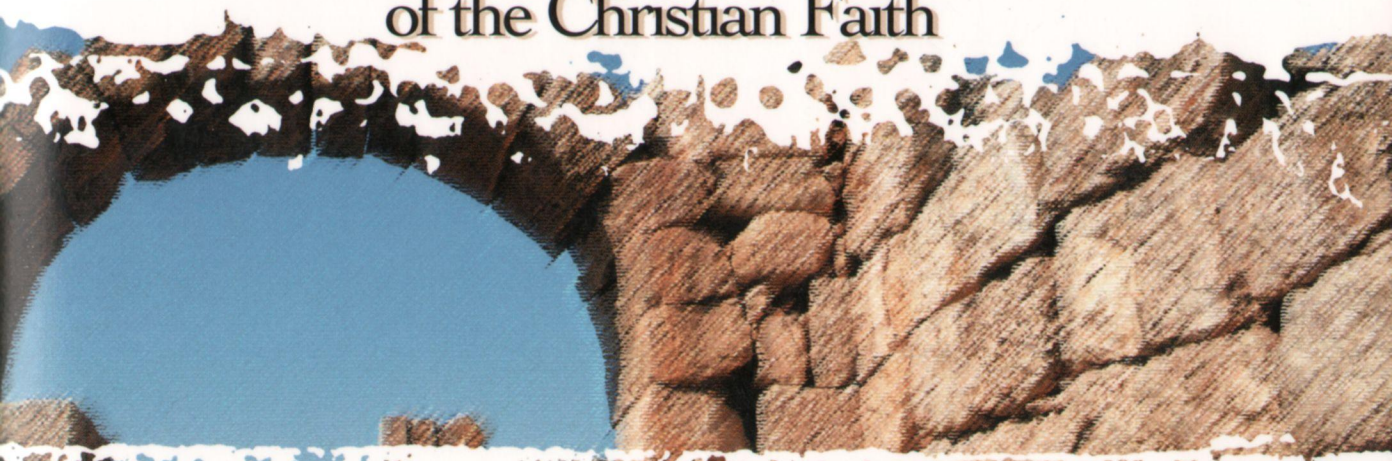

ONE GOD & ONE LORD

Reconsidering the Cornerstone
of the Christian Faith



Mark H. Graeser

John A. Lynn

John W. Schoenheit

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Note: Most Scriptures quoted in this book are from *The New International Version (NIV)*. References taken from other translations or versions will be noted, *i.e.* *King James Version* = (KJV). In verses or quotations from other authors, words in all capital letters or in bold type indicate our own emphasis. Words inside brackets within quotes are also our additions.

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The sacred name of God, Yahweh, is indicated by "LORD."

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Dedication

We would first like to express our deepest love for our heavenly Father and His wonderful Son. We are ever so thankful to be allowed the privilege to study and teach the Word of God to people who hunger and thirst for the truth.

We are also very thankful for the many men and women who have gone before us to make this book possible. Through the ages the people who have held the beliefs espoused in this book have been hated, hunted, persecuted, tortured and killed by professing Christians. Noble and godly men and women suffered terribly, yet went into exile or to their graves rather than deny the Christ they were convinced of from Scripture. The examples of these great men and women are a constant source of courage and conviction to us, and, in part, we dedicate this book to their memory.

I, Mark, gratefully acknowledge the support and love of my dear wife Karen and my four children—Nate, Anita, Julia and David—whose patience and love have enabled me to often sequester myself during the past two years so I could complete my portion of the book. I also dedicate it to our many friends who have made this book possible by their prayer, financial support and hunger to know and speak the truth in love.

I, John L., dedicate this book to my daughter Christine, who, as much as anyone I have ever known, manifests the heart of our Lord Jesus. I also dedicate it to my parents, John and Jane, who all my life have been living examples of God's love, and of faithfulness to the truth they knew.

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Preface

The last verse of the Gospel of John contains an amazing statement about the life of Jesus Christ:

John 21:25 (NRSV)

But there are also many other things that Jesus did; if every one of them were written down, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.

Just writing about his doings would fill the earth with books, and when there are already innumerable books about him written from almost every conceivable perspective, any new book must be vigorously justified. The vast majority of the books in print about Jesus have been written from the “orthodox” perspective of his “deity” by authors who believe in a “triune Godhead.” These folks, called *Trinitarians*, believe that Jesus is “God” the Creator in human flesh and have held the majority position since the Council of Constantinople in 381 AD.¹ This position is embraced by all mainline denominations of Christendom and constitutes the linchpin of the movement toward ecumenical unity among Christians. For the most part, it is assumed that all true Christians hold this position.

A few books challenging the orthodox view have made it into print, but most of these promote the idea that Jesus was someone less than the unique Son of God, as we believe the Bible clearly identifies him to be. Trinitarian authors then strongly argue that unless a person fully embraces Trinitarian doctrine concerning Christ, he will have a truncated and powerless view of him that threatens the integrity of the Christian message. So closely identified with Christianity is Trinitarianism that few of the major Christian book publishers will publish a book unless its author affirms allegiance to the orthodox view.

Thus, we find ourselves representing a distinct minority position among Christian leaders and teachers. If you are *not yet a Christian*, and have never been able to accept the claims made by “orthodox” Christians concerning the identity of Jesus Christ, we implore you to read this book before you reject him. Perhaps we will be able to communicate his great love and wisdom in such a way that you will be able to say from your heart, like the blind man who was healed in John 9: Lord I believe! We believe that if you read this book with an open mind and careful study, comparing what we say with the Word of God you may well be persuaded that what we write is true. If not, we would love to have the opportunity to speak with you further. You will find our address and website at the beginning and end of this book. We love you, and want to convey to you how much you are loved by God and the Lord Jesus Christ. That is our hope and our passion as we request that you continue to read on. May your eyes be opened, and your heart touched by the life and true identity of the greatest man who ever lived.

If you are already a Christian, and currently hold to “traditional” theology about the identity of Jesus Christ, we promise you that this book will challenge what may be your deepest

1. The orthodox definition of the Trinity is as follows: There is One God who co-exists in three eternal and co-equal persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Son, therefore, is fully “God” as much as the Father is. We respectfully dissent from this orthodox position, and the rest of this book will be devoted to explaining why.

convictions. We ask you to maintain a mind open to the possibility of being persuaded by greater light from Scripture. It is our experience that many people who say they believe in the "Trinity" do not actually know what the orthodox definition of the Trinity is. When we explain it to them, a typical response is, "Well, I do not believe *that*." The basic tenet of the traditional doctrine of the Trinity is that "the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God, they are coequal and coeternal and together the three of them make one God." Many people think the Trinity is simply belief in the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit, but that is not so. Although it may seem to you at first that this book teaches a doctrine that is heretical and dangerous, perhaps you will discover that it is actually teaching something very close to what you already believe.

You may have been taught that Jesus Christ is devalued by any concept of him other than the Trinitarian perspective, and this is understandable. We acknowledge that throughout history many of those who have rejected the Trinity have *also* rejected the uniqueness of Christ as the only-begotten Son of God, reducing him to the level of only a great prophet or teacher. For us, however, Christ is also *devalued by the Trinitarian concept of him*, because "nothing is impossible with God." But for a *man* to do what Jesus did is not only a sterling accomplishment worthy of everlasting merit, it also sets a legitimate standard for what we too can do as we follow his example of faith in God. In this book, you will find a perspective of him that recognizes his uniqueness (his virgin birth, sinless life, resurrection) and emphasizes his exaltation to his God-given position as Lord (Phil. 2:8-11).

We acknowledge the fact that Trinitarian Christians have through the centuries advanced the cause of Christ with millions of people. But, in light of their own admission that the doctrine of the "Trinity" is at best hazy in Scripture, we would ask: has this doctrine limited the outreach of the Gospel? How many more people, in particular staunch monotheists such as Jews and Muslims, as well as those rational thinkers for whom a mystical faith is unsatisfying, could have been reached not only for salvation but also for maturing into committed followers of the Lord Jesus Christ?

Perhaps you have been so persuaded by Trinitarian rhetoric that you are afraid to even consider our views, because you have been told that the only people who espouse a non-Trinitarian Christian gospel are heretics and members of "cults." But, on the other hand, you may still be willing to hear a different perspective. The question is whether or not what you believe corresponds with what the whole of Scripture actually says. If it does not, you cannot lose anything by letting go of beliefs that are not truly grounded in the Word of God. We hope that what can be gained will become evident as you continue to read. We will do our best to show you the biblical evidence for our convictions, and we trust that you will find our position as persuasive and compelling as we do. If not, we invite you to dialogue with us.

