

Apostles' Creed – Page 1

1. I believe in God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth:
2. And in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, our Lord:
3. Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary:
4. Suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead and buried: He descended into hell:
5. The third day he rose again from the dead:
6. He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty:
7. From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead:
8. I believe in the Holy Ghost:
9. I believe in the holy catholic church (universal) : the communion of saints:
10. The forgiveness of sins:
11. The resurrection of the body:
12. And the life everlasting. Amen.

It is doubtful that this creed has as its origin – each line from one of the twelve Apostles – and most probably it is based on a much earlier old Roman creed recited as a statement of faith at Baptisms.

The creed does distill the basics of the Christian Faith. When someone asks, “What do you believe? Or What does your church believe?” The Apostle’s creed gives a

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concise statement of faith – upon which most agree – which is most certainly in full agreement with the sacred text.

Some have the byline, “No creed but the Bible.” That sounds very spiritual indeed – but for the un-churched – it is the equivalent of handing them the Los Angeles Phone Directory as the answer – a bit overwhelming.

Let’s take the statements of this old statement of faith upon which most of the Church in the earth builds in agreement as foundational truths.

1. I believe in God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth:

Jesus began teaching the disciples to pray with the words, “Our Father which art in heaven.” Our Father – Oh! The spiritual wealth in those two simple words! – I could preach for a week on those two words.

Remember something – the Bible does not teach that man – as mankind are universally the children of God – in fact Jesus told the Pharisees their Dad was The Devil himself! (Certainly there is a brotherhood of mankind in that we are descended from Adam and Eve – and I’m just stupid enough to believe the creation account of Genesis.)

But to be “a child of the King!” Our Father. Now, I’m an only child and confidentially I’ll tell you something. I’m spoiled rotten – I said it. Don’t you dare say it. I’m convinced my father would give me his last nickel if it were necessary. I have had the luxury of a wonderful earthly father – but many have not. Many are orphans, many have never known their father due to death or other circumstances beyond their control as a child. But you can know your Heavenly Father.

Recently a man wrote and said, “I’ve never met God.....and I’m just speculating here...but I don’t think you have either?” Here is a portion of my answer to him. I do believe the Bible teaches that you (and I) can “meet” and know God, “And hereby we do know that we know him (God), if we keep his commandments.” (I John 2:3 KJV), “And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and a willing mind: for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.” (I Chronicles 28:9 KJV)

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Those who know me best know I believe God still speaks to the church today through the gifts of the Spirit such as in Prophecy, visions, dreams, etc., but the greatest privilege you and I have is to “come boldly before the throne” and speak to “Daddy God” as the well loved child in a great house.

Our Father. Most know of my friendship with Ruth Fisher who worked with the Healing Evangelist, Kathryn Kuhlman, for 26 years. Ruth gave me this insight from Miss Kuhlman. Kathryn told the story of having terrible ear aches as a child. Her Papa was the mayor in the little town of Concordia, MO. Everyone knew Papa. They knew him as Mayor. They knew him as an astute businessman. They knew him as a deacon of the Baptist church. They knew him as Mr. Joe Kuhlman. All that could be done for ear aches in those days was to pour in a little warm “sweet oil.” Kathryn said, “Better than any medicine, was to lay my head on Papa’s shoulder. Oh! The healing relief in just laying my head on Papa’s shoulder ... Because I had suffered and been comforted, I knew a side of my father that no one else knew.”

You have a real Heavenly Father and you can know him as a person. There are special promises in the Word of God to orphans and widows – that the Father Himself will be the Father to the fatherless (Ps 68:5) and to care for the widow (Jer 49:11).

Years ago when I started, the only possession I had was a Mustang automobile – my pride and joy as a young man. In those days, the bank only required me to have liability. My first big break in ministry was to do the music at Arlington Christian Center with the McSpadden Family (and you know Gary McSpadden today from Bill Gaither’s ministry). My car was parked at a friends’ house in Sherman, Texas (I had ridden with friends to Arlington – Judy and Paul Pogue. Judy sang with Anita Bryant.) My car (and their home) was in a flash flood. I had no money for the repairs. My family refused to help with the repair (my earthly father wanted to teach me a lesson). Before the day was out, My Heavenly Father came through! And I could tell a hundred variations on that story from incidents down through the years – proving His faithfulness to me – as My Heavenly Father. – Provision in New Delhi, India, when we had run out of funds – deliverance from a bombing in Cape Town, S. Africa where 8 people were tragically killed, etc.

[Thomas O. Chisholm](#) had it when he penned the words,

Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father;
There is no shadow of turning with Thee;
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not;
As Thou hast been, Thou forever will be.

Refrain

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Great is Thy faithfulness!

Great is Thy faithfulness!

Morning by morning new mercies I see.

All I have needed Thy hand hath provided;

Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,
Sun, moon and stars in their courses above
Join with all nature in manifold witness
To Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.

Refrain

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

Refrain

Part 2

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3. Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary:

4. Suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead and buried: He descended into hell:

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5. The third day he rose again from the dead:
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12. And the life everlasting. Amen.

In our second portion of this series on this great Creed of the Christian Faith, let us examine the second affirmation of faith.

2. And in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, our Lord:

Everything – and I mean EVERYTHING that Christianity IS – claims – lives – breathes hangs on the Miracle of the Resurrection of the Blessed Savior – Christ Jesus!

¹⁷ And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. ¹⁸ Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. ¹⁹ If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. (1 Cor 15:17-29)

In this Politically Correct generation – we are coerced to accept with respect the faith of Islam, Buddhism, Wicca, and even the lack of faith of the atheist – to name a few – as all “EQUAL” . . . (at the preparation of this message – I walked into the living room where the television was turned to a CNN. The anchor was reporting a suit filled to prevent

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Presidents from being sworn into office while placing their hand on the Bible – as this is an offense to many of other faiths).

Yet, if indeed, the Bible is the veritable Word of God – absolute – finite and yet infinite – containing as it speaks of itself, “the word of life.” (1 John 1:1) Then, the foundational truth of the Bible – from beginning to end – is but one message:

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)

[John 14:6](#) - Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

 [Acts 4:12](#) - Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

What a Statement of faith! This old creed has given us:

Jesus –

In Spanish it is “Jesus”

In Nepalese it is “Jesu”

In Greek it is Iesous

In ancient Hebrew it is “Yesu”

In Yiddish it is “Yeshua”

In that name given to the believer is the Power of Attorney of Heaven.

