - This alternative is not viable. No one else is involved.

(2) *With Man Alone* - The specific assumption is that God is *not* involved in salvation. The logical conclusions are that man accepts or rejects salvation by his own choice.

(3) *With God Alone* - The specific assumption is that Man is *not* involved in salvation. The logical conclusions are that God insures that some are saved, and prevents many from being saved.

(4) *With God and Man* - The specific assumption is that God neither insures or prevents. The logical conclusions are that God influences but not to the point of insuring or preventing, and Man accepts based on the influence of God and godly men. Man rejects based on willing ignorance of God.

#### **The explanation of each option.**

*With neither God nor man.* Absurd. By definition, this option is not God's plan for mankind. Therefore, the issue involves God, Man, or both.

*With man alone.* This is the Unitarian view. This option assumes that God has no influence on salvation. If this is true, it means that man accepts by his own choice. But this notion is inconsistent with the scriptures which teach that the Holy Spirit convicts people. “. . . And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgement; . . .”<sup>37</sup> If the Holy Spirit convicts, which is a part of salvation, then God *is* involved. Therefore, this option cannot possibly be true.

*With God alone.* This is the Calvinist view. This option assumes that man has no involvement in salvation.

The logical conclusions are that God insures that some people go to Heaven, and He prevents many people from going to Heaven.

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37. John 16:8

**Who is Involved in the Salvation Process?  
Only Four Possibilities**

**Possibility # 1 - With Neither God nor Man** *No other whos*

**Possibility # 2 - With Man Alone** *Specific Assumption: God has no influence on Salvation.*  
(Unitarianism)  
Logical Conclusion: Man accepts or rejects by his own choice.

**Possibility # 3 - With God Alone** *Specific Assumption: Man has no influence on Salvation.*  
(Calvininsm)  
Logical Conclusion: God insures that some people accept, and prevents many people from accepting.

**Possibility # 4 - With Both God and Man** *Specific Assumption: God neither insures nor prevents Salvation.*  
(Managed Cooperation and Man  
Theology and Arminianism)

Logical Conclusions:

<p>God influences but not to the point of insuring to, or preventing from Heaven.</p>	<p>Man accepts based on the influence of God and other men.</p>
<p>John 6:44 - "No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent me draws him: . . . "</p> <p>John 16:8 - "And He, when He Comes, will convict the world concerning sin, righteousness, and judgement; . . . "</p> <p>John 16:13 "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth; . . . "</p> <p>II Cor. 5:20 "Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God."</p> <p>II Peter 1:3 - "...seeing that His devine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence."</p> <p>John 12:32 - "And I, if I be lifted up from the Earth, will draw all men to myself."</p>	<p>Acts 18:4 - "And he was reasoning in the synagogue every Sabbath and trying to persuade Jews and Greeks."</p> <p>Acts 28: 23b - "...and trying to persuade them concerning Jesus, . . ."</p> <p>Romans 10:17 - "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ."</p> <p>Romans 14:22 - "The faith which you have, have as your own conviction before God." (context is doubt, see verse 23.)</p> <p>I Cor. 2:13 - "In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel . . ."</p> <p>II Cor. 5:20 - "Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us, . . ."</p> <p>James 4:8 - "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you."</p>

It is very important, at this point, to emphasize what salvation by God alone means. It means God by Himself, no other involved, singularly single, no people. I emphasize this because the Westminster Confession theorizes God alone,<sup>38</sup> and says it is God alone but involves people anyway. This is contradictory. I will demonstrate that in the proof section.

Calvinism says that God predestines some people to Heaven. Which is the same as insuring they go there. In either way of saying it, God does it by Himself without influence or involvement of man.

Calvinism also says that God foreordains people to Hell. That is the same as preventing them from going to Heaven. In either way of saying it, God does it by Himself without influence or involvement of man.

*With both God and man.* This option assumes that God neither insures that people are saved nor prevents them from being saved. Because if He insures or prevents, it is God doing it alone; not God and man doing it together.

The logical conclusions are that God influences salvation but not to the point of insuring or preventing.<sup>39</sup> And, man accepts salvation based on the influence of God and godly men.<sup>40</sup> Man rejects salvation based on his own choice to ignore or reject God.

This option I have called “Managed Cooperation Theology (MCT). The primary issue between Calvinism and MCT centers around control. Since God is all powerful, in any case, He is the one in control of all. Thus, if He wants to share control with men, via this option, He

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38. “The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination,” p.84.

39. John 6:44 - “No one can come to Me, unless the *Father who sent me draws him*; and I will raise him up on the last day.”

John 12:32 - “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will *draw* all men to myself.”

John 16:8 - “And He, when He comes, will *convict* the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgement; . . . “

John 16:13 - “But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, *He will guide you* into all the truth; . . . .”

II Cor. 5:20 - “Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though *God were entreating* through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.”

II Peter 1:3 - “. . . seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, *through the true knowledge of Him* who called us by His own glory and excellence.”

must restrict Himself to influencing but not to the point of insuring or preventing. If He does not restrict Himself, going to Heaven and Hell are His doing alone.

And, if He wants to share control, He must allow godly men to influence in the salvation process. Why, because there is no one else besides angels, and they already have an influence, therefore men must do it.

This also means that man accepts based on the influence of other men. "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ."<sup>41</sup> This is consistent with the face of scripture. This is also consistent with the concept that man is persuaded<sup>42</sup> to love God.

Let's look at this situation another way, does anyone ever get saved without hearing the gospel? Without a preacher, do they have any hope of salvation by faith? None. This means faithful men *must* work at reconciliation by true faith, or else people don't get saved. Therefore, salvation is a work of both God and man working together.

**Since salvation cannot be a work of God alone, by Himself, and also be a work of God and man together, by definition; one of the alternatives must be wrong, and one of the alternatives must be right.**

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40. Acts 18:4 - "And he was reasoning in the synagogue every Sabbath and trying to *persuade* Jews and Greeks."

Acts 28:23b-24 - ". . . And he was explaining to them by solemnly testifying about the kingdom of God, and trying to *persuade* them concerning Jesus, from both the Law of Moses and from the Prophets, from morning until evening. And *some were being persuaded* by the things spoken, but *others would not believe*."