Why do we feel compelled to undertake the project of penning yet *another* book about the greatest man ever to draw breath? First and foremost, because we feel that our Lord Jesus Christ has been so misrepresented by traditional or "orthodox" Christianity that countless people have been denied the opportunity to meet the real Jesus as he appears in the pages of God's Word. The second reason we are constrained to write this book is because, although we have not read every book written about Jesus Christ, we know of no other book that says what we say in this one. Yes, we have found some of the ideas in the works of others, but this is the only one we know of that puts all these parts together. As for its validity, we hope that you will hear us out and judge for yourself.

Of course, the most important book ever written about Jesus Christ is the first one written about him—the Bible, which we believe to be authored by the Creator of the heavens and the earth. We will be providing you with a lot of evidence that the Bible is a highly credible document, despite what you may hear to the contrary from many sources today. If you are not even sure that you believe in God, please consider that the value of understanding Jesus Christ's identity and accomplishments is that he is the best representative that God has ever had. He is truly the "image of God." The God revealed by Jesus is "the only *true* God" (John 17:3).

Although some may call this work a "doctrinal treatise," it is far more than that. We write with a burning love for The Man who chose to be obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross, for it is through his death that we have life, life with meaning and purpose now and life everlasting in Paradise with him and our Father, God. Our goal is to help people exalt the Lord Jesus as God has exalted him, no more and no less, to the end that they know, love, trust and obey Jesus as their Lord. Seeing the doctrinal truth from Scripture as to who Jesus Christ is and what he is now doing as Head of the Church is the most effectual means to identify with him to the end of doing the works that he did and thus glorifying our Father in heaven. You may notice that in this book we do not capitalize the pronouns referring to Jesus Christ. We do this in keeping with the editorial practice of the vast majority of Bible translators and publishers, who also do not capitalize the pronouns referring to God, which we do. Nothing should be read into this punctuation practice other than a simple desire to distinguish between God and His Son.

It is of the utmost importance that each person comes to a true understanding of who this person called Jesus Christ is, because understanding who he is gives the unbeliever an open door to everlasting life, and the Christian a blueprint for living life in a fallen world. The truth about the identity and work of Jesus Christ satisfies the deepest longings of the human heart—the desire to be loved, understood and appreciated for who we are. We hope to so vividly set forth the heart of our Savior that you develop an insatiable passion to know him intimately.

Rest assured that we have walked the same path of overturned mindsets that we are asking you to now walk, or at least consider walking. As long as God's Word marks that path, we need not fear. Our experience during the past thirty years has been that *many* people have been searching the wilderness of religion, philosophy and theology for that path of logic and truth, and that they rejoice when they find it. To us, it is the one that is most scriptural and rational, and it leaves the fewest questions unanswered. Most importantly, it is the perspective that we believe God has revealed in His Word, the primary source of truth about Jesus Christ. Remember that truth is not determined by whether the majority of people believe it, as the once-upon-a-time-widely-held "flat earth" theory so plainly proves. Each person must be willing to subject even his most deeply held convictions to the scrutiny of God's written Word.

Everyone applauds accuracy as essential to nearly every field of human endeavor. What endeavor could be more important to a person than accurately understanding the written revelation of his Creator? Such an understanding is the basis of one's whole attitude toward God, and affects nearly every aspect of his life. We find it unfortunate that many well-meaning Christians have attempted to characterize, define and understand Jesus Christ more from extra-biblical sources such as Greek philosophy, theological reflection and human speculation than from the Bible alone. All representations of Christ arrived at via these avenues are, to many thoughtful and spiritually hungry people, distorted, unsatisfying and mere caricatures of the real person that he is.

At this point we think it would help you to learn a bit about our own spiritual backgrounds. John Lynn was brought up in a traditional Presbyterian Church (actually he lived at home). John Schoenheit was raised as an atheist. Mark Graeser was exposed to the Unitarian Universalist Church as a small child, and received no formal Christian education while growing up. John Schoenheit majored in philosophy and Mark minored in it. John Lynn has heard of it. We have a background in logic and debate. However, we do not intend to be antagonistically argumentative or controversial, but are simply pursuing the truth with everything we have.

At one time we were all spiritual seekers who had been left cold by traditional Christians and "churchianity." We were reached by an unorthodox group called *The Way International*, considered by some to be a "cult," but for us it was a lifesaver. We were very involved in that ministry for the better part of 20 years, serving in a variety of teaching and leadership positions. We were taught a staunchly non-Trinitarian Christian gospel, but one that viewed a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as at best suspect, and at worst idolatrous. We came to recognize that Jesus Christ was not being exalted and honored as Scripture indicates, so we parted company with *The Way* so that we might better follow The True Way, Jesus Christ.

In the process of our spiritual journey, we have realized that many "Trinitarians" do have a dynamic and personal relationship with Jesus, whom they exalt and honor as "God." We have been humbled to see this. Nevertheless, we remain unable to accept the "logic" of the Trinity, and we find it not only unscriptural but also antagonistic to our passionate desire to identify with The Man Jesus Christ and be like him. Furthermore, our study of Church history has shown us that the Trinity is a concept developed through nearly four centuries with the help of extra-biblical concepts and language. As the reader will discover in this book, this fact is widely known by theologians and Church historians. Amazingly, it is still not recognized by the average Christian.

In writing this book, our purpose is not to be controversial or iconoclastic, nor is it to assault Christian orthodoxy or Trinitarianism, *per se*. Rather, it is to herald what we believe is by far the greatest truth in the Bible, the truth about who Jesus Christ is, what he reveals about his Father God and what he has done, is doing and will do for mankind. We will do our best to allow the living Word of God to "jump start" the minds of any readers who are stalled on the off-ramp of impractical religious tradition.

We have written this book for readers to enjoy and utilize in several ways, depending on their interest in the subject. Many of the appendices in the book are for those who are serious students of the Bible and want reference tools to assist them in their personal, ongoing study of God's Word.

If you are of a more scholarly bent, we have left a trail in the footnotes of this book for you to analyze our methods and reasoning and check our sources. We have made every attempt to provide scholarly support for the positions we take in this book because we admit that we are not recognized Bible scholars. We are largely self-taught, primarily because we do not subscribe to the fundamental beliefs of virtually every Christian seminary at which we might pursue advanced degrees. We would ask those who are impressed by worldly credentials to consider that neither Jesus himself (John 7:15) nor his followers (Acts 4:13) were considered properly educated by their contemporaries. The best recommendation of this book is that through logic

and Scripture, it enables men and women to be devoted followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. Any other validation is secondary at best.

Though we obviously consider the subject of this book a serious one, we often employ humor or irony to both entertain and inspire our readers to think logically according to biblical truth. We realize that we will likely offend some of our readers in the process of pursuing truth, but that is not our intention. We simply desire to be faithful teachers of the Word of God, the literature of eternity that is filled with “exceeding great and precious promises,” chief among which is Jesus Christ, *the Promise*. We pray that what you find herein will engender a passion to *know him, love him and be like him*.

INTRODUCTION

Who Do You Say That He Is?

One evening Jesus was in a boat with his disciples crossing the Sea of Galilee. A sudden, violent storm enveloped them, high waves filled the boat with water and the disciples were terrified. Jesus, however, remained asleep. They awakened him and said, "Don't you care that we are going to die?" Of course Jesus cared about them, and after all, *he* was on the boat *with* them. He arose, rebuked the storm, and the turbulent sea calmed right down. The terrified disciples said among themselves, "What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?" They had never seen anyone act with such fearlessness and such authority, nor wield such godly power. In the Greek text, the apostles' question reads: "Who then is this One?" Indeed, this is the question of the ages, and one that every person must answer for himself.

Some time later as his ministry developed and his fame grew, Jesus asked his disciples a question of his own: "Who do men say the Son of Man is?" (Matt. 16:13). After they reported to him the various opinions circulating among the people concerning who they thought he was, Jesus asked them: "But what about you? Who do **YOU** say that I am?" Peter's response was "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God." Jesus affirmed that not only was that the correct answer, but that Peter knew it because God Himself had revealed it to him.

His question continues to hang in the air even two thousand years later, and it is the question that one day every man and woman will be required to answer. Why? Because God "has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by **THE MAN** he has appointed" (Acts 17:31). There is no more important quest facing mankind than finding out the true identity of Jesus Christ and understanding the significance of his life. The issue is a matter of life and death, both in regard to the quality of one's life now, and his future eternal destiny.

