“TRUE UNEQUIVOCAL TRUTH”
by Dr. D. W. Ekstrand

TRUTH DEFINED

So what is this thing called “Truth”? Well, according to the dictionary, truth is the true or actual state of a matter… conformity with fact or reality… and a verified, indisputable fact, proposition, or principle. Truth is most often used to mean being in accord with fact, reality or the authenticity of a standard… thus truth is seen as the opposite of falsehood. Incidentally, most human activities depend upon the concept of truth; be it the sciences, law, journalism, and everyday life. By the way, it should come as no surprise to any of you that various theories and views of truth continue to be debated among scholars, philosophers, and theologians… and therein is the rub. The argument that prevails is this: truth can be either subjective or objective, relative or absolute. Before launching into this subject, let me list a number of quotes on this subject that may help give definition to this thing called “Truth;” for your own benefit, take the time to reflect upon what each of them say:

- Where I found truth, there found I my God, who is the truth itself – Augustine
- Rather than love or money or fame, give me truth – Henry David Thoreau
- Be truthful, nature only sides with truth – Anonymous
- Those who know the truth are not equal to those who love it – Confucius
- They deem him their worst enemy who tells them the truth – Plato
- It is the truth that irritates a person – Anonymous
- Truth and virtue conquer – Plato
- Truth is always the strongest argument – Sophocles
- Truth never lost ground by enquiry – William Penn
- You never find yourself until you face the truth – Pearl Bailey
- For though we love both the truth and our friends, piety requires us to honor the truth first – Aristotle
- If you ever inject truth into politics you would have no politics – Will Rogers
The truth is incontrovertible. Malice may attack it and ignorance may deride it, but in the end, there it is – *Winston Churchill*

Truth will ultimately prevail where there is pains taken to bring it to light – *George Washington*

Anyone who doesn’t take truth seriously in small matters cannot be trusted in large ones either – *Albert Einstein*

There are two ways to be fooled. One is to believe what isn’t true; the other is to refuse to believe what is true – *Soren Kierkegaard*

Again, as we launch into this subject let me provide a “**Table of Contents**” regarding the various issues that this study covers.

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By the way, of all the issues I address in this study, the issue of **the Church & Worship** is by far the most significant one for me personally, because it is a subject I have been wrestling with and giving serious consideration to for the past ten years. Though many of you may give greater emphasis to some of the other issues, in years past many of those issues were very significant to me as well. With all of the foregoing in mind, let’s begin by first defining this thing called “truth” — well, truth is neither a *Maybe*, an *Opinion*, or mere *Speculation*; in short, **truth is an unchanging Absolute Reality**. Pontius Pilate concluded his examination of Jesus with this brief question: “*What is truth?*” Jesus had just told him, “*For this I was born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Every one who is of the truth hears my voice*” (cf. Jn 18:37). Though
Jesus did not go on to explain the essence of truth to Pilate, Pilate did not rebuke Jesus or demand an audible answer from Him... instead of commanding Him to be punished, Pilate went out to the accusing Jews who had brought Jesus to him, and said to them: “I find no guilt or fault in Him” (cf. Jn 18:38); by the way, the words “no guilt/fault” are emphatic in Greek. Obviously Pilate had gotten the message; Jesus stood before him as “Truth personified” (one can only imagine how the God of heaven had moved in Pilate’s heart and mind); the reality was Pilate knew that, and fear gripped his heart... he wanted absolutely nothing to do with this situation. Though he feared the prospect of a riot by the accusing Jews, he also feared harming Jesus (i.e., the Truth); even though He did not know who Jesus really was, he was obviously troubled in his inner core. Thus he hoped to pacify the accusing Jews by scourging Jesus, and placing a crown of thorns on His head, and having His face struck several times before He was released. It was at this time that Pilate once again reiterated to the congregation of Jews who were present, “You need to know, I find no guilt in this Man” (cf. Jn 19:1-4). Stop and think for a moment, why would Pilate emphatically declare that he found “absolutely no guilt” in Jesus? Obviously his being confronted with absolute holiness and truth personified had overwhelmed him... though he didn’t fully know who Jesus was, he knew full-well Jesus was something that he was not. Now when Jesus came out into the presence of the chief priests & scribes & rulers, they cried out with a loud voice, “Crucify! Crucify Him!” (Lk 23:21); to which Pilate again said, “You yourselves take Him and crucify Him, for I find no guilt or fault in Him” (Jn 19:6) – three times Pilate had emphatically declared that “he found no guilt or fault in Jesus!” The truth is, such a redundancy is literally incredible! Yet due to the fact that the Jewish people insisted that Jesus be crucified, ultimately their voices began to prevail and Pilate pronounced sentence that their demand should be granted (Lk 23:23-24). Though Pilate repeatedly gave powerful testimony to the innocence of Christ, nevertheless, he eventually capitulated for political reasons; and as was Roman custom, Jesus’ execution was carried out without delay. Before I continue on, you’ll notice I italicize, underline, and embolden numerous words and phrases; I do this to not only give emphasis to those words and thoughts, but to help give contextual understanding as to what I have written; so accentuate them when reading about the various topics that I cover in this study.

Obviously, with the foregoing in mind, truth possess no guilt, no fault, no lying, no conniving, and no deception – all truth has absolute integrity. The Greek word for truth is “aletheia,” and it signifies “the reality that lies at the basis or essence of a matter” (cf. Mk 12:14; Rom 9:1; 2 Cor 11:10); incidentally, the word “truth” is emphatic in all three of the verses just listed. As Vines Complete Expository Dictionary states, the Greek word that is translated truth actually possesses an absolute force (page 645; cf. Jn 14:6; 17:17; 18:37; Eph 4:21; 1 Tim 2:7); so truth is not merely ethical, but an absolute that is embodied in Christ (cf. Jn 1:14, 17; 8:42-47; Eph 1:13; 4:21); thus when one rejects the truth, he rejects Christ, because Christ is the truth (cf. Jn 14:6); God by nature is the embodiment of all truth (cf. Jn 14:16-17; 15:26; 16:13-15), not just some truth. Old Testament writers used the Hebrew word “emet” (translated “truth” in English) to describe God’s Word and His deeds – His word can be trusted because He is faithful (emet) and because it is true (emet). The genius of biblical
teaching is that **all truth is unified and grounded in God who is faithful and true**. The most common usage of these terms in Scripture is that of statements reflecting **facts** that are **accurate** and **trustworthy**. The wisest man whoever lived or whoever will live, King Solomon (cf. 1 Kg 3:12), said “He who speaks truth tells what is **right**, but a false witness speaks **deceit**” (cf. Prov 12:17). The beloved of Christ, John the apostle said, “I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and because **no lie is of the truth**” (cf. 1 Jn 2:21); lying is the opposite of truth (cf. Jer 9:3; Gen 42:16). Jesus stressed the authority and certainty of His message when He said, “I tell you the truth” (cf. Lk 9:27; also 4:24; Jn 16:7). Numerous times Jesus began His teachings with the words “**Truly, Truly I say to you**” – the redundancy actually makes it a **very emphatic statement** (cf. John 1:51; 3:3; 3:5; 3:11; 5:19; 5:24; 5:25; 6:26; 6:32; 6:47; 6:53; 8:34; 8:51; 10:1; etc.). Conversely, John stressed that he was telling the truth about Jesus (cf. Jn 19:35). The apostle Paul also emphatically declared that he was not lying (cf. Rom 9:1; 2 Cor 7:14; 1 Tim 2:17; Acts 26:25). Likewise, God’s people are to **speak truth** to one another (cf. Zech 8:16; Eph 4:25). Moses said to the children of Israel, “The Lord God abounds in **lovingkindness and truth**” (cf. Ex 34:6); such was also later declared in the psalms: “**Praise the Lord! The truth of the Lord is everlasting!**” (cf. Ps 117:2).

Now, since God is true, so is His word. As the psalmist said, “**The sum of Thy word is truth, and every one of Thy righteous ordinances is everlasting**” (cf. Ps 119:160; also Ps 43:3; 119:142, 151; 2 Sam 7:28; Jn 17:17). Scripture is **“the word of truth”** (cf. 2 Tim 2:15). The gospel is alluded to as **“the truth”** (cf. Gal 2:5; 5:7; Eph 1:13); it is **ultimate reality**, and liberates man from fallen thinking (cf. Jn 8:32). Whereas Satan and men lie (i.e., never accurately define reality – cf. Jn 8:44-47; Rom 1:25), God (Jesus) is truth incarnate (as stated earlier). People often choose to believe a lie rather than truth because of their **proud hearts** (cf. Rom 1:25; 2 Tim 3:8; Titus 1:14). It is the Holy Spirit who dwells within us as believers, who guides us into all truth (cf. Jn 14:17; 15:26; 16:13; 1 Jn 5:6). The apostle John frequently referred to **“truth”** (i.e., “**aletheia**”) as **reality**, in contrast to **lies & falsehood** (cf. Jn 4:23-24; 8:31-32; 43:47), and he described Jesus as “**full of grace and truth**” (Jn 1:14). Remember, Jesus described Himself as **“the Truth”** (Jn 14:6); i.e., the revealed reality of God. Scripture teaches that there is such a thing as **“truth”** (i.e., **true truth**), and this truth is grounded in the very character and being of God Himself.

**WORLDLY THINKING**

Fallen worldly thinking argues this way: “**Truth** means different things to different people… there is no one absolute truth for everybody… what is true for you may not be true for me.” In this skeptical culture in which we live, these statements now dominate our post-modern world – **they argue that relativism rules over absolutism** because there is no universal, permanent criteria of which one can be absolutely certain. Therefore, since truth is **relative** to the masses in our post-modern world, we each see reality differently; thus we cannot be absolutely certain of any truth. So **relativism** by definition is
the doctrine that truth and ethics exist in relation to culture and society, and are not absolute.” In contradistinction to relativism, absolutism is “the doctrine that believes truth and reality are unitary and unchanging.” It is interesting to note, since relativists claim that truth lies in the individual’s perception, they are claiming it as an absolute; yet at the same time, they are claiming that absolutes don’t exist — therefore their position essentially is a contradiction. Such, is also the argument that the “atheist” uses: he claims there is no God, when in fact his claim admittedly is completely lacking in evidence; how can he know there is no God, when in fact he has absolutely no evidence to support his claim. So essentially it is nothing but relativistic opinion. The truth is, atheism and evolution cannot account for design, order or function in the universe — to their chagrin, such things demand an ultimate cause, maker or creator, because nothing that possesses design, order and function exists in and of itself. The scientific Laws of Thermodynamics insist that all such things were caused by something other than mere chance… that’s why the premiere focus of science is on the cause of everything; it readily agrees that anything that possesses design, order and function was made: therefore, nothing that has these qualities (design, order & function) is the product of evolution. Because some of you may struggle with this construct, let’s look at it in a simplistic format — if I were to place in front of you five little items (a pencil, a book, a pair of scissors, a coke bottle, and a pair of shoes)... and then ask you,Were these items created, or did they just evolve? Whatever your response would be, I would then ask you, How do you know that?” The answer is common among all genuine physicists — anything that has design, order and function was made; nothing with such qualities just evolved. Science has demonstrated this billions of times... NEVER do such things simply evolve. To make this issue even more complex, instead of looking at little items like pencils and books, look at vastly more complicated things like airplanes, computers, automobiles & I-Pads, and then look at the greatest of all things: creatures with the capacity to create things! Yet even to the amazement of genuine physicists, here we have evolutionists claiming that these brilliant creatures simply evolved out of nothing but a Big Bang! In spite of the fact that such is a complete contradiction to the Laws of Science.

Since science has NEVER seen anything develop from something less sophisticated, we now have the Second Law of Thermodynamics — NOTHING in the entire universe improves or is getting better; everything is on a downward plight in our universe; as such it is referred to as The Law of Entropy (i.e., everything is ultimately dying and in a state of decay). One more time, this is a LAW! NEVER has science attested to anything that is contrary to this Law; NOTHING has ever evolved into a greater state. Part of the problem as I see it is this — those who claim that better things evolve from lesser things, are not at all grounded in physics… just because they may have taken a course or two in physics doesn’t mean they are genuine physicists… they are simply people who embrace theories that mesh with their thinking and their fallen inner-core; to their demise, they have disregarded the LAWS of Science (i.e., the Laws of Reality) — remember, no one can ever prove unreality to be reality, or untruth to be truth; it simply cannot be done... regardless of whatever one wants to believe, whatever is IS...
whatever is not “IS NOT.” So science is not the problem; **people are the problem.** By the way, **atheism** not only argues against the Laws of Thermodynamics, it argues against reason, and against the **universal belief** that God does exist. It should be noted, nearly all of the 17,000 people groups on our planet **believe in a God** – contrary to what evolutionists and atheists believe, **theistic beliefs are not the product of human teaching and evangelism,** as leftist ideologists claim (incidentally, with absolutely **NO EVIDENCE**). The reality is, this universal belief is inherent in all of the 17,000 people groups in our world – God is the One who has placed it in the minds and hearts of men; it is not at all the by-product of human teaching & evangelism (**this was proven years ago by several German scientists**). So once again we simply have people making claims without any evidence whatsoever; such claims are simply the product of “**fallen human reason;**” in other words, **it is simply what some people’s inner-core wants to believe.** Again, that’s how idiotic and foolish man can be; he is not at all into **“knowing the truth”** – what matters to him is simply **being a completely autonomous creature** who runs his own life and his own world, and embraces his own values. The reality is, if he can keep God out of the mix, then his own heart and mind are at peace with himself. It should also be noted, **atheism** cannot account for or explain the existence of human beings and their minds; that human beings can “**think**” is unexplainable to them. Now, though **absolute atheism** does not believe there is a God… **practical atheism** simply lives as if there is no God, and it is this form of atheism that is widely prevalent in our world today (cf. Ps 10:4; 14:1; 53:1; Is 31:1; Jer 2:13, 17-18; 18:13-15).

**Albert Einstein** was probably the greatest scientist of the twentieth century; his work was astonishing to scientists all over the world, and his theory of energy became a foundation stone in the development of nuclear energy. When commenting on **quantum mechanics,** he responded to his friend **Max Born:** “Quantum mechanics is certainly imposing… the theory says a lot, but it does not really bring us any closer to the secret of the ‘Old One.’ And I am convinced that He (God) is not playing dice.” Einstein’s scientific inspiration was rooted in the fact that he believed the cosmos was the product of a Supernatural Transcendent Reality (**i.e.,** a Reality that transcends this temporal world). One thing that is very sure is this: supernatural creation and evolution are conflicting philosophies. The truth is, no one has ever logically or scientifically disproved **supernatural creation;** it is only **disbelieved.** Since fallen man is not totally objective, preconceived bias often influences his thinking. The truth is, the only way to answer the question of the origin of the universe is to examine the evidence – if our universe was designed by a **brilliant Master Designer,** then we should naturally expect it to demonstrate the evidence of brilliant design… on the other hand, if our universe evolved by purely **natural processes** from simple forms of life to more sophisticated forms, then the natural laws of the universe should demonstrate the evidence of such a process. As one reflects upon the brilliance of the created order, it is easy to see why the likes of **Albert Einstein** told the world that “natural law reveals an intelligence of such superiority that, compared with it, all of the systematic thinking and acting of human beings is an utterly insignificant reflection.” It is only when scientists acknowledge the incredible brilliance of the created order, that
they humbly admit the genius of the One who created it, and that it is not simply the by-product of sheer happenstance (of which there is no evidence whatsoever).

The two most universal and quintessential scientific laws are referred to as the **Laws of Thermodynamics** (such scientific laws refer to the power or energy that is contained in heat). **Everything** that exists in the universe possesses some form of energy. The reality is, **no physical activity occurs in the universe** that does not abide by the Two Laws of Thermodynamics. Essentially **thermodynamics** is the study of all the heat energy and other types of energy that exists in the universe, and that involves all of the atoms or molecules or participles or fully isolated entities in our universe that contain heat (*i.e.*, energy) — though energy can be transferred from place to place or transformed into different forms, it cannot to created or destroyed; therefore, it can be looked upon as **an absolute**. Obviously, energy exists in many different forms; for instance, “**plants**” perform one of the most biologically useful transformations of energy on Earth; they convert the **energy of sunlight** into the chemical energy stored within organic molecules. Now the **First Law of Thermodynamics** tells us that no matter what physical changes take place in the universe, the total amount of energy in the universe remains constant; thus nothing can happen to increase or decrease the amount of energy that is in the universe; though things may change form, the amount of energy in the universe remains constant. Though things are slowly digressing into different forms, never is the amount of energy removed from the universe; it is an absolute that God placed in the universe. The renowned evolutionary physicist **Isaac Asimov** (a man of Jewish origin who was born in Russia in 1920, and immigrated to the United States with his family in 1924, ended up graduating from Columbia University with a Ph.D, and became a professor of biochemistry at Boston University and the author of several books), in his work “**In the Game of Energy and Thermodynamics You Can’t Even Break Even,**” he identified the First Law of Thermodynamics as “**the most powerful and most fundamental generalization about the universe that scientists have ever been able to make.**” Remember, **science** is a systematic method of knowing and understanding the physical world and universe in which we live; essentially, it embraces the greatest parameters of human reason that correlate with the Scientific Method and the Laws of Science. **The Second Law of Thermodynamics** maintains that **every change** that takes place in the universe ultimately goes from a state of order to a state of disorder, that there is a **downward directional change** for everything in the universe. As Asimov explained, “never is there an upward change; the universe is constantly getting more disorderly; everything deteriorates, collapses, breaks down, and wears out all by itself.” Hence, the universe is in a constant state of decline; as such, the Second Law of Thermodynamics is often referred to as “**The Law of Entropy**” or “**The Law of Decay,**” because all things are constantly getting more disorderly (*i.e.*, all things automatically decay over time and die — one simply needs to take a look at all of those structures that man made more than 1,000 years ago; be it Egypt, Greece, Italy, Asia, or wherever; everything is falling apart. The renowned scientist, **Albert Einstein**, said “**This Law is the premier law of all science.**”
Now the only logical possibilities for the origin of the matter and energy that comprise the universe are these: 1) they are responsible for their own existence (i.e., they popped into existence out of nothing)... 2) they always existed... 3) someone or something outside of themselves is responsible for their existence. Regarding things developing out of nothing, the evidence from science indicates that matter cannot spontaneously generate. The evolutionary physicist Victor Stenger, in his book, “God: The Failed Hypothesis,” said “Without intervention from an outside force, the amount of mass, matter, and energy in the Universe would have remained constant at nothing... that according to scientific evidence, matter/energy could not have originally spontaneously generated; so I must admit that there are yet no empirical or observational tests that can be used to test the idea of an accidental origin.” According to Stenger, “There is no solid evidence, just speculation.” In addition to the foregoing, the famous evolutionary astronomer, Robert Jastrow, the founder and former director of the Goddard Institute for Space Studies at NASA, said in his book, “Until the Sun Dies” — “Modern science denies an eternal existence of the Universe,” and, “The creation of matter out of nothing would violate a cherished concept in science” — according to the world of science, this is a firmly established fact — the truth is nothing comes from nothing — the spontaneous generation of this Universe from nothing is impossible. Though evolution teaches that the development of life is the result of natural processes, such processes completely transgress the Second Law of Thermodynamics, because the Second Law states that everything in the universe progresses in a downward direction (disorder), never in an upward direction (order). However, because evolutionists employ such an exceedingly great amount of time in their equations, many people unwittingly buy into their theory, as if “an endless amount of time” pretty much makes anything possible (even the nullification of the Second Law of Thermodynamics). Again, according to the world’s greatest physicists, there is “no evidence whatsoever” that the Second Law of Thermodynamics could ever be rendered ineffective or reversed. Obviously, wanting something to be true, and something being true, are two different things altogether.

It should be noted, the evolutionary world essentially is based here in America because of the radical, leftist, anti-religious element in our country; countless scientists in Europe and other countries have actually been stunned at the arrogance of America’s evolutionary scientists. It is the “hatred” that many Americans have for Christianity that has inspired the diabolical left to embrace evolutionary thought; however, because their evolutionary thinking is grounded in sheer bias, they cannot give substantive evidence to their position. The truth is, science has repeatedly demonstrated that all changes are either genetically neutral or genetically inferior, being losses of information rather than the gains the theory of evolution requires. Despite these facts, many evolutionary scientists here in America continue to hang on to their evolutionary model; though there is not one instance where the fossil records show “a clear vector of progress,” they still dogmatically describe it in their evolutionary textbooks (which is all the more deceptive). Now, because most creatures have a limited ability to adapt to changing environments, most evolutionists use these adaptations to show that “evolution happens” (in other words,
if a creature actually undergoes a “minor change” when it is subjected to another environment, according to evolutionists that proves the fact that evolution has occurred. But the truth of the matter is this — all such adaptations are only evidence of “microevolution” (i.e., evolutionary changes within a species), not “macroevolution” (evolutionary changes from one species to a different species). Obviously, God has placed within His creatures the ability to make modest adjustments to different environments over time, but that does not at all mean His creatures can or do transform into completely different creatures (i.e., a completely different species). So adaptations that occur within a species cannot be used to support the evidence for the theory of evolution, in which one species is believed to have evolved into a completely different species. Therefore human beings didn’t evolve from monkeys or any other animal. It should be noted, all scientists (both creationists and evolutionists) agree that microevolution occurs, because minor changes within species have been observed over and over again since history began. The reality is, macroevolution has never been observed; i.e., not a single creature has ever been transformed into a different species — still, some of the most prominent evolution-scientists (particularly here in the US) have tried to convince people that that indeed has happened; the truth is, there is not a single piece of evidence that it has happened. In short, the theory of evolution is based on faith just as creationism is, but evolution-ism moves from the observable to the theoretical in a way that is not warranted by the evidence. The problem with evolutionists is that they simply insist on not having GOD in the mix (that’s an absolute to them), so everything in their mind excludes God; thus everything is explained with evolutionary thinking (because that is the only argument they can come up with). The reality is, macroevolution is only a theory that’s never been observed (never! not one time!), but if you refuse to incorporate God into the picture, you will end up embracing a construct of thought that transcends reality. The premiere problem with fallen man is that “he chooses to believe something” (truth or untruth); whatever it is he chooses to believe, he is the one who will ultimately make that choice; obviously, during the first twelve or thirteen years of one’s life, there are numerous things that one will contemplate; and by the time they enter into their teenage years (i.e., young adult years), they will make a number of choices. Scripture itself declares that God does not hold children responsible for their choices until they reach the young adult age… because it is at that point where their mature minds will make some very significant choices. Naturally the believing community hopes they will “embrace their thinking once they share it with them;” though some do, some don’t. One of the premiere goals of the Christian world is to share divine truth with the world.

In addition to the foregoing, for years the evolutionary world taught that the universe is “eternal” (i.e., that it has always existed). It was the spiteful biased thinking of the late Carl Sagan (a noted cosmological professor at Cornell University, and an outspoken atheist) who claimed that “God doesn’t exist because the universe has always existed!” He went on to say that “Nature is all that is or ever was or ever will be” — obviously if the universe has always existed then it was “not created” as the religious element in our world claims. By the way, for years these statements were basically the foundation of the
evolutionary model. Now, in spite of the fact that the *Second Law of Thermodynamics* emphatically declares that the entire universe is in a process of gradual disintegration, and is moving toward final darkness, means it obviously has *not always existed*. Nevertheless, Sagan’s absolute hatred for Christianity moved him to make this diabolical declaration. *Lincoln Barnett*, a graduate of Princeton and Columbia University, and a former editor of Life magazine, in his book, “The Universe and Dr. Einstein,” he states it this way—“The inescapable inference is that everything had a beginning; somehow and sometime the cosmic processes were started, the stellar fires ignited, and the whole vast pageant of the universe brought into being” (New York: William Morrow, p. 114). From a purely scientific standpoint, it is easy to demonstrate that matter cannot be eternal in nature. The various lines of evidence came together in the 1960s and led to the formulation of the “Big Bang Theory,” which asserts that the universe began with a cosmic explosion 13.8 billion years ago. With that in mind, the most common strategy among scientists and educators in America today, is simply to ignore the starting implications of the Big Bang. Concerning oneself with the “ultimate cause” behind the Big Bang is dismissed as philosophy; therefore it is given no place whatsoever in the science classroom here in our country; consequently, American educators claim only to deal with science—they want absolutely nothing to do with bringing God or religion into the discussion. Now, since God is “ULTIMATE REALITY,” when one excludes Him from the equation, one is simply dealing with “UNREALITY.” It is always amazing at how the diabolical left wiggles out of issues it cannot adequately address. Incidentally, the amount of hydrogen in the universe also demonstrates that matter cannot be eternal in nature; hydrogen is the basic fuel of the cosmos, powering every star & every energy source in space. Though there is an exceedingly great amount of hydrogen in the universe, at some distant point in the future on the cosmological time clock, all hydrogen will ultimately be fully exhausted (that is the essence of all scientific studies).

Now, since the *First Law of Thermodynamics* implies that matter cannot just pop into existence by itself, the universe cannot be self-caused; in other words, in eternity past (for lack of a better time table) something outside of the universe must have caused it to exist; it should be obvious, nothing can create itself, because it would need to exist before it came into existence, which is a logical absurdity. Now, since the universe had a beginning, then something external to the universe must have caused it to come into existence (i.e., something or someone that transcends the natural world is its cause). So the idea of supernatural creation is now a conclusion based on the most straightforward reading of scientific evidence. The renowned British physicist and cosmologist, *Paul C. Davies*, though not a Christian, states that the Big Bang is “the one place in the universe where there is room, even for the most hard-nosed materialists, to admit God” (The Edge of Infinity: Where the Universe Came From and How it Will End; New York: Simon & Schuster, 1982, p. 169). If you are interested in reading more on this subject, I would encourage you to read a textbook I wrote titled, “Christianity: The Pursuit of Divine Truth,” as well as a study I did on “Ultimate Reality” (The Constraints of a Worldview)—in these two works you will be able to access numerous authors & writers that I quote. For people to simply let their own
personal bias determine ultimate reality, is a very sad commentary on the nature of man—
to his discredit, he is not interested in the Truth; instead he is simply interested in his own
innate bias. Is it any wonder why God calls humanistic thought “foolishness”? (cf. Job 5:13;
Ps 94:11; also 1 Cor 3:19-21). Interestingly enough, our fallen world actually thinks the things
of God are “foolishness” (1 Cor 2:14). Remember, “the fool says there is no God” (cf. Ps 14:1;
53:1), and that “the way of a fool is right in his own eyes” (cf. Prv 12:15); because man is a
fallen creature and has an arrogant heart, he thinks he is right. Scripture tells us without
humility, one will never come to know the truth; instead, God will give him over to a
depraved mind because of his arrogance (cf. Rom 1:28); and such will rule in his soul. It
should be pretty evident, one cannot successfully argue the integrity of divine truth with
someone who has a proud heart, because depraved minds love darkness rather than truth,
and are completely blind to the truth; as such Jesus said, “Simply shake the dust off your
feet and move on” (cf. Mt 10:14; Jn 3:19; 8:12; 12:46; Acts 13:51).

The world of “science” has been in a quagmire of thought for years—the most arrogant
scientists have made brass statements that border on lunacy, while those with half a
wit have tried to express things in a more sensible fashion. For years, the wisest among
them have been telling their fellow-comrades to “let people know that our scientific un-
derstanding of the universe is extremely limited, and that we need to stop pretending
to be the genius’ of the world.” Again, let me quote Albert Einstein—“The scientist is
possessed by the sense of universal causation… His religious feeling takes the form of
a rapturous amazement at the harmony of natural law, which reveals an intelligence
of such superiority that, compared with it, all of the systematic thinking and acting of
human beings is an utterly insignificant reflection.” Yet, in spite of such integrity of
thought, men like Carl Sagan have loudly spouted off that “God doesn't exist, because
the universe has always existed!” With his depraved mind Sagan made a brass assump-
tion that the universe is an eternal reality (sadly, that was the scientific assumption by
many in the 20th century), yet it wasn’t long until the entire scientific community con-
fessed that “they were wrong,” that the universe is actually in a state of decline (i.e., it
is dying); hence it has not always existed, because by definition it would be completely
dead. By measuring the decline, as stated earlier, science concluded that the universe
exploded into existence 13.8 billion years ago; again, this explosion is referred to as
“the big bang,” and that our planet didn’t come into existence until 7.3 billion yrs later
(thus, the planet on which we live didn’t come into existence until 4.5 billion yrs ago).
The problem with so many arrogant minds in our world, is that they love to control the
discourse on the world stage, and have the populous worship at their altar; in spite of the
fact that they have absolutely “no evidence” to support their claims. According to Scrip-
ture, King Solomon was the wisest man whoever lived or whoever will live (read I Kg 3:7-
12), and he said the following: “Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more
hope for a fool than for him.” The reality is, God makes “the arrogant person” a com-
plete fool; obviously, that action thrills God (He doesn’t tolerate extreme arrogance).
When you read “divine truths” like those in Scripture, it gives definition to this mind-
less world in which we live. The ancient Greeks had a word for “the juvenile thinking
of our world” – it was our English word “sophomore;” a compound word that literally meant “wise fool” (sophos, meaning wise; moros, meaning foolish; from which we get our word “moron”); inherent in this word is the idea that “a little bit of knowledge can be a dangerous thing, because one might be inclined to think that he knows a whole lot more than he actually knows.” I find it interesting that students in the tenth grade have been called “sophomores” (as have those in their second year of college), because these are the educational years when young people start to enter the world of knowledge on a deeper level… as you might recall, many kids when they are about fifteen years old actually think they are now smarter than their dad! 😊

Albert Einstein humbly accepted the truth that human beings are not nearly as knowledgeable as they like to think they are, where as Carl Sagan and his arrogant friends wanted the world to believe they were the final voice on cosmology. Imagine making that claim without the slightest pit of evidence (remember, there is none whatsoever); obviously, one’s inner core is completely convinced that evolution is far and away the only theorem that defines reality. Incidentally, there is another “hot button issue” on the table in our world today; it is the issue of “climate change” or “global warming” – wouldn’t you know, we now have a multitude of arrogant minds making all kinds of absolute claims, and at least half the world now believes these claims; whether in fact their thinking is even close to the truth, remains to be seen. The reality is, many in the scientific community all around the world are already starting to question the integrity of this thing called “global warming” – I cover this matter in considerable detail later on in this study. The principle problem in our world today seems to be that “man now worships the world of science (i.e., the thinking of men), rather than the God of the universe,” and many in the scientific world are actually rejoicing over that, in spite of the fact that much of their thinking is “mere speculation,” without the slightest degree of evidence. Back in the 1980s the scientific world believed that “ulcers” were caused by worry: that people simply needed to stop worrying (that was the primary emphasis of psychologists); sadly, many people had to identify with scientific thinking in public; a few years later, however, a scientist with half a wit argued against that idea and was publicly criticized for his thinking by “the know-it-alls.” He claimed that ulcers were not caused by worry but by some “bacteria” that had gotten into their system; in order to prove the scientific world wrong, he digested a cup of this bacteria and ended up getting an ulcer… and that year he won “the Nobel Prize!” Keep in mind, this occurred in what we call “the genius century;” i.e., the 20th century! (not something that occurred in the middle ages; i.e., the dumb age). As Einstein stated over and over again, “We need to stop deceiving people by claiming to be brilliant, because we are not!” The reality is, the arrogant purveyors of thought in our world will say anything to get people to believe what they want them to believe (they want the masses to believe that they are the geniuses of the world; it’s the same foundation that the diabolical left is built on… remember, when people are convinced they are right, they will pretty much say anything to get people to embrace their position; there are a lot of liars in this world, they not only lie to themselves, they lie to the world); yet their depraved thinking is nothing but arrogant humanistic bias
that actually hates humility and divine truth; it is simply what their depraved minds insist on believing. The problem is “arrogant man is easily deceived” — he hears something, and if it finds acceptance in his soul (i.e., his fallen mind), he embraces it, in spite of the fact that the integrity of such thinking is seriously lacking; in short, he is too quick to believe something and is deceived (cf. Gen 3:13; Deut 11:16; Is 44:20; Jer 17:9; 49:16; Gal 6:3, 7; Col 2:8; Heb 3:13). The problem with man is that he constantly jumps to conclusions without examining all of the evidence; so is it any wonder then why man is frequently referred to as a “mental wreck”? I find it interesting, “the first temptation in the Garden of Eden was to be as God in knowledge” (cf. Gen 3:5); pride is the ugliest reality in the human family. Lord willing, that is not the altar at which any of you worship.