Romans 6:17 - "But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of *teaching* to which you were committed."

Romans 10:14, 17 - "How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? So faith comes from *hearing*, and hearing by the *word of Christ*."

Romans 14:22 - "The faith which you have, have as *your own conviction* before God." (context is doubt, see vs. 23)

I Cor. 2:13 - "In Him, you also, after *listening* to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation--having also *believed*, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, . . ."

II Cor. 5:20 - "Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though *God were entreat- ing* through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God."

James 4:8 - "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you."

## **Unconditional Election Doesn't Match the Facts**

In this section I want to show that Unconditional Election doesn't match the facts of Scripture.

My comments will be in reference to the chart, on the next page, that starts out with what we all can agree on; that God is sovereign over all. From there on we have differences. The differences all center around the two issues I mentioned above.

Issue # 1. The conflict of these two theologies come out of the concepts each hold with respect to predestination. Managed Cooperation Theology conceives of predestination as the natural outgrowth of the foreknowledge, mercy, grace and love of God, and Calvinism conceives of God arbitrarily controlling who goes to Heaven and who goes to Hell before the foundation of the world.

Issue # 2. The conflict is further irritated by the Managed Cooperation position that God has delegated some of His sovereignty to man, and the Calvinistic belief that God has not delegated any sovereignty to man but has retained all sovereignty for Himself.

Even people who adhere to the Calvinistic type theology agree that God touches people, and after touching them, they accept the call by hearing, believing, acting in faith, and loving God. They do it in the same way which I describe; except they say God provides the "touch" which causes the hearing, believing, etc.

On the other hand, I say man voluntarily allows himself to listen, allows himself to believe, etc. This means man allows himself to be influenced right from the start. This is because God shared His sovereignty; which gave man the capacity to make decisions for himself; so he would be capable of love and accountability.

But on the Calvinistic side, after God gives the "touch," they say men go through the same process as if they had sovereignty over their own life. The person makes a decision, for themselves, to hear, believe, etc. How is it possible for a person to make a decision to hear, believe after a "touch," and not be able to hear, believe, etc. before a touch? Even though man does so in every other decision

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41. Romans 10:17. Here is another example: Gal.3:2;

42. Luke 16:31; Acts 18:4-5, 18:13, 19:26, 28:23; II Cor.5:11.

making situation. It must be something the Holy Spirit does. But that is what I am saying! The Holy Spirit convicts regarding sin, righteousness and judgement. To make a decision, any decision, regardless of the motivation, requires sovereignty over ones own life. Thus people needing a “touch” to make a decision for Christ is so much nonsense.

God either saves alone, or He saves using men. God has no lying, convoluted theology, or any other shadow of a plan. God is straightforward and completely honest.

These two presuppositions call for very different beliefs in practical theology. They see God differently, and thus produce religious practices which are more effective or less effective in leading people to Christ. These next sections show the differences between sharing and not sharing sovereignty. See the chart on page 148.

### **Box One- God Shares His Sovereignty**

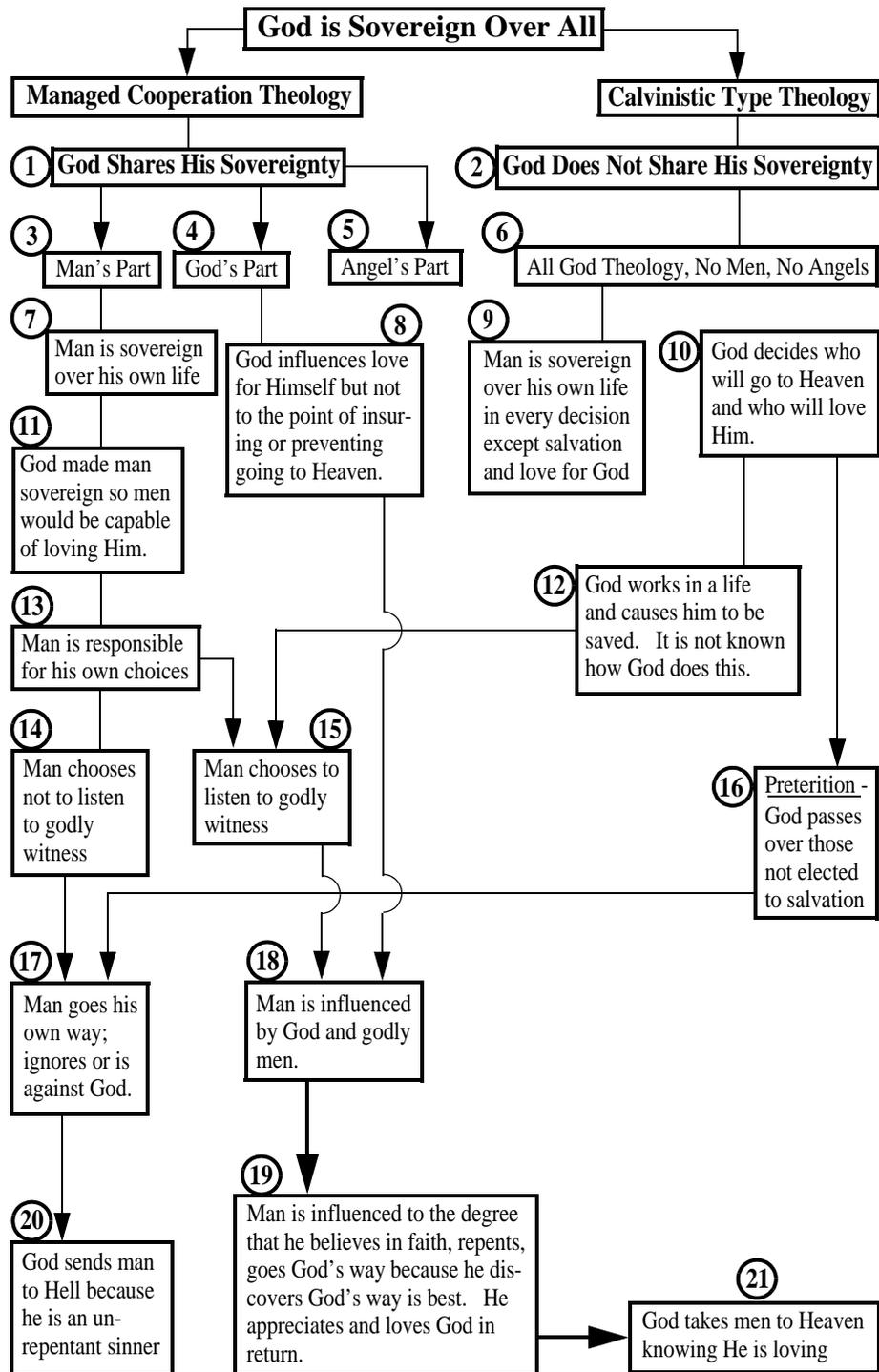
God sharing His sovereignty means that God has chosen to release part of his authority to man. He has relinquished some control. The part He has given to man is the capability and authority to make choices over ones own life. This is most obvious in the intuitive sense.