Suffering and Glory

The coming of this Man was first announced in Genesis 3:15, and at that time the two principal aspects of his life were described: suffering and glory. The entire scope of Christological history (that is, "the study of Christ") revolves around these two themes. The multiplicity of misconceptions about him also can be distilled into this paradigm. In general, people have

either demeaned him or elevated him inappropriately. Another way to state the problem is that people have either prevented him from truly suffering or prevented him from being truly glorified. Either way, the true significance of his identity and accomplishments has been distorted, and therefore the essence of the Christian Gospel compromised.

At Jesus Christ's first coming to the Jews, many wrongly expected the Messiah to be more than he was at that time. Their one-sided theological conception of him as the conquering, glorified King kept them from recognizing and appreciating who he was and what he was sent to do. There was no room in their theological inn, so to speak, for him to be the suffering Savior of mankind, and when he was manhandled and crucified, many were offended at him and thought him to be a pretender to the throne of David. On the other hand, others saw him only as the bastard son of Joseph, a mere man who died the death of a common criminal.

Subsequent misconceptions about Jesus Christ have run the gamut, either demeaning or exalting him according to man's imagination. Untethered to biblical truth, these musings of men have included bastard child, extraterrestrial, mushroom cult leader, charlatan, mystic or angelic being. Many Christians have been taught that Jesus must be elevated to the status of a "God-man." Others think of him as just a "good man." Some people believe that we cannot really know if there even was an historical figure called Jesus of Nazareth, while others believe him to be a mythological creation. In fact, every Christological position of which we are aware, at some point either artificially elevates or ignorantly degrades the Lord Jesus. Our quest, then, is to find the true and balanced perspective of this remarkable man who in our view is the very focal point of human history. To do so, we will find that many traditional ideas will have to be jettisoned in favor of the clear testimony of the only credible source of information about this Jew from Galilee who was called in his own tongue, *Yeshua ha Mashiach*, Jesus the Messiah.

A Spiritual Battle

The battle over the true identity of Christ is a very spiritual one with high stakes for mankind. Unquestionably, this Jesus of Nazareth has been the object of more speculation and demonic assault than any other person in the history of man. It is no accident that the name "Jesus Christ" springs spontaneously from the lips of all kinds of people, from the pious priest to the construction worker who has just dropped a cinder block on his foot. Even when Jesus Christ is rejected as an object of faith, he is chosen as an object of derision.

This is predictable based upon what the Bible says is really going on around us. In fact, a major theme of Scripture concerns the ever-raging battle between the true God, the Father of Jesus Christ, and the false god, the "god of this age," whom we now know as Satan, the Devil. He is a shrewd general, directing the main thrust of his attack upon the most vital truths in God's Word. The chief object of his hatred is The Man who now sits at the right hand of God. Accordingly, his primary goal is to blind the minds of men to the truth of the glorious gospel about *Jesus Christ* (2 Cor. 4:3,4). It is sad to say that by a number of means he has been *very* successful in at least distorting, if not totally obscuring, the simple truth of who Jesus Christ is.

As Satan once inspired the evil king Jehoiakim to cut up and then burn the Word of God written by Jeremiah (Jer. 36), so he inspired evil men to destroy the Living Word, Jesus Christ. His relentless assault continues unabated, attempting to undermine the authority and credibility of the written Word of God that makes known the Living Word. His assault is primarily carried out on the battlefield of the *mind*. Today, we see fewer and fewer Christians who actually honor the written Word of God as their only rule of faith and practice. Instead, too many Christians give lip service to biblical authority but in reality rely upon other standards for faith: the historic position of the Church, the testimony of their favorite preachers, the “leading of the spirit,” their own feelings, *etc.*

But as Satan failed to destroy either the scrolls of Jeremiah or the Living Word, Jesus Christ, so he has failed to destroy the written Word of God. In fact, after the original scroll was destroyed, God told Jeremiah to dictate more words than the first scroll contained. Likewise, after Jesus Christ was killed, God raised him from the dead, highly exalted him and gave him the authority to give to all those who believe on him the power to live like he did, doing the works that he did. Thus, Jesus Christ now exerts far more influence on the world than he did when he walked the earth.

In light of this spiritual battle, it is certainly not surprising that through the centuries the Christian Church could be seduced by Satan’s subtlety from the simplicity that is in Christ (2 Cor. 11:3). This is why for the better part of nineteen hundred years the “historic” Christian Church has unwittingly clung to and promoted “a different gospel” about “a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached” (2 Cor. 11:4). The other “Jesus” of historical Christian orthodoxy is a mystical “God-man” who existed before he was born. In this book, we will do our best to provide an alternative to this traditional position, one that we believe fits the evidence and logic of Scripture as a whole. We sincerely believe that a careful, logical and objective consideration of the evidence will lead the reader to the same conclusions that we have reached.

Resetting the Cornerstone

Jesus Christ is, by the agreement of all Christians, the subject of the Bible from Genesis 3:15 to Revelation 22:21. He is the very cornerstone of the edifice of biblical teaching. In Ephesians 2:20 and 1 Peter 2:6, he is called the “chief cornerstone.” 1 Corinthians 3:10 and 11 make it very clear that he is also the foundation for the building of the Church. The cornerstone sets the angles and dimensions for an entire building, which can rise only as high as the foundation and cornerstone permit. If the corner is cut inaccurately, the walls of the building will be skewed and its height will be limited. 2 Timothy 2:15 cautions the student of the Bible to “rightly divide” (*orthotomeo*) the Word of truth. This Greek word, derived from *orthos*, “right” or “straight,” and *temno*, “to cut,” literally means a “right or straight cutting.”

Cutting the cornerstone accurately, therefore, is of the greatest importance for biblical understanding and exegesis and the furtherance of the Christian Gospel worldwide. We must therefore be diligent and skillful in the choice and application of the tools we will use to accomplish this crucial task. As we will attempt to demonstrate, the history of the Church’s

Christology is a tale of misdirected zeal and the use of inappropriate tools, in particular theological reflection, Gnostic mysticism and Neoplatonic speculation. Diligent, even *heroic* effort has been made to rationalize the historically “orthodox” position, despite much contrary evidence from the scope of the Bible and logic.¹ In our view, the result is a view of Christ that cannot stand up to rational or scriptural scrutiny, thus emboldening the critics of Christianity, notably Muslims, Jews and intellectuals. Indeed, we speculate that for every person who has embraced the orthodox view and become a Christian, there is at least one who has rejected Christianity because he or she could not believe in its central teaching of the “divinity of Christ.” It is for this reason and because we believe that the truth honors both God and Jesus that we propose resetting the cornerstone for the Christian faith in a more biblically tenable and supportable position. We also believe that the truly biblical understanding of Christ’s identity is imperative to strengthen the faith of Christians against the onslaughts of the modern and “post-modern” world.

As for the true identity of Jesus Christ, the thesis of this book is as follows: The Jesus of Scripture is the “Last Adam” whom God created as the only possible remedy for the problem of sin and death brought on by the first Adam. What Adam was before his fall is what Jesus was, a man made the way Man was intended to be. God’s Word tells us that Jesus was “made like his brothers in every way.” It says he was “touched with the feeling of our infirmities.” It says that he was “tempted in the same ways we are.” It says that he was tired, hungry and thirsty and that he experienced the full range of human emotions. As the “Last Adam,” Jesus Christ truly was a one-hundred-percent human being.

As human beings with limited ability and perception, it is impossible for us to accurately conceive of, or identify with, the eternal *God* whose throne is the heavens and footstool is the earth (Isa. 66:1). A blind man might as easily describe the color “yellow.” We can, however, conceive of and identify with *The Man* Jesus Christ, who exemplified what God is all about. Jesus Christ perfectly represented his heavenly Father. How? By always saying what God would have said and by doing what God would have done. Remember such statements of Jesus as: “My doctrine is not mine, but His who sent me”; “The Son can do nothing of himself, but only what he sees the Father do;” “I always do my Father’s will.” Because Jesus perfectly lived the Word and will of God, he could say, “If you’ve seen me, you’ve seen the Father.”

The converse is also true—if Jesus Christ is distorted, misrepresented or obscured, the identity of his Father, the “only true God,” is also obscured. This is why the title of this book is *One God and One Lord*, because knowing the true identities of both God and Christ hinges on our correct understanding and usage of biblical language. The Bible is very clear in this regard: there is only *One* God, a unitary personal being, and this God is not Jesus Christ, who is His *Son*. And there is only *one Lord*, a separate being who is not God, his Father. He is the *Lord* Jesus Christ.