Let me again quote some of Albert Einstein’s most prodigious thoughts… because of his respect for truth (i.e., the reality of what is) and the integrity with which he approached ultimate reality, I have always enjoyed reflecting upon his words; so let me share them with you once again: “The scientist is possessed by the sense of universal causation… his religious feeling takes the form of a rapturous amazement at the harmony of natural law, which reveals an intelligence of such superiority that, compared with it, all the systematic thinking and acting of human beings is an utterly insignificant reflection.” Einstein understood the brilliance that underlies this physical universe (i.e., the way all things are composed), so he knew things about this universe in which we live, that very few people know about. Einstein didn’t just focus on the surface of things, but on the depth of things as well, and all such things were extremely mesmerizing to him. Obviously, God gave Einstein a brilliant mind and a humble heart, which He has used to convey physical truths to the world; however, most evolutionists seem to ignore those thoughts that Einstein had that didn’t align with their thinking, in spite of the fact that most of the scientific world almost worships Einstein and his scientific achievements. Even though Einstein was not a believer in the strict sense of the word, his humility of thought was highly respected by nearly every scientist; which in itself is very commendable… few men in our world exhibit that kind of character.

Now, since science has demonstrated by the scientific method (i.e., by procedures that the scientific world uses to test hypotheses and determine the integrity of certain knowledge), that random chance never results in order, design or function, it stands to reason then that there must have been something that “caused” these things to exist. As stated earlier, The Second Law of Thermodynamics (i.e., the Law of Entropy) tells us that everything in the universe is actually in “a state of decline,” that nothing is improving (that’s a law of nature); since everything is in a state of degeneration, nothing evolves into something better; so evolution is a nonreality, simply a suggestion that surfaced in our world in the 19th century by the naturalist Charles Darwin. It is one thing to express an opinion, it is quite another to make a claim that is completely lacking in evidence — obviously, there is something in a person’s inner-core that contributes to making those kinds of claims. It should be noted, Darwin simply gave his opinion on the origin and perpetuation of new species and plants, and suggested that the off-spring of given organisms may vary; that
greater species and plants may be the product of lesser species and plants. Though he
came up with that idea, it is also important to note that he never denied the existence of
God (no such thinking ever came from him; that has simply been the thinking of 20th
century evolutionists). Remember, early in the 19th century, our world had not yet
discovered the Laws of Thermodynamics, so Darwin was simply venturing a guess with-
out such knowledge. Now, since the Second Law of Thermodynamics (i.e., the Law of
Entropy) maintains that all matter in the universe is in a state of increasing disorder and
degeneration, one can no longer assume that superior things can be produced by inferior
things (i.e., that greater things can be produced by lesser things). Remember, where there
is the slightest degree of order, design or function, there must have been an ultimate cause
that brought it into existence, because it could not have been produced by anything that is
inferior to it. So science is essentially about “discovering why things are what they are,
and why things work the way they do.” Thus the scientific world today believes in a
“cause and effect universe.” In spite of that fact, however, some scientists in our world
still “insist” that evolution is still valid… yet “the laws of science” argue to the contrary.
It is not uncommon for some scientists to make the assumption that there is always a
“chance” that everything doesn’t coincide with the laws of science; yet why would one
make that statement if the Laws of Thermodynamics are the foundational principles that
govern the scientific world? Obviously, sheer stubborn belligerence seems to reside in
the souls of a lot of people, in spite of the fact “there is not one piece of evidence that sug-
gests that evolution is a dynamic reality.” It should be noted, all evidence points in the
direction of a Creator… there is no evidence that points in the direction of evolution—
NONE! That’s why it is referred to at best as “the theory of evolution” (i.e., speculation,
or a perceived rational explanation of that which is physical). Ultimately, it is fallen man’s
inner core that insists on making physical reality evolutionary; for some reason, evolution-
ists really believe the non-sense they teach — to admit that they are wrong, is simply out-
side the box for many of them. Keep in mind, when all one does is read data that supports
what he believes (and nothing that is contrary to what he believes), he will satisfy himself
with the data of his own choosing. Remember, when one takes reality off the table, he
ends up with unreality; conversely, when he takes truth off the table, he ends up with
untruth: it’s as simple as that—such a construct should be very clear to every one of us.
If one doesn’t leave the door open with regard to absolute truth, one will never come to
understand and believe it. By the way, keeping the door open to absolute truth requires
humility: it’s a matter of one saying in his heart, “Whatever is true, that is what I really
want to know;” Not, “I’ll think about it and then determine whether I really believe it;
God will not enlighten that kind of mind; He only enlightens the hearts of those who are
genuinely humble; He doesn’t cast His pearls (i.e., His precious truths) before swine (cf.
Mt 7:6). Humility should not be that difficult a construct for anyone to embrace, because
every man on earth is well aware of his mental deficiencies and his innate sinfulness
(God has revealed it to every person’s heart)… so it is not a matter of man being duped
by some religion.
Logic tells us that “when one excludes the possibility that reality may include a Supreme Being,” one doesn't end up with one! Wow, what an amazing deduction! And then these humanists have the audacity to claim that one doesn’t exist! That’s how “circular reasoning” works; if one starts with the presumption that there is no God (i.e., one presupposes that no God exists), guess what? one ends up proving to himself with circular reasoning that there is no God! It is such a juvenile way of “determining ultimate reality,” that most scientists in our world today are embarrassed by the narrow-minded thinking of their fellow-comrades in the scientific community (in particular here in America) who insist on approaching the subject with preconceived bias. By the way, this is primarily the result of “leftist ideology” in higher education in our country – I think it’s important for you to know, there are very few other countries in the world that embrace such a narrow-minded approach to this issue; this is simply the consequence of the diabolical left in America that “demanded a separation between church and state” – thus GOD is no longer an acceptable reality in the public arena in our country (including our schools). That’s why it is no longer found in the textbooks that are used in our public schools (it is actually forbidden)... incidentally, that’s how much “hatred” there is in the liberal element of our world that essentially now controls the public arena here in America – the liberal elites have an intense hatred for “Christians” (they actually think Christians are “the stupidest idiots on the planet”). Let me repeat myself: biased evolutionary thinking is not nearly as prevalent in the scientific communities of Europe and the vast majority of other countries in our world; it is only super-prevalent here in the so-called “land of the free!” How’s that for an oxymoron? The Cornell cosmologist, Carl Sagan, mocked and berated the idea that there was even a possibility that there was a God so strongly, that the leftist ideologues cheered him on, as if what he was declaring was unequivocally true. Back in the 1980s, Sagan emphatically declared to the world that “evolution is a proven fact!” The evolutionists and liberal elites in America roared their approval exclaiming, “The case is closed! God does not exist!” as if Sagan was the final word on “cosmology” (i.e., space and mass). By the way, Carl Sagan died in 1996 (just ten years later) knowing full-well that the Big Bang Theory had now disproved evolutionary thinking. It should also be noted, since it is almost impossible to “prove a negative,” for Sagan to declare that “God does not exist,” was about as mindless a statement as has ever been voiced by a member of the human family (cf. Ps 14:1). I would not have come down this hard on Sagan if he had simply given “his opinion” (as many others have), because that indeed is all it was — opinion — instead, he violated one of the premiere tenets of science (making a declaration without having any evidence to support it), and then he proceeded to violently attack those who disagreed with him, as if “his loud screaming voice” actually gave him credibility and established him as the ultimate determinant of cosmological truth — in a sense, it would be like claiming that it is not possible for a person to live beyond the age of 150 years; if you have no evidence to support such a claim, you cannot make that claim… you can only give your opinion, and in so doing, you need to give justification as to why you are stating that opinion. One further thought on this man “Sagan” – I find it interesting that his name appears to be a correlative of the name “Satan;” instead of being a “T” (Tyrant), he was a “G” (Goon); now whether or not he
was a correlative of Satan, one thing is sure, he walked in the dark, not the light; thus he was of his father the devil (Jn 8:44). Remember, when you talk about a human being, you are not talking about a glorious creature, you are talking about a fallen creature… even though some of us are actually “saved creatures,” none of us are worthy of worship; by the way, you are not grossly inferior to anyone on this planet; we all put our pants and shoes on the same way. Though the world loves to have a bunch of heroes and honor some people far more than others, every human being is made of the same stuff; be it a King, a President, a Hollywood Star, an Athlete, or even Einstein. The problem with this corrupt world in which we live, is that it often elevates some people far beyond their authentic genuineness or their realness. As I reflect back on my life as a youngster, Elvis Presley was one of the most popular people in America, and women went absolutely bonkers over him… yet here he was, a fallen creature just like you and me (though at the time I didn’t think that), and the end of his life demonstrated that — by the way, my two favorite singers back then were Elvis Presley & Bobby Darin: I had nearly all of their records in my music box.☺ Remember, we are all made of the same stuff, and we are all fallen creatures, be we heroes or admirers.

The questions that beg asking are these: “Why is there such an animus against religion here in America?” Jesus said that “men love darkness rather than light” (Jn 3:19). Since America seems to be the epicenter of Christendom in our world, it is here where Satan is doing his most profound work, and this he does through the unbelieving dark world. A second question that needs asking is this: “Why do so many American scientists argue so vehemently in defense of evolution?” The answer to that question essentially is the same as the preceding question: because America is the center of evolutionary thought in our world (that is simply the work of Satan; he will promote anything that denigrates God and keeps Him out of men’s minds and hearts). Incidentally, in 1981 the British Museum of Natural History in London opened a new exhibit on “evolution” to mark its one hundredth anniversary. One of the world’s leading scientific journals, “Nature” (which is an extremely popular American journal), ran a critical editorial in response to the museum’s suggestion that “evolution by natural selection was only one of a number of possible explanations.” Some of you may not appreciate the significance of that critical editorial — remember, many in the scientific world here in America think they are the world’s premiere scientists: the reality is, contrary to what many people think, that is not at all the case — that is simply the “extreme arrogance” of many here in our country (for those of you who have been indoctrinated into believing such non-sense, that may be a very difficult construct for you to believe). Regarding the critical editorial by the journal “Nature,” two weeks after the article was published, twenty-two members of the museum’s distinguished staff of biologists wrote the following letter to the editor of Nature —

Sir, as working biologists at the British Museum of Natural History we were astonished to read your editorial…. How is it that a journal such as yours that is devoted to science and its practice can advocate that
theory be presented as fact? This is the stuff of prejudice, not science, and as scientists our basic concern is to keep an open mind on the unknowable. . . . Are we to take it that evolution is a fact, proven to the limits of scientific rigor? If that is the inference then we must disagree most strongly. . . . we have no absolute proof of the theory of evolution.

It should be noted, numerous non-Christian scientists from around the world have stated unequivocally that “there is no hard evolutionary evidence,” contrary to what many of America’s liberal elite have claimed. As previously stated, I quote a number of these scientists in a study I did titled, “Ultimate Reality” — you can find it on my website should you desire to read it. Steven Hawking, an atheist and theoretical physicist, and one of the world’s most respected cosmologists, holds the same position at Cambridge University that Sir Isaac Newton once held, and has been hailed by Time Magazine as “an equal of Einstein” — when addressing the subject of origins in his work “The Grand Design,” he said: “I think there are clearly religious implications whenever you start to discuss the origins of the universe. . . . But I think most scientists prefer to stay away from the religious side of it. . . . The odds against a universe that has produced life like ours are immense” (John Boslough: Stephen Hawking’s Universe; New York: Quill, 1985). It is also important to mention here that the more advances science makes in the world, the more credibility “creationism” gets, and the less credibility “evolutionary theory” gets. Here’s the logic: if something is indeed true, the evidence cannot reveal it to be untrue; that is one of the sacred beauties of truth; thus one should “never fear the facts,” because they can only substantiate that which is true.” The only so-called facts one should fear, are those that are “arrived at with dishonest intrigue” — it is these purported facts that distort reality. This has happened several times down through the ages, to the embarrassment of those who propounded them . . . among them was the insistence of many that the earth was flat and not round . . . sadly, even the Pope jumped in and sided with “the flat earth” group. The good news is, every year in America more and more scientists are coming out of the closet and abandoning evolutionary thinking; because the evidence continues to embarrass its adherents, it moves scientists in the direction of “creationism.” If evolution were indeed true, it would be extremely easy to prove, because all evidence would logically point in that direction; but since it is not true, there is no evidence whatsoever (it is not possible to prove an untruth as being true) — furthermore, the more evidence the scientific community continues to discover, the worse evolutionary thinking appears; so it is not a matter of our fearing that we will one day wake up and discover we were wrong, and that we were the stupid people! Truth can never be disproved . . . truth can only be vindicated. And of this you can be sure, at the end of the age “every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is LORD, to the glory of God the Father” (cf. Phil 2:10-11; Rom 14:11; Is 45:23). Incidentally, that word “LORD” (Kurios in Greek) is emphatic; when it is used of Christ it refers to His deity, His right to rule, His power, His authority, and the fact He is LORD of all (cf. 2 Cor 4:5; Col 1:15-20; Rev 19:16; 21:22; 22:13, 20).
I find it interesting that the First Law of Thermodynamics was expressed at the very beginning of the Bible with these words: “Thus the heavens and the Earth, and all the hosts of them, were finished. And on the seventh day, God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on he seventh day from all His work when He had done” (cf. Gen 2:1-2). As Moses stated in the book of Exodus, “For in six days, the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is them, and rested the seventh day” (20:11).

As Dr. Jeff Miller, a scientific writer for Apologetics Press states, “Everything in the Universe was made in six days, and then the Lord stopped creating.” He expanded upon that by saying that the thrust of the First Law of Thermodynamics was expressed in the Bible thousands of years ago, though it was not discovered and formally articulated by scientists until the 19th century. Through the hand of the psalmist, God also stated centuries ago what scientists call the Second Law of Thermodynamics: “Of old You laid the foundation of the Earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. They will perish, but You will endure; yes, they will all grow old like a garment; like a clock You will change them, and they will be changed. But You are the same, and Your years will have no end” (cf. Ps 102:25-27). The Universe is wearing out — decaying like an old shirt. Once again, the Creation model is in perfect harmony with science; whereas the evolutionary model fails its thermodynamics test. The writer of Hebrews wrote: “By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible” (cf. Heb 11:3). Said the psalmist, “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork” (cf. Ps 19:1). So the reality is, the scientific evidence points to God… and positively affirms Creative Power. So science is not at all antagonistic, but helpful, to the God-believing world.

I find it interesting that the common message that is being promulgated in the scientific world today in America is this: “Whether or not there is a GOD is a religious issue, not a scientific one, and we don’t involve ourselves with religion.” I find that statement interesting as well, because the evolutionary world used to “appeal to scientific evidence” as proof that the God of the Bible does not exist. The underlying animus that still characterizes the spirit of many in the American scientific community, is that “there is still a disparaging, fervent hateful heat boiling in many scientists souls, because religion is absolutely repugnant to them” — they not only hate the fact that parents teach their children that God exists, but they refuse to let our schools teach their kids that God might exist; incidentally, that pretty much defined the communist world back in the twentieth century (religious teaching was absolutely forbidden). One can’t help but wonder how the defiant diabolical left in our country is going to respond when they stand before God’s eternal judgment and are “forced to give an account for the nonsense they espoused.” You can almost hear God saying, “You told the world that I didn’t exist… I’ve got three questions for you” —

1. Why did you make such a foolish claim?
2. Why did you believe such a foolish claim?
3. Why did you denigrate those who believed in Me?
TRUTH IS NOT RELATIVISTIC

Let me begin this section by declaring that all truth is related to God, who is both eternal and unchanging. This thing called “truth” is not simply a relativistic construct that differs according to various societies and cultures; truth is true in all cultures and all situations; it is not the product of differing contexts — the reality is, truth never changes; just as God never changes, so truth never changes. As God told the prophet Malachi, “I, the Lord, do not change;” likewise the author of Hebrews said, “He is the same yesterday, today, and forever” (cf. Mal 3:6; Heb 13:8; Ps 90:2). The term “relativism” in contemporary philosophy means that there is no consensus on any one definition; it is the doctrine that knowledge, truth, and morality exist in relation to culture, society, or historical context, and are not absolute in and of themselves. Now think about that statement for a moment; this is all the product of Satan in our world — though the devil gives definition to reality that completely contradicts divine truth, he often does so with very convincing logic… remember, Satan is an “angel of light,” so his actions and thoughts often appear to have some integrity to them; it is not as if he comes across as an absolutely despicable character; that’s why so many in the world embrace his thinking. Remember, one-third of the angelic realm in eternity past embraced his thinking; obviously, there is a side to his thinking that even believers struggle with… that’s why Paul tells us to “put on the full armor of God, that you might be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil” (cf. Eph 6:11). The message is: “untruth is not a simplistic little lie that even a monkey can understand;” it is often very deceptive and very misleading… therefore we must “gird our loins with truth” (Eph 6:14), and a significant part of truth is acknowledging that we are very weak creatures; when we admit our weakness, we commend ourselves to the power of God’s might (cf. Eph 6:10). If I admit that I cannot do something no matter how hard I may try, if someone else is present who can do that something for me, and I defer to him, then he will do it for me — with that in mind, the apostle Paul said: “When I am weak, then I am strong” (cf. 2 Cor 12:10). So it is “when we are strong in the strength of God’s might, that we are able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil” (cf. Eph 6:10-11); the reality is this: “In our own strength we are no match for the devil.” In a word, God’s best soldiers are those who are conscious of their own weakness and their ineffectiveness, and who rely solely on Him. Though that may be a very provocative reality to some of you, that is “the truth,” in and of ourselves we cannot stand against the devil.

Now in the ancient Greek world back in the fourth century BC, Protagoras told Socrates (one of the most esteemed philosophers in human history): “Truth is relative, and only a matter of opinion… what is true for you is true for you, and what is true for me is true for me. Truth is subjective [i.e., reality is contingent upon the subject].” Socrates responded, “No, truth is absolute, not opinion… [thus] you are absolutely in error [truth is not determined by the subject].” Interestingly enough it should be noted, since relativists claim that truth lies in the individual’s perception, they are making a claim that is an absolute; yet at the same time they are claiming that absolutes don’t exist — therefore relativism completely contradicts itself. It is always interesting to reflect upon “the think-
ing of fallen man;” hardly ever does it mesh with the truth; fallen thinking always has a 
way of wiggling around the truth. In contrast to relativism, absoluteism claims that truth 
lies in reality, which is not based on personal bias. With the foregoing in mind, in and 
of itself reality exists as a whole, regardless of our capacity to understand and determine 
it. Though moral relativism says every individual has the right to determine morality for 
himself… with seven billion world-wide opinions as to what is “moral,” however, morality 
quickly loses its significance altogether; which is just fine with the diabolical left. So 
foolishness rules in the relativist’s mind; he will simply say anything to appease himself. 
The reality is, fallen man’s culture does not in any way dictate truth—God does. Stated 
Solomon, “There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death” (cf. 
Prv 16:25).

The period of the Judges in the Old Testament was one of the most chaotic, tumultuous 
times in the history of Israel; the reason for the chaos is explicitly stated: “In those days 
Israel had no king; everyone did what was right in his own eyes” (cf. Judges 21:25). When 
humanity fell, the standards by which we live also fell: “we exchanged the truth of God 
for a lie” (cf. Rom 1:25). It should be obvious: ethics based on human wisdom is foolish, 
fickle, and fleeting (cf. Prv 14:12). Fallen man simply does not have the capacity to believe 
or do what is right; either he humbly submits to God and lives according to His standards, 
or he will self-destruct and live by his own relativistic standards. The reality is, God has 
placed in our hearts a standard of right and wrong, that, if followed, will result in our 
being blessed (cf. Rom 2:14-15); but our fallen nature and bent to sin clouds our conscience, 
so we fail to live up to God’s standards. Moses and the Levitical priests spoke the fol-
lowing words to all of Israel just prior to their entering into the promised land: “Israel, be 
silent and listen! This day you have become a people for the Lord your God. Therefore 
you shall obey the Lord your God, and do His commandments and His statutes which I 
command you today” (cf. Deut 27:9-10). Moses went on to say, “If you diligently obey the 
Lord… He will bless you exceedingly” (cf. Deut 28:1-14); however, “If you will disobey the 
Lord… you will suffer many curses, plagues, and chronic sicknesses” (cf. Deut 28:15-68). As 
you well know, the people of Israel suffered significantly down through the ages.

The reality is this: God has set in place certain standards, and it is “sin” to break those 
standards. What appears to be “good” to human beings, may in fact be an absolute “evil” 
to God. Because we are fallen creatures, our nurturing environment oftentimes is the 
antithesis of what the Father loves, and embraces what the Father hates; i.e., the Relative 
hates the Absolute, and the Absolute hates the Relative. Thus, it follows that to be recon-
ciled to the Father requires a radical reconstruction of our most fundamental disposition;
we must be converted from “lovers of life” to “haters of life and lovers of God” (cf. Mt 10: 
37-39; 16:24-26; Jn 12:24-26). In order to give definition to the foregoing, “to hate one’s life” 
means to turn one’s back on it as of secondary importance compared with that which 
matters most” (God and His will for your life)—it is only then that all the negative 
conceptions that cloud our vision will fade away. Remember, Jesus (the messenger of 
the Absolute) was not welcomed in the world of mankind (not even by His own people).
As Scripture states: “He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him” (Jn 1:11). Since the Absolute comes to us from outside this life, it is alien to this life; therefore He is threatening to all that we hold dear (motivated as we are by the love of life)… since we love life (because of our fallen nature), we all attempt to hang onto it as long as possible, and make it what we want it to be. The truth is, “the love of life” is not the Absolute good that many believers make it out to be: though that may be a little disconcerting to some of you, this earthly life should not have a powerful grip on us; according to Scripture, life is not about us, it is about Christ – to give clarity to the foregoing, read these passages (cf. Rom 6:3-8; 2 Cor 4:10; Phil 1:21-26; 3:17-20; Col 3:1-4; 1 Jn 3:15-17).

Again, with regard to relativistic thinking, when one mentions that “truth exists,” it earns a very dirty look from the present-day relativist. Fortunately, dogmatic relativism can be exposed as both flimsy and hypocritical, because it is not grounded in an absolute fact; it is simply an opinion based on one’s innate bias. As mentioned earlier, how can a relativist be certain about his or her position if “truth cannot be known”? Remember, the relativist thinks he’s right, that what he believes is right. As far as leftist ideologues are concerned, who hate divine truth, the only one allowed to be dogmatic is the relativist; which scholars call “a self-defeating statement.” As incredible as it may seem, the relativist thinks “his loud voice” is evidence that he is right, and that those who disagree with him are wrong. If you have lived very long in the western world, you know just how true that statement is — the political world is full of nonsensical thinking; it will say anything to make the opposition look bad… it doesn’t matter that what they are saying is not true; it only matters to them that the majority embraces them and their thinking. Sadly, though truth is the ultimate goal of the scientist (or at least it is supposed to be), most scientists simply embrace that which is relative to their conceptions of nature and what they were taught. The truth is, few college science professors have made any scientific achievements during their life — they simply teach what they have been taught; in other words, all they do is give voice to the work & thinking of others (they are simply regurgitators), so to greatly respect the vast majority of scientist is nonsense (I have bumped into a number of such professors in the various colleges in which I have taught; though they make claims, they cannot justify their claims with any scientific work that they have contributed to). It is always wise to remember, there is enough information out there in the world to satisfy one’s ignorance on any subject — for example: if one dislikes some particular group in our world, he can support his thinking with all kinds of data. If one hates Jews, Blacks, Christians, Muslims, Republicans, Democrats, Liberals or Conservatives, there is plenty of information out there in the world to support one’s innate bias. The problem with most people is that they only study and read things that support their disposition (i.e., their innate bias). So we live in a world that is strongly wedded to different positions, and due to the fact that each position has an abundance of knowledge, it is very difficult to move a person in another direction. To think that the world will embrace divine reality simply by looking at the evidence is foolish; instead it will continue to look at the dark issues and embrace them; “men love darkness rather than light” (cf. Jn 3:19). The only way a man will turn from his sin is if the Holy Spirit humbles him
and opens his heart to the truth (cf. Lk 24:45; Jn 6:44; Acts 16:14); in and of himself, no man will embrace the truth (remember, he is a 100% fallen creature; not a 90% fallen creature). I find the words of the 19th century American statesman and orator, Daniel Webster, very interesting: “It is one thing to get a new idea into someone’s mind, it is quite another to get an old idea out;” essentially, Webster believed that once a person was wedded to a particular construct, it is very unlikely he will ever change his position (that just seems to be how premature and stubborn fallen man is). Now since our public schools teach things that are antithetical to the Christian faith (i.e., to divine truth), they teach evolution, immorality, and secularism. Interestingly enough, our universities are very restrictive in their teachings as well; they are extremely liberal, and essentially teach the same things that our elementary schools teach. The textbooks do not even accurately teach history; if something occurred early on in our nation’s history that bothers the liberal element (i.e., things related to Christianity), they will not permit it to be taught in the classroom or mentioned in our textbooks. Thus the public schools here in America only teach those values that the liberal world embraces; anything that runs counter to their thinking is unacceptable (therefore they will not permit it to be taught). That leads us to the liberal media in our country and what it has to say; like public education, it continually distorts the thinking and values of those who do not agree with leftist ideology. For the last sixty years the leftists have grabbed hold of both our educational systems and nearly all of our mainline media sources; obviously, this is one of the ways in which Satan is attempting to destroy men and the God-believing element in our world… so this should not be a surprise to any of you.

Remember, Satan disguises himself as an “angel of light” in this world, and his followers as “servants of righteousness” (cf. 2 Cor 11:14-15) — so Satan is a very sly deceiver (cf. 2 Cor 2:11; Eph 6:11; 1 Tim 3:7). In Scripture, light is a spiritual metaphor for truth and God’s unchanging nature (cf. Jam 1:17). Jesus Himself declared, “I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (cf. Jn 8:12); i.e., Jesus is the “true light” that has come into this world (cf. Jn 1:9); there are “false lights” in this world, but Jesus is the “true light.” Since the Devil is “the father of lies” (cf. Jn 8:44), he chooses to approach us in the guise of something good (light), not something wicked; and being as we are all fallen creatures, we are all gullible to some extent to his work in our soul. As the late R. C. Sproul (president of Ligonier Ministries) said, “Most people are not drawn to darkness, but to light; therefore Satan appears as a creature of light to draw us to himself and his lies. If Satan came at us blatantly, he would be easy to resist, but since he comes to us in the guise of something good, we are far more likely to embrace his lies.” Remember, Satan likes to accuse us of our sin, to tell us the Father cannot possibly love us because we always serve Him with mixed motives. Oftentimes this work is very hard to distinguish from the work of the Holy Spirit, who convicts us of our wickedness and makes us feel the pain of offending God as well as the terrible sense that we are absent from His presence; yet the Holy Spirit always wounds us so that He may bring healing and restoration with the Father (cf. Ps 147:1-3). Sproul goes on to say that Satan’s work of accusation often keeps us away from God, thus preventing us from serving Him
and others… that this is why we must remember God’s grace in the Gospel; though every sin is deeply offensive to the Lord, when we humbly repent, God really does forgive us. As the story of Job illustrates, anything that Satan does is done only because the Father has permitted it (cf. Job 1:12); by the way, in every case God’s purposes ultimately are good (cf. Rom 8:28), though in the midst of them we may not think so. Even though Satan rages on the earth, he has already been cast down and defeated (cf. Rev 12:7-12). Brethren, if you feel as if God cannot forgive you for the things you have done, then your view of God is not biblical — God can and does pardon all those who repent and trust Jesus alone; there is no sin so great that He cannot and will not pardon it (cf. Deut 13:1-5; Zech 3:1-5; Rom 8:31-39; Gal 1:8-9; 2 Thes 2:1-12). As the renowned theologian Erwin Lutzer said, “Darkness is a result of attempting to find truth without the Word of God…. that is why Satan’s masquerade as an angel of light is so effective…. it actually gets us believing that God is the liar, and that God is the source of darkness” (cf. Jer 20:7; Ezek 3:14).