You and I make decisions and form opinions every day concerning our life, what we shall eat, what we shall wear for the day; and which direction we shall turn our car; to go where we want the car to go. We can also see that our decisions and opinions carry us closer or further away from God.

On Sunday morning, we may choose to go to church, or we may choose to recreate at the race track. Some may sleep-in to recover from a hangover. People who don't know God usually choose to please themselves. They don't see why they shouldn't. The point is each makes their own decision. No one tells you or them, as adults, what to do. Neither does God. God only asks this or that. God gives powerful incentives but you still get to choose.

### **Box Two - God Does Not Share His Sovereignty**

God not sharing His sovereignty means that God has *not* given man authority over his own life. It means that God retains all right and



capacity to make the decision of who goes to Heaven. He allows people to make all other decisions about life except that one.

This idea came from the Westminster Confession. It is referred to as double predestination, where God predestines some people to Heaven and foreordains many people to Hell.

The suggestion was added, that God decided who would go to Heaven and who would go to Hell, before the creation of the world; this is known as pre temporal predestination.

The problem with these two ideas is that they are not clearly presented in the scripture. There is some reason to believe these notions but not good enough reason to base a whole theology on it.

Dr. Ryrie, in his book, "Basic Theology," page 17-18, has this to say about evidence to believe:

"In a word, the limitations of a theological system must coincide with the limitations of biblical revelation. In an effort to present a complete system, theologians are often tempted to fill in the gaps in the biblical evidence with logic or implications which may not be warranted.

"Logic and implications do have their appropriate place. God's revelation is orderly and rational, so logic has a proper place in the scientific investigation of that revelation. When words are put together in sentences, those sentences take on implications which the theologian must try to understand.

"However, when logic is used to create truth, as it were, then the theologian will be guilty of pushing his system beyond the limitations of biblical truth. Sometimes this is motivated by the desire to answer questions which the scripture does not answer. In such cases, (and there are a number of crucial ones in the Bible) the best answer is silence, not clever logic, or almost invisible implications, or wishful sentimentality. Examples of particularly tempting areas include sovereignty and responsibility, the extent of the Atonement, the salvation of infants who die."

Somehow these predestination ideas have filtered down through time to become the current orthodox theology. Since there is not good biblical evidence for this kind of predestination, and there is much bet-

ter evidence for God sharing His sovereignty; christians should abandon Calvinist type theology and embrace what I have termed, “Managed Cooperation Theology.”

### **Box Three - Man’s Part**

God gives man a part so he can choose his destiny. God gives man a part so that when man loves God, it is truly man loving God; and not God imposing onto man’s heart, a love for God not his own doing; not his own conclusion. God gives man a part so that in a man’s decision to not love God, the man can be held accountable for his own decision to not love God.

God allows man to choose the path which will guide the direction of his destiny. If a man chooses not to listen to godly witness, unknowingly he chooses Hell. If he chooses to listen to godly witness, he is on a path that leads to Heaven. The issue here is the truth.

Does one want to know the truth? If one is a “know-it-all,” he may not choose to listen. If he is honest with himself, he may realize he doesn’t know all about God and therefore needs to listen.

### **Box Four - God’s Part**

God has a vested interest in obtaining a people who love Him. He will have fellowship with them forever. It is to His advantage to influence them to love Him. That is all He gets out of the creation. See Chapter Two of this book.

It is necessary that God influence, but not to the point of insuring or preventing salvation. If He insures or prevents, He is taking responsibility and accountability from the individual whose life is in question. God is accountable and responsible because He is in control. He is always in control unless He gives some part of His control to men. Let me give you an example.

If two big men, against your will, forcibly throw you into the middle of a lake, and you drown trying to swim back to shore. Who is accountable for your death? You, because you weren’t a good enough swimmer? Or the men, because they forced you to swim beyond your capability? Everyone would say the two big men. Why? Because they were in control.

This example may make it easier to see that whoever has the control has the accountability. If God is in control of your decisions, then He is accountable for the outcome. If He has given you control of your decisions, then you are accountable for the outcome of those decisions.

Nobody believes God influences people toward evil. He would be working against Himself if He did. Because, He would have fewer people in Heaven with Him later. This means He always influences for good.

#### **Box Five - Angel's Part**

God uses angels as messengers. God also uses godly angels to influence people for good. He allows Satan and his demon angels to influence men toward evil. This means God has delegated to angels certain authority allowing them to effect the lives of people. He limits the power of demons and good angels. Nevertheless, they have some authority delegated to them to influence.

#### **Box Six - All God Theology, No Men, No Angels**

All God theology means that God does it all. Men and angels are not involved in salvation. God saves men all by Himself with no involvement of anyone else. This is what Calvinist type theology suggests.

#### **Box Seven - Man is Sovereign Over his Own Life**

God has given man sovereignty over his own life which means that God will not override man's decisions. God will not override against what a man wants to do. God will try to influence man's decisions but will not dictate any decision.

God allowed man to make decisions over his own life to accommodate man being able to love God. Love is voluntarily given. It cannot be extracted. See Chapters Two and Three of this book.

Us getting to choose was demonstrated by God in the Garden of Eden. He told Adam that if he ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he would die. Adam chose to eat. God obviously gave Adam the choice. It was his decision to eat or not eat, just like it is our choice to turn our car right or left. For more details on choosing, see Chapter Three, How People Make Decisions. The ultimate choice is the following.