1 Timothy 2:5 tells us that “There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, THE MAN Christ Jesus.” Jesus said that no one could truly know the Father except by coming

1. We place quotes around the word “orthodox” because what is considered “orthodox” and “heretical” has changed many times throughout Christian history. As we will point out in Chapter 17 on the beginnings of heresy, what came to be considered “orthodoxy” was in reality a heretical view of Christ that won out. It won out not on the strength of its biblical logic, but by intimidation and force.

through him. Jesus is “the way and the truth and the life.” He is “*the way*” (the Greek word means “the road”) to God. He is “*the truth*” that marks that road, and he is “*the life*” found by those who choose to follow the road. Thus, if we are to know, love, honor and obey the Creator of the heavens and the earth, it is imperative that we *know* the one He sent to reveal Himself, the Lord Jesus Christ. In fact, it is a matter of life and death, for he is the *only* way to the one true God. We believe that when Jesus’ true identity is skewed, those desiring to follow him on the road of life may find themselves disoriented and frustrated. We find it an inescapable conclusion that an erroneous concept of who Jesus is basically leaves Christians with a “you-can’t-get-there-from-here” attitude in their quest to be like him. And after all, that is to be the goal of every Christian—to be like him. Any doctrine of Christ that subverts, hinders or obscures this goal in any way should be held suspect and finally discarded.

So how are we to come to know the truth about who Jesus was, and is? There is no way to know Jesus Christ but to rely on the Bible, the written Word of God, and let God tell us the truth about His only-begotten Son. Our entire argument rests upon this premise: the Bible is the revealed Word and Will of God. If it is anything less than that, our argument will fall to pieces. But we believe there has been an abundance of evidence of the precise inspiration of Scripture that will support this premise.

Ultimately, our goal is to rest upon the authority of the testimony of the biblical text itself so precisely that if the Bible is right, we will be right, and if the Bible is wrong, we will be wrong. If our *interpretation* of the Bible is wrong, we will take full responsibility for it and be willing to stand corrected. Our goal is not to be right in order to make others wrong, and thereby make ourselves look good. Our goal is to assist the reader in heeding the two great biblical commandments:

Mark 12:29-31 (NRSV)

- (29) Jesus answered, “The first is, ‘Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one;
(30) you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’
(31) The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

This love for God and Christ will reveal itself in loving obedience, and this obedience will enable Christ to reveal himself to us. Consider the following verse:

John 14:21 (NRSV)

“They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.”

To know the Lord Jesus Christ, one must first *have* the Word of God, that is, understand it. Then one must also put the Word into practice, that is, *obey* it. To those who do both, the Lord Jesus will make himself real. Knowing the Lord Jesus is the key to loving him, and loving him is the key to serving him. Serving him is the key to a joyous and fruitful life.

In this book, we will allow the Word of God to magnify to us its main subject, Jesus Christ. In order for it to magnify the Lord Jesus to us, we must be careful to pay close attention to the signposts of biblical terminology. If we use words the way God does in His Word, we will not drift into the theological shallows. The Word of God says to be cautious not to add to nor subtract from its words. Extra-biblical vocabulary can easily introduce extra-biblical concepts that are often contradictory to God's original intent. A classic example is the introduction of the Greek word *homoousian* at the council of Nicaea, which we will be exploring in Chapter 18 on the rejection of Scripture and logic. Also, in many cases, equivocation of important terms has led the way to mysticism and incomprehensible dogmas. Therefore, defining words accurately according to their biblical usage will be a major preoccupation of this book.

We will be focusing on the *identity* of Jesus Christ and his relationship with God. Other books could be written on the subject of his *work*, which we will not be focusing on in this book. The foundation for understanding and appreciating Christ's accomplishments lies in properly discerning his identity as "the Last Adam." We are also limiting our historical overview to those ideas, developments and influences that directly bear upon the formation of Christian doctrine concerning his identity and the role that this doctrine has had in Church history. In particular, we will argue that because Christian orthodoxy adopted the means and methods of mysticism, the resulting rejection of reason became a major hindrance to individual spiritual growth and liberation.

In fact, we believe that the historical record shows that the Christian church became an authoritarian and monarchical hierarchy held in place by a set of unintelligible doctrines that needed an elite class of priests to interpret to the masses. The average Christian believer was thus held captive to unquestionable dogmas replete with mystery and paradox until the dawning of the Reformation began to make available intellectual freedom. This book is in line with a historical trajectory begun in the 14th century by John Wycliffe, who began the process of retrieving the Bible from the clutches of spiritual tyrants and returning it to the common sense of the common man. Numerous others since then have reached many of the same conclusions that the reader will encounter in these pages, and most of them have been branded heretics, cultists or blasphemers by the institutional church. Many of them died in pursuit of the truths that the readers of this book will be able to encounter in the safety of modern toleration of religious pluralism and, beyond that, growing indifference to the very idea of "truth." Nevertheless, like grass poking up through cracks in concrete, the living truth of who Jesus Christ is keeps popping up in the pages of Scripture, out from under centuries of misunderstanding, and despite modern indifference.

Part of our intention in writing this book is to acquaint the reader with the large volume of support for our position extant in the literature of modern biblical scholarship, particularly in the past 20 years. Since it does not support traditional theology, much of this work has not found a popular audience and is therefore not found in standard Christian bookstores. We have endeavored to reduce to footnotes most of the references to the work of these scholars in order not to bog down the reader in often tedious and difficult scholarly jargon. But if the reader will be brave and read the footnotes carefully, he will almost find another book within this book.

Our purpose is to strengthen the faith of those who are dissatisfied with traditional Christology by directing them to recognized scholars who have reached the same conclusions as a result of their research. But our fundamental commitment is not to the intellectual

stimulation of our readers with the often detached perspective of the scholar or historian. We write as believers, intent upon learning the truth that might set us free and kindle a fire of desire to further the Gospel of Christ to the ends of the earth. For those who think this book too scholarly, we would plead for grace and understanding and a second or third reading if necessary. In our view, it is the scholars whose theological speculations, often little more than pedantic sophistry, have muddled the waters. To clear things up, we have found it necessary to engage the scholars' arguments head on, and that often requires a commitment to logical reasoning that some readers may find difficult or tedious.

This book has actually evolved over a ten-year period beginning from a paper titled "Rethinking Christology" that Mark Graeser presented to a group of Trinitarian ministers who were attempting to dialogue with and minister to "cultists." Mark's paper forms the basis of several of the chapters of this book. In 1991, John Lynn taught an audio seminar called *Jesus Christ: The Diameter of the Ages*. Its colloquial and devotional flavor is preserved in a number of sections of the book, which will appeal to those readers who are looking for the more entertaining and readable and less scholarly material. We would particularly recommend for their readability and devotional appeal Chapters 1-3, the last section of Chapters 8, 12 and 13. In 1997, John Schoenheit published a work on the Trinity, the highlights of which are represented in Appendix A that handles the verses often used to argue for the Trinity.

Thus, this book represents a collaboration of many years, several people and much study. A subject this important, and so complicated by tradition and misunderstanding, could hardly be handled by any one person. As of result of the team approach to the writing of the book, the reader may at times sense a "patchwork" aspect to the style, as it reflects our different thinking and writing. We trust that the book as a whole will not be skewed in the direction of any personal style, but reflect our unified desire to "speak the truth in love."

Overview

We will now provide an overview of the entire book. In Part 1, we will look at why Jesus Christ is called in Scripture "the Last Adam," and how each of them was the image of God. We will consider the mechanics and the legality of the redemption that the Savior made available to all men. We will consider what Scripture says about Man as "the image of God," and how Jesus, the perfect Man, is now fulfilling the intended destiny of Mankind. Chapter 3 will examine the way Jesus Christ is literally the "purpose of the ages," and look at his post-resurrection glory.

In Part 2, we will then discuss what the Old Testament tells us about the identity of the Messiah in prophecy from two perspectives. The first is the detailed prophetic portrait that is painted by the Hebrew Scriptures about the coming one, and the second is the way the Jews interpreted these prophecies, which were sometimes ambiguous or difficult to interpret. This helps us understand why even today Jews have difficulty believing that Jesus is the promised Messiah.

Part 3 is a detailed analysis of the Four Gospels, which describe the Savior in person. Chapter 6 is an overview of the Gospels, and explains why there are four, Chapter 7 handles the evidence from the Synoptic Gospels (Matt., Mark and Luke), particularly the view presented there of the apparently “reluctant Messiah” who veiled his identity throughout his life. Chapter 8 will handle the Gospel of John in detail, since this is the section of Scripture used to anchor orthodox Christianity. Chapter 9 will look at the relationship between Jesus and the *logos* and handle the first 18 verses of John, called “the prologue,” which are often misunderstood and misinterpreted.