There is an element in the Christian world today in our country that has proven itself to be gullible, and embrace untruth — this element is known as “The Emerging Church.” The term Emergent seems to be a reaction to several things — against the large megachurch phenomenon where relationships are not paramount, and against several formalized doctrinal statements (thus giving release to different people’s expressions). If you study the Emerging Church, you’ll notice they don’t like statements of faith, because rather than bringing people together, they push people apart. You’ll also discover that “there is no list of doctrinal statements describing what it means to be emergent.” So the biggest concern regarding the Emerging Church is their attitude towards “truth;” as John Piper, the chancellor of Bethlehem College & Seminary in Minneapolis, and the author of more than 50 books says, “They don’t believe that truth itself is an objective propositional thing that has a yes and a no…nothing is either/or, good or bad, right or wrong: [therefore] it is all vague.” The reality is, the Emerging Church does not put a premium on biblical faithfulness, truth, or doctrine… according to their websites, they actually regard that kind of emphasis as harmful, because it alienates so many people. As John MacArthur (one of the greatest preachers in America) states in his work titled, “The Truth War: Fighting for Certainty in an Age of Deception” — “The emerging or/ emergent church movement falls into line with basic post-modernist thinking — [thus it emphasizes] experience over reason, subjectivity over objectivity, spirituality over religion, and feelings over truth…. because experience is valued more highly than reason, truth becomes relative,” thereby destroying the standard that the Bible contains absolute truth. Another area where the emerging/emergent church movement has become antibiblical is its focus on “ecumenicalism” — the idea here is that “unity among people” is more important than doctrinal truth; not offending someone is of paramount importance, which is in direct opposition to passages such as Revelation 2:14-17. Now, though false doctrine doesn’t abound with every people group that embraces the emerging/emergent church, we all need to take heed of Matthew 7:15-20 — “Watch out for false prophets; they come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By every fruit you will recognize them… every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and
thrown into the fire; thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.” The truth is, when we compromise the Truth of the Gospel, we ultimately end up promoting false doctrine, which leads people away from Christ, instead of to Him.

As “Focus on the Family” has often stated, the so-called “wall of separation between church and state” has done more damage to America’s religious & moral tradition than any other utterance of the Supreme Court. While the First Amendment was originally intended to prevent the establishment of a national religion and thus ensure religious liberty, the Supreme Court’s misuse of the “separation of church and state” phrase has fostered hostility toward, rather than protection of, religious freedom. This phrase has even been used by the Court to outlaw Ten Commandment displays in public buildings, prayer & Bible reading in schools, clergy and even student invocations at school events, and other public acknowledgements of God. Such decisions radically negate the founding father’s presupposition of America’s Christian identity. So in spite of the rhetoric common to revisionist historians, our founding fathers did not seek to eradicate religion in America. As history has proven over and over again, an overwhelming majority of those who signed the Declaration of Independence counted themselves as “men of faith.” Incidentally, nowhere in the Constitution do the words “separation of church and state” appear. Contrary to nonsensical propaganda from the revisionists, the letter that Thomas Jefferson wrote regarding church/state separation was written to a lady to protect religious liberties from an intrusive government; essentially what Jefferson was saying was that the government has no authority whatsoever over the church! Jefferson’s message had nothing to do with the church not being able to influence the state! In no way did Jefferson or any other framers of the U.S. Constitution seek to restrict Americans’ religious activities. To the chagrin of many present-day leftist ideologues, in the early years of our nation’s history, congress collectively and frequently studied the Bible & Prayed in their congressional meetings; and this frequently went on for 2-3 hours — that’s how significant “divine truth” was to our forefathers. The truth is, the vast majority of our nation’s founding fathers aligned themselves with Christianity — it is hardly a secret that George Washington & Abraham Lincoln were men of deep, unwavering Christian faith. Their personal writings, public statements, church involvement, and the testimony of their families reveal their lifelong commitment to Christ. Yet, none of this is found in public school textbooks, or taught in public schools. One can only imagine what the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights would have been, or what would be taught in our public schools if our founding fathers had been atheists or agnostics.

Then there is the great American patriotic song, “God Bless America,” that was penned by Irving Berlin (1888-1989), a Russian-born Jew whose family immigrated to America in 1893 when he was just five year’s old — the family fled Russia after their house was burned down in a pogrom that was out to destroy the Jewish people. Irving’s parents and their eight children settled in New York, and struggled greatly to make ends meet. By the time Irving was a teenager, he was trying to make a living as an itinerant singer. In 1917, during WWI, he was drafted into the United States Army, and due to his musical skills,
he was asked to help increase troop morale by writing patriotic music — it was at this
time that Berlin wrote the song, “God Bless America.” Twenty years later in 1938 when
events in Europe showed signs leading to another world war, Irving made some revisions
to the song, and the song was an instant success all over America. During his life, Irving
published over 1,000 songs, lifting American spirits during crises like WWI, WWII, and
the Great Depression. Some of his most famous songs are “White Christmas,” “Easter
Parade,” and “There’s No Business like Show Business,” but obviously his most beloved
song is “God Bless America.” Incidentally, in the summer of 1940, both of our national
political parties appropriated it for their conventions. Yet here we are today, some eighty
years later, forced to endure diabolical leftist ideologues who absolutely despise the song.
Following are the lyrics to the song —

God bless America, land that I love
Stand beside her and guide her
Through the night with the light from above
From the mountains to the prairies
To the oceans white with foam
God bless America, my home sweet home
God bless America, my home sweet home

Now, having grown up in the 1940s and 1950s (which some of you may have), we were
fortunate to grow up in a far more moral age… however, once the 1960s and 1070s came
along, so did drugs, free sex, nudity, sex before marriage, public profanity, alcoholism,
homosexuality, divorce, crime & anti-religion — these things were taboo in the 40s and
50s. Though that may be a surprise to some of you, that is exactly what the situation was;
and things have only gotten worse! For instance, it is now very common for women to
dress provocatively head to toe (only the religious right argues against it). When the first
guy used the word “damn” on television back in the late 50s, much of our world didn’t
know exactly how to respond to that… the common response was: “How can that
guy say that?” Today, postmodernism and evolutionism dominates American culture…
so much so, that it is the only value system the diabolical left will let our public schools
teach (their hatred of biblical morality and creationism is extremely strong); again, some
of you may not have any idea that this is what actually defines our nation today. Regard-
ing the term postmodernism, it is a term that essentially refers to anything that overturns
traditional standards and promotes relativism; conversely, evolutionism simply insists on
taking God off the table. Now, though the religious right occasionally wins a few battles;
they lose far more than they win; hence, that’s why we are where we are today. As we
approach the end of the age, according to Scripture, things are only going to get worse
(exceedingly worse); and then the end shall come. By the way, such is all in the plan of
God. Though all of this may not make sense to you, or coincide with what you want it to
be, that is the reality (i.e., that is “Truth”). Though this is not an easy construct for any
of us to fully wrap our minds around, this ultimately is what is going to occur. Now, due
to the poignancy of man’s existence, let’s go back to his earliest years.
THE EARLY YEARS OF MAN’S EXISTENCE

In the book of Genesis we learn about the creation of man and his ultimate fall, and the residual effects of the fall — death was the price he paid for disobedying God (cf. Gen 2:17; 3:16-19). Death meant he would ultimately die physically (cf. Gen 5:5; 1 Cor 15:21-22; Heb 9:27)… that he would die spiritually (cf. Eph 2:1; Col 2:13); i.e., he would be alienated from God, and no longer have fellowship with Him… and that he would ultimately experience judgment and eternal death (cf. Mt 8:12; Mk 9:43; Heb 9:27); i.e., eternal separation from God, not annihilation. Only by acknowledging one’s sinfulness and placing one’s trust in God (Christ), is he forgiven and delivered from the curse of sin (cf. Jn 3:16; Rom 6:23; Gal 6:8; 1 Cor 15:35-49; 1 Th 4:13-18). Now, because Adam sinned, his offspring also suffered the consequences of his sin; Adam’s oldest son (Cain) actually killed his youngest son (Abel – cf. Gen 4:8). When one studies the entire book of Genesis, and considers all of the years mentioned, like the Archbishop James Ussher, one might conclude that man’s creation probably happened about 4,004 B.C. Whether in fact that is the exact time that man was created is difficult to know; biblical archaeologists have been able to accurately address issues back to about 2,000 B.C; but prior to that time the margin of error seems to increase somewhat, because the totality of what transpired prior to that date is simply not given… so one can say that man could have been created as early as 6,000 B.C. Now, whatever occurred in the ancient world, scripture tells us that Adam lived to be 960 years old, and that Methuselah lived to be 969 years old (the longest any human being has ever lived); incidentally, the word “Methuselah” means, “when I die, judgment;” to the amazement of many, when Methuselah died God immediately destroyed the world with a worldwide flood… so God waited and waited and waited for people to turn from their sinfulness; He waited so long Methuselah ended up being the oldest human being whoever lived. Incidentally, Noah lived to be 950 years old. It was the “growth of evil” in our world that caused God to destroy the world and everything that inhabited it with a “flood” — only Noah found favor in God’s sight, so God told him to build an “ark,” and place two of every living creature in it, that they might all be spared complete destruction (cf. Gen 6:5-22). Scripture describes Noah’s ark as being 300 cubits long, 50 cubits wide, and 30 cubits deep; the length of a cubit in the most ancient times was about two feet, whereas more recently it is said to have been about one and a half feet. So the ark was upwards of 600 feet long, 100 feet wide, and 60 feet deep. I find it interesting that scientists suggest these dimensions are the most ideal measurements for an ocean liner, and would prove to be a very sea-worthy vessel. A vessel with these dimensions would have the capacity of about 2,000 cattle cars, each of which could carry up to 20 cattle, 80 hogs, or 100 sheep (Gleason Archer, ed., Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982, p. 84). Many people wonder how many different kinds of animals exist in the world today — at the present time there are 290 main species of land animals larger than a sheep… 757 more species ranging in size from a sheep to a rat… and 1358 species small than a rat. The Genesis account says that “two of every species” were taken into the ark to ultimately repopulate
the earth. Researchers have concluded that two of every species would fit “comfortably” in the 2,000 cattle cars, with plenty of room for fodder (Archer, p. 84).

Now, after the waters had subsided, Noah and his family and every living creature in the ark went out into the world, and life began anew for them. Genesis 6-9 tells the story of the flood that covered the whole earth, and of Noah, the man God used to save the world of men and beasts. Up until this time, the world knew nothing of “rain”—so this thing called rain was not known to the human family; therefore the corrupt unbelieving world must have laughed at Noah for building an ark; the darkness of their thinking simply had no room for divine truth. Once Noah and his family entered the ark, God caused “great rain to fall on the earth for 40 days” (cf. Gen 7:17)—the water prevailed for 150 days (cf. Gen 7:24), and all the flesh that moved on the earth perished… thus God blotted out every living thing (cf. Gen 7:21, 23). According to Scripture, the water prevailed “fifteen cubits higher than the mountains,” according to geologists that’s anywhere from 22 to 30 feet higher than the mountains. It’s important to remember, up until this time, the world’s atmosphere was considerably different than it is today… early on in human history the entire earth enjoyed a warm tropical environment in which there was enhanced oxygen in the atmosphere; as a result, organisms grew larger and lived longer. Everything on the planet grew because a “morning mist” watered the earth through the processes of evaporation, transpiration & condensation (cf. Gen 2:5; also Henry M. Morris: Science and the Bible; Moody Press, 1986, p. 82). This daily mist would have kept the entire earth in a comfortable state of humidity, and would have provided enough moisture to sustain lush vegetation and abundant animal life everywhere on the planet. The warm waters of the sea would likewise have sustained the marine life all over the world; all of which was God’s design. Since rain had never occurred prior to the flood, cold weather and hot weather were not known back then; remember, essentially, this was the perfect world God created (even though at this point it was experiencing the “curses” that God subjected it to when Adam and Eve sinned (cf. Gen 3:17-19; Rom 8:20-22)… but once again, since man had abused God’s creation, things now changed significantly. Most archaeologists and theologians believe that the mountains of the world were not nearly as high previous to the flood as they are today; so it is easy to imagine how the entire world was completely flooded—as Scripture says, “all the fountains of the great deep burst open (i.e., those fountains that exist underneath the oceans), and the floodgates of the sky were opened (that was the moisture that existed above the firmament), and the rain fell upon the earth for forty days and forty nights” (cf. Gen 7:11-12).

Regarding the water vapor canopy that existed in the skies, creationists believe it was this invisible canopy that produced the greenhouse effect and maintained mild temperatures from pole to pole, thus preventing air-mass circulation and the resultant rainfall (cf. Gen 2: 5-6); so the atmosphere was far more dense in the past, and that contributed to a healthier environment, as numerous scientists & Dr. John Baumgardner of Los Alamos have suggested. Some Bible scholars cite Psalm 148:4 as evidence for the water vapor that still exists in the outer reaches of our atmosphere (obviously, it is significantly less
Thomas Lowell, associate professor of geology at the University of Cincinnati, stated in the September 15, 1995, issue of *Science* magazine that “A lot of water vapor in the atmosphere leads to a warmer climate; conversely when there is less vapor, the temperatures become colder.” In addition to that, a Yale study published in the March 3, 2000 issue of *Science*, confirmed that high levels of oxygen were present in the earth’s distant past. In addition to this, scientists from NASA and Columbia University maintain that an abrupt climate change took place 8,200 years ago, and that climate change was caused by a massive flood — it should be noted, since the atmosphere is radically different today than it was 6,000-7,000 years ago, one cannot accurately determine “the time line” in the ancient past; to do so requires that the things being measured are the same today as they were in the ancient past; but such is not at all the case (we’ll deal with this in more detail momentarily). By the way, the theory of evolution does not have an answer to the question of “why the dinosaurs were so big;” however, creation-scientists believe they were simply enlarged reptiles, because reptiles do not have a built-in growth-inhabiting factor like other animals and human beings. Thus the dinosaurs would have continued growing as long as they lived; hence the older they got the bigger they grew. And contrary to what the evolutionary model has claimed, human beings lived during the age of the dinosaurs. In cretaceous rock strata near Glen Rose, Texas, numerous human and dinosaur footprints have been found criss-crossing each other, which proves in solid rock that human beings and dinosaurs lived at the same time (Jobe Martin, pp. 133-135).

By the way, Scripture goes on to say that after the flood, “The fountains of the deep, and the floodgates of the sky were closed” (cf. Gen 8:2); i.e., once God had destroyed the world with a flood, the fountains of the deep that were under the ocean were all completely shut down. Interestingly enough, regarding the fountains of the deep, God challenged Job’s thinking years later with these words: “Have you entered the springs of the sea? Or have you walked in the recesses of the deep?” (cf. Job 38:16; also cf. Gen 1:2; Prov 8:24, 28); obviously Job had not. By the way, it has only been in modern times that science has discovered that there are vast cavernous springs in the ocean bottom (John D. Morris: *The Geology Book*, Green Forest, AR; Master Books, 2000, pp. 62-66). Regarding these two water sources that existed in the ancient world, Scripture tells us that on the second day of creation “God separated the waters which were below the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament” (Gen 1:7). Because a canopy of water existed in the sky, creationists believe it created a greenhouse effect and blocked much of the radiation that now hits our planet from space, and that this resulted in ideal living conditions. Scientists have speculated that if there were about three feet of water surrounding the globe in vapor form (compared to the two inches we have today), it would have had the effect of making the earth a giant terrarium, and tropical temperatures would have extended from the North Pole to the South Pole (Henry M Morris: *Science and the Bible*; Moody Press, 1986, p. 82). Incidentally, water vapor is clear, unlike clouds or steam. A sun-warmed “water canopy” would generate heat, thus producing a greenhouse effect over the entire globe. Though there is not enough water in the atmosphere today to yield worldwide greenhouse conditions, the two inches do pro-
vide us with enough temperature control to make the world habitable, and also protects us from harmful cosmic radiation from space. The relatively small vapor blanket that exists in our present atmosphere is the very thing that makes life possible on earth today. So, with a larger water vapor canopy encircling the globe, the atmospheric conditions would have been radically different from what we have on earth today; such a vapor canopy would not only have been invisible, but would have prevented extremes of heat and cold, resulting in a uniformly warm, sub-tropical climate all over the earth. Winds and storms would not have been possible since they basically result from temperature differences.

Is there any proof that greenhouse warmth once surrounded our globe? Yes there is — numerous palm tree fossils have been found in Alaska and broad leaf ferns in the Arctic. To explain it away, evolution-scientists have speculated that these trees and plants traveled there on the tectonic plate (earth crust) movement over millions of years; the problem with their deduction is that these trees are not millions of years old. Creation-scientists, on the other hand, believe they grew in the polar regions in the tropical world before the Flood, and that these trees were buried during the Flood of Noah’s day, resulting in their fossilization (Jobe Martin, The Evolution of a Creationist; Rockwell, TX: Biblical Discipleship, 1996, p. 126). The reality is this: once the water canopy in the firmament poured out a great deal of its water, the ideal environment no longer existed. Furthermore, it was only after God had destroyed everything with the waters of the deep and of the sky, that He caused the mountains to rise up significantly like they are today. According to Scripture, it took one year and ten days to dry up the floodwaters enough so Noah and his family could leave the Ark (cf. Gen 7:1-8:19). Noah’s Ark landed on the mountains of Ararat where the elevation was about 17,000 feet (Gen 8:4); the mountains of Ararat are located in modern day Turkey. It was primarily during the flood that the Lord restructured the entire world and placed the majority of the flood water under the great depths of the sea; by the way, “the great ice age” occurred after the flood as a result of the great change in the earth’s atmosphere; when God closed the foundations of the deep and the floodgates of the sky (cf. Gen 8:2), cold and heat, summer and winter became an integral part of our world’s weather (cf. Gen 8:22); remember the water vapor canopy that encircled the globe prior to the flood was about three feet thick, whereas today it is only two inches thick. In addition to the foregoing, God said the following to Noah after the flood: “Every moving thing that is alive shall now be food for you, just as I previously had given you green plants to eat; the only thing you shall not eat is the blood of these creatures” (Gen 9:3-4). So it wasn’t until after the Flood that man started eating “meat;” that had not occurred early on in human history (man did not eat creatures, and neither did creatures eat other creatures). It should be noted, storms, earthquakes, hurricanes, typhoons, blizzards, hail storms, dust storms, thunder and lightning did not exist prior to the Flood, because the atmosphere in the ancient world was far different than the one that exists today. By the way, not long ago scientists discovered the remnants of a city a hundred feet or more beneath the surface of the Black Sea; according to scientists, it appears that this sea was not always there or not always so expansive, and that such was clear evidence of a flood in ancient times (Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary, p. 585).
Another issue we need to consider is the fact that Adam and Eve and those who lived during the first millennium, were highly resistant to disease and illness. It was only over time, as a result of man’s sin, that the human genetic code became increasingly corrupted, and more susceptible to death and disease. The atmospheric system which existed prior to the flood would have permitted people to live much longer than in our present system. By filtering out the harmful radiation (as a water canopy would do), the scientific world today believes that humans would actually be able to live upwards of 1,000 years. Interestingly enough, man lived hundreds of years during the first millennium — to list a few: Adam lived 960 yrs… Seth 912 yrs… Enosh 905 yrs… Kenan 910 yrs… Mahalalel 895 yrs… Jared 962 yrs… Methuselah 969 yrs… Lamech 777 yrs… and Noah 950 yrs (cf. Gen 1-9). Now, following the worldwide flood, men lived far fewer years — for instance, Abraham lived 175 yrs… Sarah lived 127 yrs… Isaac lived 180 yrs… Jacob lived 147 yrs… Joseph lived 110 yrs… and Moses lived 127 yrs — however 400 years after Moses passed away, the first King of Israel, King Saul lived 70 yrs… King David lived 70 yrs… and King Solomon lived 60 yrs. So the life spans of people went down significantly after flood. By the time Abraham came on to the world stage in 2,000 BC (cf. Gen 12-25), no one from that point on lived more than 180 years; and by the time Moses passed away, around 1,400 BC at the age of 127, no one in Scripture lived that long again. Joshua succeeded Moses in leading the children of Israel into the Promised Land, and he died at the ripe old age of 110; though that was not completely uncommon back then, since then it has become very uncommon. Now, 400 years later during the time of King David (around 1,000 BC), the norm for life became 70 to 80 years, just as the psalmist had stated: “As for the days of our lives, they contain seventy years, or if due to strength, eighty years” (Ps 90:10). Why the reduction? Because the greenhouse effect that had governed the early world had been significantly reduced. It is interesting to note that God reduced the age of man initially to 120 years back during the time of Noah (cf. Gen 6:3); yet 1,000 years later, He reduced man’s life-span to 70 or 80 years; obviously, it was all effectuated by the changes that God made in the atmosphere after the flood. Since God is the one who determines the longevity of human life, He does so for a purpose — He could have the vast majority of human beings live 2,000 years if He wanted to... or 200 years, or 30 years; but at this juncture, God has so willed that man now live 70-80 years. Obviously, the amount of time allocated to “adults” is about 50 years... and it is during that length of time where man must make a lot of decisions about life, divine truth, and the Lordship of Christ; it’s not like he’s got a thousand years to think about things... he’s only got about 50 years as an adult. With that in mind, there are no one thousand year old heroes on the world stage anymore for people to ooo and awe over... things now move very quickly in life, which is just the way God planned it. For those of you who are still relatively young, talk to some older people — they’ll tell you how rapidly life has gone by for them.
THIS THING CALLED THE ICE AGE

Regarding this thing called “the Ice Age,” according to numerous scientists, the Genesis Flood reduced the carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, which in turn caused atmospheric cooling, and it is this cooling that would have ultimately caused the “Ice Age.” It should be noted, when the nutrients and minerals (in particular iron), began to be depleted, the growth of phytoplankton would have decreased and less carbon dioxide would have been removed from the atmosphere. As such, once the carbon dioxide concentrations would have increased again, the atmosphere would have warmed again, ending the “Ice Age;” and glaciers and ice sheets covering a large portion of the continents would have melted, as numerous scientists have stated (J.M. Barnola, D. Raynaud, Y.S. Korotkevich, and C. Loris: “Vostok Ice Core Provides 160,000 Year Record of Atmospheric CO₂,” Nature 329, pp. 408-414). Dr. L. Vardiman, chairman of the Astro/Geophysics Department at ICR, says: “If one ignores the Flood and its massive influence and attempts to explain climate change by small astronomical variations, then it is understandable why so much concern is expressed about the recent variations in carbon dioxide on global temperatures. However, if one recognizes the impact of the Flood on geophysical and biological systems, not only during its most active period but also following it, these current apocalyptic concerns pale into insig-
nificance.” Vardiman goes on to say, “The current attempt to mitigate hypothesized global warming is not supported by the evidence and is premature at best. The real driving force behind the current controversy is politics, not science.” Regarding the foregoing, you may want to read these two articles: (J.D. Hays, J. Imbrie & N.J. Shackleton: “Variations in the Earth’s Orbit: Pacemaker of the Ice Ages,” Science 194, pp. 1121-1132)… and (L. Vardiman: “A Faulty Climate Trigger.” Institute for Creation Research, Impact Article #261, 1995, 4 pp.). Creationists obviously are delighted by the evidence for the Ice Age, and they cite it as an aftereffect of the Genesis Flood. On the other hand, secular scientists have a very difficult time explaining how the Ice Age began, because they have no evidence that coincides with their evolutionary model. As Dr. Andrew Snelling, a geologist both here in the US and in Australia, and the author of hundreds of scientific articles, says: “Forests grew on Antarctica and the Arctic before ice began to form. Drilling down through Antarctic’s ice sheet, scientists have found in sediment layers beneath the ice sheet fossils of a sub-
tropical rainforest, complete with palm trees & macadamia trees… so the world appears to have been a pretty balmy place prior to the Genesis Flood and the Ice Age.”

Many people have wondered how the entire globe could have been covered with water. If one were to make all of he earth’s hard surfaces a completely smooth sphere without any oceans or mountains, there would be enough water in the oceans to cover the entire globe at a depth of over 1.5 miles (8,500 feet). The water in the oceans today covers over two-thirds of the globe (John D. Morris, Geology, p. 65). It is thought that when the floodwaters began to recede, the ocean basins redeveloped, and the mountain chains were formed — this is why we find ocean fossils near the top of Mount Everest, the highest point on earth at over 29,000 feet (John D. Morris, Geology, p. 66). Once the floodwaters subsided, life on earth would have been radically different; it probably took several hundred years for the earth
to settle back down into the equilibrium we enjoy today. The centuries to follow would have been marked by massive storms, violent earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. The Ice Age probably lasted 600-1000 years, approximately between the time of *Noah* and the biblical patriarch *Abraham*. Incidentally, the polar ice caps today are much smaller than they were during the Ice Age, and they are decreasing in size every year (Don Batten: *The Revised & Expanded Answers Book*; Greek Forest, AR; Master Books, 2002, p. 156).

*Evolutionists* reject the biblical account of a worldwide flood, obviously because of the “*religious overtones*” associated with it. I find it interesting that the most significant physical phenomenon purported by nearly *every religion on earth* is that of a worldwide flood — not a local flood, but a *worldwide flood*. Traditions of such a flood are found among thousands of people groups all over the world, and these traditions, taken as a whole, strongly agree with the monotheistic account found in the book of Genesis; so this thing called a worldwide flood wasn’t something that was taught to all of the people groups of the world by Christian missionaries and evangelists. Obviously, all the descendants of Noah and his family shared this poignant truth with everyone they lived with; in the early years after the flood this would have been an extremely noteworthy subject… how could they not have share it? Remember, the descendants of Noah were “*scattered all over the earth*” just a few years after the flood (cf. Gen 10:32-11:9). And such a worldwide phenomenon could not have happened without leaving its “*fingerprint*” all over the globe. It seems logical that all of the evidence either unequivocally *substantiates* this claim or unquestionably *refutes* it. It is simply a matter of honestly evaluating all of the evidence. So the issue is whether or not the *evidence* supports the occurrence of a worldwide flood. What evidence should one expect from a global flood that drowned all the animals, birds, and people that were not on the ark? All around the world, in rock-layer after rock-layer, we find *countless billions of dead things* that have been buried in water-carried mud and sand. Their state of preservation frequently tells of *very rapid burial and fossilization*, just like one would expect in a flood the magnitude of that described in Genesis. There is *exceeding evidence* that many of the rock strata were laid down *very quickly*, one after the other, without significant time breaks between them. *Polystrate fossils* (ones which traverse many strata) speak of very quick deposition of the strata. The scarcity of erosion, soil formation, and roots between layers of strata also shows they must have been deposited in quick succession (Jobe Martin; p. 130). Perhaps some of the most striking evidence of the violence of a global flood are the *enormous numbers of animals whose violently separated bones have been discovered in several deep fissures* excavated both in Europe and North America (Gleason Archer: *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties*; Grand Rapids, Zondervan Publishing, 1982, p. 82); such fissures have been discovered by the Black Sea, the island of Kythera, the island of Malta, the Rock of Gibraltar, and at Agate Springs, Nebraska (Archer, p. 83). The question often arises as to how these remains could have been preserved for such a long time — material that was once alive seldom lasts very long under normal circumstances after it dies; yet we have *multiplied trillions of fossils that have been preserved*. In some places, hundreds of thousands of dinosaur bones are buried and fossilized comprising entire hillsides. The great majority of fossils are preserved by the *trillions* — the reality
is, such fossilization requires protection from scavengers and a very quick burial of the organism. Such findings are not only incongruent with evolutionary theory, but strong supportive evidence of a worldwide blood.

For science to be credible, it must give preeminence to the truth — whatever the cost — and not try to destroy evidence that runs counter to one’s thinking, which has happened several times by a few evolutionists (that just demonstrates the lack of integrity by some in the evolutionary world). Again, “truth” must be the goal… not one’s innate bias. By the way, evolutionary science has no answer for the existence of numerous quick-frozen animals found in various places all around the globe. What is a quick-frozen rhinoceros doing in Siberia? The truth of the matter is there were tropical animals living in Siberia before the Flood of Noah’s day, and that the animal’s remains are such that they were caught and permanently frozen (they are still frozen today) with such incredible speed that undigested plants remained in their mouths and digestive juices in their stomachs.

Science has also discovered that the skin of a number of pre-flood mammoths contained “no oil glands,” which is also extremely surprising to evolutionary scientists. Why? Because cold temperature animals have a plentiful supply of oil glands to oil their hair and fur. Cold temperature animals need a lot of oil to protect them from cold wet weather. Therefore, these ancient mammoths were warm-weather animals, eating warm-temperature plants, and were caught suddenly and frozen quickly and permanently in the distant past. Evolutionists have no explanation for this. But a cataclysmic event such as the collapse of the water canopy at the Flood provides the answer and the evidence (Jobe Martin, p. 146). The evolutionary model that denies the worldwide flood is an empty deception, and more and more people are realizing it. Today there are thousands of scientists all over the world who maintain that belief in God and in the truth of the events recorded in the Bible (including the flood) is compatible with all we know about our universe and ourselves, and that it contradicts no known facts.