Mark 16:16 - "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned."

This and other scriptures like it, imply that we have the ability and responsibility to choose.

John 4:42 - "and they (samaritans) were saying to the woman, 'It is no longer because of what you say that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed the savior of the world.'"

The samaritans heard and chose to believe. This is the simple truth of the gospel. A man hears and chooses to believe or not believe. Many men choose not to hear. But mankind gets to choose which path he will follow. Therefore, God can rightly make him responsible for his own decisions.

#### **Box Eight - God Influences Love . . . .**

God knows that to truly love God, one must be able to choose to love God freely. This means that God had to persuade man to love Him. He would do so by loving man through Jesus Christ and other ways shown throughout the bible. He would do so through the work of the Holy Spirit.

Since God made man capable of loving God, and He wants all men to love Him; He does not insure that some people will love Him, or prevent others from loving Him. That idea is completely foreign to Him, and is a false man-made idea.

II Peter 3:9 - "The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance."

Since God truly wishes none to perish, and all to come to repentance, He gives ample time for all to do so. He will allow who-so-ever-will to come. He wants all to come but will not force them.

#### **Box Nine - Man is Sovereign . . . .**

Calvinist type theology theorizes that Man is sovereign over his own life in every decision except salvation and love for God.

**I say, if God has not given me sovereignty over my own life, then me giving lordship back to Him has no meaning.** And if anybody is

a proponent of Lordship and Calvinism, it is John McArthur. So, God must have given me sovereignty, in the first place, if I need to give lordship back to Him.

Intuitively, I know I make all my decisions over my own life. But, if God has not given me authority over my own life, which decisions that I have seemingly made, are mine; and which are God's, that He made; but it just appears that I made? What kind of a God is the Calvinist following?

It is insulting to me to think that the perfect character of God would be impugned by the thought that He might manipulate my thoughts and decisions. It doesn't matter if it is for my good. That notion is simply not honest.

James 1:17 - "Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation, or shifting shadow."

Since this verse teaches that God does not do anything that is suspicious or vaguely not true, it also teaches He is completely honest and straight-forward.

Therefore, if I am making decisions over my life, then God does not, and will not, override them. He may influence, but not to the point of insuring or preventing salvation; or any decision.

This all means that if the scripture implies that I choose, then I do. If Calvinism type theology says otherwise then it must be abandoned because it makes God out to be a liar. And, I will show that later.

### **Box Ten - God decides Who will go to Heaven and who will love Him.**

God, according to Calvinist type theology, decided, before the foundation of the world, who as individuals, would go to Heaven and who would be passed over and not go to Heaven.

Then, after the creation, God made it happen, presumably by doing something in the life of the elect (one chosen to Heaven).

### **Box 11 - God made man sovereign so men would be capable of loving Him.**

As I have said before, to love requires the capability to choose. Agape love is a choice to love on the part of the lover because of attributes

within the lover. Love is voluntary. It cannot be extracted. Since man begins his life not knowing or loving God, man must have choice to choose to love God later in life.

Therefore, God had to give man capability of choice in order to get agape love. See Chapter Two of this book.

**Box 12 - God Works in a Life and causes him to be saved.**

Calvinistic type theology postulates that one is saved first by God's choosing, then the one listens to godly witness, is called, caused to believe, caused to remain in faith, be sanctified, and caused to love God.

This theory means that God actually does the reconciling, which causes belief, faith, sanctification, and glorification. But that is not what the scripture teaches. The scripture teaches that godly men have been given the ministry of reconciliation (II Cor.5:20). Godly men *start* the "Natural Man" onto the path to knowing God and admiring Him for His attributes. After the process is started, man comes to realize he should listen to the Holy Spirit (God). Prior to introduction by godly men, he doesn't even know there is any such thing as the "Holy Spirit." Yet Calvinistic theology would have us believe that God does the reconciling; not godly men.

Managed Cooperation Theology suggests just the opposite. Man chooses to listen first. Then he is called by the Holy Spirit. Then he believes. Then he acts in faith, and the progression follows and finishes.

**Box 13 - Man is Responsible for His Own Choices**

Another reason God delegated some of His authority to man is so He could, without a doubt, hold man accountable for his own actions in this life. And everyone, including all people going to Heaven, would agree. If I choose for good, I get a reward. If I choose for evil, I also get a reward but a negative one. One I don't want.

Giving man choice is to give him the ability to love his wife, love his children and parents; not to mention loving God. With choices come responsibility; responsibility to God and to the society. The law protects the society. Christianity stands up for God. Man's responsibility to both is common knowledge. Only a few say different.

**Box 14 - Man chooses not to listen to godly witness**

I am saying man has 100% choice to listen or not listen to godly witness. He can make decisions over his own life, and *all* those choices are his own; not just 99.99% of them. God is straight-forward and does not hide anything. If anything gets hidden, it is Satan who does the hiding.

Satan certainly hides the truth whenever possible. Since he does, many men make choices which lead them away from God. One of those choices is whether or not to listen to godly witness. The demons discourage and deceive listening to godly witness. Since it is a choice, men who don't listen are willingly ignorant, and thus many times, they pay the ultimate price.

#### **Box 15 - Man chooses to listen to godly witness**

I am saying that man has 100% choice to listen or not listen to godly witness.

I listened because I realized I did not know much about God. I realized some were saying there was a Heaven and a Hell. I didn't know if there was or not, but if there was a Hell, I sure didn't want to go there. So I started listening so I could make an intelligent decision.

I believe I made a decision to be open to the possibility, and God and godly men did the rest. Me being open, paved the way for all the other work by God, and godly men, in my life.

#### **Box 16 - Preterition**

This is a word coined by scholars to summarize the idea that God does not send people to Hell, He just "passes over" (ignores) them. The purpose of the word is to exonerate God from any accountability of sending people to Hell. Let me offer an illustration.