One week ago yesterday (at the preparation of this sermon) My wife’s uncle by marriage, Jim Brodersen, lay for the second day BRAIN DEAD in a diabetic coma in Marquette

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General Hospital in Marquette, MI. Being kept alive on complete life support 72 hours as Michigan law mandates. My father-in-law, Juan Papaleo, a man of intense faith in God, walked last Monday night into that ICU cubical, laid his hands Jim's comatose body and said firmly, "In the Name of Jesus, LIVE." The next morning – last Tuesday, a nurse walked into the room and knowing of Juan's prayer decided to try an experiment. She shouted, "JIM!" The brain dead man OPENED HIS EYES. "Squeeze my hand!" He did so – now the other hand – again Jim obeyed. Today he is out of ICU and though not yet well, he is walking and talking and recognizing his wife and two teenage boys and other family and friends!

Many years ago, about 1981, I stood alongside Christian author and Healing Evangelist, Frances Hunter, praying for the very sick at the end of a Hunter Miracle Service at their headquarters in Kingwood, Texas. We came to a grandmother in a wheelchair. She was surrounded by her family, a daughter, and several small grandchildren. Frances Hunter asked, "What is wrong?" "Scleroderma," the daughter answered, "For 12 years. Her body is mostly stone." (I reached out and touched her left hand which seemed to be wood or stone – form fitted by the disease to the arm of the wheelchair.) Her daughter continued, "She cannot stand or move – she is "stone" above and below her chest area and the disease will soon petrify her heart and lungs." Frances hunter touched her stone-like right hand. My hand was still upon her petrified left hand. Frances said firmly, "Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk." I felt the stone of her left hand change to the warmth of human skin – when suddenly the grandmother SCREAMED – and SHOVED us out of the way – LEAPING out of that wheelchair – she began running at top speed – SCREAMING wildly – circling the 1500 seat auditorium – followed by her ecstatic and jubilant grandchildren who were scrambling to keep up with grandma!

The Christ –

The Messiah -- The Savior

[John 1:29](#) - Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

His only begotten son, our Lord

The Nicene Creed says of our Lord:

(I believe)in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only begotten Son of God,
begotten of his Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light,
very God of very God,
begotten, not made,
being of one substance with the Father;
by whom all things were made;

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who for us men and for our salvation
came down from heaven,
and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost
of the Virgin Mary,
and was made man;

As much God as though he were not man, while at the same time *and with no contradiction*, as much man as though he were not God.

Years ago when I would try to give insight into this mystery of the Trinity – or perhaps better understood today – the Tri-unity of God I would use the similes and metaphors of water – steam – ice or perhaps of the egg – with its yoke and its shell – or even of man whom the Word itself teaches is made up of Spirit, Soul and Body. [1 Thessalonians 5:23](#)

Some time I came across this most wonderful thought which I believe will give you the sense of how The Son can be the EXPRESS IMAGE of the Father. [Hebrews 1:3](#) - Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high:

In his sermon, “The Fingerprints of God,” (a wonderful message – well worth a listen) Dr. D. James Kennedy gives the intellectual insight – or rather *revelation* that the fingerprints of God are left on the universe He created – and by looking at that creation, we can learn something of the creator.

I would like to use the same logic here. [1 Thess 5:23](#) tells us that we are created – spirit, soul and body, “and *I pray God* your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” **KJV**

The very first chapter of the Bible tells us that we are created in the very image of God. (Genesis 1:26-27)

Then there are three of me! William Mark Bristow is a Spirit! He has a Soul! And he lives in a body. **Yet when I look in the mirror, I see only ONE. And unless you’ve been drinking – you too will see only one of me. (Thank God!)**

And there you are. It’s that simple. We have a tri-une God – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit – yet the one we see – the one in whom the Godhead fully dwells – the one in whom he is revealed is Jesus.

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In a sense, the Trinitarians and the oneness people both have a truth. In exactly the same way that I am a three-part being – and yet you'll see only one of me.

Here we learn the Lord is One God.

Deuteronomy 6:4, “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God *is* one LORD:”

Here we see the Father speak from heaven, the son standing in the water, and the Spirit descending as a dove.

Matthew 3:15, “And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: ¹⁷And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

Take my spirit out of my body and I am dead to this world – no longer a functioning human being. Take my soul (the mind, will and emotions) by damaging my brain functions and I am no longer the person you have come to know. Damage my body so that it cannot function properly – such as with a stroke or accident and I am no longer the person you know – and may perhaps die.

The point is this – I am not ME – complete without all three parts, yet I am not three parts but a whole – ONE. Genesis 2:7, “⁷And the LORD God formed man *of* the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.”

Here in man's creation is the body made of dust – the Spirit, the breath of life – and a living soul.

Part 3

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6. He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty:

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The THIRD Affirmation of Faith:

3. Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary:

Isaiah 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

I believe in Miracles! I have to believe in miracles. The very essence of Christianity hangs directly on the fact that Jesus was born of a virgin.

www.msnbc.com reported on a Newsweek poll:

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/6650997/site/newsweek/>

Dec. 5 - Seventy-nine percent of Americans believe that, as the Bible says, Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary, without a human father, according to a new NEWSWEEK poll on beliefs about Jesus.

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Sixty-seven percent say they believe that the entire story of Christmas—the Virgin Birth, the angelic proclamation to the shepherds, the Star of Bethlehem and the Wise Men from the East—is historically accurate.

In the NEWSWEEK poll, 93 percent of Americans say they believe Jesus Christ actually lived and 82 percent believe Jesus Christ was God or the Son of God. Fifty-two percent of all those polled believe, as the Bible proclaims, that Jesus will return to earth someday;

For this NEWSWEEK Poll, Princeton Survey Research Associates interviewed by telephone 1,009 adults, aged 18 and older on Dec. 2 and Dec. 3. The margin of error is plus or minus 3 percentage points.

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In commenting on The Virgin Birth, Donald R. Whitaker, Ph.D., a Nuclear Physicist as well as a Doctor of Osteopathy, and one of the developers of the Trident Nuclear Submarine, said, “The virgin birth is absolutely necessary for the Savior to have “sinless” blood. You see the blood comes not from the mother, but from the Father. As Jesus’ Father was God Al-mighty – he had not the sinful inheritance of Adam – but rather was a NEW Adam. The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. I Cor 15:45. Jesus had his Father’s blood. He had a body of flesh – but he had sinless blood. Blood of bulls and goats decay. It is the blood that causes meat to decay – why, “the life is in the blood.” The blood of the sacrificial animal was put upon the mercy seat to atone for sin – but that animal blood decayed! But when Jesus came – with perfect blood – sinless blood – it is most certain that His blood is still viable – as full of life – as that dark day when His life’s blood poured from his veins at Calvary!” (Excerpts from a talk on The Blood of Jesus at THE DOVE CHRISTIAN RETREAT – no date – Longview, Texas.)