Now once the Flood was over and the Ice Age began to subside (which as previously stated, may have been upwards of a thousand years), Scripture stresses that “a new beginning had now become necessary.” The memory of the Flood seems only to have acted as a call to show man’s power in defiance of God. Now, the premiere incident that occurred a few hundred years after the Flood was “the building of the city of Babel” (Gen 11:4). The Hebrew word “Babel” means “confusion;” it was the name given to the city that the disobedient descendants of Noah built so they would not be scattered over all the earth (Gen 11:4, 9). The “tower of Babel” and the city they built was intended to be a monument of human pride — “they sought to make a name for themselves” (Gen 11:4); so the tower of Babel was a monument to mankind’s continued disobedience. God had commanded them to “be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth,” but instead they sought to avoid being scattered abroad (cf. Gen 9:1; 11:4). So to bring the people’s monumental task to an end, “God chose to confuse their languages so that they would not be able to understand each other’s speech” (cf. Gen 11:7). The resultant effect was they fled from one another in fear; thus the Lord scattered them over the whole earth (cf. Gen 11:8). Again, the
name of the city was called “Babel,” because the Lord confused their language (Gen 11:9). Obviously, God has a way of “moving us” when we become stubborn and insist on doing things our way; remember, the purpose of God’s judgment was to “limit man’s ability to do whatever he wanted to do.” It should also be noted, the city of “Babylon” became to the Old Testament writers “the symbol of utter rebellion against God”… and it has remained so even in the New Testament (cf. Rev 17:1-5).

ABRAHAM AND HIS DESCENDENTS

Now, after the decedents of Noah built the tower of Babel and sought to create a world of their own making, God changed people’s languages, and dispersed them all over the world… and hundreds of years later God brought “Abraham” onto the world stage, and told him to “Go forth from your country, and from your relatives and your father’s house, to the land which I will show you; and I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (Gen 12:1-3). It’s important to remember, Abraham had been a member of a large number of Semitic people who worshipped idols and occupied the ancient Near East back around 2,050 BC (that area today is present day Iraq). The reality is, Abraham did as God said (i.e., he believed God), and went out from Ur of the Chaldees “not even knowing where he was actually going” (cf. Heb 11:8), “and God reckoned his believing as righteousness” (cf. Gen 15:6; Rom 4:3, 9, 22; Gal 3:6; Jam 2:23). Abraham became the first Hebrew Patriarch, and came to be known as the prime example of faith. God Himself became known as “the God of Abraham” (cf. Ex 3:6), and Abraham became known as “God’s friend forever” (2 Chron 20:7). It was through Abraham that God revealed His plan for “human salvation” (cf. Ex 2:24; Gen 15:18; 17:1-8; 22:16-18; 28:13-15)… for Paul, Abraham was the great example of faith (cf. Rom 4; Gal 3). The descendents of Abraham and his son Isaac, became known as “the children of Israel” (i.e., the children of Jacob [Isaac’s son] whose name God changed to Israel, after he wrestled with the divine messenger—cf. Gen 32:28). Jacob’s twelve sons became known as “the sons of Israel.” Incidentally, the name Israel literally means “God strives,” “God rules,” and “God heals.” It should also be noted, the descendents of the Great Patriarch Abraham were given the responsibility of introducing everyone they came in contact with to “the God of heaven;” evangelism is not something that was just reserved for New Testament believers… when the ark was brought into the Temple that King Solomon had built, he told the people of Israel, “When foreigners come to pray, do whatever they ask of you, so that all the peoples of the earth may know God’s name, and fear Him, that they may know that this house which I built is called by Thy name” (cf. 1 Kg 8:41-45; Ps 22:27-28; Prv 1:7; 9:10; Is 2:2-4). Ultimately, it was when Abraham entered into the land that God had led him to, that the “land of Palestine” (i.e., “the promised land”) became a reality. It all began with “Abraham believing God.” In order to “please God” one must “believe God” (cf. Heb 11:6); it is when we stop trusting in ourselves and trust in God, that He imputes righteousness to us (i.e., that He places it on our account); furthermore, it was only because Abraham believed God that he obeyed God. The Old Testament primarily uses the term
“trust” when speaking of believing God, and the New Testament uses the word “faith” (the Greek word faith is a correlative of the word trust). The New Testament defines faith as “the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” (cf. Heb 11:1). So faith trusts God for one’s future with great conviction, because of everything God accomplished in the past. So faith believes in the God of creation and the ruler of all things.

Regarding the descendents of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, they spent 400 years in Egypt (roughly from 1950 to 1450 BC) where God grew them as a nation… this sojourn experience was intended by God to not only teach them compassion toward the strangers in their own midst (cf. Ex 23:9), but ultimately to deliver them from helpless servitude and continually remind them of His mighty power and His redemptive purposes (cf. Deut 4:34; Ps 78:52). Following their deliverance from Egyptian bondage by Moses, and conquering the Promised Land by Joshua, the children of Israel spent the next 400 years being ruled intermittently by Judges: such individuals were raised up by God during times of crisis, to be agents of God’s divine will and meet the needs of the nation. During this 400 years period (roughly 1450 to 1050 BC), the nation of Israel repeatedly lapsed into recurring cycles of apostasy (i.e., abandoning the faith); as such, God often placed them in bondage to foreign powers… ultimately He would then raise up a Judge who would rule over them for a time. During this 400 year period, God raised up 14 different faithful judges to deliver His people from their enemies, and administer divine justice, wisdom and leadership. After 400 years of being ruled by Judges, the children of Israel demanded that the prophet Samuel give them a King as their ruler, so that they would be like other nations (cf. 1 Sam 8:4-5); obviously, Israel thought having a King was the answer to their problems; essentially they didn’t like being different from the rest of the world… the result was, God ultimately gave them a King (King Saul). Keep in mind, during this 400 year period, the children of Israel continually abandoned the faith; i.e., “they simply did what was right in their own eyes” (Josh 21:25). This is not at all uncommon for fallen man — seldom does he “learn” from those who went before him… they always have to make the same mistakes that others made. Think about it: Why is it so difficult for us to learn something from others? Why do we seemingly only learn things by experience? Such is the nature of fallen man. Now once God’s people had a King to rule them, things calmed down for a short period of time, but once a King stumbled and abandoned his faith, so also did the people, so unfaithfulness again ruled in the kingdom of Israel. By the time Israel was ruled by its third King (King Solomon, the son of King David), the people were once again turning their back on the living God & forsaking the Almighty; as such, they degenerated into a corrupt heathenistic society. So the Jewish kingdom’s decline began in the days of King Solomon (970-930 BC). Solomon succumbed to the custom of the day and married many foreign women to cement political alliances; such was forbidden in the Mosaic Law (cf. Deut 17:17). Even more despicable, Solomon allowed his pagan wives to build altars to their gods east of Jerusalem on the Mount of Olives.

Now, as time passed, Solomon’s wives turned his heart toward their idols; because of his pride and his neglect of God’s Law, God ripped the kingdom from Solomon’s son
Rehoboam (who himself had become completely unreligious), and divided it into two kingdoms — the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah (this occurred about 930 BC). Soon Baal worship replaced the worship of God throughout the land of Israel. Incidentally, all of the 19 kings who ruled in the Northern Kingdom of Israel during its existence (930-722 BC) were despicably wicked, and its behavior evoked God’s wrath, leading to Israel’s downfall — in 722 BC the Northern Kingdom was conquered by the Assyrians and the people were dispersed throughout all the lands of the north. Keep in mind, it was during this time that God sent the prophet Isaiah to speak to both the Northern and Southern Kingdoms, to warn them of impending disaster if they continued to reject the God of Israel. So God instructed Isaiah to let His people know that He was going to send the Assyrians down from the north to conquer them and take them into captivity; yet that didn’t affect a change in he Northern Kingdom… though the Southern Kingdom briefly responded to what Isaiah was telling them, within a hundred years they also turned against God, so the Southern Kingdom of Judah was conquered by the Babylonians in 605 BC… but because she refused to defer to Babylon’s leadership, in 586 BC King Nebuchadnezzar completely destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple. Remember, it was during the 620 year period of the Kings (1050 to 430 BC) that God sent His Prophets to speak to His people and warn them of impending disaster, if they continued to reject the living God and simply live life as they pleased. In spite of the fact that God sent numerous judges and prophets to His people down through the ages, they just kept on committing apostasy and killed some of the prophets. The long and short of it is, for 2,000 years (i.e., from the time of Abraham to the time of Christ) God’s people continued to walk in the dark and do what was right in their own eyes.

In spite of the fact that God frequently judged the children of Israel severely and placed them in bondage to other nations, they continually let their innate sinfulness rule in their soul.

Ultimately, God sent forth His own Son to bring His people into the light, but they not only rejected Him, they killed Him, because they loved darkness rather than light… as such, God placed them in bondage to Rome and scattered them all over the world, and then began to “reach out to those people who were not His people” (i.e. Gentiles) with “the Gospel of Christ” (cf. Rom 9:10). Though all day long God had stretched out His hands to His disobedient and obstinate people (i.e., to the children of Israel), God has still not rejected them. Instead, God has hardened their hearts until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; thus all Israel will one day be saved, because God will take away their sins” (cf. Rom 10:11; 11:1, 25-27). As Scripture says, “God has shut up all in disobedience that He might show mercy to all” (Rom 11:32). Said Paul, “Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!” (Rom 11:33); by the way, the two words that are emboldened in that verse are “emphatic” in Greek. Obviously, the ways of God transcend the minds of men, which is precisely what God told the prophet Isaiah: “My thoughts are not your thoughts… neither are your ways My ways. As high as the heavens are above the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts higher than your thoughts” (cf. Is 55:8-9; 53:
The question is, “What do you believe?” Do you believe in human logic, or do you believe in divine truth? According to Scripture, the determining factor of what we believe is either “a proud heart” or “a humble heart” — the foundation of our innate sinfulness is a proud heart, and such has a very strong presence in all of our lives… conversely, a humble heart sees himself for who he really is. Obviously, all of us (including the believing world) struggle with some of the thinking and ways of God, because they appear to almost contradict this thing called “love.” That God would “slay” the entire world because it didn’t align its thinking with His thinking, seems a bit much to most people; after all, how can a loving God be that cruel? Why couldn’t He accomplished His purposes without brutally destroying the world? And why can’t He accomplish His purposes in us as His children without subjecting us to great affliction, suffering, sorrow and pain? Obviously, there are a lot of questions that even we as believers ask, yet God has clearly expressed that “His ways are not our ways, that as high as the heavens are above the earth, so are His ways higher than our ways.” The problem with fallen man is that he has a very remedial understanding of this thing called “sin,” whether we are believers or unbelievers, we simply don’t see it as being as bad as God does. So “two extremes” stand out with regard to God; He is not only a God of extreme grace (i.e., unfathomable love), He is also a God of extreme wrath (i.e., incredible hate); think about it: here’s a God who “died for us,” yet will “eternally punish” anyone who rejects Him. The truth of the matter is, we can neither conceive of His love or His hate… or fathom His height or His depth — such things simply transcends human thought. The reality is, none of us as believers are people of great faith, yet as believers we do have a degree of faith in a great God. Thank God “our standing before God” is not the product of our doing, because we would never enter into His eternal kingdom. All we can say is this: “Thank God He loves us.”

Perhaps it would be helpful to quote the words of the Lord to the prophet Isaiah in the 8th century BC, when God’s people were walking in the dark and committing apostasy. Remember, it was at this point when God sent Assyria down from the north to conquer the Northern Kingdom of Israel and take them into captivity and scatter them throughout the land. The Bible I quote from is known as the “Contemporary English Version.” I quote from it because it helps give a contextual understanding of what Scripture says; with that in mind I simply quote the first 20 verses of Isaiah chapter one; though I don’t quote every single word, I quote those that are relevant to the message. Isaiah begins by saying, “Listen, heaven & earth! The LORD has said, the children I raised have turned against Me… even oxen and donkeys know who owns and feeds them, but My people won’t ever learn! Israel, you are wicked and corrupt and have turned from the LORD, the holy God of Israel… from your head to your toes there isn’t a healthy spot. Your country lies in ruins; foreigners and strangers shall take and destroy your land while you watch. Zion would have disappeared like Sodom and Gomorrah, if the LORD All-Powerful had not let a few of its people survive — you are no better than the leaders and people of Sodom and Gomorrah! So listen to the LORD! Your sacrifices are absolutely meaningless to Me… I am sick of your offerings… your sacrifices are worthless… your
incense is disgusting… I can’t stand your evil ways! So stay out of My temple! I hate your New Moon Festivals and all others as well; they are a heavy burden I am tired of carrying. No matter how much you pray, I won’t listen to you! Wash yourselves clean! I am disgusted with your filthy deeds. Learn to live right! See that justice is done; defend widows and orphans and help those in need. Come, let us reason together — though your sins are as scarlet, they will be whiter than snow. If you willingly obey Me, you will eat the best crops of the land; but if you refuse and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword. Truly, the mouth of the LORD has spoken” (cf. Is1:1-20). Obviously, God’s words are very poignant; to make light of them is beyond foolish… yet that is what sinful man does constantly. Once again, consider what God has done down through the ages — He destroyed the earth with a flood… He essentially destroyed Egypt… He destroyed the Assyrians… He destroyed the Babylonians… He destroyed the nation of Israel… and He destroyed Rome. Now, whether you like it or not, that is what He has done… and according to Scripture, everything He has done is “right.” The question is, do you believe the “truth,” or do you reject it like the rest of the world and Israel did? God is GOD, and He alone is the sole determinant of what is “true,” what is “right,” and what is “wrong.” As stated several times, believing what is true all begins with a “humble heart;” if one will not humble himself before the Lord, he will never come to a knowledge of the truth and embrace it. Beloved, without humility there is no enlightenment; therefore, don’t just focus on the “head,” focus on the “heart” (i.e., don’t just focus on constructs of thought, focus on the attitude of your heart). Remember, we live and walk by “faith,” not “sight” (cf. 2 Cor 5:7); so if you insist on having physical evidence in life, you will never come to a knowledge of the “truth.”

THE WORLD OF SCIENCE

The problem with the Radioactive Dating Methods (of which Carbon-14 Dating and Radioisotope are two of them), is that they make the assumption that the context in which everything is being tested is the same today as it was thousands or millions of years ago, but that is not at all the case as science itself continually proves. Now if everything was the same down through the ages, such deductions would be meritorious, but since things have radically changed over time, such dating methods are completely inaccurate; by the way, this isn’t something that only the religious world believes, the vast majority of scientists in our world embrace this reality. For example, we know what the content level of salt is in the ocean, so if we add up all the possible ways salt can be added or removed from the ocean, we can determine its age. By doing so, scientists have calculated that the ocean cannot possibly be more than 62 million years old; yet it is interesting to note that evolutionary theories assume that the oceans have been “salty” for at least 3 billion years (which is nearly 50 times longer). However, if the oceans are actually 3 billion years old, and have continued to increase in salt at the present rate, they would contain so much salt “no life whatsoever” would be able to survive in them. Therefore the oceans simply cannot be that old. The world of science also conducts dating studies on the atmosphere, by
measuring how much of the lightweight gas helium exists in our atmosphere; they measure its present level as well as the rate at which it enters the atmosphere from the crust of the earth. In addition to that, they also know how much helium is leaving the atmosphere and is drifting into space. At the present rate of accumulation, all of the helium that is now in the atmosphere would have gotten there in less than 2 million years. Now, if a major flood occurred at some point (as Scripture states) an extremely large amount of helium would have been released from the earth’s crust, reducing the maximum age significantly (John D. Morris: The Geology Book; Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2000, p. 56). Now, in addition to the foregoing studies, numerous other studies have been done by the scientific world. So all of the methods that have been used to estimate the age of the earth, 90 percent of them point to an age far less than the billions of years asserted by the evolutionists.

Another piece of scientific evidence that is particularly interesting involves our moon. The moon is slowly distancing itself from the earth at about one inch per year, and most scientists believe that this rate would have been even greater in the past. Nevertheless, if the moon has receded at only one inch per year, it would have taken 1.37 billion years to reach its present distance from the earth (i.e., if it had actually been in contact with the earth when it was first formed). Therefore the maximum age for the moon is far too young for the evolutionary model, which claims the moon is 4.6 billion years old. The reality is, “all science is tentative,” be it creation-science or evolutionary-science, because it does not possess all the data necessary to be certain of its assertions, especially when dealing with events of the past. The reality is this: since the atmosphere was radically different prior to the flood, it is simply not possible to accurately date things prior to the flood… and since the flood only occurred 6,000-7,000 years ago, the world prior to the flood is simply not known to the scientific world. So all dating methods, including those that point to a young earth, rely on unprovable assumptions. Therefore, it is vital for the scientific community to be intellectually honest (though many scientists are; many are not) and not draw absolute conclusions from evidence arrived at by using such methods. Wanting something to be true, and proving something to be true, are two different things.

What is important to remember is this: “One must be able to give credence to what he believes, and identify all of the evidence for what he believes” (both the pros & the cons), and not just let his innate bias dictate reality (which to man’s discredit is extremely common in our world). Because man is a fallen creature, he is inclined to embrace “untruth” rather than “truth,” i.e., his temporal mind simply cannot and will not defer to that which is eternal and transcends human thinking… so his proud inner core governs his thinking. It is self-pride that keeps man in the dark; he just cannot accept the fact that he indeed is a person with a corrupt mind and in need of salvation (i.e., deliverance from his corrupt sinful inner core). It is his innate sinfulness that keeps him in the dark (cf. Jn 3:19; and Jn 1:4-5; 7:7; 8:12; 12:46). The knowledge of God is important for several reasons: it not only tells us who God is, but who we are — men and women spend billions of dollars annually in an attempt to know themselves; but this isn’t adequate because it does not bring the individual into a knowledge of God, and thus see oneself for who he truly is. Remember,
God is holy, and we are not holy… God is good, and we are not good (i.e., from God’s perspective — because we are not genuinely holy creatures, we naturally interpret things with fallen human thinking). The reality is, to know God is to see ourselves as Isaiah did: “Wow is me! I am a mess! I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips” (cf. Is 6:5). If you have lived 40-50 years, this shouldn’t be a difficult construct for any of you to agree with, because over time everyone of us have reflected upon our innate sinfulness, which is simply the work of the Holy Spirit within us; the reality is, the older we get the more this is evidenced in our lives, just as it was in Paul’s life (cf. Rom 7:18). The apostle Peter expressed it this way: “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord” (Lk 5:8). It is interesting to note, the “wisdom” of the ancient Greek world was summed up in these words — “know thyself;” these words embody the deeply held conviction that “the proper study of mankind is man” (i.e., our wisdom consists in the accuracy and depth of self-knowledge). The problem with human thinking is that it is not grounded in divine thinking… therefore its very foundation is radically deficient, thus causing him to embrace things that are not true (remember, God is the full essence of truth; so without embracing Him, one’s thinking will be erroneous and seriously lacking in integrity. When man humbles himself before God, God enlightens his heart to the truth… the reality is, such cannot be acquired by human reason.

The late James Montgomery Boice states in his work “Foundations of the Christian Faith” (InterVarsity Press, p.189), “On one level Christianity has no quarrel with [the thinking of the ancient Greek world], so long as it is remembered that knowledge of oneself always involves a corresponding and personal knowledge of the God who made us… knowledge of God will always involve knowledge of our personal need and of the salvation that He alone brings.” The reality is, one cannot know man as he really is in himself, without knowing God. That’s why Reinhold Niebuhr, the Reformed Theologian and professor at Union Theological Seminary in New York for more than 30 years, states in his work “The Nature and Destiny of Man” — “Man has always been his own most vexing problem” (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1949, part 1, p. 1). Incidentally, Niebuhr was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1964, and Time magazine posthumously called him “the greatest Protestant theologian in America since Jonathan Edwards.” Tragically, modern man in his arrogance has not only rejected divine thinking, he has even rejected the qualitative thinking of Greek reasoning. The reality is, our world today is about as “dumb a world” as has ever existed. Georg Friedrich Hegel’s theory of historical development, and Karl Marx’s dialectical materialism, and Charles Darwin’s biological evolution, each assumes unending and inevitable progression. However, the aftermath of the two world wars and current international unrest has since demonstrated that there is enormous difficulty in maintaining a high level of optimism. As Niebuhr said, “Under the perpetual smile of modernity there is a grimace of disillusion and cynicism” (p. 121); how can there not be? This world is a diabolical mess; it makes one wonder if the world has ever been as diabolically corrupt as it is today; there is so much lying and cheating going on in our world, there is no way our world will ever end in peace. In case you didn’t know this, one-fifth of every dollar you spend in the
marketplace is “recompensing organizations for thefts they have occurred” (it should be noted, theft not only happens in the marketplace by so-called customers, but by the employees who work in those businesses); so for every $100 you spend in the marketplace, $20 of it is paying for thefts that have occurred. As has been popularly stated, history seems to be one long inglorious record of man’s inhumanity to man. According to Scripture, when God placed man & woman in the Garden, He gave them maximum freedom, authority and dominion over every created thing, yet they rebelled against Him and violated His command “to not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil” (Gen 2:17). As Emil Brunner points out in his book, “The Christian Doctrine of Creation and Redemption” – “The conception of sin in Greek philosophy…is based upon the fact that ‘sense instincts’ paralyze the will, or at least hinder or suppress it. Evil is thus due to the dual nature of man” (Westminster, 1952, p. 91). When one considers all that transpired in the Garden of Eden, it is easy to see that “pride” ultimately ruled in their hearts: Eve thought she knew what was better for herself, and Adam determined to go his own way (compare that with Isaiah 14:14). So pride lies at the heart of the human race. As the renowned philosophical British theologian C. S. Lewis states in his book “Mere Christianity” – “Pride makes us want to be more than we are or can be, and consequently causes us to fall short of the great destiny for which we were created” (p. 94).

When we admit our sinful condition and embrace Christ as our Savior, we experience His love and grace in our lives, and rejoice in the God of our salvation. Aside from the knowledge of God telling us who we are, it is also important to remember that the knowledge of God gives us knowledge of this world: when we understand the world for what it really is, we understand God’s purposes in this world, and what is going to ultimately happen to this world. Lastly, it is by the knowledge of God that the Church becomes a dynamic institution in our lives because of God’s presence in it. It is the community of believers whereby we are encouraged in our faith, and experience God’s love through them; the Church is “the pillar and support of the truth” (cf. 1 Tim 3:15; Heb 10:23-25); it is in the Church where we glory in the God of our faith, and where we encourage other believers to walk in the Spirit. Remember the words of Jesus, “Come unto Me all who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls” (cf. Mt 11:28-29). When we go to God, His dynamic presence in our lives transforms our thinking and changes our heart. The problem with our world is that few people seek to substantiate their thinking with divine truth and the laws of logic and all the evidence that is available to them…instead, they just jump to conclusions, and end up embracing that which simply satisfies their hearts and corresponds with what they want to believe, not what is really true. Divine truth only rules in the mind of the humble; i.e., in the mind of him who turns from his fallen sinful inner-core.
THE ISSUE OF GLOBAL WARMING

Because of man’s reluctance to deny himself and his fallen thinking, he will reinvent the wheel and believe whatever his fallen inner-core wants to believe (i.e., he will believe “untruth”). The issue of “global warming” now seems to be the premiere issue on the table today here in the Western world. The questions one can ask are these? Why is that the case? and How did all of this start? Two highly-esteemed scientists, Jay Lehr and Tom Harris, have been addressing the issue of “global warming” for more than twenty years. Jay Lehr has more than 30 years of experience as a scientific mechanical engineer and in technology communication, and is now the Executive Director of the “International Climate Science Coalition” (ICSC). The Heartland Institute describes Lehr as “perhaps the most frequently cited and interviewed critic of exaggeration and alarmism in the global warming debate, appearing over a thousand times on online news forums and being regularly published in newspapers in the U.S., Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the U.K. and numerous other countries.” Lehr and Tom Harris (a graduate of Princeton, and an internationally renowned speaker, scientist, and author who has testified before Congress on dozens of occasions on environmental issues) wrote an article titled: “How Al Gore Built the Global Warming Fraud” (if you want to read that article you can access it online). I summarize that article in the next two paragraphs. Back in the 1970s media articles warning of imminent climate change problems began to appear regularly. TIME and Newsweek ran multiple cover stories “asserting that oil companies and America’s capitalist life style were causing catastrophic damage to the Earth’s climate… that man-made climate change would reduce agricultural productivity for the rest of the century.” Newsweek proposed in its April 28, 1975 edition that “internal combustion engines” needed to be outlawed. Though this sounds very similar to today’s climate change debate, back in the 1970s, “the fear was man-made global cooling, not global warming;” did you hear that? TIME magazine’s cover story in the January 31, 1977 edition was, “How to Survive the Coming Ice Age.” It included “facts” such as scientists predicting that Earth’s so-called average temperature could drop by 20 degrees Fahrenheit due to man-made global cooling. Dr. Murray Mitchell of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration warned readers that “the drop in temperature between 1945 and 1968 had taken us one sixth of the way to the next Ice Age temperature.” So global cooling gained considerable traction with the general public.

But then, instead of cooling (as long predicted by man-made climate change advocates), the planet started warming up again. So something had to be done to rescue the climate change agenda from utter disaster, and here is where Vice President Al Gore entered the picture and proclaimed to the world that “We have a global emergency!” Referring to the most recent UN climate report, Gore claimed it showed that “current global warming could actually extend to an existential threat to human civilization on this planet as we know it.” Now it was at this point that the “climate change agenda” became a top priority of the United States Government, and President Clinton gave Al Gore authority over the newly created President’s Council on Sustainable Development, which ultimately advised
the President to “reduce greenhouse gas emissions across diverse sectors and levels of society.” A cornerstone of Gore’s strategy was to ensure that all high-ranking government officials who had any involvement with funding policies relating to climate change were in line with his vision. These agencies included the Department of Energy, Environmental Protection Agency, National Science Foundation, Department of Education, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and National Aeronautics and Space Administration. An example of Gore’s power was shown when noted physicist Dr. William Happer, then Director of Energy Research at the Department of Energy, testified before Congress in 1993 that “scientific data did not support the hypothesis of manmade global warming.” After making such a comment, Gore had Happer immediately fired — 15 years later, Happer said, “I had the privilege of being fired by Al Gore, since I refused to go along with his alarmism. I did not need the job that badly.”

It should be remembered, Al Gore was also able to leverage his high visibility through his movie awards, his Nobel Prize, and his involvement in various carbon trading and other schemes into a personal fortune. When he ended his tenure as Vice President in 2001, his net worth was $2 million; by 2013, it exceeded $300 million. Though his financial status is not what determined the error of his position, neither did it determine the integrity of it. Incidentally, Gore’s movie, “An Inconvenient Truth,” provided a series of graphic images showing the apocalyptic consequences that some had predicted if fossil fuels were allowed to continue warming the planet — these images included melting glaciers, dying polar bears, spreading diseases, coastal cities inundated by massive floods, cities wiped out by hurricanes and tornadoes, and food supplies exterminated by droughts. The compelling propaganda played a major role in frightening an entire generation about the future… children are increasingly depressed about their future, thanks to the constant barrage of global warming propaganda they receive at school, in spite of the fact that Gore’s climate change agenda is wrong and does not at all coincide with the scientific consensus of our world. A recent survey of more than 1,000 geoscientists (commonly known as earth scientists) found that only 36 percent agree with the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change assertion that humans are causing a serious global warming problem — once again, here we have a large non-scientific group (the U.N.) making judgments on science of which they have very little knowledge. How our world can be this narrow-minded and empty-headed is extremely difficult to understand. By contrast, a majority of scientists in the survey believe that nature is the primary cause of recent global warming and/or that future global warming will not be a very serious problem. As Tom Harris said, “Global climate is always changing in accordance with natural causes, and recent changes are not unusual.” Naturally, the global warming alarmists are outraged by this survey, and are now attacking the integrity of scientists. What is funny about the so-called “alarmists” is that they have been saying exactly the opposite for decades — just a few short years ago they were screaming about “global cooling” and now they are screaming about “global warming!” As James Taylor, the president of the “Spark of Freedom Foundation,” says: “When alarmists say that scientists can be biased based on their career path, and that only atmospheric scientists are
qualified to give informed opinions on global warming, they are engaging in the most laughable form of hypocrisy.”

Obviously, there are numerous individuals who are far more knowledgeable on this thing called “Global Warming” than is Al Gore, so let’s briefly look at what they have to say. First, there is the daily cycle of the earth’s rotation that causes continual changes in radiant energy that is received by and transmitted from every spot on the planet… and there is the monthly lunar cycle, driven by the orbit of the moon around the earth; these two cycles interact to produce variations in atmospheric pressure, as well as tides and currents in the oceans and the atmosphere. In short, these are the short-term weather makers. In addition to the foregoing, the yearly seasonal cycle is caused as the tilted axis of earth’s rotation affects the intensity of solar energy received by each hemisphere, which produces spring, summer, autumn & winter for every spot on earth. As the earth’s orbit cycles, seasonal extreme temperatures also vary. So regular climate change is best explained by the earth’s orbit and tilt. The reality is, the earth’s climate is never still for long. The fact is, there is no evidence whatsoever in the climate record that carbon dioxide has a detectable effect on global temperatures; yet those who have made such claims, refuse to admit they were wrong (again, pride rules in their hearts). A scenario that recently occurred at Glacier National Park (GNP) in Montana, was that the National Park Service boldly proclaimed that all glaciers at the Park were melting away rapidly; in so doing, they put up a large sign saying that the glaciers were disappearing; the sign read, “Gone by 2020!” Yet this year they quietly removed the sign and the government literature which told visitors that the Park’s glaciers would disappear by either 2020 or 2030. Why was that? Because the most famous glaciers at GNP were not melting and shrinking; instead they were actually growing! A common trick that the National Park Service had been using was this: they displayed old black-and-white photos of glaciers back around 1920, and placed them alongside photos of the same glaciers taken around 2006; obviously, there were significant differences between the two pictures. But what they failed to do was give precise identification as to the exact time that each of the pictures were taken. Anyone familiar with glaciers in the northern Rockies knows that glaciers tend to grow for nine months each winter and melt for three months each summer… so the pictures were not an accurate portrayal of what was actually occurring. One of the largest GNP glaciers is the popular “Jackson Glacier;” the scientific world believes that particular glacier may have grown as much as 25% or more over the past decade. It should be noted, the “Gone by 2020” claims were reported in the New York Times, National Geographic, and other international news sources… but no mainstream news outlet has done any meaningful reporting regarding the apparent stabilization and recovery of the glaciers in Glacier National Park over the past decade. Even the local news sources in Montana have remained utterly silent regarding this matter. Another interesting development is that temperatures in Montana have been extremely cold this year, and that snowpack is far above normal. I find it interesting, there is “no source” in our world that takes the lead and causes every so-called professional entity to state things properly, and provide all of the evidence on a matter (both pros and cons)… the
reality is, we don’t live in a world that possesses great integrity: the truth is we live in a very deceptive world, and no one but GOD at the end of the age is going to change that; and to the praise of His glory, “TRUTH” will then reign supreme on the last day. Though many of us as believers would like to see “truth vindicated in the now”… that may not happen; therefore we must defer to GOD (who is on the throne), realizing that He will ultimately do as He has so decreed — one thing is sure, “truth will reign in the end, and all untruth will be revealed for what it really is.”