In my view of preterition, a person's life span is like God making a conveyor belt with everyone on it. It is traveling from birth on the left, to Hell on the right, with life in between. People move around on the belt but can't get off it. God is standing over the conveyor belt with a cross in His hand, touching those He chooses to Heaven. At the end of the belt, people not touched by the cross drop off into Hell, while people who are touched, God takes up to Heaven. Preterition says, God is not accountable for the destiny of people not touched. Those not touched just continue to drop off into Hell without God doing any-

thing. Never mind that God made the conveyor belt and put everyone on it.

When God created people with their natural ability to sin, it was like putting them on a conveyor. Without intervention, they will go to Hell. According to preterition, there is no intervention.

Calvinists saying that God is not accountable for people dropping off the conveyor, into Hell, is absurd. The conveyor is His system of dealing with all people. How can anyone else be accountable?

Lets change the illustration a little bit. Let's say God installs lots of crosses above the conveyor such that people can touch the crosses when they pass by. Some other people, who have already passed a cross and touched one, tell the ones who have not passed, to touch a cross. God encourages the witnesses and the ones receiving testimony. If you touch a cross, you will go to Heaven; if you don't touch a cross, you will go to Hell.

These two illustrations demonstrate the difference between Managed Cooperation Theology and Calvinistic type theology.

In the one case, God controls all, with no choice, so He is accountable. In the other case, He has delegated some choice for touching to men. So if they touch, and continue touching, they go to Heaven.

**Box 17 - Man goes his own way; ignores or is against God**

Man lives out his life going his own way and doing his own thing. This doesn't mean that God ignores him, it means he ignores God. I believe God gives lots of opportunities for men to listen.

**Box 18 - Man is influenced by God and Godly men**

As a man allows himself to be influenced by the Holy Spirit and godly witness, man becomes more influenced by the mercy, grace and love of God. Thus, God draws him. Conversely, the closer a man draws to Jesus, the more he wants to get away from the evil of sin. The negatives of sin drive him away from it.

**Box 19 - Man is influenced to the degree that he believes in faith, . . . .**

And, he repents, confesses his sin, believes to the degree that he acts in faith, and goes God's way, because he discovers that God's way is better than his way. Saved men appreciate God for His wisdom, mercy, grace and love. God's attributes and his own growth in love, cause

him to love God in return.

**Box 20 - God sends man to Hell because he is an unrepentant sinner**

If he is unrepentant, that assumes that he had the opportunity to repent and didn't.

If a man has choice to listen; and, he has personal choice such that he can choose the path to love God, or choose the path to not love God; and the man chooses not to listen, then that man is unknowingly choosing Hell. Hell is the consequence of choosing the wrong path; but only if a choice is present. Matt. 7:13-14 says the same thing:

“Enter by the narrow gate, for the gate is wide, and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter by it.

“For the gate is small, and the way is narrow that leads to life, and few are those who find it.”

If a man does *not* have personal choice; such that he can choose the path to love God or to choose the path not to love God, then it is God who is choosing the paths for everyone. As in my illustration, the man is up a conveyor without a cross!

**Box 21 - God takes men to Heaven knowing God is honest.**

And not just honest, but completely honest. There is not a hint of dishonesty or hint of lying in anything that God says or does.

This means that when people get to Heaven, and they look back through the years of human history, they will not find any incident where God was not completely honest, forthright and above reproach in everything He ever said or did. To find such an incident would produce some doubt.

If a question comes up about ones own love for God, can everyone say without a doubt, my love for God is my own love; or will someone think he is not sure. If a man thinks God artificially inseminated love into him, might that individual doubt the veracity of ones own love for God? I am sure that would produce doubt. It would in me.

To avoid that particular doubt, and any other doubt about God, is precisely why God has to be perfect in character. Satan produced the original sin, in the Garden, by producing doubt in Adam and Eve about God. See Chapter Three, Man's Sovereignty and His Fallen Nature..

## **A Proof that Calvinism is Incorrect**

First, the situation. Next, the doctrine of Unconditional Election, Section One. Third, I will assume that Section One doctrine is true and correct, then demonstrate that if it is true and correct, God is a liar. The same format for Sections Two, Three and Four. Then, the conclusion.

The Westminster Confession is the basic doctrinal statement of calvinistic type theology. It originated in the 1500s as an argument against Arminianism. It has since been massaged into a modern day shadow of its former self.

### **Section One**

The doctrine of “Unconditional Election” is the foundation of Calvinism. The other four points hang on its truth.

**“The Westminster Confession states the doctrine thus:**

‘By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestined to everlasting life, and others are foreordained to everlasting death.

‘These angels and men, thus predestined and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished.’”<sup>43</sup>

There is more to the confession but for now, I want to focus on this section.

This is the common meaning.

( I ) The first sentence clearly states that God predestines some people to Heaven.

and,

( II ) foreordains many people to Hell.

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43. “The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination,” P. 84.

( III ) They continue to say that God specifically designs each individual to unchangeably fulfill their appointed destiny.

( IV ) They continue to say that the number of people going to Heaven is unchangeable, and the number of people going to Hell is unchangeable.

**II Peter 3:9, “The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.”**

This passage teaches that God is willing to give people ample time to repent, and thus go to Heaven, because He has no desire for people to go to Hell.<sup>44</sup>

*Proof # 1* Since before the foundation of the world, God foreordained ( II ), unchangeably ( IV ), many people to Hell; and then, after the world was created, He also says that He wishes none to perish, He is a liar. He is a liar because His willful act of foreordaining many to Hell, without the opportunity to be different, contradicts His later words alleging desire that *none* should perish.

Conversely,

*Proof # 2* Since before the foundation of the world, God chooses to predestine ( I ), unchangeably ( IV ), only a specific number of people to Heaven; and then, after the world is created, He also says He desires *all* to come to repentance, He is a liar. He is a liar because His willful act of predestining *certain* people to Heaven, without opportunity for all others to be different, contradicts His later words alleging desire for *all* to come to repentance.

*Proof # 3* Since before the foundation of the world, God specifically designed each individual to fulfill their appointed destiny ( III ); and then, after the world was created, He also teaches that people can change from perishing to being saved, means God is a liar. He is a liar because He created people such that they *cannot* change, then later says *they are able* to change if they repent.