Part 4 will look at the evidence of the remainder of the New Testament, which clearly identifies Jesus of Nazareth as both Lord and Christ. The Book of Acts, the Church Epistles and the Book of Revelation have much to say about who Jesus Christ is and his “functionally equal” relationship with his Father.

Part 5 will focus on the practical aspects of who Jesus Christ is, what he is doing now, and our potential to identify with him to the end that we become like him in thought, word and deed. We will close with a look at the true hope of each Christian, that hope made available by the work of Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God.

Part 6 is an historical perspective on the development of traditional Christology. First we will look at the phenomenon called “the expansion of piety,” which explains corruptions of the text of Scripture and the historical tendency to elevate the identity of Christ. We will then identify the beginnings of heresy as addressed in the epistles of 1 and 2 John, where we can see that an illogical, confusing and self-contradictory view of Jesus Christ had already taken root in the first century of Christianity. We will also look at the influence of Gnosticism and Neoplatonism on the development of Christian doctrine in the centuries after Christ.

The doctrine of the “incarnation” of Christ will then be examined in light of the Apostle Paul’s prophecy in Timothy that Christian leaders would turn away from the truth unto myths. Then we will see how the rejection of Scripture and logic, a crucial element of true faith, led to the idea that God was beyond reason. To conclude our historical perspective, we examine Socinianism as the historical movement most closely aligned to our position, and one that validated the importance of reason and liberty. We will then consider modern trends in the development of both Trinitarianism and Christian unitarianism.

Another virtual “book within a book” is the appendices, which are intended to be used for reference more than to be read straight through. Our hope is that this book will be one that is not read only once and then put away to gather dust, but one that continues to edify, enlighten and inspire the reader to pursue his or her relationship with both the Living Word and the written Word.

What Is at Stake

Some readers may take the position that what we are arguing for is just nitpicking over equally probable biblical interpretations that have no significant practical ramifications. From this perspective, it looks like the world is already full of books detailing every possible theologi-

cal and Christological position, few of which interest the average person. So, they ask, what difference does it make who Jesus really was and is? That is a very good question.

Beyond what we have already asserted about the importance of this subject, we believe there are five ways in which this topic is vitally significant. In the first place, the issue of biblical integrity is at stake. Some interpretations do damage to the integrity of Scripture, even though there may be a few verses that can be squeezed to support them. The question is, does an interpretation fit with Scripture *as a whole*? This is demanded by logic. If the Bible is not to be the foundation for our belief, then we must accept some other basis. If the Bible is taught in such a way that contradictions are ignored, tolerated or created, the Word of God is thus corrupted and made less credible to those people who are unwilling to embrace contradiction in the pursuit of truth.

Second, spiritual tyranny is encouraged when confusing and self-contradictory dogma is required as an object of faith. Rather than honestly persuade people by logically consistent and scripturally sound principles, tradition and man-made “authorities” are set up as lords demanding submission. Spiritual leadership of this sort does not engender authentic discipleship, but in too many cases unquestioning and rigid adherence to incomprehensible doctrines. The shaky underpinnings of their faith are evidenced by their angry and emotional reaction to rational and scriptural challenges. Convictions based in truth empower a patient and loving response toward those who present challenging ideas.

Third, all false interpretations of the identity of Jesus Christ demean both his accomplishments and the nature of the one true God, his Father. Something is inevitably lost when God’s people are unable to clearly discern the face of God, for whatever reason. Any doctrinal system that makes it more difficult to understand the nature of God or appreciate the life and work of the Savior is not in the best interests of Christians or of Christianity itself.

Fourth, false teaching concerning Christ makes it difficult for us to identify with him and believe that it is possible to do the works he did. Since we are commanded to walk in his steps, and are told that we can do the works that he did, any doctrine antagonistic to this is suspect. We assert that our ability to identify with Jesus as a man facilitates our following him, and that any doctrine that hinders our identification with him will correspondingly hinder our ability to do what he did.

Lastly, evangelizing the world is made much more difficult by centering the Christian Gospel on a “God-man,” who is basically a mythological figure and one who does not harmonize with common sense. It is our contention that children, Jews, Muslims and thoughtful truth-seekers everywhere are hindered from believing in Christ when told that he is “fully God and fully man,” “God the Son,” or some other unbiblical description. Jesus commanded his followers to “go into all nations and make disciples.” There is an implied promise in this commandment, which is that as we obey it, he will open the doors for us. The sad state of the world nearly two thousand years after Christians first received this commandment is most telling—there are billions of people who still need to hear the Gospel of Christ. We believe this is because too few human beings have ever heard the unadulterated Gospel (“good news”) about the Savior. What they have heard has been a blend of truth and pagan philosophy. How can this be? Please continue reading!

In the process of writing this book, we have found it necessary to aggressively rethink our own Christological position with scriptural diligence, intellectual honesty and rigorous rationality, being ever-willing to challenge even our most deeply held convictions, assumptions and beliefs. We now invite the reader to join us in this quest, regardless of how uncomfortable the journey may be for him at times. If our beliefs are scripturally sound, they will hold up to scrutiny. If not, we must let them go in favor of something better, by which both our personal lives and the life of the Church can only be enriched. In the course of accompanying us on this path to the truth, we pray that the reader will clearly recognize that our motivation is fervent love for our heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus, and that our main goal in writing this book is that both would receive all the credit and glory due them.

Christianity 101: Two Adams

From the classified section of *The Jerusalem Herald*, Nisan 1, AD 27:

HELP WANTED Redeemer for Mankind

Job description: Man needed to pay price for sins of mankind. Must live totally sinless life. Demanding schedule, constantly on the go. No guaranteed home or income. Must be willing to train forgetful staff who tend to quit under pressure. Must totally fulfill law of Old Testament. Must be absolutely obedient to the will of management. Will ultimately be beaten and humiliated and experience indescribable suffering and anguish. Will become sin offering and die on job.

To qualify: Must be male, minimum age 30. Father must be God, mother must be of house and lineage of David, must have been virgin when he was born. Adopted father must also be of house of David. Must have sinless blood and spotless record. Must have been born in Bethlehem and raised in Nazareth. Must be self-motivated, with aggressive personality and burning desire to help people. Must have tremendous knowledge of Old Testament and firm reliance on biblical principles. Must incorporate the foresight of Noah, the faith of Abraham, the patience of Job, the faithfulness of Joseph, the meekness of Moses, the courage of Joshua, the heart of David, the wisdom of Solomon, the boldness of Elijah, the power of Elisha, the eloquence of Isaiah, the commitment of Jeremiah, the vision of Ezekiel and the love of God.

Wages: Holy spirit (without measure) to start. Additional payoff in intimacy with God and receiving revelation as necessary to complete job. Constant on-job training, supervision and guidance by top-level management.

Benefits: Position could lead to highly exalted position in future if job carried out successfully.

Workman's compensation: Injuries sustained on job, including death, well compensated by promotion including new body. Management will highly promote name upon successful completion of job, and entire publicity department will be devoted to getting name before multitudes. Will assume presidency of expanding international venture (The Ministry of Reconciliation), as Head of Body of well-equipped members ready to move dynamic new product on world market. All in all, tremendous eternal potential for growth and rewards in return on initial investment of giving life.

If qualified, management will contact you. No need to apply.

Why did God need to fill this position of Redeemer? Because He had to “fire” the original general manager of His creation for gross impropriety and malfeasance. When God delegated the oversight of Creation to a *man* with *free will*, He anticipated the possibility of that man’s failure, and formulated a plan to solve the problem. The plan was for *another man* to rectify the catastrophic situation. Why *another* man, when He had such poor success with the first one? Why did He not just march down here and take care of things Himself? Many Christians believe that is exactly what God did—that He became a man in order to redeem mankind. But since man was in such a sorry state that he could not redeem himself, was the only alternative for *God Himself* to do the job? We think there are a number of problems with this theory.

First of all, one of the most defining attributes of God is His absolute holiness.¹ This means that He transcends His creation the way Henry Ford transcended the automobile that he built. Though God can be intimately involved with His creation, He, by definition as “the Creator,” stands distinct and apart from it. He cannot make Himself into a rock or a tree or a frog or a man, because these are all created things. Neither is He “one” with them, as pantheism suggests—that God is “in” the rocks and trees and frogs and men. This is a very basic biblical truth.