THE DYNAMIC NATURE OF TRUTH

Jesus said, “For this I was born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the TRUTH” (cf. Jn 18:37). As stated earlier, truth is the very sum and substance of Jesus. Untruth does not exist in Him. The fullness of the truth ultimately not only defines who God is, but His purposes as well. Jesus also stated: “Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice” (Jn 18:37). In the Upper Room the night before Jesus went to the cross, He asked the Father to “Sanctify His disciples in the truth; that Thy Word is truth” (Jn 17:17). The word “sanctify” literally means “to be separated unto God;” remember it was sin that separated us from God… in like manner it is God’s mercy that separates us from the Evil One, and brings us into God’s presence. Being separated unto God (i.e., being sanctified) is God’s will for us as believers (cf. 1 Thes 4:3); being sanctified must be learned from God as He teaches it in His Word, and it must be earnestly pursued by the believer. Our sanctification is not imputed to us (as the righteousness of Christ was at salvation), instead it is built up little by little, as a result of obedience to the Word of God, and by following Christ’s example (cf. Mt 11:29; Jn 13:15; Eph 4:20; Phil 2:5) in the power of the Holy Spirit (cf. Rom 8:13; Eph 3:16). The reality is, since we exist in the midst of an infinity of relativities and changing circumstances, we must fix our eyes on Jesus if we are to have our hearts & minds opened to the truth (cf. Heb 12:2). As the British Professor of Biblical Studies, Hebrew and the New Testament, Edgar Jones (1912-1991), states in his work, “Absolute Truth” — since absolute truth lies outside the boundaries of our world, it transcends human thinking and is inconceivable to us… though we can understand it once it is revealed to us by the Holy Spirit, “we are unable to conceive of it unaided” — thankfully, God sent His Son to us so that we can understand the truth. “In Jesus, the Father has penetrated the barrier between time and eternity [that we might be enlightened to the truth]; something that we would never, on our own, have guessed or imagined.”

Remember, Jesus came to bear witness to the Truth — He did not come to help us win our wars, maintain our national freedom, restore prosperity to our homes, save our marriages, make our businesses successful, heal our infirmities, or promote our careers. Though He can do those things, and at times does, their relevance is almost meaningless in comparison to His absolute purpose in the world.

Jesus once fed a great multitude with five barley loaves and two fishes. The next day some of these people sought Him out again, and He responded to them saying, “Truly,
truly, I say to you, you seek Me not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you” (cf. Jn 6:25-27). Beloved, carefully consider what Jesus said to these people; can you identify its application to your life? The truth was, the people Jesus was speaking to were seeking Him because of “the loaves,” not for their interest in “Truth.” Beloved, are you really interested in the Truth? Or is this world the most important thing in your life? Many churches in the Christian world make the same mistake these Jewish people did; they simply seek to apply Jesus to the relative concerns of this life; i.e., they attempt to use Him for their own ends (most of us have done that numerous times — throughout the course of a day, we often ask God to help us with regard to some negative circumstance we are going through, to remove some problem from our lives, to open some door for us, to relieve us of the anxiety and frustration and stress we are going through; our dialogue with God frequently relates to the negatives we are experiencing). In other words, our goal in life is to enjoy life and not be in a continual state of discomfort and stress. The invitation that is presented by numerous pastors and evangelists is this: “Come to Jesus that He may supply all your needs, that He may straighten out your life, that He may bring peace to your home, that He may deliver you from drugs, etc.” Then they get one thing right by also telling them that “He wants to forgive them of their sins and save their soul for eternity.” But, is that what you are really interested in, when you have been attracted by the promise of the fulfillment of a temporal need? When one focuses on his temporal needs, rather than on Christ and his spiritual needs, he may find much of what is being taught in a majority of churches much to his liking; after all, this world is what life is all about… and what could be more important than feeling good, being happy, and being pleased with life. By the way, some of the largest churches in America are grounded in just such theological thinking. But Jesus did not come to fill us with the loaves, or supply our temporal needs, He came to bear witness to the Truth. The Roman emperor, Lucius Septimius Severus, before his death in A.D. 211 said, “I have been everything, and it is worth nothing” (Durant: The Story of Civilization; Simon and Schuster, N.Y., 1972, p. 622); Severus voiced the ultimate truth of the futility of this life and all it contains when it is lived for its own sake. As Edgar Jones states, “There is a fundamental ‘core’ deep within us [i.e., our flesh] that the temporal experience leaves unfulfilled, and when that is unsatisfied, nothing about us is satisfied.” So it is the wise who seek Absolute Truth, because it alone meets the deepest need in our soul, as well as our eternal need; though divine truth is not necessarily totally relevant to time, it is extremely relevant to our eternal destiny — that which is eternal has no relevance to time… it is the truth of the life that lies beyond this one that is truly relevant. Remember, eternal life is a life that never ends. Jesus came to us from out of Eternity, into our world where He suffered for us in order that He might deliver us from the domain of darkness and transfer us into His glorious Eternal Kingdom (cf. Col 1:13; 1 Th 2:12; 2 Tim 4:18; Heb 12:28; Jam 2:5). “God gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believed in Him would have eternal life” (cf. Jn 3:16). It is because of our temporal nature that we place such a premium on our temporal existence; yet it is this almost meaningless existence that we
need to turn from. There are numerous passages that give definition to “absolute truth;”
let me share a few of them with you at this point:

* Said Jesus: “He who loves his life loses it; and he who hates his life in this world shall keep it to life eternal” (cf. Jn 12:25).

* Said Jesus to His disciples: “If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake shall find it” (cf. Mt 16:24-25).

* Said Paul: “If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied” (cf. 1 Cor 15:19).

* Said John: “Do not love this world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is the world… is not from the Father, but is from the world. And the world is passing away… the one who does God’s will abides forever” (cf. 1 Jn 3:15f).

The psalmist describes truth as a fundamental characteristic of God; whereas the wicked does not speak truth (cf. Ps 5:9), the blameless one speaks truth from the heart (cf. Ps 15:2). The psalmist David said to God, “Guide me in Your truth” (25:5)... “Send forth your life and your truth” (43:3)... the reality was, he desired to “Walk in God’s truth” (86:11). The book of Proverbs defines truth as a “virtue” that the person of God should practice... it is to proceed from one’s mouth (Prov 8:7), and such speaking gives honest evidence (Prov 12:17). The prophet Jeremiah bemoaned the fact that in Judah truth was absent — that God looks for truth (Jer 5:3), and that it is notoriously absent from Judah (Jer 7:8; 9:3, 5). The prophet Zechariah commanded his readers to “Speak the truth” (Zech 8:16), and to “Love truth and peace” (Zech 8:19). Jesus told the woman at the well that it really didn’t matter where one worshiped God, what matters is that “one worship in spirit and truth” (Jn 4:24). Since Jesus spoke the truth, the Jews sought to kill Him (Jn 8:40), because they were ultimately of their father the devil, the father of lies (Jn 8:44). Jesus questioned those who opposed Him, “If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me?” (Jn 8:46). For Paul, truth is the message of God that all of humanity has supressed (cf. Rom 1:18), and exchanged for a lie (cf. Rom 1:25); as such, they have directed their worship to that which is created rather than the Creator. In the Book of Galatians, Paul makes truth synonymous with the gospel, which the Judaizers had perverted (cf. Gal 2:5; 2:14; 4:16; 5:7; also Eph 1:13; Col 1:5-6); so salvation is synonymous with the knowledge of the truth (cf. 1 Tim 2:4), and knowledge of and belief in the truth prevents one from becoming entangled in erroneous doctrines. Paul urged Timothy to “guard the truth,” which the Holy Spirit had entrusted to him (cf. 2 Tim 1:14); and Scripture itself is “the word of truth” (cf. 2 Tim 1:15); hence the church is “the pillar and support of the truth” (cf. 1 Tim 3:15; 1 Cor 4:1; Eph 3:10). Paul informed Timothy and Titus that
The only alternative to the truth is to believe in myths and the thinking of men; i.e. lies, untruth (cf. 2 Tim 4:4; Titus 1:14).

The reality is, “we all believe in something,” the question is, “Do we believe what is true? or Do we believe what is not true?” Since man is a fallen creature, it is only natural for him to believe his fallen thoughts, because that is actually the sum total of who he really is. Remember, all fallen creatures are fleshly creatures — they are not 50% fleshly; they are 100% fleshly… there is no innate goodness in fallen man; thus everyone of his actions and thoughts are tainted in some way with evil (i.e., they never fully coincide with God’s standards; as such, they are not pleasing to God). Though all human beings like to think they are reasonably good creatures, according to Jesus, “there is none good but God alone” (cf. Lk 18:19). So how does sinful man respond to that statement? Well, for the most part, he argues against it with fleshly thoughts, and in so doing he the justifies his contrary opinion at some level. The truth is, it is very difficult (actually impossible) for man to see himself for who he really is — because his fallen inner-core can neither fully understand or accept it; though he knows he is not perfect, to say that he is completely imperfect is simply too much for him to comprehend; remember, he is thinking with a fallen mind. Now, according to Paul, “man’s flesh sets its desires against the Spirit; i.e., it is completely in disagreement with divine truth” (cf. Gal 5:17); though it may pretend to be good, there is always some aspect of his thoughts and his actions that deny the truth. If man wasn’t completely fallen, he would be able to see his deficiencies, and present a somewhat legitimate argument against them, but being as he is completely fallen, he can only argue with his fallen mindset. It should be clear to every believer, fallen man cannot accurately argue against his own inner-core, because it is his fallen inner-core that completely rules in his heart and mind. If he possessed something other than “his flesh,” he might be able to argue to the contrary, but being as he is nothing but a “fleshly creature,” it is his flesh that determines the essence of what is really true to him. As the prophet Isaiah said, “All of us like sheep have gone astray, we have all turned to our own way” (cf. Is 53:6). By the way, that’s a very interesting comment — sheep are the only animals in existence who are totally dependent upon human beings to shepherd them; without a shepherd, sheep would not exist because they have no ability to defend themselves; they must not only be led and fed, they must be protected and cared for. Remember, God made every creature in existence, but of all those He created, He made “sheep” the way He did to help man see himself for who he truly is — over & over again in Scripture, His people are called “sheep,” because they strongly resemble sheep; we not only need to be led and fed, we need to be protected and cared for; we do not have the ability to provide for all of our needs in life… just as sheep go astray, so do we as humans… if left to ourselves, we would simply perish at the end of the age. Now regarding sheep, read the following OT and NT passages: (cf. Num 27:16-17; 1 Kg 22:17; Ps 44:22; 74:1; 78:52; 95:7; 100:3; 119:176; Is 53:7; Jer 23:1; 50:6; Mt 9:36; 10:6; 15:24; 26:31; Jn 10:1-18, 27; 21:15-17; 1 Pet 2:25).

To continue this concept, David said, “There is no one who does good… no one who understands… no one who seeks God… all have turned aside and have become corrupt;
there is no one who does good, not even one” (cf. Ps 14:1-3; 53:1-3; Rom 3:10-12). Now as believers we are not only “new creations in Christ,” but individuals in whom the “Holy Spirit dwells;” and it is the Holy Spirit who “guides us into all truth”—thus as believers we now have a “new mindset” to help govern our thinking; nevertheless, because the “old mindset” (i.e., our fleshly mind) is still present within us, we constantly find ourselves vehemently arguing back and forth; and that argument is frequently won by the flesh, because our fleshly inner-core still has a very strong presence in our lives. An example of this for us as believers would be this: we all get frustrated when God doesn’t meet our needs and desires (in spite of the fact that we sometimes think they are “good,” and that we pray for them over and over again). So what happens? Our “flesh” grabs hold of our thought life, and frequently wins the day. My flesh, like yours, can be so exasperating at times, it simply overwhelms me… and try though as I may to overcome it, I frequently fail to do so; it often feels as if there is absolutely nothing I can do to overcome it. As Paul stated: “Though the wishing to do good is present in me, the doing of good is not… thus I often succumb to the very evils I despise and do not wish to do; the reality is, nothing good dwells in my flesh” (cf. Rom 7:18-19). Another element that is important to remember is that Satan is ever at work in us telling us what a mess we are, and how disgusted and disappointed God is with us… that He is really frustrated with us; hence, He sends hard discipline our way. My flesh, like yours, can be so exasperating at times, it simply overwhelms me… and try though as I may to overcome it, I frequently fail to do so; it often feels as if there is absolutely nothing I can do to overcome it. As Paul stated: “Though the wishing to do good is present in me, the doing of good is not… thus I often succumb to the very evils I despise and do not wish to do; the reality is, nothing good dwells in my flesh” (cf. Rom 7:18-19). Another element that is important to remember is that Satan is ever at work in us telling us what a mess we are, and how disgusted and disappointed God is with us… that He is really frustrated with us; hence, He sends hard discipline our way. So “reality” is continually being distorted in our minds—the question is, are we going to believe God loves us, or are we going to succumb to what the devil says? Now, if the flesh is this evident in the believer’s life, how in the world does it not completely rule in the life of the unbeliever? Remember, the Holy Spirit dwells in the believer’s heart, but does not dwell in the unbeliever’s heart; thus, the unbeliever is in complete subjection to his fleshly desires (i.e., his innate sinfulness; some of which may actually appear to human beings as good and righteous). The “pretense” with which human beings live, is actually pretty amazing… here they are pretending to be what they are not (i.e., good), and to a degree they actually believes that they are something they are not (i.e., good persons or reasonable good persons); the reality is, the “self-life” is an absolute in the unbeliever’s life (i.e., his own wants govern his life). Whereas the believer is at war with the devil and the forces of darkness and his own flesh (cf. Eph 6:11-12; Gal 5:17), the unbeliever buys into his own self-righteousness and the non-sense that Satan places in his heart… remember, “The unbeliever is of his father the devil, and embraces his thinking” (cf. Jn 8:44).

In this strange world in which we live, “wealth” has become the chief issue that governs many peoples lives. The premiere problem with being wealthy is that it tends to enhance one’s self-centeredness, increase his arrogance, and distort his perception of life. Though wealth can have a very productive upside, generally it has a very destructive downside, because it tends to cause one to value his possessions far more than he should. God gave human beings dominion over the earth (cf. Gen 1:26-28), thus entrusting His wealth to them. In so doing, God made them “His stewards over the created realm.” With that in mind, all one possesses is actually God’s, not man’s; as such, possessing property carries with it significant responsibilities. God holds those whom He has entrusted with His wealth
responsible for attending to it properly (i.e., as God has so ordained – cf. Num 18:20-32; Deut 14:28-29; Mal 3:8-10; 2 Cor 9:6-14; 1 Tim 5:18), including carrying for the poor (cf. Prov 29:7; Amos 5:11-12; Mt 19:21; 1 Tim 5:3-5). Think of it — after the fall of Adam and Eve, God made some people rich and some people poor; in so doing, He gave the rich the responsibility of helping meet the needs of the poor... yet our world is so grossly consumed with wealth, it places very little emphasis on meeting the needs of the poor — in our world today, millions of poor people are dying of starvation every year, simply because they do not have enough money to buy food to feed themselves and keep themselves alive. What does that tell you about this corrupt world in which we live? How can the rich be that insensitive to those who are that poor? Now, just as people are responsible to help the poor, they have also been given the responsibility to carry out the ministries of the church; yet no more than twenty percent of those in our churches make much of a contribution to its ministry. Why do so many believers ignore their responsibilities in the church and in the world? Obviously, many of them have a very remedial faith. The reality is, the human family is responsible to handle wisely all God has entrusted to them. Obviously, all of God's creatures have not been equally blessed — some have been blessed with "great wealth," and others with "very little wealth." This is all the work of God in our fallen world; God is testing men to measure their goodness... at the end of the age He is going to judge them accordingly. All things are not equal in this world (as most people think they should be), but being as man has a fleshy mindset, he doesn’t see how God can bless some people with great wealth, and simply give others little wealth; that simply transcends human thought (cf. Mt 25:14ff). Though that is the reality, it is a very difficult one for fallen man to accept. As such, he constantly questions it — "If God is really God, why would He do that?" "Why is there so much inequality and inequity in our world?" “Wouldn’t it be best for God to make everything equal?” “If He is a fair God, how can these things be?” So here is fallen man not only questioning the integrity of God, but not owning up to his own responsibility in the world. Ultimately, the problems in our world are man's problems — they are the ones who are not owning up to their responsibility. The reason being, they are extremely self-centered people who love money far more than they love people. As the apostle Paul said to Timothy, "The love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have even wandered away from the faith" (cf. 1 Tim 6:10). In spite of the fact man can’t fully justify his own actions in this world, to insist that God do everything the way man thinks He should do them, is to judge God brashly and deny one’s own responsibility. When looking at our world today, look at the “context” — we live in a fallen world that God is ultimately going to judge. For a person to make his own "personal happiness" the underlying construct that governs his life, will ultimately cost him terribly in the end; yet that is how the vast majority of people live. Perhaps the "behavior of others" has too strong an influence on them... after all, if others have big houses and boats and summer homes and great cars, why shouldn’t we also have such things? If others aren’t looking after the poor and the needy, why should we have to assume that responsibility? Obviously, it’s pretty easy for people to wiggle out of their responsibility. Let me say it one more time — everyone is going to be judged for the life he lived; if that is just a meaningless reality to you, you’re going to regret it in the end.
As the Lord told Isaiah, “Shall the potter be considered as equal with the clay… or what is formed say to Him who formed it, ‘He has no understanding?’” (cf. Is 29:16). He then went on to say to him, “Wow to the one who quarrels with his Maker… will the clay say to the potter, ‘What are you doing?’” (cf. Is 45:9). Likewise, the Lord said to Paul, “Does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use, and another for common use?” (Rom 9:21). Obviously, God is GOD, and has a right to do as He pleases; what we ought to rejoice in is that God is a HOLY GOD who does everything right! Never does He do wrong! For a human being to pass judgement on God for anything that He does is absolute lunacy, because the individual does not even understand “WHY” God does what He does — for example: If one person is given greater mental capacities than another person, why is that something you might consider to be wrong? If one has more wealth than someone else, why is that wrong? If one’s personality is different from other peoples, why is that wrong? If one’s skillset is different from other peoples, why is that wrong? If one’s skin color is different from someone else’s, why is that wrong? If one is of a different gender than someone else’s, why is that considered wrong? If one is raised in a different country than someone else, why is that wrong? If one is raised in a different century than someone else, why is that wrong? If one is raised with several peers, and someone else is an only child, why is that wrong? Obviously, there are numerous things that make each of us different from others… why is that wrong? Can you justify your reasoning? Just because someone is bigger, wealthier, smarter, and stronger than you are, why is that wrong? Would you actually prefer that every single creature be “absolutely identical”? By the way, should you exclude God’s eternal purposes from the equation (one that all of us are completely ignorant of as temporal fallen creatures), you will seriously misjudge God over and over and over and over again. To somehow think that God doesn’t have a genuinely perfect reason for doing things the way He does them, is to “tell God He is an absolute idiot.” Since when is “your thinking” greater than “God’s thinking”? As God said to Isaiah, “My ways are not your ways, neither are your thoughts My thoughts; as high as the heaven is above the earth, so are My ways and My thoughts higher than yours” (cf. Is 55:8-9). Why is that such a difficult construct to accept? The problem with fallen man is that he continually judges God and His ways, because they are often not acceptable to him… yet here are fallen temporal creatures passing judging upon the Eternal God of all creation. So whatever it is that God allocated to you in this life… can you accept it for what it is, or do you wish it was substantially different?

Perhaps another question that needs answering is this: Since everything you own is “God’s” (not yours), how “responsible” are you as one of His stewards? How “faithful” have you been with all He has entrusted to you? Including “His children” (technically they are not yours; they are His). Have you used everything He has entrusted to you for “His higher purposes,” or have you simply used things for your self-centered purposes? Do you get the picture? God has allocated different things to different people for different reasons; in so doing He is going to judge each person at the end of the age
as to how “faithful” each person has been with everything the Lord entrusted to them. Remember the Great Commandment: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind... and you shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Mt 22:37-39). Remember, this is a COMMANDMENT, not a suggestion; God has COMMANDED us to love! Contrary to what you may believe, “you are your brother’s keeper!” God has given this injunction to all of us as His creatures; this is God’s decree to the human family; remember, to love means to “seek the other person’s highest good.” Now if “love” (i.e., God – 1 Jn 4:16) rules in your heart, you will not live according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit; thus you will do what is pleasing to God. Another compelling statement by Jesus was this: “To whom much is given, much is required” (Lk 12:48). Though some people like to think being greatly gifted is the greatest thing in the world... they need to remember, being greatly gifted requires great responsibility and allegiance to Christ. The long and short of it is, this life isn’t about “living for oneself;” it is about “living for Christ and being faithful in our service to Him.” Said Paul, “It is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy” (1 Cor 4:1-2); so what is it that reigns in your soul: “truth” or “untruth”? “God-centeredness” or “self-centeredness”? It’s important to remember, you weren’t blessed with everything God has given to you because you merited it in some way; you possess what you possess because that is the way God made you; you had no input whatsoever into God’s actions. Now to argue to the contrary is to put the cart before the horse, and that kind of thinking is absolute nonsense. “God formed your inward parts in your mother’s womb” (cf. Ps 139:13); you had nothing to do with who you became and all you possess. Furthermore, “In God’s book are written all the days that were ordained for you, when as yet there was not one of them” (cf. Ps 139:16). We are not self-made creatures; we are God-made creatures. He gave us our physical bodies, our minds, and the context in which we live. Remember, “God does all things after the counsel of His will” (cf. Eph 1:11). To somehow think that God created everything without a purpose, or that all things are just the product of happenstance or our own doing, is to not only denigrate God, but elevate ourselves and our own fallen thinking... the truth is, nothing is more foolish than that.

Now, every believer should not only be “content” with who he is as a person, but with all that God has given to him, and properly use it as God has so decreed. Paul said to Timothy: “Instruct those who are rich in this present age not to be conceited, or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly gives us all things to enjoy. Let them do good, and be rich in good works, always being generous and ready to share” (cf. 1 Tim 6:17-18). The reality is, possessing property carries with it significant responsibility. According to Jesus, “We are to lay up for ourselves treasure in heaven, not treasures on earth” (Mt 6:19-20). Instead of wealth making one proud, it should cause a person to do good to others, and do that which will have a lasting impact upon others. Though some people don’t like the idea that they are responsible to share their “God given wealth with others,” that is the reality... should they abrogate that responsibility, they will pay a very steep price for doing so in the end. Remember the story of the good Samaritan — a certain man was going down to Jericho from Jerusalem, and was stripped
and beaten by robbers who left him half dead… a priest passed by him without rendering a helping hand… likewise, did also a Levite… only a certain Samaritan felt compassion for him and did everything he could to help him; said Jesus to a lawyer who happened to be listening to Him and dialoguing with Him: “Show mercy toward others as this man did” (cf. Lk 10:30-37). The reality is, a generous spirit accompanies righteousness… if we have not love we have NOTHING! (1 Cor 13:2). Love is far more significant than wealth, yet more often than not, the wealthy are greatly lacking in love. Reflect upon the words of Jesus: “Whoever is greatest among you is the servant” (Mt 23:11; Mk 9:35); furthermore, “No servant can serve two masters… one cannot serve God and mammon” (i.e., money – cf. Lk 16:13). So either one lets money rule in his soul, or he lets God rule in his soul. Remember, “even the Son of man came to minister, and not be ministered to” (Mt 20:26; 23:11; Mk 10:43); likewise, we are to do the same. Scripture warns against valuing one’s wealth too highly, because riches can prevent one from bearing spiritual fruit (Lk 8:14).

The reality is, our riches, talents, and material blessings are all gifts by God that have been given to us that we might glorify Him and use them to bless others. At the end of the day, nobody takes anything to their grave; as Job said: “Naked we came into this world, and naked we shall return from it” (cf. Job 1:21; Ecc 5:15). The proverbial saint Agur stated the following, “Lord, keep deception and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches; may I not be too rich that I deny You, nor too poor that I steal” (cf. Prv 30:8-9). Here was a man who wanted his life to be worthwhile and honest; he would simply be satisfied with the provision of his daily needs – essentially he was saying, “Give me this day my daily bread” (cf. Mt 6:11). It is when we see God for who He truly is, and our own fallenness for what it really is, that we are open and honest in all that we do and say. Again, the premiere problem with people being wealthy, is that it essentially destroys most people; rather than making them a good people, it tends to make them proud self-centered people. King Solomon reminds us that “pride goes before destruction; that it is better to be of a humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud” (cf. Prv 16:18-19). Perhaps the question that needs to be asked is this one: “Do you value friendship with the rich over friendship with the poor?” The reality is, it is better to be poor and humble than rich and proud; however, the world has a very difficult time believing that — they actually say success and wealth justifies pride, and that associating with movers and shakers is as good as it gets. Obviously, there are numerous subjects one can cover with regard to this thing called “truth,” hopefully, the issue of wealth has been helpful.

One could say, a deviate that is contrary to wealth is “helping others in need,” because being others-oriented is the exact opposite of being self and wealth-oriented. As the apostle Paul said, “Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard others as more important than yourself; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others” (Phil 2:3-4). Wow, those two verses are really loaded… let me begin by first saying that the “emboldened words” in those two verses are emphatic; so read them again with that in mind. Man’s biggest problem is that he is a very “self-centered creature;” that which matters most to
him is “himself” (not others) — fallen man is not naturally an “others-oriented creature.” The context here is this — with all there is in Christ, the members of His body should have unity of purpose, be of one accord, and be a people of affection & compassion (Phil 2:1-2)… nothing should be done with selfish ambition or conceit; with lowness of mind, every believer should regard others as more important than himself. Obviously, to esteem others as more important than oneself is foreign to fallen man… it is only when we are empowered by the Holy Spirit that it can actually be practiced. The long and short of it is, the interests of others is to be of greater concern to us than our own personal interests. Paul goes on to say, “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus” (cf. Phil 2:5). Think about it — though Jesus was God, yet He placed such great value on us as fallen creatures, He did everything in His power to forgive us and redeem us… He didn’t consider His deity so wonderful that He would not show concern for fallen man… He did not consider His equality with God as something that He had to grasp forever under all circumstances. He was mindful of our needs, and did everything He could to meet them, including dying for us. So Jesus came to this world to endure the contradiction of sinners against Himself. The night before Jesus went to the cross He said to His disciples: “If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I am going back to the Father” (cf. Jn 14:28); in other words, the disciples should have rejoiced to learn that He was going back to His heavenly home… while on earth, He had been cruelly treated and rejected; but now He was going back to be with His Father. As Paul said, “Though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor” (2 Cor 7:9), that “He emptied Himself by taking on the form of a bondservant, and coming to this world in the likeness of men” (cf. Phil 2:7). “Jesus didn’t come to this world to be served, but to serve others, and to give His life a ransom for many” (cf. Mt 20:28). As such, “God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is LORD to the glory of God the Father” (cf. Phil 2:9-11). The question is, as a believer are you willing to take the lowly place and serve others, and seek their highest good? Remember, “Jesus humbled Himself to the point of being obedient, even to the point of death on a cross” (Phil 2:8). In order to love others as God has so decreed, we first must humble ourselves that the Holy Spirit might move in our hearts and minds, that we might be sensitive to the needs of others – to be humble means to not think more highly of ourselves then we ought (cf. Rom 12:3). Again, as Paul stated, we are to “have this mind / this attitude” in ourselves that was also in Christ Jesus (cf. Phil 2:5).

As fallen sinful creatures we all naturally want to please ourselves and enjoy life as much as possible; thus we often focus on our wants,” in spite of the fact that fallen fleshly thinking is frequently deceptive & erroneous, and actually leaves us in the dark. Remember, human beings are who they are (fallen sinful creatures), and they will be who they are (i.e., people who live by their own innate desires) if they don’t take the initiative to focus on divine truth. Now, because one cannot be who he is not (i.e., a glorious creature), he will be who he is (an unglorious creature)… the truth is, man can only make very modest changes in his life… only GOD can transform his life; though God is at work in our lives
as believers, He will not fully transform our lives until eternity future. It should be pretty evident to every believer, we are no where near what we are going to be (remember, we are going to be like Christ – cf. 1 Jn 3:2); that should not be a difficult construct for any believer to understand. Again, none of us can be who we are not; we may pretend to be, but that’s all it is, “pretense.” Now, unbelievers neither understand divine truth, nor do they embrace it. The reality is, no man is able to conceive of something outside of himself; how can he conceive of something he is not? He can’t conceive what it is like to be an elephant, a giraffe, or a donkey, because it has absolutely no relevance to his inner-core. Though all human beings believe certain things about life, essentially their beliefs are not that significant, because they simply cover those earthly issues that helps make life more understandable and acceptable to him. A fellow-graduate at Talbot Theological Seminary, Josh McDowell, said in an article he wrote on what one believes: “Belief will not create fact, and truth is independent of belief” (i.e., just because you believe something doesn’t make it true). Yet Jesus emphasized the fact that what one believes is absolutely vital – “If you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins” (cf. Jn 8:24), and “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, because God’s wrath remains on them” (Jn 3:36). By the way, what Scripture stresses is not so much the act of belief, but the object of belief. With that in mind Jesus said: “I am the way and the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me” (Jn 14:6).