**Mark 16: 16, “He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.”**

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44. See also Matt.18:14

*Proof # 4* Since before the foundation of the world, God said the number of people in Heaven and Hell is unchangeable (IV ); and then, after the creation of the world, He also said in Mark 16: 16 the numbers are indeed changeable; means, God is a liar. He is a liar because He created *unchangeable* numbers of people in Heaven and Hell; then later, alleges the numbers are *changeable* by believing.

## **Section Two**

### **The Westminster Confession on Unconditional Election (cont'd):**

‘Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to His immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of His will, hath chosen in Christ, unto everlasting glory, out of His mere grace and love, without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions, or causes moving Him thereunto; and all to the praise of His glorious grace.’

This is the common meaning.

For those He predestined to Heaven, God, before the foundation of the world, decided; on His own, without regard to any attributes of man, to save them. This was to the praise of His glorious grace.

I find no fault with this paragraph that I wish to dispute at this time.

## **Section Three**

### **The Westminster Confession on Unconditional Election (cont'd):**

‘As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath He by the eternal and most free purpose of His will, foreordained all means thereunto. Whereby they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ, are effectually called unto faith in Christ by His Spirit working in due season; are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by His power through faith unto

salvation. Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only.'

This is the common meaning.

Although God has appointed certain people to Heaven for reasons unknown to us, He has also given them all the tools needed to go through the process of salvation. That is: being fallen in the way of Adam, redeemed by Christ, called to faith in Christ by His Spirit in due time, such that each individual is justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by His power through faith unto salvation. No one else is saved.

*Proof # 5* Since God, before the foundation of the world, predestined some people to Heaven ( I ), then after the world was created, projected the message to mankind that they were saved by love, forgiveness, mercy and grace, makes God a liar. God is a liar because they were actually saved by the special something that God gave them, which He withheld from the unsaved. Which means, love, forgiveness, mercy, and grace have nothing to do with actual salvation but are merely stage props that deceive.

## **Section Four**

### **The Westminster Confession on Unconditional Election (cont'd):**

'The rest of mankind, God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of His will, Whereby He extendeth or withholdeth mercy as He pleaseth, for the glory of His sovereign power over His creatures, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sin, to the praise of His glorious justice.'"

This is the common meaning.

For the rest of mankind (group going to Hell), God was pleased with sending them there, because He gives or withholds mercy for His own reasons. He demonstrates His power over these creatures by sending them to Hell for their sin, to the praise of His glorious justice.

*Proof # 6* Since before the foundation of the world, God foreor-

daind ( II ), unchangeably ( IV ), many people to Hell, and He designed each individual to unchangeably fulfill their destiny ( III ), means God designed sinners; not people who do or do not sin. Since God specifically made them that way, it is unjust for God to eternally punish the sinner for doing what God designed him to do. Therefore, God is responsible for their sin. Since God is responsible for their sin, and tries to pass it off as the man's responsibility, God is a liar.

*Proof # 7* Since God predestines some to Heaven ( I ), and foreordains many to Hell ( II ), means salvation, or a lack of it, is a work of God alone. Since God sends people to Hell because of their sin (Section Four), the sinner is involved with the process. If they are involved with the process, then God is not in the process alone. This means the doctrine is inconsistent, and therefore flawed.

I have cited two inconsistencies and five proofs which demonstrate that Unconditional Election opposes scripture. There are many more scriptures which oppose Unconditional Election which could be cited. The number cited is sufficient.

Since it is impossible for God to lie (Hebrews 6:18), nor is there any hint of lying in Him (James 1: 17), means Unconditional Election must be an incorrect doctrine; and therefore, Calvinism an incorrect theology.

Boettner himself, speaking about the five points of Calvinism, says the following:

“Prove any one of them true and all the others will follow as logical and necessary parts of the system. Prove any one of them false and the whole system must be abandoned.”<sup>45</sup>

Since the doctrine of Unconditional Election accuses God of lying, and we know God is not a liar, means the doctrine is incorrect. Since the doctrine of Unconditional Election is the backbone of Calvinistic type Theology, and it is incorrect, means Calvinism is incorrect, and must be abandoned.

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45. “The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination,” p. 59.

## **An Additional Inconsistency**

Since before the foundation of the world, God chose to predestine ( I ), unchangeably ( IV ), and He foreordains ( II ), unchangeably ( IV ), people to Heaven or Hell, means He alone is responsible for everyone's destiny. He alone is responsible because no one else is involved in the predestination and foreordination process. It is a done deal *before* creation when man comes to the Garden of Eden.

Man cannot possibly be involved because he did not exist at the time predestination and foreordination occurred. And since God alone is sovereign; therefore, God alone is accountable and responsible for salvation or lack of it.

Since God alone is responsible for the predestination of the elect and foreordination of the non-elect, He would have to create the elect fundamentally different, in some respect, from the non-elect. Otherwise the two might operate similarly, and He would lose control. He could not be sure they would act differently as appointed.

However, God could create the elect and non-elect fundamentally the same but intervene in their life. This intervention would cause their destiny to be fulfilled. The Confession is not clear on which case they believe.

In Section Three of the Confession, it says the elect were foreordained with everything needed to be saved. That is: God calling them, and them hearing; God asking them to believe, and them believing; God calling them to faith, and them acting in faith; God calling them to love Him, and them loving Him. This section of the confession, obviously, involves the cooperation of the elect.

Since God employs the cooperation of the elect as a part of salvation; whether or not He causes the cooperation, Section Three still demonstrates that Calvinists believe salvation is a work of God and man together.

Since the Confession teaches in Section One, that salvation is by God alone, and in Section Three it teaches that salvation is by cooperation of God and man together, the Confession is inconsistent and therefore, flawed.

The Confession is inconsistent because, as I pointed out earlier in this chapter, salvation by God alone is fundamentally different than salvation by cooperation of God and man together.

Since Calvinism is flawed with inconsistencies and contradictions with the scripture, it must be abandoned. In its place should be Managed Cooperation Theology.

## **Modern Day Calvinism**

Originally, Westminster Calvinism postulated that God both predestined the saved to Heaven and foreordained the unsaved to Hell. Many modern Calvinists have changed the hypercalvinism of the Westminster type to something less hyper. One of those changes is negating the foreordination of people to Hell by God.