Because He is so holy, God knew that He Himself could not *legally* redeem mankind by becoming one of us. Neither can He just make up the rules as He goes along. His righteousness and integrity are absolute, and He cannot break the rules that He has established. One of those rules is that He keeps His Word. That is important, because God never promised to send *Himself* to ultimately redeem mankind. Rather, He promised that “the seed of the woman” (Gen. 3:15) would come, and that this man would do the necessary work.

Furthermore, there is nothing in the Bible to indicate that God can become a true man, because He is *God*. One of the boundaries of God’s nature is given in Numbers 23:12: “God is not a man...” And from the beginning, one of Man’s defining boundaries was that the consequence for disobeying God’s command was *death*. *Potential mortality*, then, was always a defining part of man’s existence. God, therefore, cannot actually *be* a man, because He *cannot* die.² He is immortal, by definition.³ The great pattern of the Bible is that God equips *others* to serve Him and act as His agents. Moses, Gideon, David and Jesus were each sent by God to perform a necessary job. In Jesus’ case, the job was the ultimate redemption of mankind and creation. But how could a *man* do such a job? He could do it by following the pattern established by all the men God sent to perform a task—being equipped by God and then precisely obeying His plan. This is exactly how Jesus Christ accomplished his task as Redeemer. Not only *could* a man do the job, but the job *required* that a man do it, since God Himself could not legally do so. To understand why this is so, we will now turn our attention to the source of the problem that necessitated the sending of another Adam to be Man’s Redeemer.

1. See Lev. 19:2; 20:7,26; 21:8; Josh. 24:19, *et al.*

2. However, He can (and occasionally did) “appear” as a man. Regarding the rare examples of God coming into concretion in the form of a man, see Appendix A (Gen. 18:1,2). In these cases, however, God did not actually transform Himself into a man, but took on the *appearance* of a man so that He could have fellowship with certain people at crucial times in redemption history.

3. 1 Timothy 1:17 clearly identifies God as being immortal, meaning that He cannot die. In fact, He is the very Author of Life itself. An enormous burden of proof is laid upon those who would argue that God Himself could *die* for our sins. If He *were* able to die, who would raise Him from the dead? (See Appendix A (1 Tim. 1:17).

The First Adam

Exploring the biblical background of the need for a Redeemer is crucial to understanding both the integrity of the Bible and the identity of Jesus. Before we subject this remarkable man from Galilee to a needless onslaught of theological speculation, we must carefully analyze the biblical relationship between the “first Adam” and the “Last Adam.” Even modern biblical scholars are recognizing that this parallel between the two “Adams” was a key element of apostolic Christianity, and is probably the earliest and richest biblical insight concerning the identity of this unique man named Jesus Christ.⁴ We, too, have come to the conclusion that this relationship is the key to understanding and appreciating Jesus’ identity, and that it establishes the first boundary marker in our survey of this subject.

Once upon a time—“in the beginning”—God was all by Himself. His heart’s desire was, in essence, a family to love and be loved by. First, He created angels and other spirit beings. He then made two people—a man and a woman—and gave them dominion over the earth, their home. God’s instructions were simple—He told them to multiply and to fill up the earth with more people after their kind, *i.e.*, *mankind*. He gave them only one prohibition—not to eat of a particular tree in the garden. They chose to disobey their Creator, and thus wreaked havoc not only upon His originally perfect creation, but also upon their own offspring.

The first Adam was part of a creation that God declared to be “very good.” His “seed,” therefore, was perfectly designed to reproduce “fruit after its kind,” even as the plants and animals were. Therefore we can assert that Adam was genetically flawless, but he was not a robot. He had the quality that goes a long way in defining what a human being is, as distinct from animals: freedom of will. Where animals are governed by instinct, man was made with a brain that made him able to be self-aware and govern himself. He was therefore well equipped to understand that he was a being that owed his existence to his Creator. He could learn from his environment and choose his behaviors. It was up to him to make decisions in response to God’s commandments, whereas animals receive their “commandments” as a part of their genetic packaging. Raccoons do not choose whether or not to raid a garbage can.

This privilege to choose was not granted only to Adam. The same held true for his “wife,” Eve (they never had a formal ceremony—Adam just awoke from a nap and found out he was married!). It is not our purpose here to examine the mechanics of Adam and Eve’s original sin, but suffice it to say they did the one and only thing they were not supposed to do—they ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Though they both partook of it, God held Adam responsible. His disobedience revealed that in the depth of his heart, Adam came to doubt

4. In theological terms, this is called “Adam Christology,” and many scholars acknowledge that this was the “Apostles’ doctrine” concerning the identity of Jesus. James D.G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making* (Grand Rapids MI, W. B. Eerdmans, 1989) notes on pp. 114,115: “We have...seen how *widespread* [his emphasis] was this Adam Christology in the period before Paul wrote his letters—a fact not usually appreciated by those who offer alternative exegeses of the [Phil. 2:6-13] hymn.” Dunn also quotes Young: “It is eschatology, not incarnation, which makes Christ final in the New Testament...Christ is final for Paul, not as God incarnate, but as the Last Adam.” The Apostle Paul compares and contrasts Jesus and Adam in three key places in Scripture: Romans 5:12ff, 1 Corinthians 15:22 and 45, and Philippians 2:6-13 (and also Hebrew 2:8 if Pauline authorship is accepted). We will visit and revisit these passages throughout the book.

God's true love for him. Thus, he did not believe that God would provide for him what he really needed, and he chose to take matters into his own hands and provide for himself. Of course, the consequences were far reaching—for him, his wife and all their descendants.

In fact, Adam's disobedience set the general pattern of all men's subsequent disobedience to God (Rom. 1:18-21). He also set the pattern for the coming Messiah in other ways as well, in particular as the following scripture indicates:

Romans 5:14 (NRSV)

Yet death exercised dominion from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam, who is a type of the one who was to come.

There are many people in the Old Testament who could be called "types of Christ." But this is the only place in the New Testament that directly points back to a particular person who would set *the* pattern for who the Messiah would be like. Adam was a "pattern of the one to come," in that both Adam and Jesus Christ were men who by one act had a universal effect on mankind.

The record of Adam's transgression makes it clear that the verb "to sin" means to disobey the Word of God. By his action of sinning, he introduced "sin" into God's perfect creation. Thus, a state of corruption was imposed upon God's perfect Creation, which was now indelibly tainted and would require a process of redemption. For the catastrophic consequences of sin to be completely rectified, a new heaven and earth were necessary.

The entrance of sin caused an even greater problem for God to solve—*death*. The following verse clearly illustrates this:

Romans 5:12

Therefore, just as **sin** entered the world through one man, and **death** through **sin**, and in this way **death** came to all men, because all **sinned**.

Thus, the twofold problem that God had to solve was *sin* and *death*. Adam and Eve disobeyed God, which was an individual act of "sin." But by this one unrighteous act, they catalyzed a transformation of creation from a state of perfection and righteousness to a state of "sin." When they did, they and all their descendants became subject to death, the direct result of sin. After that, the only kind of children they could produce were children "separated from the life of God" (Eph. 4:18), and hence, from the moment of their birth destined to die.

God's Solution: Another Adam

What was God's solution to the problem of sin and death? The only solution legally available: *another* Adam! In fact, if we had to sum up the whole Bible in five seconds, we could say: "It is the story of two men and their affect on mankind. The first man wrecked everything; the second man is fixing it."

Like the first Adam, the Last Adam would have to be, first of all, *genetically* flawless and without a sin nature.⁵ It was God's responsibility to create him that way, which He did via the virgin birth. But more than that, the Last Adam had to be *behaviorally* flawless. God could not be responsible for that. He could only hope that, in contrast to the first Adam, the Last Adam would be obedient throughout his life and thus accomplish the redemption of mankind. In essence, God took a risk and trusted that the Last Adam would trust Him. This is love-in-action: taking a risk, giving second chances, demonstrating commitment to a promise. As the Bible says in 1 John 4:8, God is love, and He has therefore modeled it perfectly. In our view, His plan, as revealed in His Word, exemplifies a far greater love than if He had somehow become a man Himself.

Before looking at God's initial reference in Genesis 3:15 to the special promised offspring of Adam and Eve, we want to get a running start in the broader context of the passage.

Genesis 3:21 (NRSV)

And the LORD God made garments of skins for the man and for his wife, and clothed them.