Though people obviously believe what they want to believe, those who reject the truth will one day be judged for doing so. Now if man was “totally ignorant of divine reality,” that would be one thing (obviously, man cannot be held guilty for something that he did not know; Scripture even attests to that), but man is not totally ignorant of divine reality; God has conveyed to the human heart what is right and what is wrong… that man suppresses the truth in unrighteousness (Rom 1:18)… that God has made Himself evident to every man (cf. Rom 1:19-21; 2:15; Ecc 3:11)… that man has exchanged the truth of God for a lie; as such, he serves the creature rather than the Creator (cf. Rom 1:25); i.e., he values the creature more than the Creator. Obviously, those are very poignant realities; though we may argue against them, such is foolishness. Think about it, the Christian world is constantly teaching divine truth, and the unbelieving world (for the most part) is constantly arguing against it; thus the world essentially is “rejecting divine truth.” Though God Himself has conveyed divine truth to the hearts of all men, He is also sharing it through the believing world. Yet fallen men still arrogantly reject Christ because they are of their father the devil (Jn 8:42-47); in other words, they love the thinking of the devil, darkness and “untruth,” because it coalesces with how they feel about life. The truth is, every human being knows he is deficient (i.e., that he is a sinner), that he is not the wonderful person he wishes he was, that he is seriously lacking in goodness, and in need of divine forgiveness and acceptance… nevertheless, he still insists on seeing himself as being significantly better than he really is. That’s the reality of fallen man—he simply thinks he is better than the vast majority of other people; thus he sees himself in a positive light (the underlying reality is, Satan has completely deceived him). So the truth is, there is no argument against the foregoing; either one is going to embrace divine truth in
all its fullness, or he is going to reject it. Now, though there are different levels of divine truth that each person has been given, it is “the level of truth of which they are aware” that God will ultimately use to judge them. With the foregoing in mind, it should be easy to understand that no one will claim ignorance on the day of judgment... to think that people will argue against divine truth at the Great White Throne Judgment is absolute foolishness, because the knowledge of divine truth was always present in their hearts and minds — no one is going to be held accountable for what he did not know. Therefore, “every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is LORD, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil 2:10-11). Though the foregoing can be a rather poignant reality to some of you, that is what is going to occur... the important thing is that you “embrace divine truth” and seek to know it in all its fullness.

Years ago when I was in graduate school, I had become increasingly discouraged with this thing called “life;” it wasn’t at all what I thought it should be, or what it was cracked up to be... the truth was, it wasn’t at all what I wanted it to be; which is a common trait in every man’s soul. Here I was, a graduate with degrees in both Finance and Secondary Education, and now working on my MBA (Masters of Business Administration). I had just concluded a reasonably successful career in football, and seemed to have the world in my hand, yet from my perspective, I didn’t seem to be reaping at all what I had sown; since I had worked very hard, “Why did my life seem so empty and meaningless? Why was my life not at all what I thought it should be? Was this all there was to life? Why would I even want to continue living if this is all life was about?” — incidentally, that essentially is what the Roman Emperor, Lucius Septimius Severus, said before his death early in the 3rd century A.D. Because of the disconcertion in my heart, one day I went for a walk in the park all by myself; in so doing, I began directing my thinking toward God; obviously, God was now doing a radical work in my life, but at the time I had no idea that that is what was happening. So here is what I said to God: “God, if you really exist (obviously I wasn’t absolutely certain that He did), I want you to become real in my life, no matter what it costs me; and if you will become real in my life, I will give you my life, and you can use it in what ever way you choose.” Though that may sound somewhat strange to some of you, that is the prayer I prayed that God ultimately used to bring me to Himself. Though my perception of God back then was not only somewhat confusing, it was perplexing as well; nevertheless, God used such thinking to bring me to Himself. My confidence in God obviously wasn’t very high back then, yet my disconcertion with life caused me to cry out to Him. Who else was I going to cry out to? I didn’t trust anyone else with that kind of knowledge. The incredible part of all this was “within just a few months” I attended a “Father/Son Banquet” that I didn’t even know was occurring. I drove to church one Sunday night because my soul had become increasingly heavy; even though I hardly ever went to church back then (and never in the evening), rather than there being an “Evening Service,” they were holding a “Father/Son Banquet” on the campus, which wasn’t something I was interested in... but since the Senior Pastor happened to see me out in the parking lot when I drove in (incidentally, no one else was out there but me and the pastor [Guy Davidson] which in itself was really strange); and
he insisted that I go inside and enjoy the evening, which I ultimately did, even though I really wasn’t into doing so (remember, my inner core wasn’t at all in a happy state, so being around a group of dads and their kids wasn’t something I really wanted to do). Anyhow, that night the coach of the Phoenix Roadrunners Hockey Team (the only professional team in Phoenix back in the early 70s) shared his testimony… and to my surprise, he spoke directly to my heart. Never had I heard what I heard that evening; so I went home that night and carefully reflected upon all he had said, and before I went to bed, I shared my thoughts with God, that if everything I had heard that night was indeed true, I wanted Him to make it a reality in my life… up until this point every spiritual decision in my life had simply ended in vague uncertainty and disillusionment; the long and short of it was, God made it a very convincing reality in my life (i.e., He opened my heart to believe with great conviction; cf. Acts 16:14). Again, this was God’s doing, not mine; no matter how smart I may have felt I was, no human being possesses the smarts to judge and accurately evaluate divine reality; only God can turn the light in our soul and give us the grace to believe. Remember, I knew my inner core was a mess (admittedly so; I had come to the end of myself), thus God opened my heart to believe; humility is a human requirement for knowing divine truth. If you will go to God with humility and honesty, He will ultimately do a transforming work in your heart and mind and life… that’s the way He works; but it is all precipitated with a humble heart; where there is no humility, there is no enlightenment. Though I didn’t know all of this back then, I know it today.

The prophet Micah shares the most important truth for mankind: “God has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God” (cf. Mic 6:8; also Deut 10:12; Is 56:1; Jer 22:3; and Mt 23:23). Said the Lord to Isaiah, “But to this one I will look, to him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word” (cf. Is 66:2; also Ps 34:18; Is 57:15; Mt 5:3-4; Lk 18:13-14). Beloved, the foregoing is “true” – “absolutely true” – so embrace it! As one of the greatest voices in Christian history, St. Augustine, said, “Where I found truth, there found I my God, who is the truth itself.” Incidentally, many philosophers claim that “truth is a description of reality,” and that “God is the supreme reality,” and that “whenever truth comes around, all lies have to run and hide.” It was the 17th century founding father of Pennsylvania, William Penn, who said, “Truth never lost ground by enquiry.” Now should one claim that “absolute truth does not exist,” cannot be true because such a claim would be a contradiction in itself; how can one make an absolute statement, when he denies the existence of absolutes? Again, that is a contradiction — yet such thinking is very common in the unbelieving world; they simply say anything to deny the truth. Now if one should claim that we can’t know anything for certain, in making such a claim, one is arguing to the contrary when he says that he can know something for certain; remember, the foundation of his thinking is that he can’t really know. Again, this is the way the unbelieving world operates; it makes claims without the slightest bit of integrity or knowledge… it is just such nonsensical, unintelligible babble they want people to believe. Keep in mind, all truth is of God. Now, should you insist on changing the discourse and make contrary claims, obviously you can do
so, but that doesn’t mean the claim has integrity or that it is true; the reality is, one day you will have to give an account for making claims that are not true. If the anger in your soul is that strong, you better prayerfully humble yourself before the Lord and ask Him to open your heart to the truth (unless you really don’t care about knowing the truth). Remember, that which is not true is a lie — untruth (cf. Jn 8:43-47).

**The Essential Truths of Christianity**

God’s Word reveals those truths (doctrines) that are essential to the Christian faith. In short, they are The Sovereignty of God… The Deity of Christ… Salvation by Grace… Resurrection of Christ… The Gospel… Monotheism… The Authority of Scripture… The Necessity of Faith… and The Church & Worship. The writings of six highly esteemed authors helped me give definition to these nine doctrines; they are: Wayne A. Grudem, prominent evangelical evangelist, and graduate of Harvard University & University of Cambridge, and the author of the book “Bible Doctrines: Essential Teachings of the Christian Faith”… James Montgomery Boice, the late 20th century American Presbyterian preacher and theologian, and author of the book “Foundations of the Christian Faith”… Clarence H. Benson (1879-1954), a pioneer Christian educator who taught at Moody Bible Institute for nearly 20 years (1923-1941), and authored the book “Biblical Faith: Doctrines Every Christian Should Know”… Bobby Jamieson, present-day lecturer in New Testament Greek at the University of Cambridge, and author of “Sound Doctrine,” that emphasizes the importance of good theology… Matthew J. Slick, Pastor, Author, Theologian, and president of “Christian Research Ministry” (a highly respected conservative Christian ministry)… and Blaise Pascal, the renowned 17th century French Mathematician, Theologian, Philosopher, Scholar and Physicist — these six men essentially state that Scripture declares that these nine doctrinal truths are absolutely necessary for Christians to embrace. Though there are many other important doctrines (if they weren’t important, Scripture wouldn’t mention them), the Bible clearly supports these nine essentials. A non-regenerate person (i.e., a Mormon, Jehovah’s Witness, Atheist, Muslim), will emphatically deny one or more of these essential doctrines. Following is a short summary of each of these nine doctrines; though I don’t expand upon each of them in great depth (that wasn’t my purpose in listing them), these nine doctrines are essential for the Christian world to believe —

1. **The Sovereignty of God** — In the minds of men everything must begin with “GOD,” who created everything. Nothing precedes GOD — Nothing! “He is before all things, and in Him all things consist” (cf. Col 1:17); everything was created by Him, both that which is in the heavens and all that is on the earth, things that are visible and things that are invisible — “from Him and through Him and to Him are all things” (those emboldened words are emphatic in Greek — cf. Rom 11:36; Col 1:16). God’s revelation to man (i.e., Scripture) begins with these words: “In the beginning GOD created the heavens and the earth” (cf. Gen 1:1; also Ps 33:6, 9; 89:11; 90:2; Is 40:21-26; 42:5; 45:18; Jn 1:3).
Interestingly enough, “faith begins with the understanding that GOD is our Maker” (cf. Heb 11:1-3), and that God is the only sovereign in all the universe (cf. Is 43:13; 45:5-7; 46:9-11; 55:8-11; 1 Tim 6:12-16). If God is not GOD (i.e., the active God of all creation) in your mind and heart, then you are not worshipping and believing in the God of the Bible and creation. Again, GOD must be the active force in your life (regardless of what you are going through); everything you experience has been caused or approved by GOD; there is no such thing as mere happenstance. GOD has a purpose for everything in our lives; if God is not GOD in your life, then the god you worship is simply the god of your own making—remember, divine truth is the foundation of God’s revelation to man; i.e., it is grounded in God’s Word.

2. The Deity of Christ — Jesus is God in the flesh (cf. John 8:58 with Exodus 3:14; see also Jn 1:1, 14; 8:58; 10:30-36; 20:28; Col 2:9; Phil 2:5-8; Heb 1:8). Incidentally, the doctrine of the deity of Christ includes the Trinity; i.e., that there is one God who exists in three persons. Though Jesus entered into human history as a man, He was still fully God; thus His name was “Immanuel,” which translated means, “God with us” (cf. Mt 1:2; Jn 8:24). To make Jesus less than He is (i.e., not God), is to completely change the discourse.

3. Salvation by Grace — By grace we have been saved through faith (cf. Eph 2:8-9; 4:1-11; Gal 5:4). The problem with most people in the Christian world is that they have an unbiblical theology; this was the main problem in ancient Israel (that’s why the vast majority of the ancient Jewish world was deemed unfaithful by Christ when He appeared in the world 2,000 years ago; rather than their being a people who believed in the teachings of Scripture, they simply believed in their own human works). Remember, only one-third of the so-called Christian world today (i.e., the professing world) are true believers. The reality is, Jesus’ death on the cross fully paid for our sins; God loved us so much that He sacrificed His only Son — since this is “grace,” it is a favor that is “completely undeserved.” With that in mind, one may still feel that he might have deserved something…but that is not at all the case; as Scripture says, “God has shut up all in disobedience that He might be merciful to all” (Rom 11:32); without experiencing God’s undeserved mercy, we would be completely without hope and dead in our sins. The truth is, there is absolutely NOTHING one can do to earn God’s favor or gain access to heaven, because he does not have the capacity to do so… once a person has placed his faith in Christ, his eternal future in heaven is guaranteed (cf. Heb 13:5); though our being transformed into the image of Christ is a long difficult process, it is one that is absolutely sure… hence it is by GRACE ALONE whereby we experience the fullness of our salvation; i.e., it is by grace alone that God continues to accept us in spite of all of our stumbling and ongoing sinfulness. One thing is sure, God is going to ultimately perfect the work that He began in us at salvation (Phil 1:6); the reality is, our eternal future is absolutely certain because it only depends upon God—not one percent of it depends upon us. Now, because God is the GOD of our lives, He has chosen to reward us as His children for cooperating with Him and walking in obedience in this
Thank God our God is a God who is extremely merciful and gracious! Either you glory in that truth or your faith is grounded in untruth.

4. **The Resurrection of Christ** — If Christ has not been raised, our faith is absolutely worthless (cf. 1 Cor 15:14, 17; Jn 2:19-21); *i.e.*, if Christ was not raised from the dead, then His sacrifice was not greater than all our sin. Aside from Jesus’ appearance here on earth and His subsequent death on the cross, no other event is as significant to the Christian faith as that of the resurrection. Christ has done it all; he has paid the price for all of our sins (past, present and *future*); there is *nothing* left for Him to do. As believers, our being *transformed* now into the image of Christ is now the work of the Holy Spirit who indwells us; and that work is also guaranteed… though God asks us to *cooperate with Him*, it is not our cooperating that determines our salvation; though by cooperating with God and the Holy Spirit, we will be *rewarded* accordingly in eternity future.

5. **The Gospel** — The gospel message is that Jesus is God in the flesh, who died for our sins, rose from the dead, and freely gives the gift of *eternal life* to those who believe in Him (cf. Gal 1:8-9; Jn 1:1, 12, 14; 3:16; Rom 10:9-10; 1 Cor 15:1-4). Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, and no one comes to the Father but through Him (cf. Jn 14:6). Paul warns, “If anyone preaches a different gospel, let him be *accursed*” (Gal 1:8-9). As previously stated, our salvation is all the work of God… beloved, don’t change the discourse.

6. **Monotheism** — This is the belief that there is only one God to be worshipped and served (not many gods as Mormonism believes — cf. Ex 20:3-6; Is 43:10; 44:6, 8), and God exists in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit (cf. Mt 28:19; 2 Cor 13:14; Eph 4:4-6); so the *Trinity* is also a critical element of Mono-theism. Another important element here is that “*God lives;*” *i.e.*, He is eternal! All other gods are “*false*” and not gods at all; by the way, “*there is no second power*” in the universe — “*God is all-powerful!*” (cf. Ps 147:5; Lk 1:37; Mt 19:26; Eph 3:20). Satan and his minions and all unbelievers can only do what God permits them to do, and as incredible as it may sound, all such actions (as negative as they may be) will ultimately accomplish God’s higher purposes. Think about it, as horrific as the crucifixion of Christ was, God used it to bring about our salvation! The truth is, God can cause *good* to result even from the worst form of evil! So, either we believe in the God of heaven… or we believe in a god of our own choosing (not the God of the Bible). Again, if Scripture does not define the God you worship, then you are worshiping the god of your own choosing.

7. **The Authority of Scripture** — Everything we know about Christianity has been revealed to us by God through *His Word*. As the apostle Paul stated, “*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God*” (*i.e.*, it is “*God breathed;*” cf. 2 Tim 3:16; and 2 Pet 1:20-21). So the source of all Scripture is *God Himself*: His word is truth (Jn 17:17) and it cannot be broken (Jn 10:35). Christians affirm the *infallibility and inerrancy of Scripture*; because God is its author, and He doesn’t lie, His word is true and trustworthy (cf. Heb
6:18; Titus 1:2; 1 Jn 2:21, 27); to somehow think that God didn’t have the capacity to protect and keep His Word from being destroyed down through the ages (because the devil and his minions absolutely hate it), is to suggest that God is not omnipotent. The reality is, God has preserved His Word—**ABSOLUTELY NOTHING is too difficult for God** (cf. Is 40:17, 23, 28; Jer 32:17, 27). Remember, unbelievers exchange the truth of God for a lie; *i.e.*, *untruth* (cf. Rom 1:25).

8. **The Necessity of Faith** — In short, the essential doctrines of Christianity would not be complete without the ingredient that binds everything together—*faith*. As the author of Hebrews says, “**Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen**” (Heb 11:1). As Christians, we live by this construct with the understanding that we believe in a God we cannot see (cf. 2 Cor 5:7), and trust Him for our future. As one of the great Christian voices of the 20th century, **Dr. R. C. Sproul**, said: “**Nobody has a crystal ball that works:** we all walk into the future by faith, not by sight. None of us have experiential knowledge of tomorrow. The only solid evidence we have for our own future is drawn from the promises of God [that are contained in His Word]… so we must trust God for tomorrow” (cf. 2 Cor 5:7). Though God Himself is invisible, Scripture makes it clear that He is manifest through the things that are visible (cf. Rom 1:20); God has manifested Himself in creation and in history. Remember, it is one thing to believe in the existence of God… it is quite another to **believe God** (Jam 2:19); so faith is more than believing in God; it means **believing God**. Again, “**Without believing God, one cannot please God**” (cf. Heb 11:6).

9. **The Church and Worship** — Remember, the Church was founded by the Lord Jesus Christ that it might be **like Christ**: the reality is, as believers we are being transformed into the image of Christ (cf. Rom 8:28-29; 2 Cor 3:18; Phil 3:21); thus the church (*i.e.*, God’s called-out ones) must possess at least some of His characteristics (cf. Jn 13:14-17, 34-35; 1 Pet 2:21); obviously, some will end up possessing more than others. Jesus’ prayer for His people in John 17, was that their lives should be characterized by **joy** (v. 13), **holiness** (v.14-16), **truth** (v. 17), **mission** (v. 18), **unity** (v. 21-23), **love** (v. 26). The life of Jesus was marked by each of these qualities. Regarding worship, the renowned British preacher, theologian, and seminary professor, **John R. W. Stott**, in his book “**Christ the Controversialist**” stated, “**Christians believe that true worship is the highest and noblest activity of which man, by the grace of God, is capable**” – why is that? Because reflecting upon and believing **divine truth** is the epitome of wisdom and righteousness. Incidentally, it was John Stott’s book “Basic Christianity” that God placed in my life when I first committed my life to Christ back in the early 70s; and that book helped enlighten my heart as to the essence of divine truth. Sadly, much of what passes for worship today is not worship at all; often times it is simply an amalgamation of human thought. As the late **James Montgomery Boice** states in his book, “**Foundations of the Christian Faith:**” the Bible’s basic teachings about worship are these: God desires worship (*i.e.*, to be valued for who He is)… God alone is to be worshiped (nothing and no one else is to be worshiped; only the worship of God is a mark
of saving faith)… and worship is more often than not thought of as a corporate activity (i.e., a collective activity by God’s people in the church). As the Lord Jesus indicated in John 4:24, “we must worship God in spirit and truth,” we worship in truth because truth has to do with the very nature of God and who He is; remember, we are worshiping OUR CREATOR, not the world, not some human being, and certainly not humanistic thought, because those things are completely contrary to the ways of God. To the dismay of many, God is not at all pleased with the way many Christians often worship (that was the case over and over again in the Old Testament). In addition to the foregoing, true genuine worship does not involve having a gorgeous building, with all kinds of artifacts, pictures, statues, crosses, priestly clothing and numerous candles; it simply involves love for God, a humble heart, and the contemplation and affirmation of divine truth. Though the Christian world often tries to build an environment that helps facilitate worship, such buildings in and of themselves are actually meaningless; even if a congregation had actually dedicated the building to the Lord. The only “sacred Temple” that ever existed, was the one God designed and had His people build in the City of Jerusalem.

THE CHURCH AND WORSHIP

Needless to say, this is a very difficult subject for some people; so take the time to carefully wrestle through it. Due to the depth of this doctrine and all it involves, I thought it would be best to shed more light upon it and give more clarity as to what it teaches. Since some of what follows may cause some of you to question what is stated, let me encourage you to carefully reflect upon all that is written, and read the various passages that are listed. I address these issues because they are so profound in the Christian world here in America. Let’s begin by defining the word “worship” — the Greek word “proskuneo” literally means “to do reverence to,” i.e., to bow down or prostrate oneself before the One being worshipped; yet that does not mean that true worship is simply a matter of physically bending the knee before God, as if such an act in and of itself is pleasing to God (read Is 1:11; Jer 6:20b; Hosea 6:6; Amos 5:21; Mt 15:8-9; Rom 3:20, 28; 9:31-32; 10:21) — again, let me repeat myself: take the time to read the various passages listed on this subject; though there are a lot of them, you need to read them, that they might impact your thinking and your faith. Now, in short, worship is a matter of submitting to the Lordship of Christ in one’s heart; in the ancient world, bowing down before some one meant one was humbly placing himself in complete subjection to that person — the Hebrew word “kara” occurs 35 times in the Old Testament, and was a common attitude for the worship of God (cf. 1 Kg 8:54; Ezra 9:5; Is 45:23; Phil 2:10). So genuine worship essentially is a matter of “giving supreme worth to God and honoring Him as the sovereign triune God that He is;” thus, “true worship is the believer’s full acceptance of God’s self-revelation” (cf. Mt 4:10; 14:33; 28:9; Jn 9:38; Rev 4:10; 11:16). In the OT the Hebrew word for worship (shachah) essentially meant to bow down before the Lord in worship and reverence Him for who He is (cf. Ps 5:7; 45:11; 72:11; Is 66:23; Jer 7:1-2; Zeph 2:11). Therefore to worship God in spirit & truth (as Jesus so defined worship – Jn 4:24), one
must acknowledge the fact that He is our invisible transcendent Creator, who is all-knowing, all-powerful, every-where-present, and absolutely perfect in all of His ways. In the NT, worship involves Prayer, Praise, Preaching, Scripture Reading, Singing Hymns, Confession, Charity Giving, and Fellowship with other Believers (cf. Act 2:42-47; 1 Cor 14:26; Col 3:16; 1 Tim 4:13; Jam 5:16). Throughout the course of this particular subject, we will be covering several related issues, so consider them accordingly —

A. IMPORTANCE OF FELLOWSHIP – Remember the words of Hebrews 10:24-25, “Do not forsake the assembling of yourselves together, as is the habit of some... but consider how to encourage and stimulate one another to love and good deeds.” Now, since the vast majority of churches in the ancient world were “small house churches,” most of them only had 30-50 members, and probably half of those people were children & young people; nevertheless, “the vast majority of people in those churches bonded together very strongly to encourage each other and meet each other’s needs” (remember the unbelieving world was strongly persecuting them; so they all needed each others presence in their lives; as incredible as it may seem, they often held everything in common (they were that supportive of each other)... obviously they became very close friends and were a part of each others daily life (cf. Acts 2:44-47). Remember, they didn’t have automobiles to travel five/ten miles to church... so, many of them would have been neighbors, yet some probably needed to walk a few miles to join their friends in worship. To the regret of many churches in America today, though many of them are far larger then those in the ancient world, the fellowship that exists in many of our churches is often seriously lacking; thus the believing world in our country is often more self-centered than God had designed it to be. God did not intend for us to have a Lone-Ranger Faith, where we walk through life alone, and where life is just about us; remember, the church is “the family of God,” and it is that family that we must fully embrace — in so doing, we will not only be ministered to by others, but we will also have the opportunity to minister to others; again, that’s the way God designed the church; so don’t change the discourse.

The word “fellowship” in Greek (koinonia) means “to hold all things in common” (that’s how families are to function; when family members are self-centered, they’ve got a mess; thus unity and bonding are essential in any family). As believers we need to bond together with other believers and grow together in Christ... we don’t grow in our faith when we forsake the assembling of ourselves together with other believers; no man is an island in the Christian world (cf. Heb 10:24-25). Remember, “we are one in Christ” (sense this principle is not fully understood and embraced by many in the Christian world, take the time to reflect upon the following verses: cf. Jn 13:14; 13:34; 15:12-13; 17:22; Rom 12:4-8, 10, 16; 1 Cor 12:13, 20, 25-27; Gal 3:28; 5:13; 6:2; 1 Th 4:9; 5:11; Heb 3:13; 10:23-25; Jam 5:16; 1 Pet 1: 22; 4:8-10; 1 Jn 3:23; 4:7ff). By the way, to the surprise of many believers here in our country, basically 60% of all our churches have a weekly attendance of less than 100 people, and many of those churches are actually “house churches” (keep in mind, there are over 300,000 churches in America, and 12% of them are house churches (i.e., there are about 35,000 house churches in our country); with that in mind, 90% of all churches in China are house churches, and are
attended by 120 million people. Remember, during the first three centuries nearly every church was a “house church” — it wasn’t until the fourth century that the Christian world started building worship facilities — incidentally, the word church in Greek [εκκλησία] literally means “called out ones,” and that term was used exclusively of believers until about the fifth century; it wasn’t until the Christian community began building worship centers that they began calling them “churches.” Regarding the sizes of America’s 300,000 churches — 177,000 churches have an attendance of less than 100… 105,000 churches have an attendance between 100 and 500 people… 12,000 churches have an attendance of 500 to 1,000 people… and 7,000 churches have an attendance of more than 1,000 people. So with the foregoing in mind, most churches are relatively small — over 80% of them have an attendance of less than 150 people. Incidentally, regarding the entire Christian world today, there are now over 2.5 million Christian Churches all around the globe… and the vast majority of them have an attendance of no more than 100 people. Now, though 35% of the world’s population claims to be Christian (i.e., 2.5 billion people claim to be Christians), only about a third of that number are true born-again Christians (i.e., only about 12% of the world’s population are genuine believers; thus that number is about 800,000,000 people); also keep in mind, not every genuine believer attends church every Sunday.

B. IMPORTANCE OF GOD’S WORD — Remember, it is God’s Word (not human thinking) that must be taught in our churches, that believers might grow in the knowledge of Christ and embrace Him and His ways — the teaching of God’s Word is of absolute paramount importance for a church; yet sadly that does not define many churches. Keep in mind, Scripture is God’s revelation, and it is just such truths that every believer is called to learn; no one has a right to change the discourse. Remember, “the church is the pillar and support of the truth” (cf. 1 Tim 3:15; Eph 3:10); those who preach & teach “must be diligent to present themselves approved to God as workmen who do not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth” (cf. 2 Tim 2:15; 1 Pet 1:10; Acts 17:11); incidentally, that means pastors must “spend significant time in preparation for their sermons” (Acts 6:1-4); preaching is not just a simplistic little responsibility – to preach rightly, one must spend a lot of time prayerfully preparing his sermon; he needs to be very conscious of the fact that he is responsible to “feed God’s flock with the fruit of God’s Word;” if he fails to do so, he is abrogating his responsibility… to make light of it is to abuse the pulpit. I expand upon this particular doctrine more than the others because this one seems to be far more troubling to those of us who are genuine believers in Christ — I can’t tell you how many people I have heard complain over their worship services. For a pastor to make light of his responsibility, is to abuse God’s people; such pastors need to either do what is right, or get out of the ministry. Every pastor should take the time to reflect upon exactly what it is God has called him to do, and in so doing, do a self-evaluation and ask himself the following: “Am I doing my best to feed God’s Word to God’s flock?” Again, as previously stated, many believers here in America are very frustrated with their church, and in most cases the reason for that is “the overseers, leaders, and pastors that have been assigned to serve and lead the church, simply don’t take that responsibility nearly as
serious as they should” — remember, the most important aspect of church leadership is that of leading the congregation in worship; when worship does not spiritually impact the believer’s heart, then something is seriously lacking. Being a pastor isn’t a little joy-ride as some like to think and some try to make it… nor is it about them personally… it is a work that requires great discipline, prayer, concern for others, and commitment to the work of ministry. If there is one statement that accurately defines a pastor’s responsibility, it is the one Jesus Himself shared with the apostle Peter after His resurrection: “Tend to My lambs and Shepherd My sheep” (Jn 21:15-17) — you’ll also notice that it was “Peter’s love for God” that was to be the foundation of his ministry; though most pastors claim to love God, their lives often don’t demonstrate that. So if you really don’t truly love God, neither will you love His people… and if you have not love, you have nothing! (cf. 1 Cor 13:1-3). This will make more sense to you after reading through all that is written on this subject in the following pages.

C. IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER – Then there is the need for Prayer and Bible Reading in our worship services, without these two items one could easily misinterpret the ways of God in life. Remember, prayer is the acknowledgement that God is the foundation of life; when our worship services fail to incorporate prayer in them, we will have the tendency to place far more emphasis on ourselves and our own will than on God and His will. Listen carefully here—worship without prayer suggests to some people that prayer is simply something that believers do on their own. Since the church is not constantly focusing on the will of God in our lives, it is easy to understand why believers stumble on this issue. To give contextual understanding to this thing called prayer, Jesus said, “If you ask in My name you shall receive what you ask for” (cf. Jn 14:13-14; 16:23-26)… yet even that statement is often misinterpreted in the believing community — to ask something in God’s name means to ask according to His will… it is not simply a matter of closing out your prayer with the words “in Jesus name, Amen.” The idea here is that our prayers need to be for God’s purposes and kingdom (cf. Mt 6:9-10), not for our own selfish desires. Jesus’ brother James said, “You do not receive because you ask with wrong motives” (Jam 4:3). Likewise the apostle John said, “If we ask anything according to God’s will… we shall receive what we ask for” (cf. 1 Jn 5:14-15). Since worship means ascribing worth to God and aligning our will with His will, prayer should be an integral part of our worship services, because that is exactly what prayer does. Incidentally, it is a sad commentary that prayer is not an integral part of most worship services — once again, Satan is undermining the ministry of the church… remember, he will do anything he can to keep God out of the mix; he loves it when church is simply the product of fallen men. Because prayer is a very remedial construct in our worship services, prayer seems to be that which believers are to do on their own, not something that must be an integral part of a congregation’s worship service. Again, this is a sad commentary for most modern-day churches. Remember, prayer is not only communicating with God, it is acknowledging Him for who He is, and the fact that He is not only our Savior but our Lord and Master (i.e., the One who governs our lives)… that we need His forgiveness, His love, His grace, His wisdom, and His direction in life. Prayer is not at all about telling God what to do; it is about
seeking God’s will for our lives and what He would have us do. When properly understood, prayer is powerful, because it brings God Himself into our worship, that He might manifest Himself in our hearts. So prayer involves submitting to the One who knows our circumstances, and abandoning our own fleshly desires (cf. Mt 6:10; Lk 22:42; Acts 21:14; 1 Th 5:24; Ps 138:8). In a sense, prayer is to the spiritual life what breathing is to the physical life; we simply cannot function properly or be spiritually healthy without prayer; remember, God is our life! (cf. Ps 16:11; 36:9; Prv 14:27; Jn 6:48; 2 Cor 4:11; Col 3:4); to ignore His presence is absolute foolishness. Now, since prayer was a vital issue for Jesus in his life (who knew no sin), how much more should it vital to us who struggle with sin? Now if we were wonderful righteous creatures, that would be one thing…but that does not at all define who we are; we still inhabit sinful flesh; as such we stumble often in life (cf. Rom 7:18-19; Jam 3:2; Ps 73:26; Ecc 7:20; Prov 24:16) — beloved, humble yourself before the Lord, seek His face, fight the good fight of faith, and submit to His will & His lordship. Regarding corporate prayer, Scripture tells us that “God’s house is to be a HOUSE of PRAYER” (cf. Is 56:7; Mt 21:13; Mk 11:17; Lk 19:46; Micah 4:1-2) — by the way, if you fail to commune with God in worship, then how can you expect to experience His love and grace in worship? Remember the word of the Lord to King Solomon — “If My people, who are called by My name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin, and will heal their land” (2 Chron 7:14). Beloved, prayer is not simply some remedial little ritual that pleases God, it is the expressed attitude of the heart that humbly seeks His forgiveness and His will for our lives.

D. IMPORTANCE OF SCRIPTURE READING — Incidentally, a correlative of prayer would be the reading of Scripture / God’s Word — since God’s Word essentially is divine truth to man, it must be contemplated and believed, with the understanding that it is the voice of God to our hearts. Remember, “we are transformed by the renewing of our minds” (cf. Rom 12:2); therefore we are exhorted to “long for the pure milk of the Word, that by it we may grow with respect to our salvation” (1 Pet 2:2). As the Lord told Moses, “Kings must read the law all the days of their lives, that they may learn to fear the LORD their God” (cf. Deut 17:19; Ps 119:11, 105, 148, 160; Jer 15:16). To the dismay of God’s people, the reading of Scripture and praying in our worship services here in America have almost disappeared completely; why is that? Obviously, Satan is constantly at work doing everything he can to destroy God’s church; yet in spite of this fact, I can almost hear numerous believers renouncing such thinking, which shows how remedial their faith really is. Beloved, we are talking about two of the most important dynamics that God wants His church to embrace — communicating with Him & contemplating His Word — how can we possibly make light of such things? Remember the words of the apostle Paul to Timothy—he commanded him to “devote himself to the public reading of Scripture” (1 Tim 4:13). The truth is, it appears most professing believers in our modern world simply think that such isn’t that important — why is that? because perceived reality frequently supersedes divine truth in the minds of most men; the reason being, “they are actually ignorant of divine truth” (as such, they simply believe what seems right to them)... I share this with you, because this is exactly the way the ancient Jewish world operated;
they constantly let their human thinking dictate reality in their life. Obviously, most churches in our country today actually have a few prayers in their worship services — they generally have very short prayers before and after their sermons, and prior to their offerings, yet very seldom is Scripture read. With all of the foregoing in mind, it appears as though prayer itself really isn’t that important in our churches, that it is simply some kind of spiritual ritual that they need to take (almost like lighting a candle or dipping one’s hand in some sacred water). The reality is, most churches need to make prayer and the reading of Scripture far more significant realities in their worship services.

E. IMPORTANCE OF MUSIC – Another issue that is troubling to many adults in our churches is the type of music that is being sung; contrary to what some believe, our worship services are to have a strong spiritual dimension to them, because that is the foundation of worship (worship involves giving reverence to God; it is to have a God-orientation, not a man-orientation)... so worshipping God should not incorporate a little Hollywood dimension to it; though singing rock-and-role music may have its place in some Christian teenage setting, it should not characterize our worship services; yet that is the case in numerous churches today. Obviously, there are standards that need to be observed when we collectively gather together to worship in the church... every conceivable behavior and action is not appropriate when it comes to worshiping God – we don’t scream and holler and rant and rave when we worship God... we don’t talk and tickle each other and laugh when we worship God... we don’t drink beer or coke or whiskey when we worship God... we don’t play games and throw a football up on stage when we worship God... we don’t go topless and dress provocatively when we worship God; obviously, some actions are completely antithetical to divine worship, just as they are to a funeral service... so think about what was just stated (in spite of the fact that some of those statements are pretty radical). The reality is, divine reverence is essential for divine worship. As Dr. Lawrence Mumford, a music professor at Providence and a composer of several songs said: “Music in the church is a subject that has been a source of considerable controversy over the last quarter century in our country.” He goes on to say that church leaders have a responsibility to edify their congregation, and edification means singing more hymns rather than contemporary songs, because much of what hymns teach is taken directly from Scripture — many of them actually borrow lines directly from the Bible. Regarding the issue of reverence, giving reverence to God means revering God and respecting Him for who He is;” to change the discourse or minimize who He is, is to be irreverent rather than reverent.” So in worship, either one reveres God or he doesn’t revere Him. To give a little contextual understanding of what was just stated, when our country’s citizens gather together and sing some of our nation’s songs, you’ll notice they do it with reverence, not irreverence.” Consider the following songs that our nation sings: “America the Beautiful”... “God Bless America”... “The Battle Hymn of the Republic”... and “Our National Anthem.” When we sing these songs you’ll notice we will stand up and take off our hats, and in some cases put one of our hands on our chest; by the way, we were taught this in grade-school. We don’t change the discourse and make these hymns sound like little happy rock-and-roll songs; since that is the case,
how can we *show reverence to our country and the Most High God*, yet insist on doing so with rock-and-roll music? The foregoing doesn’t mean we are denigrating modern-day rock-and-roll music, it simply means that *certain types of music are not proper in all situations*. The reality is, if we can revere our nation by the songs we sing… surely we can revere the God of heaven by the hymns we sing. Remember the book of Psalm is a “book of songs” that are ultimately God-breathed and God-approved; these songs were memorized and sung over and over again by God’s people in ancient Israel, that they might learn the essence and the depth of divine truth; by the way, learning such truth takes exceedingly more time than some people think — believers must reflect upon biblical truths over and over again, that such truths might become significant realities in their life; so to sing a song one time isn’t at all sufficient; it must be contemplated over and over and over again (the important thing when singing in worship is to *carefully reflect upon and affirm the divine truths that we are giving voice to*). Keep in mind, genuine believers will continue to grow in their faith until God calls them into His eternal presence in heaven. The book of Psalms has been an incredible source of instruction, comfort, and blessing for God’s people, by teaching them not only how to worship, but to serve and glorify God forever.

Now due to the fact *there is great variance among the age groups in our churches today*, there are significant differences regarding the types of music that people like; some like “classical music,” some like “contemporary music.” Though the various types of music themselves are not necessarily sinful, they can be a distraction to different age-groups; thus the style of music can actually be a deterrent to experiencing the ministry of divine truth to one’s heart (the agitation in their soul can actually keep the door closed in their heart)… the reason for that is the songs themselves and the style of music doesn’t necessarily coincide with the values that had become an integral part of their lives and their faith. Think about it: here are groups of adults being forced to sing songs they have never heard, with a contemporary style of music that is not to their liking; the reality is, they have been God’s children for 30-50 years, and in a sense are now being robbed of the 200 to 300 hymns that had been a significant part of their lives as believers… the reality is, such hymns ministered divine truth to their hearts over the years, and became an integral part of their worship experience. Because that is a *common problem* here in our country, many churches have actually gone to two different kinds of worship services: one that is *traditional* (i.e., one that predominantly sings the old hymns of the faith), and one that is *contemporary* (i.e., one that embraces a far more modern contemporary style of music). Two problems seem to exist: first, *the spiritual depth of the words* that are sung are frequently far more profound in the traditional hymns than in the contemporary songs — though not all contemporary songs are completely lacking, most of them do not come close to the spiritual wisdom that is expressed in the hymns… and second, *the leaders* who control the way in which worship services are conducted, often exclude certain types of music that most mature believers have strongly revered.
Scripture makes it very clear that “hymns” express the congregations praise of God’s greatness and majesty. The term is used several times in Scripture (cf. Neh 12:27, 46; Mt 26:30; Acts 16:25; Eph 5:19). Psalm 33 is a beautiful expression of why we as believers should praise God. The book of Hebrews tells us that Jesus will declare His Name to the church, and sing praise to God (cf. Heb 2:12). Christian songs down through the ages were used in worship to praise God… to instruct in the faith… and to express joy. The greatest hymns that are sung in the church are firmly grounded in Scripture, and are often sung with a great melody. Of all the hymns in our hymnals, more than two hundred of them have played an extremely significant role in the worship of the church. Now, with all the foregoing in mind, let me quote the words of five popular hymns; should you care to reflect upon a number of the most profound hymns in the Christian world, you can do so by going online and checking out more than one hundred of them; in so doing you will notice the importance of divine truth in the Christian world; simply go online to—

www.songandpraise.org Following are five of the most popular hymns in the Christian world that you should take the time to reflect upon. The first one (A Mighty Fortress Is Our God) is one of the best known hymns in the entire world; it was written by the reformer, Martin Luther, and it inspires us to find strength in God’s love and salvation amid the woes of mortality — read it accordingly:

“A Mighty Fortress Is Our God”

A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing;
our helper He, amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing.
For still our ancient foe does seek to work us woe;
his craft and power are great, and armed with cruel hate,
on earth is not his equal.

Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing,
were not the right Man on our side, the Man of God's own choosing.
You ask who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is He;
Lord Sabaoth His name, from age to age the same;
and He must win the battle.

And though this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us,
we will not fear, for God has willed His truth to triumph through us.
The prince of darkness grim, we tremble not for him;
his rage we can endure, for lo! his doom is sure;
one little word shall fell him.

That Word above all earthly powers no thanks to them abideth;
the Spirit and the gifts are ours through Him who with us sideth.
Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also;
the body they may kill: God's truth abideth still;
His kingdom is forever!
“What a Friend We Have in Jesus.”

What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear!  
What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer!  
Oh, what peace we often forfeit, Oh, what needless pain we bear,  
All because we do not carry everything to God in prayer!

Have we trials and temptations! Is there trouble anywhere?  
We should never be discouraged – take it to the Lord in prayer.  
Can we find a friend so faithful, who will all our sorrows share?  
Jesus knows our every weakness; take it to the Lord in prayer.

Are we weak and heavy-laden, cumbered with a load of care?  
Precious Savior, still our refuge – take it to the Lord in prayer.  
Do thy friends despise, forsake thee? Take it to the Lord in prayer!  
In His arms He’ll take and shield thee, Thou wilt find a solace there.

“How Great Thou Art”

O Lord my God, When I in awesome wonder,  
Consider all the worlds Thy Hands have made;  
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,  
Thy power throughout the universe displayed.

Chorus:  
Then sings my soul, My Savior God, to Thee,  
How great Thou art, How great Thou art.  
Then sings my soul, My Savior God, to Thee,  
How great Thou art, How great Thou art!

And when I think, that God, His Son not sparing;  
Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in;  
That on the Cross, my burdens gladly bearing,  
He bled and died to take away my sin.

When Christ shall come, with shout of acclamation,  
And take me home, what joy shall fill my heart.  
Then I shall bow, in humble adoration,  
And then proclaim: "My God, how great Thou art!"
“It is Well with My Soul”

When peace like a river attendeth my way,
when sorrows like sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,
It is well, it is well with my soul.

Though Satan should buffet, tho trials should come,
let this blest assurance control.
That Christ has regarded my helpless estate,
and hath shed His own blood for my soul.

My sin – O the bliss of this glorious thought –
my sin – not in part but the whole,
Is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more,
praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!

And, Lord, haste the day when the faith shall be sight,
the clouds be rolled back as a scroll,
The trump shall resound and the Lord shall descend,
“even so” – it is well with my soul.

“Amazing Grace”

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found;
Was blind, but now I see.

Through many dangers, toils and snares,
I have already come;
'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me,
His Word my hope secures;
He will my Shield and Portion be,
As long as life endures.

When we’ve been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We’ve no less days to sing God’s praise
Than when we’d first begun.
F. IMPORTANCE OF SPIRITUALLY MATURE LEADERS – Obviously, the issues previously mentioned need to be addressed. One of the problems is this: *often in many churches spiritually mature adults no longer control the way in which worship is conducted*; instead of having such adults define how worship is to be conducted, many churches now have *young people* making that decision; though these young people may be highly committed to Christ, our modern culture seems to have a strong influence on the types of music they like; thus they frequently impose it upon the entire congregation. Remember, back in the 1960s (some 55 years ago), Hollywood & Postmodernism began to strongly influence our nation’s culture, and in so doing, they promulgated behaviors that Scripture strongly opposes; the music of that era grabbed hold of nearly every young person, and before long it found its way into the church and began to override the style of music that had been firmly established in our churches down through the years. Thus our modern culture has now entered into our churches and has started to control much of the way in which we worship. So here we have a Christian world today that is moving in two different directions: one insists on a *traditional* approach to worship, and the other on a *contemporary* approach. The question is, does Scripture actually address this kind of problem? Yes it does in an interesting sort of way: the apostle Paul said to Timothy, “An *overseer* in the church must be one who has proved himself fit to serve as a leader, must be one who manages his own household well, must be a person of dignity, must be one who has been tested over time, and must not be a new convert” (cf. 1 Tim 3:2-10; 5:22; Titus 1: 5-9; 2:2-7). . . overseers in the church (i.e., pastors and church leaders) *should have a lot of experience under their belt, and not simply be young believers*. Obviously, I’m applying this construct to those individuals who control the way in which worship is conducted in our churches—though these individuals aren’t necessarily preachers, they do strongly influence much of our worship. Now with all of the foregoing in mind, the main emphasis is that “*spiritually mature elders*” need to be the ones who rule in our churches—though these individuals aren’t necessarily preachers, they do strongly influence much of our worship. Now with all of the foregoing in mind, the main emphasis is that “*spiritually mature elders*” need to be the ones who rule in our churches; this does not mean that they will reject all modern music, but that they will change the discourse as is needed. Peter said the following to the 1st century church: “*I exhort the elders among you… shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight… proving to be examples to the flock… You younger men need to be subject to your elders… so clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble*” (1 Pet 5:1-5). In like manner, the Lord said to Moses, “*You shall keep My sabbaths and revere My sanctuary… do not turn to mediums or spiritists… instead, rise up before the grayheaded and honor the aged; in so doing you shall revere your God*” (Deut 19:30-31); i.e., “*listen to the aged because they have learned something in life.*”

The Bible presents growing old as being accompanied by increased wisdom and experience; that’s why Solomon said “*gray hair is a crown of splendor*” (cf. Prov 16:31). As is commonly taught in Scripture, *wisdom grows in relation to our awareness of “time and judgment,” so as human beings we need a divine perspective in the face of life’s brevity and apparent injustice* (cf. Ecc 3:15-17; 8:5-8, 12-15; 9:11-12; 11:9; 12:14). As Job stated, “*Wisdom is with the aged, and understanding in length of days*” (cf. Job 12:12); i.e., wisdom is found
with the elderly, and understanding comes with a long life. Job’s friend, Elihu, said to him, “many years teach wisdom” (cf. Job 32:7). Conversely, Solomon said, “The glory of young men is their strength, whereas the splendor of old men is their gray hair” (i.e., the wisdom of a long life – cf. Prov 20:29). For those of you who are young, reflect upon the following – do you actually think you are going to be less wise forty years from now than you are today, or do you think life will have taught you something? Let me word it this way – are you not significantly smarter today than you were fifteen years ago? Well one thing is sure, in this life you are going to grow in wisdom (unless haughtiness and arrogance continues or starts ruling in your soul; sadly, that is not at all uncommon in our world… there are many adults, including famous ones, who are disgustedly arrogant; the reality is, they are so stupid they don’t even understand it; God Himself calls them absolute fools). It should be pretty obvious, the antithesis of pride is humility. Lord willing, all of you who are reading this will grow in humility; such is essential for one to be pleasing to God. Hopefully, 20-40 years from now all of you young people will be far wiser than you are today. Now, with that in mind, can you look at elders as being a people who have grown in wisdom over the years? and not simply conclude that they are not as wise in their thinking as you are? It should be evident to everyone, our proud fallen nature frequently leads us astray in this life, thus causing us to see things wrongly and misinterpret them… it is the aged who have learned to deal more appropriately with their flesh; they humbly recognize how incredibly powerful it is, and how it must be dealt with… on the other hand, young people are still early in the process of learning.

Another negative thought that seems to describe our culture is this – the aged were far more respected in the ancient world then they are today, which in itself is a rather interesting construct. Why are the aged denigrated in our culture today by younger people, and treated as if they are essentially silly old people. Perhaps the younger generation actually thinks “their self-confidence, high-techiness, fun nature, and strong physical bodies” makes them superior to the aged? If that is the case (and it might be), then this world is becoming far more juvenile in its thinking than any of us would have thought (incidentally, this happened several times in the ancient world). With the foregoing in mind, it’s important to remember that young people are the product of what they were taught and led to believe, and essentially what they were taught is postmodern thinking, which not only denies absolute truth, but teaches young people to value their own thinking above other people’s thinking. Thus they have been taught to say: “Don’t impose your values on me – because what is true for you isn’t necessarily true for me,” so this arrogant kind of thinking should not be a surprise to anyone of us. The truth is, seniors have far more wisdom than those who are young (not knowledge, wisdom); now if that offends you as a young person, remember, when you are older you will be wiser than those who are younger than you; just as those of us who are now older, when we were younger our elders were wiser than we were. The difference between young people today and young people years ago, is that we respected our elders and acknowledged that they were wiser than we were… but that doesn’t seem to characterize the younger generation today. By the way, the foregoing is simply the way God designed the economy of the human
family; there is no such thing as a wise baby (one only becomes wise after years of living). The premiere problem with young people today is their arrogance; i.e., they think far more highly of themselves than they ought (Rom 12:3) — they actually think their confidence in themselves is a real positive, not a negative. Aside from what they have been taught, the reason they think this way is that they simply haven’t lived long enough to learn some of the most profound realities of life, nor were they taught to honor those who are older than them… thus, the postmodern generation before them is the one to blame for the arrogant thinking of our younger generations. By the way, the ultimate author of Postmodernism is Satan himself; he finally got the world to uniformly deny the existence of absolute truth. Remember, the world is of their father the Devil (cf. Jn 8:42-45; Mt 12:30). Incidentally Postmodern thinking actually began during the period of the Renaissance back between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries; essentially what it did was elevate human thinking to the center of reality… which ultimately ended up denying the existence of absolute truth (in particular divine truth). As stated earlier, here we have a group claiming there is no such thing as absolute truth, yet in so doing they themselves make an absolute claim (i.e., that there is no absolute); essentially this was a byproduct of “circular reasoning” (which is the best Satan can do — clever? absolutely, but not gloriously clever; lies and untruth are never exceedingly clever; there is always a hole in such thinking that is incredibly large and evident to people of wisdom — the problem with fallen man is that he is not only gullible, but that he simply believes what he wants to believe). Remember the words of King Solomon: “A gray head is a crown of glory” (cf. Prv 16:31; 20:29); i.e., those who are wise can see through the empty-headedness of that which is evil.

G. REGARDING DIFFERENT STYLES OF MUSIC IN WORSHIP — The question we need to answer is this: how do we resolve the differences that exist between the young and the old? Does the thinking of the old (relatively speaking) matter to those who are young? It could be… but if they fail to respect an elder’s position, then they will value their own thinking far more… which leads to another question: Does one particular age-group deserve to be more prominent in the church than any other age group? Or should they all be considered co-equals? i.e., does every person in a church (regardless of age) have a right to vote on all issues? Or is there a particular age they need to be before they are eligible to vote? The ancient political world had a law that declared that only those 21 yrs of age and up could vote… not that many years ago (during the postmodern era) congress changed it to ages 18 and up, with everyone being equally qualified to vote… with that in mind; is that how a church should be run? Why? Why not? Well, no matter what your opinion may be, you need to at least give definition to the integrity of your position (i.e., you must be forced to defend it with logic), and after doing so give a biblical definition as to how God designed the church and intended it to be run. Now with the foregoing in mind, take the time to read the following passages (cf. 1 Tim 3:1-13; 5:17-25; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Pet 5:1-5; Acts 6:1-7; 20:27-30). So essentially, those who control worship in the church need to possess the maturity & character & dignity & wisdom & spirituality that is needed to effectively lead people in worship… remember worship is about revering God and ascribing worth to Him… not just a little music rant — now, should you argue
to the contrary you are superseding divine truth with human reason; i.e., you are giving preference to human thinking over what Scripture teaches. Incidentally, pretty much all age groups to some degree can ascribe worth to God, but growing older will increase the depth of that ascription. Remember, *overseers and deacons have been given the responsibility to govern the church that it might reflect Christ* (cf. 1 Tim 3:1-10; Titus 1:5-9).

Now whether or not the *style of music* in our churches plays a significant role in our worship, *the words themselves* should play a far more significant role; i.e., *the words that we sing should take far greater precedence over the style of music that we sing in our worship services*, because that is where cognition & genuine reverence comes into play, and without being confronted with *divine truth*, people would never come to know it, and there would be no cognition. Remember, we are not just talking about *singing songs*, we are talking about **worshipping God** and letting Him minister to our heart… as such, the *words of the music* are profoundly more important than the *music itself*… and being as traditional music is far more geared to worship, traditional music should constitute the majority of what is sung in our churches; to completely reject traditional music is to decrease the significance of worship. Since some contemporary music is well written and incorporates biblical truths, some of it can be justifiably used in worship… the problem is, not all of it is justifiable. Sadly, it appears as though many churches simply want a *youth inspired culturally attractive worship service*, where the style of music actually takes precedents over the spiritual nature of what the songs themselves may teach. For some reason, it is not uncommon for some young people to actually think that their modern style of worship is far more likely to inspire one’s faith than a traditional style of worship; keep in mind, very few young people are deeply grounded in what this thing called *divine worship* is all about. With the foregoing in mind, that doesn’t mean all contemporary songs are completely unacceptable for church-wide worship. I am reminded of a popular contemporary song that Dallas Holm’s wrote about twenty years ago; God has used this song to minister to people’s hearts all over the western world; take a moment and reflect upon the first verse of that song (by the way, I like the song for two reasons — I love the words and I love the rhythm of the song.

“*Jesus God a Hold of My Life*”

*Jesus got a hold of my life and He won’t let me go!  
Jesus got into my heart; He got into my soul!  
I used to be oh so sad, but now I’m just free and glad,  
Cause Jesus got a hold of my life and won’t let go!*

It should be obvious to everyone of us as adults that divine worship is not a matter of simplicity and singing popular little medleys; it is about *divine truth* and its impact upon our lives. This should be very clear to those of you who are mature believers; it should not come as a surprise that some forms of music (when they are being employed in worship) can actually be more distracting than beneficial to a congregation, because not all
styles of music find a home in everyone’s life. By the way, I grew up loving rock-and-role music, so I can empathize with those who are big fans of it, but it was never a spiritual dynamic that was used in worship; though rock-and-role music can be a happy cultural experience for some people, that doesn’t mean it will have a strong spiritual impact upon their heart and their life. What seems to be the case is this: **young people love their style of music so much, they insist on incorporating it into their worship**; so one could actually deduce that the **style of music** is actually more significant to some young people than **the words themselves**: apparently traditional music isn’t to their liking, in spite of the fact that the lyrics them-selves are far more biblical and encouraging to the heart. Obviously, the fore-going is something that should be carefully considered. Now, though children and teenagers alike both have their own music styles that they like, that doesn’t mean those music styles should dominate the main worship service in their church. The reality is, both children and teenagers can sing their cultural styles of music when they meet in their various age-graded ministries (which is the norm); I used to do that in my college ministry years ago (there were probably about 40 contemporary songs that we sang over and over and over again; but they were not at all rock-and-role type songs; nevertheless, being as I was the one who played the piano, the rhythm in my bones led me to really like the songs — incidentally, I’ve still got that kind of rhythm in my bones – 😊). The reality is, adults, teens and children **all differ**… yet there needs to be a time when the entire church gathers for worship, and it is **at this time that spiritually mature adults need to lead the church in worship**. The reality is, if they properly lead us in worship, the vast majority of people will far more likely **learn the ways of God in worship**: keep in mind, **even children and teenagers will one day be adults**, and the mature level of worship that governed their churches in their younger years will have strongly impacted their faith (just as it strongly impacted their parents faith early on in their lives). It should be clear to everyone, once you have sung a song for 10-15 years, the truths of that song will have permeated your heart and soul, yet even then its message will continue to strongly minister to your soul. It is important to note that the fore-going is not at all a matter of **denigrating** young people or their music; that is not at all the issue — **it is a matter of giving definition to genuine worship and divine truth**. The problem with contemporary music, is that many young people often like the music itself more than the words, simply because they are addicted to that style of music (they simply love drums, guitars, and the rhythm of loud rock-and-role music).

Now, regarding **the style of music** that is sung in many of our churches, how do they go about changing the style of worship (if indeed it needs changing)? Well, first and foremost, a church should immediately make at least **half** of their music **“traditional music”**… in so doing, **every hymn needs to have its theme explained prior to singing it**, so that everyone will know the **divine precept** of which they will sing prior to singing it (such may involve one, two, or three short little sentences). This **worship structure** needs to be implemented in all worship services (don’t keep your congregants in the dark; constantly explain the truths that your hymns teach; though some may not need an explanation, many of your congregants do need one — it is only with such instruction that our
congregants will come to know the significance of divine truth. It should be noted and understood by the entire congregation, that the divine truth of a particular hymn is not to be questioned or doubted; instead it’s to be embraced and believed… why’s that? because the hymns and songs we sing must be God’s message to His people; if it is not, then one has absolutely no business singing it. It is only when this is understood that God’s people revere their Creator and grow in their understanding of divine truth when they sing songs that are grounded in God’s Word. Again, keep in mind, we’re not saying that all contemporary songs are unbiblical… we are simply stressing the integrity of the biblical messages that are contained in the music that is sung.

H. THE SERMONS THAT ARE PREACHED – Another extremely important element in our churches is the preaching and teaching of Scripture. It is not uncommon today for many pastors to gear their teaching to the world (i.e., to unbelievers), yet that is not what worship in God’s church is to be all about – Sunday worship services are to be directed toward believers – not unbelievers – that they may grow in their faith & love for God; so in that sense, pastors need to speak directly to God’s children (not to foreign hearts; again, this is “the essence of divine worship we are giving definition to”). The reality is, most Christians are very ignorant as to what Scripture really teaches… thus in most cases they have a very remedial faith, do in large part to the worship services and the teaching they have been subjected to over the years. Though pastors may frequently expand upon the doctrine of justification (i.e., establishing a relationship with Christ), the doctrine of sanctification (i.e., growing in one’s Christ-likeness and one’s relationship with Christ), is to be the foundation of their teaching (just as it is in all of the New Testament letters to the Christian world). God’s purpose for the church (i.e., for His called out ones) is the edification of His people: i.e., to instruct, inspire and build up God’s people (Eph 4:11-16). With that in mind, pastors must give a contextual understanding as to what God’s Word teaches, and not simply give some kind of contemporary understanding of it, or venture off into some abstract cultural principle. The reality is, if one does not understand the context of Scripture, oftentimes he will misinterpret what it teaches. To the regret of many pastors here in America (in particular, the pastors of many big churches), “they seem to be more interested in letting their personality rule in the pulpit, rather than divine truth;” what seems to be important to them is “how wonderful they are, and how much their congregation loves them, and enjoys their time with him” – with that in mind, “laughter and humor” is often a significant part of their preaching… so rather than humbly focusing on how wonderful God is and the essence of divine truth, their premiere focus is often on themselves, their pleasant personality, their humor, the happiness of their congregation, and their relationship with their congregants. The underlying problems with egocentric pastors is that they are seriously lacking in humility; thus God isn’t nearly as dominant in their lives and ministry as they want their congregants to believe. Being funny and being able to jabber is absolutely meaningless when it comes to effective ministry, even though the size of their church may suggest else wise; large congregations oftentimes are completely meaningless, because the foundation of their ministry is the happiness of their congregation – in that sense their worship services amount to no more
than psychological encouragement. Personally, I don’t like listening to self-centered pastors, because only God-centered pastors humbly let divine truth rule in their ministry, and it is precisely that the believing world needs to hear; though self-centered pastors may be admired by remedial believers, they are not admired by mature believers, because men of wisdom can actually see right through them. The reality is, pastors should “never” draw attention to themselves—all one must do is look at television and see how prominent this kind of problem is among pastors. By the way, if you are one of these kinds of pastors, you need to know that your ministry would be far more fruitful if you had half as large a congregation, yet humbly ministered God’s Word to your congregants. Just because a church is large, doesn’t mean it is having a transforming affect upon those who are worshiping there; though the majority of people may enjoy the worship service, that doesn’t mean it is having a significant spiritual impact upon their lives; just because the worship service may be a comfortable, enjoyable experience to people, doesn’t mean it is positively affecting their faith… therefore, abandon the popular stuff, and simply focus on God Himself and His will for His people (remember, they are not your people—they are God’s people who desperately need a shepherd—cf. Mk 6:34).