¹¹ But when Christ came as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation), ¹² he entered once for all into the Holy Place, not with the blood of goats and calves, but with his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption. ¹³ For if the blood of goats and bulls, with the sprinkling of the ashes of a heifer, sanctifies those who have been defiled so that their flesh is purified, ¹⁴ how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal

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Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to worship the living God! (Heb 9:11-14 NRSV)

(Hebrews 10:1 NLT) The old system in the law of Moses was only a shadow of the things to come, not the reality of the good things Christ has done for us. The sacrifices under the old system were repeated again and again, year after year, but they were never able to provide perfect cleansing for those who came to worship. ²If they could have provided perfect cleansing, the sacrifices would have stopped, for the worshipers would have been purified once for all time, and their feelings of guilt would have disappeared.

³But just the opposite happened. Those yearly sacrifices reminded them of their sins year after year. ⁴For it is not possible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. ⁵That is why Christ, when he came into the world, said,

“You did not want animal sacrifices and grain offerings.

But you have given me a body so that I may obey you.

⁶ No, you were not pleased with animals burned on the altar or with other offerings for sin.

⁷ Then I said, ‘Look, I have come to do your will, O God— just as it is written about me in the Scriptures.’”

⁸Christ said, “You did not want animal sacrifices or grain offerings or animals burned on the altar or other offerings for sin, nor were you pleased with them” (though they are required by the law of Moses). ⁹Then he added, “Look, I have come to do your will.” He cancels the first covenant in order to establish the second. ¹⁰And what God wants is for us to be made holy by the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all time.

¹¹Under the old covenant, the priest stands before the altar day after day, offering sacrifices that can never take away sins. ¹²But our High Priest offered himself to God as one sacrifice for sins, good for all time. Then he sat down at the place of highest honor at God’s right hand. ¹³There he waits until his enemies are humbled as a footstool under his feet. ¹⁴For by that one offering he perfected forever all those whom he is making holy.

¹⁵And the Holy Spirit also testifies that this is so. First he says,

¹⁶ “This is the new covenant I will make
with my people on that day, says the Lord:
I will put my laws in their hearts
so they will understand them,
and I will write them on their minds
so they will obey them.”

¹⁷Then he adds,

“I will never again remember
their sins and lawless deeds.”

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¹⁸ Now when sins have been forgiven, there is no need to offer any more sacrifices.

That you and I may claim, “there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. . .” (Rom 8:1 NRSV) is a direct result of the miraculous Virgin Birth.

I’m going to give you three scriptures that describe the human condition:

Ezekiel 18:20 - The soul that sinneth, it shall die.

Romans 3:23 - For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God

Psalms 14:3 - They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, **not one**

These three scriptures describe the impact of the Virgin Birth and His sinless Blood:

Psalm 103:¹² As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.

Micah 7:19 - He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our **iniquities**; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.

Isaiah 43:25, I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.

As we consider that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Ghost, remember something about the Holy Spirit. Christ offered Himself through the Holy Spirit – before the Worlds were formed. (Heb 9:14) Methinks he said, “I’ll go – but only if you go with me.” And so the very Power that brought the World into existence at God’s command – The Holy Spirit – brought Jesus into this world. And before Jesus entered into His ministry – REMEMBER – The Holy Spirit came Upon Him – they saw him in the form of a dove descending from heaven. POWER!

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Jesus was as much man as though he were not God.

Philippians 2:7, But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

The underlying meaning in the original tongue is that He laid aside His divine nature – by choice -- to come and live as a man – a second Adam – a man – FILLED with the Power of the Holy Spirit. That's the reason He could say, "These same works that I do shall ye do also, and greater works than these (John 14:12)" regarding miracles.

If Jesus performed miracles as the Divine Son of God, He could never have said, "Believers will lay hands on the sick and they shall recover (Mark 16:15).

One more thing – the Holy Spirit – the mighty POWER of God – the Mighty Third Person of the Trinity – dwells in YOU as a believer. If the church would suddenly awaken to the Power available to them – it would shake the World. The scriptures say that "Twelve men turned the world upside Down!" (Acts 17:6)

In our consideration of the Blessed Virgin today – we would do well to remember her last recorded words in the scripture – spoken as Jesus was just about to begin his public ministry. John 2:5, ". . . Whatever He says to you, do it." NAS

Part 4

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5. The third day he rose again from the dead:

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12. And the life everlasting. Amen.

Rather than assert these scriptural facts – I would rather look at the result of these actions today:

The law demanded the death of the sinner – “The Soul that Sinneth, it shall die.” (Eze 18:4).

Jesus, a righteous man, died for my sin – for your sin. And the price demanded was paid in full!

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit [Rom. 8:1].

“Who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” does not really belong in this verse. Apparently some scribe picked it up from verse 4 where it belongs. The literal rendering is: “Therefore now, not one condemnation.”

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For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death [Rom. 8:2].¹

For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit [Rom. 8:3–4].²

Someone described the law with this short verse:

Run, run and do, the Law commands
But gives me neither feet nor hands.
Better news the Gospel brings,
It bids me fly and gives me wings.

The Fork and Spatula:

Let me illustrate this truth by using a very homely incident. Suppose a housewife puts a roast in the oven right after breakfast because she is going to serve it for the noon meal. The telephone rings. It is Mrs. Joe Dokes on the phone. Mrs. Dokes begins with “Have you heard?” Well, the housewife hasn’t heard, but she would like to; so she pulls up a chair. (Someone has defined a woman as one who draws up a chair when answering a telephone.) Mrs. Dokes has a lot to tell, and about an hour goes by. Finally our good housewife says, “Oh, Mrs. Dokes, you’ll have to excuse me. I smell the roast—its burning!” She hangs up the phone, rushes to the kitchen, and opens the oven. Then she gets a fork and puts it down in the roast to lift it up, but it won’t hold. She can’t lift it out. She tries again, closer to the bone, but still it won’t hold. So she gets a spatula. She puts the spatula under the roast and lifts it out. You see, what the fork could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, the spatula is able to do. Now, there is nothing wrong with the fork—it was a good fork. But it couldn’t hold the flesh because something was wrong with the flesh—it was overcooked. The spatula does what the fork could not do.