Were Adam and Eve's outfits the first clothing ever mentioned in the Bible? No, they had earlier become the first tailors in the Bible, as the following verse indicates:

Genesis 3:7

Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

Here we have, in essence, the birth of "religion." After having failed to keep God's commandments and thereby stand righteously before Him, the first humans tried to cover their own sin, to "justify" themselves. This marked the beginning of a sinful human pattern: man attempting to cover his guilt with the works of his own hands in a self-righteous effort to earn favor with God. The futility of such religious efforts to remove the guilt inherent in all mankind is revealed by the fear that gripped them in the presence of God, as the next verse shows.

Genesis 3:8 (NRSV)

They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife **hid themselves** from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

We can see that religion is a very poor substitute for a personal relationship with the Creator based on trust in Him, and it failed to produce any confidence or faith in God's loving care. In fact, the first humans tried to *hide* from Him, which is precisely the naked effect of sin—it drives a wedge between God and man!

5. Because the first Adam was genetically flawless, we can safely conclude that the Last Adam was also. Scientific evidence corroborates this truth. In his book, *The Seed of the Woman* (Brockville, Ontario, Doorway Publications, 1980), Arthur Custance does an admirable job on the subject of the genetic perfection of Jesus Christ. Although the entire thesis of the work is important to our point, pp. 282-286 are especially relevant.

It is very significant, then, that the first thing God did for mankind after they sinned but before He ejected them from Paradise, was to get rid of their fig leaf underwear and make them some new clothing. In effect, He said to them, “You *can’t* go out looking like that—and you *are* going out!” The clothing they had made for themselves was not a sufficient covering as far as God was concerned. Most significant is the material from which the new clothes were made—animal skins. Did God get the skins from animals who donated their extras? No, animals like to be clothed too. What we have here is the first *shedding of blood* in the Bible. In His grace and mercy, God instituted a substitutionary sacrifice for the sin of Adam and Eve, one that clothed them in a temporary righteousness and allowed them to live until the seeds of death planted in them came to fruition some 900 years later. The blood of animals was shed to provide a covering for mankind that was “suit-able” in God’s sight.

Remember that from Genesis 3:15 on, Scripture is pointing toward the coming Redeemer. The shedding of the animals’ blood was a foreshadowing of the shedding of the blood of “the Lamb of God,” a sacrifice necessary for God to be able to clothe with His righteousness those who would believe on this Redeemer. With the sacrifice of animals, and the subsequent clothing of Adam and Eve in their skins, God made *temporary* atonement for the sin they had just committed. In light of this pattern, we can appreciate that the shed blood of Christ, the “Lamb of God,” made *permanent* atonement for mankind, and also made it possible for people to be “clothed with power from on high” (Luke 24:49). No longer is anyone who believes in Jesus Christ spiritually “naked.”

Jesus Christ had to be the Last Adam, a “lamb from out of the flock,” but “without spot or blemish” so that he could die as an acceptable sacrifice.⁶ By being both genetically *and* behaviorally flawless, the Last Adam’s life would be a sufficient sacrifice for the *sin nature* inherent in all men, as well as for all their sinful behavior in the future. We will see in the Book of Hebrews that the reason the Last Adam had to be a *true man* was so that he could *die* to pay the price for the sins of all men. We will also see that via his death, he “took the Devil’s best punch,” and that in his resurrection, he got up “off the canvas.”

In Genesis 3:9-13, God questioned both Adam and Eve about their disobedience, and then prophesied concerning the consequences of their sin. But God’s harshest judgment was reserved for His nemesis, the “Serpent,” Satan. He turned to Satan and pronounced the death sentence upon His archenemy, the one who had masterminded the downfall of the first man. How fitting that the first announcement of the coming Redeemer was made “in your face” to the one responsible for the introduction of sin, evil and death into God’s creation.

Genesis 3:15 (NRSV)

I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring [seed] and hers; he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.

Let us now unpack this verse, which is one of the most loaded-with-truth verses in the entire Bible. Theologians refer to this verse as the “proto-evangelium” because it basically

6. We use “lamb from out of the flock” to bring together two concepts—first, that Jesus was the *true* Passover lamb, a lamb taken from the flock of sheep, and second, that there are many scriptures that say that Jesus was one of us. He was one of the “brothers” (Deut. 18:18; Heb. 2:11), he was a man, the Last Adam, and thus he was like the Passover Lamb in that he was “of the flock,” not an outsider, but truly one of us.

capsulizes all the rest of Scripture by foretelling both the sufferings and glory of the Messiah. It also foretells the “head-to-head” conflict between the promised seed and the serpent, until the destruction of Satan is accomplished in one of the final acts of redemption before Paradise can be restored.⁷ To us, this verse stands as a marvel of God’s poetic and literary genius. It is no wonder that the Bible has been called “the literature of eternity.” In two simple sentences this verse sets forth the promise, the conflict and the destinies of both Christ and Satan, who were to be the two principal antagonists in the great struggle to complete the process of redemption. Today we can view this verse with 20/20 biblical hindsight and see in it truths that those of Old Testament times did not clearly understand.

It is very significant that Satan is presented as a serpent crushed under the foot of the woman’s offspring. First of all, we should note how appropriate this image is, because poisonous snake are best killed by crushing its head, so it cannot rear back and strike. But before being crushed, the serpent would bite “the heel” of the promised seed, causing a time of suffering.⁸ This was the first prophecy of his suffering and death required for the redemption of mankind.

It is obvious to us today that there is a temporal sequence of events being set forth. This coming seed would *recover* from being struck in the heel and then strike the head of his adversary after that.⁹ What we see foreshadowed here is the *resurrection* of Jesus Christ and his future destruction of the Devil. Revelation 20:10 tells us that the old serpent will one day be cast into the lake of fire where he will burn for “ages unto ages,” and Ezekiel 28:18 tells us that he will eventually “be brought to ashes.”¹⁰ From our vantage point in the Church Age, we can see that the serpent’s head will be crushed by the exalted one who was raised from the dead with a new, glorious body and made Head, first of the Church and then of the whole earth in his Millennial Kingdom. As we will see in 1 Corinthians 15:24-28, Christ must reign until all God’s enemies are subdued, and Satan is “Public Enemy #1.”

The next truth in this verse is that the coming one, the solution to the problem of sin and death, would be a *man*. We know this by the reference to him as a “seed.” Adam and Eve were the only two people ever to start tall and without navels, that is, they did not begin as seeds in the wombs of their mothers. Of course, Adam and Eve could not be born because there was no

7. See Appendix F on the Satan/Christ parallelism, which will also be addressed in Chapter 3.

8. It is significant that only two body parts are mentioned in this verse: the head and the heel. The heel represents the time when Messiah had a body vulnerable to the serpent’s bite, which caused death. The “head” foretells a time in the future when the Redeemer would be in a place of authority, and able to crush the Serpent’s head. God has given the promised seed all the authority he needs to complete the job he has been given.

9. The *NIV* and some other versions make a differentiation in the verbs usually translated “bruise,” “strike” or “crush.” The Hebrew text uses the same word for both verbs used in this sentence. The Hebrew word is *shup* and it means “to bruise” or “to crush.” Although it could be shown from the entire scope of the Word that the Serpent would only “bruise” Jesus’ heel, and that Jesus will “crush” his head, that truth is not clearly brought out here. It is more accurate to translate the verb *shup* the same way, either “bruise” or “crush.” The Serpent did crush Jesus’ heel, but having a crushed heel only put him down for a short time—three days and three nights. When Jesus crushes the Serpent’s head, it will put him “down for the count.”

10. *Is There Death After Life?*, (Ch. 4, pp. 45-49), available from CES.

one to father and mother them, so God created them. Then He made it plain that they were to “be fruitful and multiply and fill up the earth.” God wanted them to do this while they were in their original state, so that their descendants would live forever in the original Paradise. However, as we know, they disobeyed God and thus could produce nothing but a race of mortals—people doomed to die.

Because the Last Adam had to be a man, he had to start as a *seed* and be *born* of a woman. But in order to have the potential to become the Redeemer of mankind, he had to start with a sinless nature like the first Adam did. Genesis 3:15 predicts how God would accomplish this seemingly impossible feat, and that is the next great truth revealed in this verse. Note that God referred to the seed as “her” seed. In retrospect, we see in these words a foreshadowing of the virgin birth.¹¹ In a normal birth, it is the man who puts the seed into the woman, where it combines with an egg and grows for nine months. When it came to Jesus Christ, however, it was God who put a perfect human seed (the Greek word for “seed” is *sperma*) into the womb of a virgin named Mary.¹² The child resulting from this union, therefore, had the same genetic flawlessness as the first Adam. The following verses make it plain that God was the direct cause of Jesus’ conception.