### **Predestination without Foreordination**

They suggest that God allows the unsaved to go to Hell on their own because He pays no attention to them. This is called preterition. They never receive the “something” which gets them saved; that God gives to the elect.

Ryrie says it is the passing over of those not elected to salvation.<sup>46</sup> As I understand it, God does not do anything special to save them, so they all go to Hell without exception.

Theologians have suggested this as truth because they still want to believe Pre temporal (before creation) Predestination of believers but abhor the idea that God might destine many to Hell.

They try to relieve God of His being accountable for sending people to Hell, by suggesting God just overlooks the unsaved. According to them, this would mean He allows them to sin as everyone has done and when they die, God sends them to Hell; because they were unsaved sinners. Never mind, that it was not possible for them to be anything else. I refer you to the conveyor illustration.

If God predestines people to Heaven, by giving them something in

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46. Basic Theology, p.313.

their life, that He does give to the unsaved, then by not giving the “something” to the unsaved, He still controls who goes to what destiny. Passing over them does not relieve God of any accountability. This is because withholding the “something” is a conscious act, just like giving the “something” is a conscious act.

I can understand abhorrence to the idea that God foreordains to Hell for two reasons. It does not seem to serve any good purpose. It is a waste of people that God says He loves. It is not loving on God’s part. If Preterition is true, this demonstrates that God’s sovereignty is more important to Him than is His love to Him. In other words, this is how a sovereign God administrates His love. This is not the God I serve.

The answer to the Pre temporal Predestination issue is that if you want to believe God predestines people to Heaven; Ok. But at the same time, you must also accept with it, that God also foreordains many to Hell. To not take them together is intellectually dishonest. The reformers recognized this fact; which is why they postulated it.

## **Psalm 145: 17 - 20**

### **17) The Lord is righteous in all His ways, and kind in all His Deeds.**

This means God is straight-forward in all that He does. He does not use innuendo, trickery, implication, inference, or says one thing when He really means something else. He is loving in all that He says and does.

Calvinism postulates that God chooses who will go to Heaven and who will go to Hell but also that God gives “the something” to a sinner which causes him or her to listen, believe, and act in faith, and be taken to Heaven. This makes God out to be underhanded.

Either He chooses the person or the person chooses Him. It is not a little bit of both. Either salvation is by God alone or it is a work of both God and man. Calvinism is not intellectually honest.

### **18) The Lord is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth.**

This means God is near to all who call on Him with a sincere heart.

**19) He will fulfill the desire of all who fear Him; He will also hear their cry and will save them.**

This means God will fulfill the desire of *all* who fear Him; He will also hear their cry for relief from disaster, or cry for Heaven, and will save them. He will save them if they cry out with a sincere heart.

This passage teaches that *all* men have the capability to call on God and be saved. This passage does not teach that the *elect only* have the capability to call on God and be saved. Since the elect is a more restricted group of members than all men, if the elect was in view, the passage would have to include the word "elect" to convey the truth that it is just the elect that is saved.

Since the word "elect" is not present, the promise must apply to all men. Therefore, it's all men who are capable of being saved; not just the elect that is capable.

**20) The Lord keeps all who love Him; but all the wicked, He will destroy.**

This means that God keeps as a possession *all* who love Him. This implies that love of God is of great value to Him. It implies that He will take them to Heaven; unless of course, He is only going to keep them for a short time. This teaches that one who loves God will be saved.

Conversely, this means God will **not** keep the wicked as a possession. This implies that the wicked is of not much value to Him, and He will destroy them. In other scripture, we see that the wicked will be separated from Himself permanently.

What does this passage teach about the difference between the two groups? One group loves God, and one group does not. God values highly one group, the other group He values very little. Before there were two groups there was one group containing both people who will eventually love God and people who will eventually not love God. Before they chose the route of their destinies, they was one group which God loved so much He die for them all.

Salvation, which Calvinist type believers see as the issue of life, is

really not the issue. The primary issue of life is love for God. Glorification is the reward for loving God, destruction is the reward for not loving God. Salvation could be thought of as the primary issue of life from man's point of view, but love for God is the primary issue of life from God's point of view.

## **Problems With Arminianism**

Managed Cooperation Theology is nearly the same as Arminianism. Both are a work of God and man interacting with each other; relationship is very important. When I talk about initial cooperation, belief, and faith; I could be talking about either one. Some issues like eternal security, we may not believe the same but most issues we agree on. Where we don't agree, is on the issue of God sharing His sovereignty with man, such that man can properly be accountable and responsible before God. I think it makes a theological difference whether or not God has actually delegated such sovereignty.

The difference in theologies involves the question of who is accountable and responsible for man's actions. Is man accountable and responsible, or is God accountable and responsible? If God has not given man sovereignty over our own lives, then He is accountable for our actions, and responsible for our choices. As an example, if you, as a parent, allow your toddler to run out into the street and he is injured, who is accountable and responsible; the child or the parent? Everyone would say the parent; because they are sovereign over the child, and they are therefore accountable before the law, and morally responsible for the child.

However, if the child is actually twenty-one years old, runs across the street and gets hit by a car; none would hold the parent accountable at law, nor responsible for injuries sustained, because now the child is grown up and sovereign over his own person. It is the same between God and man.

It seems clear to me that God has ordained a Heaven and a Hell, and we are all going to one place or the other. If God has not delegated sovereignty, accountability and responsibility to man; then; Arminianism is right, and God chooses where we will go based on grace and

faith. But then it also follows: if God retains sovereignty, he also retains accountability and responsibility for man and man's actions. Just like the parents of the toddler. And, if God is sovereign, accountable and responsible for man's actions, why is God sending men to Hell for that which God is sovereign over, accountable for, and for which He is responsible? Good question. The answer, I believe, is that He is not doing that at all.

This means God has not retained sovereignty, but given sovereignty, accountability, and responsibility to mankind. If that's the case, then God sees man as sovereign over his own life, accountable for his own actions, and responsible for his own choices. Therefore God can rightly send man to Heaven because he has chosen to allow himself to see God, be forgiven, and come to love God. That is the blessing. And, conversely, He can rightly send man to Hell because man has not *chosen* to allow himself to see God, be forgiven, and come to love God. That is the curse. This man's own choices, for which he is responsible, gets him to Hell just like the murderer; rightly, gets the death penalty for his crime.