I. THE IMPORTANCE OF HUMILITY—Perhaps I should identify a humble man of faith who symbolized what I just stated; that man was “Billy Graham”—as incredible as it may seem to some of you, I actually had the privilege of knowing him and his son Franklin back in the 1980s (I only allude to that because of the genuine impact he had on my life early on in my ministry, as well as millions of other people—I could not have been more blessed by the people God placed in my life down through the ages; frequently I have asked God question, “Why me?” Though the answer was never immediately given to me, after years of service He finally gave me understanding as to what He has been doing in my life). So here was a man (Billy Graham) who exhibited genuine humility—if you’d like to confirm what I have just said, take the time to carefully listen to one of the sermons that he preached… in so doing you’ll be able to see why God so strongly blessed his ministry. The reality is, numerous pastors from all over the world frequently complimented him because of his humility; the reason was, they knew full well how extremely rare genuine humility is. Let me address the subject of humility this way: “How humble do you think you would be if you became the recipient of 50 billion dollars? The truth is, there probably isn’t a person on this planet who could humbly handle that kind of money (cf. Prv 30:8-9); remember, we are all fallen creatures who are not nearly as wonderful and glorious as we may think we are…it is the arrogant one who denies the corruptness of his inner core (i.e., flesh). Listen carefully to what I’m saying; I’m not just babbling to somehow elevate myself; I’m made of the same stuff all of you are. Now, due to the way God has wired me (cf. Ps 139:13-16), throughout my life I have always questioned what was going on in my life… one of the questions I have asked myself several times is this: What would happen to me if I inherited a billion dollars? How would that really affect my life? In other words, how much does wealth or the lack of it really affect my life?” With that in mind, the words of Agur in Prov 30:8-9, have been my prayer now for past 35 years: “Lord, may I not be too rich that I deny you, or too poor that I steal” (obviously, that is
an extremely poignant statement because it shows how extremely fickle we are as fallen creatures. Keeping the foregoing in mind, in order for us to be effective servants of God in any way, we can only do so with the fullness of everything that God places on our plate (health issues, financial problems, difficulties in ministry, painful rejection, affliction, trials, temptations, difficult circumstances, humbling issues); the reality is, we’re not people who can pretty much handle everything… so to ask God for a big money tree, perfect health, and a problem-free life is downright foolishness; yet that is what many in the Christian world have done; as such, they’ve been buffafoed by their fallen nature. The truth is, we can only operate effectively in this world when we do so with all of the negatives that God has placed in our lives (cf. 2 Cor 12:8-9)… contrary to what some of you may believe, we don’t have the capacity to handle great sums of money, and all of the other positive perks we would like to have on our plate. The reality is, none of us as believers know precisely how much we can handle, therefore we must rejoice in what God has given to us, knowing full well that it serves His higher purposes for our life — and such includes our looks, our health, our skill-set, our family, our friends, our wealth, our ministry, and all of the negatives we have experienced in life; since it was all determined by God, it is absolutely sufficient. By the way, this doesn’t apply to unbelievers — only to believers — unbelievers will suffer greatly at the end of the age for the life they lived here on earth (whereas believers are called to suffer in this life, unbelievers will grievously suffer in eternity future – cf. Ps 73:1-3, 13-17; 1 Pet 4:17-19). So think about it: why would you want something in your life that would ultimately cause you to stumble greatly and destroy your life? God has a plan for your life, and everything He subjects you to in life is a part of that plan; it all helps accomplish your transformation and His higher purposes (cf. Ps 139:13-16; Ecc 11:5; Is 55:8-9; Rom 8:28-29; 2 Cor 3:18). The truth is, none of us really know precisely what it is we can handle, but God does, and that should be as sufficient for us, just as it was ultimately for Job (God never told Job why He subjected him to all He did, but after years of consternation in his soul, Job fully accepted what God had permitted him to experience). With all of the foregoing in mind, my prayer in life has simply become the one Jesus told His disciples: “Lord, give me this day my daily bread” (i.e., only meet my immediate needs – cf. Mt 6:11). Interestingly enough, though everything I have gone through in life has not been super-pleasant, nevertheless God has obviously gone before me and directed my path and accomplished His higher purposes (cf. Ps 138:8; 139:5). The truth is, God has negatively subjected me and my wife to some very difficult financial problems in the past twenty years (at one point we lost everything we owned), in spite of the fact that we have lived pretty frugal lives and have been reasonably faithful with all God has given to us… so you do the math; was my self-pride the problem, or was it to simply to grow my faith and keep me in His will to do the work to which He has called me? Keep in mind, some of this work has been very painful and difficult. Obviously as believers, we don’t get answers to why things are the way they are in life; Job didn’t, and it’s very unlikely you and I will… that is simply God’s economy for His people. Only at the end of the age will we fully understand all God was doing in our lives; meanwhile, we are called to accept it, sight unseen (cf. Is 55:8-11; 2 Cor 12:7-11; Phil 1:29; 4:11-13; 2 Cor 5:7). Please keep in mind, I stated all of the foregoing to simply help you see how God works in our
lives; nothing was mentioned to edify myself or give you a better understanding of who I am (I don’t do that stuff — cf. Heb 10:36; 11:13, 39-40). Perhaps the question that needs to be asked again is this: “Is divine truth the most significant thing in your life, or does human reason supersede it?” By the way, Scripture never claims that this was a wonderful simple little life… it wasn’t for Jesus and it isn’t for you and me. The question is, “Can you trust God for everything He subjects you to in life?”

Incidentally, God used Billy Graham to minister to more than 215 million people in 185 countries all around the world, and hundreds of millions more via television and radio. It was Billy Graham’s humility of heart that made him the effective spokesman that he was… with that in mind, let your egocentric nature vanish from your life; you don’t need that nonsense; simply cry out to God to have Him remove it from your life. The question is: “Are you more interested in your own standing before men, or being a humble servant of the Most High God?” By the way, those believers who are highly committed to Christ can easily spot an arrogant heart; so prayerfully determine to “remove it from your life.” What is absolutely essential is that preaching needs to have a far more “serious element” to it, rather than a “culturally interesting element.” Divine truth must prevail in the pulpit — it is not about you, your good looks, your fancy clothes, your cleverness, your humor, or your cultural savvyness… it’s about you humbly focusing on God and divine truth. Sadly, I can hear some pastors say, “Well, I have to be me.” Though that is true, you must do all you can to make it less about you… your proud heart… and your fun personality, and more about the object of worship — divine truth and God Himself. Though that is a heavy issues, you must pursue it at all costs. Now without humility, that simply will not happen. Remember, worship services are not about “having a happy hour;” they’re about letting God speak to the hearts of His people. If you are a pastor, think of it this way — if five people in your congregation were going to die this week, and you knew that, how would that affect your pulpit ministry? Hopefully, your humor and all of that nonsense would be removed from your ministry. Beloved, you’ve been bought with a price, let God use you!

J. EQUIPPING SAINTS FOR THE WORK OF SERVICE — As stated, another function the church is responsible for is “equipping believers for the work of service” (cf. Eph 4:12). The New Testament makes it very clear that the work of ministry is to be done by all Christians: “To each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift” (cf. Eph 4:7); the emboldened words in that verse are emphatic in Greek, so read it accordingly. It is just such ministry that helps “build up the body of Christ, that all believers might attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God; i.e., that they might become mature believers” (cf. Eph 4:12-13); the work of equipping is to be done not only by speaking the Word of God, but also by living it (i.e., by being an example), and by serving people; Jesus said, “My sheep hear My voice and they follow Me” (cf. Jn 10:27; 21:15-17). The question is: Are you listening to God? or simply letting your innate sinfulness rule in your life? Body life is an extremely critical aspect of the Church; as James Montgomery Boice said in his book “Foundations of the Christian
Faith” — Believers are to love one another (Jn 13:34-35)... Serve one another (cf. Gal 5:13)... Bear one another’s burdens (cf. Gal 6:2)... Forgive one another (cf. Eph 4:31-32)... Confess their sins to one another (cf. Jam 5:16)... and Instruct one another (cf. Rom 15:14). Remember, as believers we are brothers and sisters in Christ, so how can we not love and care for one another, and seek each others highest good? When “truth” reigns in our soul, that is precisely what will occur; however when truth doesn’t reign in us, then our “flesh” will reign, and we will always opt out of doing right and caring for others (we’ll always have an excuse for doing so).

K. THE BELIEVER’S UNDERSTANDING of HIMSELF — Keeping the foregoing in mind, “believers are to examine themselves to make sure that they indeed are in the faith” (i.e., that they are true believers; 2 Cor 13:5) — should they not examine themselves, there is a strong possibility their thinking might be somewhat erroneous (i.e., that they might be basing their salvation on something they have done rather than having faith in Christ alone). One of the problems with a self-based type of salvation, is that the individual himself “will not have assurance of salvation;” as such, his imperfect life will cause him to seriously doubt his salvation... since none of us come anywhere close to measuring up to God’s standards, it is only natural to question our salvation if it is based on anything other than Christ alone. As David Brewer states in an article he wrote on 2 Corinth 13:5, “Assurance of salvation never comes from looking at our imperfect walk but at the objective truth of the gospel.” As the apostle Paul emphatically stated, “It is by grace that we have been saved through faith: it is not of ourselves, it is the gift of God, not a result of works, that no one should boast!” (cf. Eph 2:8-9; Rom 3:28; 1 Cor 1:29; 2 Tim 1:9). Remember, we are all fallen creatures who inhabit sinful flesh... now in spite of the fact we are “saved fallen creatures,” we are still “sinful fallen creatures” (cf. Lk 18:19; Rom 7:1, 25; 8:3; Jn 3:6); the truth is, sin will not be fully eradicated from our lives until we enter into God’s eternal presence in heaven. Meanwhile, we must “die to sin” in this life; though Christ “died for our sin” (i.e., paid the penalty for our sin), we are to “die to our sin” (i.e., turn from our sin). The wonderful truth is, God has forgiven us of all our sins (past, present & future); that’s why we have reason to “glory in the cross of Christ!”

Beloved, unless “grace” is a dominant part of your faith, you will struggle greatly with your faith, because your standing before the Lord is all the work of Christ on your behalf. Again, our charge as believers is that “we not let sin reign in our bodies,” but that “we grow in our faith and love for Christ” (i.e., our believing Christ; cf. Rom 6:12, 14; 8:13; 1 Tim 1:5; 6:12; Heb 12:2; 1 Pet 2:2; 2 Pet 3:18; 1 Jn 5:4). Remember the words of Jesus: “If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (Jn 8:31-32); to abide literally means to live according to the teachings of Christ and His Word... those who do not abide turn aside from Him and what He teaches. Though none of us are saved by works, as true born-again Christians we abide in His Word: i.e., we obey Him because we are saved; that is, because we do believe in Christ we do what He says. Keep in mind, Jesus was saying this to those who were thinking that “their works” and their identity with their father Abraham was the divine road to salvation.
Now, since we all have a “sinful inner core” (i.e., a sinful nature), our “performance” is always going to be lacking at some level, which can be a very mesmerizing reality... the truth is, we simply don’t have the capacity to live a grand and glorious and righteous life. So as true born-again believers, the one thing that will cause consternation in our soul is “our sinful flesh.” Now if you are not a true believer, your sin nature will not be nearly as bothersome to you as it is to believers, because you will actually see yourself as being better than you are; which is simply the result of “your proud fallen inner core.” Only believers struggle with their innate sinfulness (because of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit); i.e., only believers experiences “an ongoing war in their soul,” and that’s the war believers are called to fight (cf. Rom 7:18-19, 23; 8:12-13; 12:1-3; 1 Cor 9:27; Gal 5:16-17; Eph 6:10-18; Phil 2:12-13; 3:13-14; 1 Tim 6:6-12; Heb 4:9-16; 12:1-11; Jam 4:1-10; 1 Pet 2:11; 1 Jn 2:1-3; 5:4). I have come down very hard on this issue because it is an extremely poignant one in the Christian world — we cannot opt out of our responsibilities in life, and think that God is somehow going to be pleased with us; though that happened in the ancient world at different points (2,000 to 3,000 years ago), it has also happened in our world today. It should be noted, God will not simply ignore it as if it isn’t that big an issue; either we obey or we will pay a price for not obeying (cf. 1 Cor 3:12-15). Why the believing community can be so rebellious is mind-boggling, and why it thinks its human thinking is meritorious is actually hard to understand. Since God has clearly defined His will for us in His Word, we must not change the discourse in any way; only the juvenile believer (if in fact he is a believer) has a tendency to interpret things the way he wants to, and it is precisely that that Scripture warns us against over and over again. So whether you are a pastor or a congregant, humble yourself before the Lord and embrace divine truth. Is it hard to trust at times? Absolutely, at times it is very difficult. The reality is, God’s divine revelation must be the foundation upon which we build our entire life. What else would one build it on? Fallen human reason? You talk about a losing proposition, that is the absolute worst! Remember, our father Abraham waited 25 years for God’s promise of Isaac (think about that carefully); since “time” often causes us to “doubt,” we must learn to embrace the truth even though it is not visible (cf. 2 Cor 5:7). So is it any wonder why Scripture calls our father Abraham, “God’s man of faith?” The question is, are you?

**THE TRUTH IS, “WE REAP WHAT WE SOW”**

The principle of Sowing and Reaping is common throughout Scripture — the Greek term translated “reaping” is “therizo,” it is akin to the word “theros,” which means “to harvest.” Incidentally, the term reaping is not only used of “harvesting” in the agricultural world, it is also used of “recompense” for doing good (cf. Hos 10:12; Gal 6:7-10), for doing evil (cf. Job 4:8; Prv 22:8; Hos 8:7; 10:13), for evangelism (cf. Mt 9:37-38; Lk 10:2; Jn 4:35-38), and for final judgment (cf. Mt 13:30, 39; Rev 14:14-16). Because many of us as believers oftentimes tend to get “the short end of the stick in life,” we naturally question this thing called “sowing and reaping,” i.e., we question whether or not we are getting what we deserve... the argument
goes this way: “If we work hard in life, then why don’t we reap what we sow?” That was the argument of the psalmist Asaph in Ps 73—he said, “My feet came close to stumbling, because the wicked are the ones who prosper, and there seems to be no trouble in their lives; so surely in vain I have kept my heart pure, for I have been stricken all day long.”

The reality is this: when things actually run counter as to how we think things should be (or how we want them to be), that can produce a lot of angst in the soul, just like it did in Asaph’s. When the psalmist pondered to understand this, “it was troubling to him until he went into the sanctuary of God, and perceived the wicked man’s ultimate end” (v. 16-17) — it was only when the Lord opened Asaph’s heart to the life to come and “the eternal destiny of the wicked,” that everything came into focus for him. The reality is this: as believers we only reap positives in this life to a limited extent; our reaping will not be fully completed until the “Judgment Seat of Christ” (i.e., prior to our entering into the eternal state); as Paul said, “Every one of us as believers must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, where we will each be recompensed for our deeds in the body, whether good or bad” (cf. 2 Cor 5:10). The Lord tells us in His Word that we will each ultimately be rewarded for faithful service in this life: “Behold, I am coming soon, and will bring my recompense with Me, to give to every man what he has done” (cf. Rev 22:12). In contradistinction to believers, the unbelieving world will stand before God in what is known as the “Great White Throne Judgment,” where they will be judged for everything they did in life, including not believing in God (cf. Rev 20:11-15). Divine judgment will involve separating the sheep from the goats and the wheat from the tares (i.e., separating believers from unbelievers — cf. Mt 13:30; 25:33ff). As Jesus said, “The tares will be bound in bundles to be burned, whereas the wheat will be placed in God’s barn” (Mt 13:30). The concept of tares in the agricultural world is that they are not suitable for human food, therefore they are separated from the wheat. In addition to the foregoing, when addressing the quality of each man’s work in the church (which includes teaching), the apostle Paul said, “If any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man’s work will become evident … it is to be revealed with fire, which will test the quality of each man’s work … and each person will be rewarded accordingly — if a man’s work is burned up, he shall suffer loss, though he himself will be saved” (1 Cor 3:12-15). The Lord will say to His own children at the Judgment Seat of Christ: “Well done good & faithful slave; you were faithful in a few things, therefore I will now put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your Master” (cf. Mt 25:21, 23) — true faithful believers will enjoy the blessings of the Messianic Kingdom. The truth is, our eternal future is actually being determined to a large degree by our faithfulness here in this life.

What is disturbing to many in the Christian world, is the reluctance of many professing believers to walk the walk; instead they simply talk the talk. Now whether or not they are genuine believers, only God knows (cf. Mt 13:24-30). However, according to Scripture, the genuine believer “walks the walk,” and “strives to obey God,” as such, he is the only one who experiences peace in the deep recesses of his heart (cf. Eph 2:10; Titus 2:14; 3:8, 14; 1 Jn 1:7).
The practice of working the ground to gain a harvest, essentially is as old as humanity itself. Part of Adam’s curse was that the ground would bring forth thorns and thistles in response to his work, and that “by the sweat of his brow would he eat food” (cf. Gen 3:19). So, Adam understood the concept of “you reap what you sow in life” – by the way, such is not only true in agriculture, it is also true in life’s choices (cf. Prov 1:31; 22:8; Hosea 10:13). Yet as Scripture states, Job wasn’t reaping what he had sown; the harvest was still a long way off — Job would not reap until years later in his life (cf. Job 42:10-17). So experiencing negative circumstances doesn’t necessarily mean we have done some negative things. Though the principle of reaping and sowing is generally true, it is not always at work in every situation in the way we might expect. The truth is, sowing and reaping is “a law of life;” each one of us will reap what we have sown… interestingly enough that is what every religion on the planet believes (so it appears as though that is one of the divine constructs that God has placed in the hearts of men – cf. Rom 1:18-32). “Karma” is a theological concept found in Buddhism & Hinduism; it is the belief that how you live your life will determine the quality of life you will have after reincarnation – if you live a life of selfishness & evil, you will be reincarnated into a less-than-pleasant lifestyle; conversely, if you live a life of unselfishness & kindness, you will be rewarded by being reincarnated into a pleasant life. Thus you will reap in the next life what you sow in this life. Now since the Bible rejects the idea of reincarnation, it doesn’t support the idea of karma. The author of Hebrews states, “Man is destined to die once, and after that he will face judgment” (i.e., the way in which man lives his life will determine his eternal state; cf. Heb 9:27). There is no endless cycle of life and death and rebirth; that is only inherent in the theory of reincarnation. The afterlife is either eternal suffering in hell (Mt 25:46), or eternal glory in heaven with Jesus, who died so that we might live eternally with Him. Said Paul, “The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Therefore let us not become weary in doing good, for in due season we will reap a harvest if we do not give up” (Gal 6:8-9); obviously if one gives up, he is not doing good. In this life, when we as believers follow our fleshly desires, we will reap corruption; i.e., we’ll reap things like marital difficulties, divorce, financial difficulties, painful thoughts, anxiety, unthankfulness, thoughts of regret, suspicion, bitterness, discontent and bad memories; conversely however, when we obey the Spirit, we will reap peace, joy, assurance of faith and contentment. The reality is, when we cave into our sinful nature, suffering can be either outward physical suffering or inward mental suffering or both; neither of which are pleasant.

The apostle Paul said to the church of Galatia, “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. He who sows to the flesh will of the flesh reap corruption; but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life” (Gal 6:7-8). Now according to Scripture, the choice is ours – either we walk by the flesh, or we walk by the Spirit… and the way we walk will ultimately determine what we reap. Obviously we live in a world that has gone amuck, and try though as we may to make it a pleasant little world, such is simply not possible. With that in mind, “we must each learn to accept out condition in life, whatever it may be;” if we cannot change something, we
must learn to accept it, be it some form of affliction, persecution, financial loss, illness, hardship, abuse, rejection, sleepless nights, weather problems, car problems, or physical loss (cf. Phil 4:11-13; 1 Tim 6:6-8; Heb 13:5). As the apostle Paul says, “In everything give thanks for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus” (cf. 1 Th 5:18; Eph 5:20; Col 3:17). Though life can be very tough and disconcerting at times, we must learn to accept what God has decreed (all such things have a good purpose in God’s economy) that we might grow in our faith and become the people that He wants us to be. Remember, we grow in faith by being subjected to trials and tribulations; there’s no skirting this issue — such is simply the economy of God for believers… that’s the purpose of life’s difficulties. The truth is, our faith must ultimately be stronger than the negative conditions we experience in life. Scripture says that our faith grows when it is being “tested;” without our faith being tested by trials and tribulations, it will be a very weak faith (cf. Jam 1:2-4; 1 Pet 1:6-8; Heb 6:11-12; Lk 21:19). Just as one increases his physical strength by pressing heavy weight, so one grows in faith when he is being subjected to the weight of difficult trials and tribulations; though we grow in knowledge by reading Scripture, our faith is only strengthened when it is tested. The question is, “Is your faith stronger than the negative circumstances you are experiencing?” It is here where we learn to “fight the good fight of faith;” i.e., where we learn to trust God even when things aren’t pleasant and going the way we want them to go (cf. 1 Tim 6:6-12; 1 Cor 9:24-27; Phil 1:29-30; 3:12; 1 Tim 1:18-19). Though at times we may think that God is actually “forsaking us,” that is not at all what Scripture teaches. Remember, even the Lord Jesus when He was suffering terribly on the cross cried out to the Father, “Why have You forsaken Me?” (cf. Mt 27:46). Though pain and suffering can be very perplexing and disturbing to us (imagine what it was to Christ), God did not forsake Christ, nor does He forsake us (Heb 13:5); though He subjects us to great pain sometimes, He does not forsake us. My experience (no doubt like many of yours) has been this — though I sometimes get frustrated and discouraged when I am being tried (i.e., being subjected to trials and difficulties), God ultimately calms my spirit that I might align my thinking with His thinking and experience His peace and His presence in my life (that’s what our God of love does).

The premiere message of Jesus is this: “I am the light of the world, he who follows Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life” (cf. Jn 8:12). The reality is, without Christ, one will walk in darkness and untruth; i.e., he won’t see things as they really are; only Christ can turn on the light in a person’s life and give him the grace to see things as they really are. If you were to walk into a room where there was “no light,” you would not see things as they really are; you would simply put your hands out and let them touch things and judge them accordingly, and at times you would bump into things and stumble… because without “light” you simply cannot see things as they really are; thus you would constantly misinterpret things. By the way, without being enlightened, you would probably think your perception of this dark world was fairly accurate, and that this thing called light was simply an oxymoron that really didn’t exist. Remember, “the devil disguises himself as an angel of light” (2 Cor 11:14); i.e., he comes across to the vast majority of people in our world essentially as being a righteous person of truth and an exponent of that which is good. Because his precepts mesh with fleshly thinking, those in
the dark “embrace his thinking,” and actually see it as that which is “good, or reasonably good. All one needs to do is look at our “political world” – the diabolical left is inclined to believe that its ways are the only ways that are good and worth pursuing, and that those who disagree with them are nothing but a bunch of religious idiots without a nickels worth of sense (now if that offends you, so be it; your problem is you are thinking way too highly of this world and its diabolical values; do not be deceived, Satan is an angel of light, and the vast majority of the people in this world embrace his thinking). To contrast the difference between our country today and our country back in the early years of its existence, take a moment and reflect upon those things that ruled in the past, and those things that rule today —

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Obviously, our country had a pretty good beginning, but it is having a very ugly ending; yes, that day is rapidly approaching. In spite of the fact that our world is a spiritual wreck and a complete mess, nevertheless, as believers we are to “live in the world,” but “not be of the world.” One of Jesus’ brothers (James) said: “This is pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father, to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world” (Jam 1:27); incidentally, the two emboldened words in that verse are “emphatic” in Greek (so read it accordingly). James went on to say, “Do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God?” (cf. Jam 4:4). Again, the emboldened words are “emphatic” in Greek. The reality is, “We are not to love the world or the things in the world; if one loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him” (cf. 1 Jn 2:15); that is also “emphatic.” Hence, one cannot possibly love this diabolical world and love God (cf. Jn 8:42-47). John goes on to say, “Whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world, our faith!” (i.e., our believing God & divine truth – cf. 1 Jn 5:4-5). Jesus instructed the twelve disciples who had followed Him throughout His ministry with these words – “Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth… I did not come to bring peace, but a sword” (cf. Mt 10:34). Jesus wanted His disciples to know that their lives would not be devoid of conflict; even their own families and friends might reject them (cf. Mt 10:35-38), and that they would very likely experience martyrdom and persecution in this life. Jesus didn’t come into this world to make peace with it, He came to share the truth, knowing full-well that most of the world would reject it, and that they would actually kill Him. As we bring this study to a close, let me encourage you to reflect upon the following passages: (1 Jn 2:17; Mt 5:14; Mk 8:36; Jn 15:19; 17:11, 14-18; 18:36; Rom 12:2; Gal 6:14; Phil 2:15).
THE FIVE STEPS OF MAN’S EXISTENCE

Regarding the totality of man’s existence from the beginning of time to the end of time, Scripture essentially identifies the following five steps —

1. **Man’s Creation** *(i.e., man’s perfection)* — God made human beings perfect creatures, and made us in His image.

2. **Man’s Rebellion** *(i.e., man’s fallenness)* — Man sought autonomy *(i.e., his own independence)* when he was tempted in the Garden by Satan; as such, he became a fallen creature separated from God with a permanently sinful inner core.

3. **Man’s Redemption** *(i.e., man’s justification)* — God sent His Son into the world to suffer for His creatures, that He might forgive them and justify them. However, only those who place their trust in Him experience God’s forgiveness and are deemed righteous before Him.

4. **Man’s Transformation** *(i.e., man’s sanctification)* — As new creatures in Christ, we are to walk in humble obedience before God, and grow in Christ-likeness. This is “the faith life” to which God has called us as believers.

5. **Man’s Immortality** *(i.e., man’s glorification)* — At the end of the age, God’s children will be ushered into Heaven to serve Him for all eternity; so in the heavenly realm we are going to be God’s eternal servants. Thus God’s desire for us as His creatures is that we ultimately go full circle, and become the people He originally created us to be… those who refuse to humble themselves and embrace God as the God of their lives, will reap what they have sown and suffer eternal separation from God in hell.

Now, regarding this thing called “life” — God started it, and God will end it. As God said to the prophet Isaiah, “I am God… there is no other… declaring the end from the beginning… My purposes will be established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure… Truly as I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. What I have purposed, surely I will do” *(cf. Is 46:9-11)*. He then went on to say, “He who is blessed in the earth, shall be blessed by the God of truth… his troubles shall be forgotten and hidden from My sight. I will create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things shall not be remembered” *(Is 65:16-17)*. Said the apostle Paul, “God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved… We were predestined according to God’s purpose, who works all things after the counsel of His will” *(cf. Eph 1:4, 5, 11; Eph 2:8-10; 4:22-24; Col 3:1-10; Heb 12:1-2)*. Though the process of “transformation” is ultimately the work of God in our lives… it is also a work that God calls us to participate in, and to the degree that we do participate in His work of salvation, to that degree we will rewarded in the heavenly realm.
As Paul states, “We are to work out our salvation with fear and trembling; yet work with the realization that GOD is at work in us, both to will and to do His good pleasure” (Phil 2:12-13). Beloved, we are to let TRUTH reign in our life, and let God be the GOD of our life; we are not to let human reason govern our life, or make God a distant reality in our life, or make God something He is not; so strive to let God’s light shine in and through your life.

MAY ABSOLUTE TRUTH REIGN IN YOUR SOUL.

ADDENDUM

Due to the fact that this study covers so many issues, I thought it would be good to bring it to a close with a number of “quotes” dealing with the subject of spirituality. Though some of them are absolutely true, some are not; nevertheless, I felt they were each quality statements that merited being contemplated (you’ll understand that after reading them). With all of that in mind, I thought I would start by quoting the greatest scientist of the twentieth century, Albert Einstein – though he was not a believer in the strict sense of the word, he was a man of great wisdom and humility, and a person our world greatly respected. Trust you will find these quotes an inspiration to your own heart.

• Albert Einstein – My religion consists of a humble admiration of the illimitable superior spirit who reveals himself in the slight details we are able to perceive with our frail and feeble mind.

• Aristotle – All Earthquakes and Disasters are warnings, that there is too much corruption in the world.

• Thaddeus – Until you have suffered much in your heart, you cannot learn humility.

• Treasure Tatum – It takes darkness to be made aware of the light.

• Unknown Author – History seems to be one long inglorious record of man’s inhumanity to man.

• Mike Yaconelli – Spirituality is not about being fixed; it is about God’s being present in the mess of our unfixedness.

• Henri Nouwen – The spiritual life does not remove us from the world, but leads us deeper into it.

• Davide Platt – My biggest fear, even now, is that I will hear Jesus’ words and walk away, content to settle for less than radical obedience to Him.
• **Eugene Peterson** – The way of Jesus cannot be imposed or mapped – it requires an active participation in following Jesus as He leads us through sometimes strange and unfamiliar territory… where we engage in [significant] prayerful conversation with Him.

• **John Bradshaw** – We are spiritual beings on an earthly journey, and it is our spirituality that makes up our beingness.

• **Ernest Homes** – We can no more do without spirituality than we can do without food, shelter, or clothing.

• **Mother Teresa** – God will use you to accomplish great things on the condition that you believe much more in His love than in your own.

• **Jack Hyles** – If God called us to a task, He will qualify us for the job.

• **John MacArthur** – You are the only Bible some unbelievers will ever read.

• **Jim Elliot** – He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep, to gain what he cannot loses.

• **Billy Graham** – The Christian life is not a constant high. I have my moments of deep discouragement. I have to go to God in prayer with tears in my eyes, and say, “O God, forgive me” or “Help me.”