The Law is like the fork in that it was weak through the flesh. It just won’t lift us up; it *can’t* lift us up. But a new principle is introduced: the Holy Spirit. What the Law could not do, the Holy Spirit is able to do.

1J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible commentary [computer file], electronic ed., Logos Library System*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997, c1981 by J. Vernon McGee.

2J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible commentary [computer file], electronic ed., Logos Library System*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997, c1981 by J. Vernon McGee.

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The Old Nature and New Nature:

The natural man strives and even sets his heart upon the things of the flesh. Here is his diet: “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (Gal. 5:19–21). It is an ugly brood!

In Colossians Paul says: “But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds” (Col. 3:8–9). The Lord Jesus said: “For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies” (Matt. 15:19).

It is humiliating but true that the child of God retains this old Adamic nature. It means defeat and death to live by the flesh. No child of God can be happy in living for the things of the flesh. The prodigal son may get into the pigpen, but he will never be content to stay there. He is bound to say, “I will arise and go to my father.”

“They that are after the Spirit” are born again, regenerated and indwelt by the Spirit of God. They love the things of Christ. “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth” (Col. 3:1–2).³

For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace [Rom. 8:6].

There is one thing for sure: if you are living in the flesh, and you are a child of God, you are *not* having fellowship with God. You *can't*. The Lord Jesus in the Upper Room said to Simon Peter, “. . . If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me” (John 13:8). Now, my friend, He meant that. He will not fellowship with you or with me if we are committing sin and are continuing to live in the flesh. “Well,” somebody says, “what are we to do?” Do what Simon Peter had to do—he stuck out his feet and let the Lord wash them. And you and I need to go to Him in confession. First John 1:9 tells us, “If we confess our sins.” Who is “we”? We Christians. “He is faithful and just . . .” when He does it, because it will take the blood of Christ, my friend. You and I do not know how wicked the old nature is. And we need to go to Him for cleansing.

The English poet, John Donne, using the mythological story of the labors of Hercules—where that strongman of the ancient world was confronted with the task of cleaning out the Augean stables—illustrates this important truth. Though Hercules was able to perform the task, Donne shows that man cannot clean the much greater filth of the human heart. He writes:

3J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible commentary [computer file], electronic ed., Logos Library System*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997, c1981 by J. Vernon McGee.

Lord I confess that Thou alone are able
To purify this Augean stable.
Be the seas water, and all the land soap
Yet if Thy blood not wash me—there's no hope.⁴

*Jesus paid the price for my sin – for your sin – then having finished his work, he
sat down at the right hand of the Father –*

And there OUR JUDGE ever-lives to make intercession for me – and for you!

³¹ What can we say about such wonderful things as these? If God is for us, who can ever be against us? ³² Since God did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won't God, who gave us Christ, also give us everything else?

³³ Who dares accuse us whom God has chosen for his own? Will God? No! He is the one who has given us right standing with himself. ³⁴ Who then will condemn us? Will Christ Jesus? No, for he is the one who died for us and was raised to life for us and is sitting at the place of highest honor next to God, pleading for us. (Romans 8:31-34 NLT)

Do you see it? The only one who can accuse me, gave His son to die and ransom me!

The only one who can condemn me – died to save me – and is now sitting at the right-hand of God – praying for me to make it!!

Part 5

1. I believe in God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth:
2. And in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, our Lord:
3. Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary:

4J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible commentary [computer file], electronic ed., Logos Library System*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997, c1981 by J. Vernon McGee.

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4. Suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead and buried: He descended into hell:

5. The third day he rose again from the dead:

6. He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty:

7. From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead:

8. I believe in the Holy Ghost:

9. I believe in the holy catholic church (universal) : the communion of saints:

10. The forgiveness of sins:

11. The resurrection of the body:

12. And the life everlasting. Amen.

The Holy Ghost – the very Spirit of God All Mighty.

Here are some of the things I have learned over the years through the study of The Word of God and through the dealings of the Holy Spirit and through observing these great men and women of God up close as they ministered under the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

The Power of the Holy Spirit and His Gifts are Capacities for Service

Acts 1:8

8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. ⁵

The Holy Spirit is here to do everything Jesus would do if he were here in person.

John 14:16-18

⁵The King James Version, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769.

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16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; 17 *Even* the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

18 I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. ⁶

Jesus did miracles as a “MAN” empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Philippians 2:7

7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: ⁷ (KJV)

Philippians 2:7

7 but emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.
And being found in human form,
(NRSV)

No miracles are recorded of Jesus in the Word of God until the Holy Spirit comes upon Him at His Baptism.

Luke 3:21-22

21 Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, 22 And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased. ⁸

Luke 4:1-2

And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, 2 Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered. ⁹

The Council of Nicea in 351 A.D. stated, “Jesus is as much man as though he were not God, yet at the same time, as much God as though He were not man. Fully man, yet Fully God without conflict.” God cannot be tempted, yet Jesus was tempted in all manner like as we are yet without sin (Heb 4:16)

Yet, what man could say, John 8:58

58 Jesus said unto them, **Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.** ¹⁰

⁶The King James Version, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769.

⁷The King James Version, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769.

⁸The King James Version, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769.

⁹The King James Version, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769.

¹⁰The King James Version, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769.

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Or

Matthew 26:53

53 **Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?**¹¹

Or

John 18:6

6 As soon then as he had said unto them, **I am** he, they went backward, and fell to the ground.¹²

Just before going to the cross, Jesus prays

John 17:5

5 **And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.**

¹³

In English we call this “incarnation”. Our Hispanics of West Texas have a dish called “chili con carne” chili with meat or flesh. This is God con Carne, literally God with meat or flesh, John 1:14

14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

¹⁴

Every miracle between the incarnation, God putting on flesh, and the resurrection, Jesus performed as a man filled with the Holy Ghost. John 14:10

10 **Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.**¹⁵

That is why He could promise his believers to do the same works

John 14:12

12 **Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.**¹⁶

Mark 16:17-18

17 **And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; 18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.**

¹¹The King James Version, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769.

¹²The King James Version, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769.

¹³The King James Version, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769.

¹⁴The King James Version, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769.

¹⁵The King James Version, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769.

¹⁶The King James Version, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769.

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17

This is why it was vitally important for the disciples to tarry or wait in Jerusalem the Holy Spirit had come upon them with power.