The theological point which Arminians miss, I believe, is God delegating sovereignty, accountability, and responsibility to mankind for his own life. This makes man accountable and responsible to God's larger program which encompasses more than just what goes on in the person's own life; namely Heaven and Hell, and life and death.

### **Implications of Not Delegating Sovereignty**

If God does not delegate sovereignty, then sending men to Hell when God is responsible for their actions, is unloving. And if there is anything that God is; its loving. And since God is loving; therefore, God must have delegated personal sovereignty to man. This makes man accountable and responsible for his own actions.

For what does God hold man accountable and responsible? Only one thing; being open minded enough to cooperate with godly men to learn about God and His mercy, grace, and love. Then God steps in to convict of sin, righteousness and judgement. Thus God and man work together such that man comes to love God.

But what if you believe that God has not delegated sovereignty to men but retains it. That means you probably see God as accountable

and responsible for producing love in people; not a joint effort. People's responsibility is just to do as instructed and modeled by Jesus; that is, make disciples. That's what Christians are doing all over the country and world; trying to make disciples. We are failing at it. That's why Christianity is in such a pitiful state. Arminians and Calvinists alike have missed the point. *Loving God* is the point. Making disciples is a result not a cause. *Loving God* is the cause. We make disciples because we love God; not making disciples to show that we love God. I believe Arminian Christianity is going downhill because the theology supports making disciples but *supports less* the idea of loving God as a reason for existence. However, if man is accountable and responsible to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, and your neighbor as yourself; it would give an entirely new focus to Arminianism. The goal of making disciples would be replaced by the goal of loving God and neighbor. This is exactly what Managed Cooperation Theology is trying to say.

If Arminian theologians could see their way clear to believe that God has delegated some of his sovereignty to man, then it becomes man's job to cooperate to love God as the foremost commandment says. Then, we make disciples because we love God. Then we become like Jesus; He made disciples because He loved the Father, and was directed by Him to do so.

## **Summation**

I have shown, at the beginning of this chapter, that there are only three possible theologies; assuming there is only one God, the God of the Bible. That is man alone, God alone, or God and man working together. Unitarianism is a classic example of "Man Alone" theology. Calvinism is a classic example of "God Alone" theology. Arminianism is a classic example of "God and man working together."

I believe Arminianism, with a change in view of the sovereignty of God; and Managed Cooperation Theology is the correct message of the Bible.

I have offered seven proofs which indicate that if Unconditional Election is valid, God is a liar. That alone should be enough for every-

one to abandon Calvinistic type theology.

Then I offered Psalm 145:17-20 which demonstrates that:

(1) God is straight-forward in all His ways. That Calvinism tries to pass off a half-truth as doctrine.

(2) God is near to all who would call on Him with a sincere heart.

(3) God will save all who will cry out to him with a sincere heart.

(4) Salvation is offered to all men, and not just the elect.

(5) God keeps all who love Him, and destroys all the wicked.

Lastly, through the “Theological Differences Chart,” I have demonstrated how Pre temporal, Double Predestination, and God delegating some sovereignty to man, are the two principle differences between Calvinism type theology and Managed Cooperation Theology. Calvinistic type theology leads to the conclusion that the sovereignty of God is more important to Him than love is to Him. Managed Cooperation Theology leads to the conclusion that love is more important to Him than is His sovereignty to Him.

Walls and Dongell, in their book, “Why I am not a Calvinist,” pp. 219-221, provide the following conclusion, which will be my conclusion for this chapter.

“As we saw in chapter five, Calvinist John Piper recognizes the possibility that God may not choose his son for salvation, but he insists that he would adore God even in that case. We acknowledged that we have a certain admiration for Piper, although we profoundly disagree with his understanding of the character of God. This, we suggest, serves as a good test case for those who may still be trying to make up their mind on Calvinism. Does Piper’s attitude reflect piety at its best, or is it deeply at odds with God’s character revealed in Scripture? Interestingly, the title of the article in which Piper insists on adoring a God who might consign his sons to Hell is ‘How Does a Sovereign God Love?’ We believe Piper has the question backward and that his article reflects the unfortunate subordination of love to will that Gunton identifies. Given the full revelation of God in Scripture, the question we should be asking is, how would a God of perfect love express his sover-

eignty?

“When love is subordinated to will, then the fatherhood of God, which is emphasized in the Trinity (Mk 1:11; Jn 1:18; 5:19-20; 17:20-26; 20:17; I Cor 15:20-28), takes a back seat to the image of God as King or Ruler.<sup>47</sup> God’s essential relational nature as a being who exists in three persons becomes secondary to the notion that God is a sovereign monarch whose will cannot be thwarted.

Without the benefit of the New Testament, such a perspective is perhaps understandable. This is not to deny that God’s love is revealed in the Old Testament (Lam 3:22; Hos 11:1). However, the full meaning that God is love was revealed in its clearest light only with the incarnation (Rom 5:8; Gal 2:20; Ijn 3:16; 4:9). In the brilliant light of the incarnation, we learn that from all eternity there was love between the Father and the Son (Jn 17:24, 26). Moreover, the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost revealed that God’s eternal dance of love included the third person of the Trinity as well (Rom 5:5; Gal 4:6; Eph 3:16-19). That is why love is not merely an activity of God --- it is his very essence. In a nutshell, our case against Calvinism is that it doesn’t do justice to the character of God revealed in Scripture. It does not accurately portray the holy One who is “compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love” (Ps 103:8), the God for whom love is not merely an option or a sovereign choice, but who is such that his eternal nature is love (I Jn 4:8).

“In the introduction, we posed the question this way: Does God love all of us and desire our well being? We have shown that Calvinists cannot answer this question in the affirmative without equivocation and inconsistency. The breathtaking vision of God’s trinitarian love is obscured by the Calvinist claim that God passes over persons he could just as easily save and thereby consigns them to eternal misery. The exhilarating message of the gospel that should be good news to all sinners is

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47. For an insightful study of the various roles of God in Scripture and their relation to each other, see Allan Coppedge, *portraits of God* (Doweners Grove, Ill.: Inter-  
varsity Press, 2001).