Luke 24:49

49 And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

18

Acts 1:8

8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. ¹⁹

Before we look directly at that “power” the gifts of the Holy Spirit, let us look at His nature and work.

John 14:15-17

15 If ye love me, keep my commandments. 16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another **Comforter**, that he may abide with you for ever; 17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

20

John 14:25-27

25 These things have I spoken unto you, being *yet* present with you. 26 But the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, **he shall teach you all things**, and bring all things to **your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you**. 27 **Peace** I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

21

John 15:26-27

26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, **he shall testify of me**: 27 And **ye also shall bear witness**, because ye have been with me from the beginning.

22

John 16:7-15

7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. 8 And when he is come, **he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment**: 9 Of sin, because they believe not on me; 10 Of righteousness, because I go

17The King James Version, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769.

18The King James Version, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769.

19The King James Version, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769.

20The King James Version, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769.

21The King James Version, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769.

22The King James Version, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769.

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to my Father, and ye see me no more; 11 Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. 12 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, **he will guide you into all truth**: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. 14 **He shall glorify me**: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew *it* unto you. 15 All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew *it* unto you.

23

Growing up I was taught the Gifts of the Spirit ceased after the time of the Apostles, and that only the Apostles had these gifts.

Did only the Apostles have these gifts?

The 120 in the upper room including Mary the Mother of Jesus.

Acts 1:14-15

14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

15 And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,) ²⁴

Acts 2:4

4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

25

Stephen ordained as a deacon in Acts 1:5 (to wait tables and give food to the needy)

Acts 6:8

8 And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.

26

Philip also ordained as a deacon in Acts 1:5

Acts 8:5-8

5 Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. 6 And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. 7 For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed *with them*: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. 8 And there was great joy in that city. ²⁷

Ananias - a certain disciple

23The King James Version, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769.

24The King James Version, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769.

25The King James Version, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769.

26The King James Version, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769.

27The King James Version, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769.

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Acts 9:10-17

10 And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, **Ananias**. And he said, Behold, *I am here*, Lord. 11 And the Lord *said* unto him, **Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for *one* called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth**, 12 **And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting *his* hand on him, that he might receive his sight**. 13 Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: 14 And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name. 15 But the Lord said unto him, **Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: 16 For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake**. 17 And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, *even* Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.²⁸

The household, kinsmen and friends of Cornelius

Acts 10:24

24 And the morrow after they entered into Caesarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends.²⁹

Acts 10:27

27 And as he (Peter) talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together.³⁰

Acts 10:44-48

44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. 45 And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. 46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, 47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? 48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

³¹

Agabus the Prophet

Acts 11:27-28

27 And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. 28 And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar.³²

²⁸The King James Version, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769.

²⁹The King James Version, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769.

³⁰The King James Version, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769.

³¹The King James Version, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769.

³²The King James Version, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769.

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Certain Prophets and Teachers

Acts 13:1-2

Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. 2 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. ³³

Ephesian believers speak with tongues and prophesy

Acts 19:1-7

And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, 2 He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. 3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. 4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. 5 When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 And when Paul had laid *his* hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. 7 And all the men were about twelve.

³⁴

Believer's testify to Paul about danger in Jerusalem

Acts 20:22-23

22 And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: 23 Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. ³⁵

Acts 21:4

4 And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days: who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem. ³⁶

Philip's four daughters

Acts 21:8-9

8 And the next *day* we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was *one* of the seven; and abode with him. 9 And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy. ³⁷

Agabus again

Acts 21:10-11

³³The King James Version, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769.

³⁴The King James Version, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769.

³⁵The King James Version, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769.

³⁶The King James Version, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769.

³⁷The King James Version, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769.

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10 And as we tarried *there* many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus. 11 And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver *him* into the hands of the Gentiles.
38

There are more instances than we will study now, but suffice it to say, more than the 12 had these gifts of the Spirit in their lives.

Were these gifts only for the time of the Apostles?

Acts 2:38-39

38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. 39 **For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.** ³⁹

Mark 16:17

17 **And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;** ⁴⁰

Irenaeus – Against Heresies, II 49.3 (A first century Pastor after the time of the disciples writes)

But they fall far short of raising the dead, as the Lord raised them, and as did the apostles through prayer, and as among later Christians, because the need was so great and the whole of the local church besought God with much fasting and supplication, the spirit of the dead man has returned and his life has been granted to the prayers of God's people...

But if they suggest that the Lord has done these things only in appearance, I will refer them to the prophetic writings, and prove from them that all this had been foretold about Him and really happened, and that He alone is the Son of God. So it is that in His name those who truly are His disciples, having received grace from Him, put it to effectual use for the benefit of their fellow-men, in proportion to the gift each one has received from Him. Some drive out demons really and truly, so that often those cleansed from evil spirits believe and become members of the Church; some have foreknowledge of the future, visions, and prophetic utterances; others, by the laying-on of hands, heal the sick and restore them to health; and before now, as I said, dead men have actually been raised and have remained with us for many years. In fact, it is impossible to enumerate the gifts which throughout the world the Church has received from God and in the name of Jesus Christ crucified under Pontius Pilate, and every day puts to effectual use for the

38The King James Version, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769.

39The King James Version, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769.

40The King James Version, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769.

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benefit of the heathen, deceiving no one and making profit out of no one: freely she received from God, and freely she ministers.

*Similarly, we hear of many members of the Church who have prophetic gifts and by the Spirit speak with all kinds of tongues, and bring men's secret thoughts to light for their own good, and expound the mysteries of God. **Against Heresies, V.6***

Others used by God through the centuries of whom you may find writings containing evidences of the Baptism with the Holy Spirit and the Supernatural Power of God are:

Girolamo Savonarola (Italy, 1452 – 1498)

Madame Guyon (France, 1647 - 1717)

John and Charles Wesley (John 1703 – 1791, Founders of the Methodist Church)

Maria B. Woodworth-Etter (1824, 1944 Early America)

Charles Finney (1792 – 1875, Early America)

Dwight L. Moody (1837 – 1899, Early America)

John G. Lake (1870 – 1935, Africa early 1900's)

T. L. Osborn (Contemporary Healing Evangelist)

Kathryn Kuhlman (1907? – 1975 world renown Evangelist this century)

Oral Roberts (Contemporary Healing Evangelist this century)

All believers ... “And these signs shall follow...”

Before looking directly at the gifts let's answer a few more questions.

Doesn't the scripture say that not everyone will speak with tongues?

1 Corinthians 12:29-30

29 Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? 30 Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? ⁴¹

This scripture deals with “offices” of the church, not with gifts of the Spirit.

Ephesians 4:11

11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; ⁴²

The same offices are given, Apostles, Prophets, Teachers, then from Acts 8:6 (miracles and healings with Philip) we see miracles are the gifts of the Evangelist. Tongues and Interpretation are most often associated with a local church and pastor today. Those gifts are seen more than any other gifts in the local church, so the office of Pastor is referenced here.

Doesn't the scripture say that tongues and gifts will cease?

⁴¹The King James Version, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769.

⁴²The King James Version, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769.

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1 Corinthians 13:8-10

8 Charity never faileth: but whether *there be* prophecies, they shall fail; whether *there be* tongues, they shall cease; whether *there be* knowledge, it shall vanish away. 9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. 10 But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. ⁴³

Has knowledge ceased? Do we know everything perfectly as we will in heaven? Have prophecies ceased? No. We are still awaiting the prophetic fulfillment of the second Coming, the great catching up, the great tribulation, salvation for the Jewish people. So these gifts have not yet ceased, but will cease when we see Him face to face, for then we will know as we are known and there will be no need for the “in-part” gifts.

Didn't I receive the Holy Spirit when I was saved?

Romans 8:14-17

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. 15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. 16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified together. ⁴⁴

Romans 8:9

9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. **Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.**

⁴⁵

Think for a moment of a drinking glass containing water. The glass has water, it may even be filled with water. Yet, I may submerge or immerse that glass full of water in a pool of water, and now instead of the water being in the glass, the glass is in the water.

Let's say it like this. You are born-again. You have received the Spirit of Adoption whereby you cry “Abba Father, or Daddy, God.” You have Him. But the question is, “Does He Have You?”

When you receive the Baptism or Immersion with the Holy Spirit, He has you.

Acts 8:5-7

5 Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. 6 And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. 7 For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed *with them*: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. ⁴⁶

⁴³The King James Version, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769.

⁴⁴The King James Version, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769.

⁴⁵The King James Version, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769.

⁴⁶The King James Version, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769.

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Acts 8:12

12 But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. ⁴⁷

Acts 8:14-17

14 Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: 15 Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: 16 (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) 17 Then laid they *their* hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. ⁴⁸

These people were born again, and had followed the Lord in water baptism. Then Peter and John came and these received this wonderful Baptism of the Holy Spirit. This is a separate experience from their salvation. It had nothing to do with their salvation whatsoever.

What is the evidence of receiving the Baptism with the Holy Spirit? I believe the real and best evidence is: “Ye shall receive power and ye shall be witnesses...” (Acts 1:8).

Now we come to the church – the universal church in the earth. The old creed says, “The Holy catholic church.” At the time the creed was written the word catholic simply meant “universal.” It is not a reference to the Roman Catholic Church which is a branch or part of the church in the earth – for all who have received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior (from a Protestant understanding).

We are part of “The Church” which is made up exactly as the parts of the body, Baptist, Methodist, Catholic, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Pentecostal, etc. We would accept all who would accept the statements of this creed – or rather the Word of God – the creed being a synopsis.

It is a pleasure and a privilege to work with all who believe and practice these scriptural precepts. Theological Scholars agree that basic and fundamental truths necessary to our Salvation and Christian walk are clearly and fully “fleshed-out” in scripture with little or no room for individual interpretation – as these precepts taught in the Apostle’s Creed demonstrate – as the acceptance in belief and practice by the universal church – the body of Christ at large in the earth – demonstrate.

Although I believe in and practice “divine healing” and other tenets of my Pentecostal faith and have beliefs and opinions about the timeline of Creation, the unfolding of the

⁴⁷The King James Version, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769.

⁴⁸The King James Version, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769.

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book of Revelation regarding the Second Advent, etc., - these “less certain” tenets of our faith have points of intrigue which are left open for speculation. Therefore we will not exempt ourselves from nor ostracize any part of the body of Christ which does not see “eye-to-eye” with us on these (perhaps “superfluous” is too strong a word) extraneous and non-core doctrines.

Church Government

Jesus said, “I will build my church.” Experience and history has shown that any lasting work for God upon this earth will only be through the church, and at the practical level, the local church. (Of course this refers to the congregation and not a building or institution, although buildings and organizations seem necessary (maybe “practical” is a better word here than “necessary”) as a vehicle for men to carry out God’s instruction.

The scriptures declare that God has set forth Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastor’s & Teachers. We would recognize those at large in the body of Christ whose gifts and callings are recognized by scriptural precedents. The above order set forth in Ephesians is the pecking order – and each Office would have within it those below it.

It seems clear. Just as The Nine Gifts may be resident as the Holy Spirit is resident in the Believer – yet not active at all times, these offices or callings may be conferred – but not active in “power” at all times – yet with respect at all times.

The active order of these offices in the local church seems established in 1 Cor 12. Apostles, Prophets, Teachers, Evangelists, Pastors. And the working order seems from the bottom up – or that the local churches are built on Pastors, then Evangelists, then Teachers, then Prophets, then Apostles. All these ministries work through and stand on the office of Pastor in the Local Church.

In actual practical government of an area or district the scriptures are a bit unclear (its use of “Bishop” and “Elder” or “Presbyter” sometimes seemingly interchangeably) – but it seems to be that a Bishop was pastor over a number of churches, and that preaching Elders/Pastors led the local congregations assisted by Deacons (who also preached and ministered as the occasion arose). Elders and Pastors lean toward the meeting of spiritual needs while Deacons definitely lean toward the meeting of earthly and physical needs of the congregation.

For governance of the local church it appears that the local Elder or Pastor was the figure of authority, making major decisions by soliciting the wisdom of God – the wisdom of Apostles and Prophets and Evangelists associated with the local work, then with the support and prayer of Elders and Deacons and finally least of all the wishes of the congregation – decisions were reached.

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Today we see two types of legal church government in the US, Congregational vote in a shared democratic government (which little scriptural precedent) – or – a local legal Non-Profit Corporation with a Board of Directors who govern – sometimes with the wisdom from a Board or Panel of Advisors. Grace Fellowship, Inc. is such a legal Non-Profit Corporation with a Board of Directors (7 in number) and a Board or Panel of Advisors (Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists & Teachers associated with this work). The Pastor is the President of the Board of Directors and rules in the mundane and matters of course. Larger items are brought before the Board of Directors & the Board of Advisors where the Pastor is but 1 vote of the 7. In our case, the one Board of Directors leads both the Monahans and Odessa congregations and has individuals from **both** congregations serving.

Wanting to be part of the larger whole, Grace Fellowship, Inc. is for many years part of the Full Gospel Fellowship of Churches and Ministries International, Inc. (Christ for the Nations in Dallas – with the late Gordon Lindsay – and the Voice of Healing ministries evolved into this affiliation of independent and inter-denominational churches and ministries with membership in the thousands and around the world.) www.fgfcmi.org

Spiritual Authority in the Church

Eph 4:11, And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; ¹²For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: ¹³Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: ¹⁴That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; ¹⁵But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even* Christ: ¹⁶From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

(Each office has within it – those below it.)

Paul called an Apostle – 1 Tim 2:7

A preacher (Evangelist/Pastor)

A Teacher

An Evangelist at Corinth – 1 Cor 9:1

Prophets – also teachers – 1 Cor 13:1

Who is an Apostle?

- 1) **Does not build on another's foundation:** Rom 15: ¹⁷I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God. ¹⁸For I will

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not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed, ¹⁹Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. ²⁰Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation: ²¹But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand.

- 2) ***Congregations that HE built are the sign of his apostleship:*** 1 Cor 9:¹Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord? ²If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord.
- 3) ***Signs and wonders are his calling card:*** 2 Cor 12:12, ¹²Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds. (Healings and miracles are the calling card of an evangelist. 1 Cor 12:29, Eph 4:11, Acts 8:6-7.)
- 4) ***Approved by Spiritual Leadership:*** Gal 1:¹⁷Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. ¹⁸Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. ¹⁹But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother. ²⁰Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not. ²¹Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia; ²²And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judaea which were in Christ: ²³But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed. ²⁴And they glorified God in me. (Chapter 2) ¹Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with *me* also. ²And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain.

What is a New Testament Prophet?

- 1) ***Tells the church "What will be" so action can be taken.*** Acts 11:27, ²⁷And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. ²⁸And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. ²⁹Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea: ³⁰Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.
- 2) ***Brings the Mind Will and Purpose of God regarding Leadership and Ministry.*** Acts 13:1, ¹Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod

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the tetrarch, and Saul. ²As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. ³And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid *their* hands on them, they sent *them* away.

- 3) ***Building up the Body of Christ – with confirmation, preaching and teaching.*** Acts 15:29, ³²And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed *them*. ³³And after they had tarried *there* a space, they were let go in peace from the brethren unto the apostles. ³⁴Notwithstanding it pleased Silas to abide there still. ³⁵Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.
- 4) ***Tells “What will Be”*** Acts 21:10, ¹⁰And as we tarried *there* many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus. ¹¹And when he was come unto us, he took Paul’s girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver *him* into the hands of the Gentiles.
- 5) ***Must acknowledge the Word of God in precedence to what is ministered forth from his own mouth.*** 1 Cor 14,³⁷ ³⁷If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.

I think today we have a clear understanding by example of Evangelist (Billy Graham, Benny Hinn, Rinehard Bonke, etc.) The scriptural example is Philip in Acts Chapter 8.

Just as clear is the office of Pastor (Joel Osteen and John Hagee being shining examples on the mega-church scale – with dozens of shining local church examples.) And I think all of us have lived enough to see men who were not “God-called” who decided Clergy was a lovely profession – practicing Religion of man – whatever the pedigree over the door.

Teacher is also well demonstrated today with the likes of Kenneth Copeland, the late Kenneth E. Hagin, Sr., Joyce Meyer, Marilyn Hickey, etc.

We need not concern ourselves further as these offices are well known.

What are the responsibilities of a Pastor/Evangelist/Teacher in a service?

- 1) 1 Peter 5:2¹The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: ²**Feed the flock** of God which is among you, taking the oversight *thereof*, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; ³**Neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.**

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- ⁴And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.
- 2) 1 Thess 5:12, ¹²And we beseech you, brethren, **to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord**, and admonish you; ¹³And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. *And* be at peace among yourselves.
 - 3) Titus 1:9, ⁹**Holding fast the faithful word** as he hath been taught, that he may be able by **sound doctrine** both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. ¹⁰For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: ¹¹Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake. ¹²One of themselves, *even* a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians *are* always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies. ¹³This witness is true. **Wherefore rebuke them sharply**, that they may be sound in the faith; ¹⁴Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth.

Wisdom for ministering in another's pulpit:

- 1) Wait until God opens the door and/or you are invited. (If God really has a message – he will open the door for you – otherwise you have been obedient – it's up to the one in charge.) I once ministered with Ruth Fisher (a longtime member of Kathryn Kuhlman's staff) in the congregation of a Franciscan Monk. The rules of conduct being unfamiliar, Ruth handed a portion of the service to me and I was to continue ministering to the sick – rather than Words of Knowledge of healing, I felt I received a prophetic word of encouragement. Not knowing my limits, I simply walked over and asked the Franciscan Father if such would be appropriate. He gave me clearance to go ahead – and so I ministered out. Had he asked me to with-hold, I would have done so – and continued to minister in healing as Ruth and her team were invited to do.
- 2) Find out “the rules of the house” and either abide by them – or don't go.
- 3) Never try to bring correction and rebuke to the leadership. Only an Apostle or a Prophet can rebuke another Apostle or Prophet, etc. (Nowhere in the New Testament do you see roving ministries – going to straighten out other ministries.)
- 4) Intercessors may see it all – and God may move on you to “prove” the leadership in a certain thing – but yours is to pray – not to usurp authority.
- 5) Be careful of anything that brings confusion – God is not the author of Confusion.

As so much of my particular call is in the Supernatural of God, here is a basic sketch of my working understanding of the Nine Gifts of the Spirit and wisdom in their working.

Now we are brought to the communion of saints.

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The entirety of the Body of Christ is joined together in the earth in worship – in the work of the ministry and in receiving the Lord's Supper. But here what is most important is that we are literally – the Body of Christ to work in the earth.

1 Corinthians 6:19, “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost . . .”

Individually – you and I are a portable temple or tabernacle of the Holy Ghost. But Corporately we are:

1 Corinthians 3:16, “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God. . .”

And that scripture goes on to carry a frightening warning against anyone who would harm or damage the body of Christ, “and *that* the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? **¹⁷If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy;** for the temple of God is holy, which *temple* ye are.”

We must honor and prefer each other. We must recognize that each has an important part that we, “may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even* Christ: ¹⁶From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.” (Eph 4:15)

And here we have “the forgiveness of sins.” I think it's interesting that we are to confess our faults to one another and ask forgiveness of one another – but we confess our sins only to God, who has the supernatural ability to not only forgive – but to forget.

I think three of my favorite scriptures are marked in every Bible I own:

1) Psalm 103:10, “He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. ¹¹For as the heaven is high above the earth, *so* great is his mercy toward them that fear him. ¹²**As far as the east is from the west, *so* far hath he removed our transgressions from us.**”

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Do you realize – if He had said, “As far as the north is from the south” the meaning would not be the same. I can leave my home in West Texas and travel to the North Pole – but as soon as I cross that pole – North and South meet – I will suddenly be headed South.

But, if I travel East – I will travel East forever – never will I cross a line and be going West – East and West will NEVER meet. And He has put MY SIN – As far as the East is from the West. The old folk say, “You can’t get there from here!” Hallelujah!

2) Jeremiah 31:34, “And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, **and I will remember their sin no more.**”

I forget where I parked the car – but eventually with the help of friends and the panic button on my key fob – I remember. When God purposes to forget my sin – He remembers it no more!

3) Micah 7:19, “He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; **and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.**”

Man, in person, has yet to attempt – much less explore – the real depths of the sea. It has taken every technology to find Titanic (a little more than 2 miles deep). (The deepest part of the ocean is the Marianas Trench located in the Pacific Ocean near the Northern Mariana Islands. It has a maximum depth of 35,838 ft or roughly 6.7 miles.) Will man ever be able to probe the depths? Perhaps – but you get the point. The Lord has put MY SIN and YOUR SIN where NOBODY can dig it up and go talking about it.

Part 6

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth,
And in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord;
who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,
born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended into hell.
The third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty;
from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Ghost,
the holy Catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.¹

Has life dealt you difficulties? Are you discouraged not being in the place in life you expected to be at this stage? Are there tragedies, cruelties, heartaches, and hardships – almost too much to bear?

THIS AIN'T ALL THERE IS!

1 Corinthians 15:16-19

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16 If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised. 17 And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is useless, and you are still under condemnation for your sins. 18 In that case, all who have died believing in Christ have perished! 19 And if we have hope in Christ only for this life, we are the most miserable people in the world.

For the believer – resurrection means two things:

1. Life eternal in the presence of heaven.
2. Restoration in the here and now

Let's look for a moment at the ethereal Life everlasting.

Heaven is described thus:

John 14:2, “In my Father’s house are many mansions: if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.”

Kingdom Matt. 25:34, “then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:”

Abraham’s bosom Luke 16:22, 23, “And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; ²³And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.”

Paradise 2 Cor. 12:2, 4, “I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. ³And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) ⁴How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. “

Better country Heb. 11:10, 16, “For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God. . . . But now they desire a better *country*, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.”

Holy city Rev. 21:2, “And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.”

10–27, “And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, ¹¹Having the

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glory of God: and her light *was* like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; ¹²And had a wall great and high, *and* had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are *the names* of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: ¹³On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. ¹⁴And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. ¹⁵And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. ¹⁶And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. ¹⁷And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred *and* forty *and* four cubits, *according to* the measure of a man, that is, of the angel. ¹⁸And the building of the wall of it was *of* jasper: and the city *was* pure gold, like unto clear glass. ¹⁹And the foundations of the wall of the city *were* garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation *was* jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; ²⁰The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. ²¹And the twelve gates *were* twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city *was* pure gold, as it were transparent glass. ²²And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. ²³And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb *is* the light thereof. ²⁴And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. ²⁵And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. ²⁶And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. ²⁷And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."

Rev. 22:1–5, "And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. ²In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, *was there* the tree of life, which bare twelve *manner of* fruits, *and* yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations. ³And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: ⁴And they shall see his face; and his name *shall be* in their foreheads. ⁵And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever."

There are no tears in heaven. No death in heaven. No heartaches, no sickness, -- read it in the last chapters of the book of The Revelation – it's an awesome description. And I think of it every time I stand by the casket of some loved one! We will never be parted from our loved ones – we'll never again have to say, "Goodbye."

I am more concerned today with the hear-and-now:

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Travel with me to Bethany – I wonder what that little town was like. About 2 miles from Jerusalem on the Jericho road. Bethany means, “place of misery.”

In John chapter 11 we are told Jesus loved Mary and Martha and Lazarus – in the next sentence we are told that Lazarus is seriously ill (and Jesus loved him – think on that – in fact Jesus is going to let him die).

Mary and Martha send a runner – a messenger to Jesus, “Come quick, Lazarus – the one you love is very ill!” Jesus sends a message back with the runner, “This sickness is not unto death.”

As the runner comes through the door with the Lord's very promise of good news – methinks Lazarus is drawing his last breath.

What horror – what disappointment. And their reactions when Jesus does come (and Lazarus has been dead for days) – Martha is angry and let's the Lord know it, “IF YOU HAD BEEN HERE – LAZARUS WOULD NOT HAVE DIED-- where were you – I thought you loved us!”

Mary is hurt. I doubt that she even looked into the Lord's face when she said, “Lord, if you had been here he would not have died – why didn't you come and save him.”

Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life.” He asked Martha, “Do you believe this?” She never really answers him -- except to say, “Someday- in heaven . . .”

When Jesus says, “ROLL the stone away.” Martha slips in beside him and whispers in his ear, “What! Are you crazy! He's been dead for 4 days, it's hot – he is going to stink!”

She doesn't understand – in fact I can't see any faith-filled words here.

But she believes – He said, “Roll the stone away, and Martha gives the command to the servants – DO IT!”

You know the rest. Or should I say, Restoration.

Romans 8:11

11 The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as he raised Christ from the dead, he will give life to your mortal body by this same Spirit living within you.

THAT's Resurrection Power at work --- TODAY!

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[1](#)Ronald F. Youngblood, general editor; F.F. Bruce and R.K. Harrison, consulting editors, *Nelson's new illustrated Bible dictionary: An authoritative one-volume reference work on the Bible with full color illustrations [computer file], electronic edition of the revised edition of Nelson's illustrated Bible dictionary, Logos Library System*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997, c1995.

[2](#)*Holy Bible, New Living Translation*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.) 1996.

[3](#)Thomas Nelson, Inc., *Nelson's topical Bible index [computer file], electronic ed., Logos Library System*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997, c1995.