11. It is often taught, and until recently we also believed, that Genesis 3:15 was a specific prophecy of the virgin birth because of the phrase “her seed.” We assumed a literal meaning of the word “seed,” equivalent to “sperm,” and took that to be a figure of speech to emphasize that God was the author of such a seed, since a woman does not generate “seed” herself. While the Hebrew word *zera*, here translated “seed,” occurs more than 200 times in the Hebrew text of the Old Testament, and does mean “seed” (literally, like what is sown in the ground—See Gen. 1:11, *etc.*), or “semen” (Gen. 38:9; Lev. 15:16), it can also mean “offspring,” “descendants,” or “children” (Ps. 22:23; Isa. 1:4).

It was quite understandable to the Hebrews, then, that in this sense a woman could have “seed,” *i.e.*, *children*. That fact is very clear in the Old Testament. In Genesis 4:25, when Seth was born, Eve comforted herself over the death of her firstborn, Abel: “Adam lay with his wife again, and she gave birth to a son and named him Seth, saying, ‘God has granted me another child [seed] in place of Abel, since Cain killed him.’” This verse makes it very clear that Eve had “seed.” In Genesis 16:10, an angel was talking to Hagar, Abraham’s Egyptian slave, about her children: “The angel added, ‘I will so increase your descendants [seed] that they will be too numerous to count.’” The angel was talking to Hagar, and spoke about her “seed,” yet she was not even in the genealogy leading to Christ. Later, when Abraham wanted a wife for his son, he sent his servant, who found Rebekah. As her family sent her away to Abraham, they blessed her and spoke to her of their hopes for her children: “And they blessed Rebekah and said to her, ‘Our sister, may you increase to thousands upon thousands; may your offspring [seed] possess the gates of their enemies’” (Gen. 24:60).

The book of Leviticus also speaks of a woman having seed: “But if a priest’s daughter becomes a widow or is divorced, yet has no children [seed], and she returns to live in her father’s house as in her youth, she may eat of her father’s food. No unauthorized person, however, may eat any of it” (Lev. 22:13). The book of Ruth contains a pertinent reference. The elders of Bethlehem spoke to Boaz, who had just stated that he would marry Ruth. The elders said, “Through the offspring [seed] the LORD gives you by this young woman, may your family be like that of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah” (Ruth 4:12). In this verse, the offspring, the seed, was the gift of the Lord given to Boaz by Ruth. Obviously we are not talking about the sperm, but we are talking about the children, because it would be by Ruth that the Lord would give children [seed] to Boaz. This same truth is found in 1 Samuel 2:20: “Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, saying, ‘May the LORD give you children [seed] by this woman to take the place of the one she prayed for and gave to the LORD.’ Then they would go home.” Again, the husband is being given “seed” by the wife.

From Hebrew lexicons and from the text of Scripture itself, the word “seed” can mean “offspring” or “children.” Women did have “seed,” not in the sense of “sperm,” but in the sense of “children.” This fact explains why the Jews were not expecting Christ to be born of a virgin, and even Mary herself, a believer and descendant of David, asked the angel how she could give birth to Israel’s Messiah without having a husband (Luke 1:34). We now know that Christ was born of a virgin, and looking back we can see that the possibility is allowed for in Genesis 3:15. However, to say that Genesis 3:15 specifically prophesies a virgin birth is not correct. The verse was written by Israelites for Israelites, and presumably they knew their own language well, yet they read the verse for centuries and understood that it referred to the Messiah, without knowing or believing it foretold a virgin birth.

Luke 1:30-35 (NRSV)

(30) The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God.

(31) And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus.

(32) He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David,

(33) He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there will be no end."

(34) Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?"

(35) The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God."

Mary asked the angel Gabriel a very logical question: How would a baby be conceived in her womb without a man being involved? Gabriel's reply contains a great truth that many Christians throughout history have overlooked because of their theological assumptions. In verse 35, the Greek conjunction translated "so" (*NIV*) and "therefore" (*KJV*) indicates the *cause* responsible for the eventual birth of "the holy one," the Son of God. From the Greek word for "born" (*genao*), we get the word "Genesis," and it denotes the *beginning* of Jesus in the womb of Mary.¹³ This makes it very plain that Jesus Christ began in the womb of Mary, just as every human being begins in the womb of his or her mother. If Jesus Christ is truly a *man*, the Last

12. It could be argued that God did not create "seed" or "sperm" in Mary that then fertilized her egg, but rather that He created a zygote, a fertilized egg inside Mary that then grew into the child, Jesus. This latter view is the view of all Trinitarians who argue that Jesus, who pre-existed his birth as some form of spirit being, "incarnated" (literally, "came into flesh") in the womb of Mary. Scripture is not explicit about this, which is not surprising since the conception of Mary occurred long before test tube babies, surrogate mothers and *in vitro* fertilization. Nevertheless, we believe the language of Scripture is still capable of revealing to us what happened. If God created a zygote in Mary's womb, we believe the language of creation would appear somewhere in the records of the conception and birth of Christ. Instead, we find that Christ is called the "seed" (Greek = *sperma*) in the Bible. Also, the Word of God talks of Mary's "conception," which would not really be accurate if she had not in fact conceived. Furthermore, when the angel was explaining to Mary how she would become pregnant, the terminology he used of God's interaction with Mary, *i.e.*, "come over you" and "overshadow you," seems to portray God's role as a Father and impregnator, not as a creator. Lastly, we would point out that Jesus is said to be from the line of David through his father and his mother. For us it is easier to understand him being called that if Mary were his mother in the ordinary sense of the word. We do not believe that Mary having a genetic contribution to Jesus would have placed his genetic perfection in jeopardy. This is no doubt at least a large part of what Philippians 2:6 means when it says that Jesus was in "the form of God." That is, his body was the result of the direct action of God, even as Adam's was. The difference between the two Adams in this regard was that one awoke fully formed while the other was formed in a woman's womb and went through the entire process of human development.

13. Two similar Greek words, *genesis* and *gennesis*, can be translated "birth." But *genesis* can also mean "creation," "beginning" and "origination." Since these words are very similar, a scribe could have easily changed the one to the other to eliminate the idea that the so-called "eternal" Son of God had a "beginning," which was the position of the "heretical" Arians. Bart Ehrman proposes a reason why the text to be corrupted in this way, with *genesis* changed to *gennesis*:

Adam, he could not possibly have existed prior to his birth. How can one exist before he exists? ¹⁴

The third great truth in Genesis 3:15 is that the Man, man's Redeemer, would suffer. His "heel" would be "struck." This was a prophecy of his suffering and death that was required for the redemption of mankind. The fourth truth in this verse goes hand-in-hand with the third. It is obvious to us today that this coming seed would *recover* from being struck in the heel and strike the *head* of his adversary. What we see foreshadowed here is the *resurrection* of Jesus Christ and his future destruction of the Devil. Revelation 20:10 tells us that the old Serpent will one day be cast into the lake of fire where he will burn for "ages unto ages," and Ezekiel 28:18 tells us that he will eventually "be brought to ashes."

The last truth that we see in Genesis 3:15 is perhaps the *pièce de resistance*! It also relates to the other reason why Jesus Christ is called a "seed" in this, the first mention of him in Scripture. What is the purpose of a seed? *To produce fruit after it's kind*. This is clearly communicated in the first chapter of the Bible, where we see God establish the fruit—seed—fruit cycle. Every plant produces a "fruit" wherein is "seed," which when germinated will reproduce the same "kind" of plant.

Genesis 1:11-13 (NRSV)

(11) Then God said, "Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth **that bear fruit with the seed in it.**" And it was so.

(12) The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and **trees bearing fruit with seed in it.** And God saw that it was good.

(13) And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

God also made the animals to reproduce their own "kind." That is, the "seed" of the male would combine with the egg of the female and reproduce the same "kind" of animal. Is not this same principle also being communicated in connection with the Last Adam in the following verse?

John 5:26 (NRSV)

For just as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to **have life in himself.**

When one now asks why scribes might take umbrage at Matthew's description of the "genesis" of Jesus Christ, the answer immediately suggests itself: the original text could well be taken to imply that this is the moment in which Jesus Christ comes into being. In point of fact, there is nothing in Matthew's narrative [nor Mark's or Luke's, for that matter!], either here or elsewhere throughout the Gospel, to suggest that he knew or subscribed to the notion that Christ had existed prior to his birth...Anyone subscribing to this doctrine [of Christ's "pre-existence" and "incarnation"] might well look askance at the implication that Matthew was here describing Jesus' origination, and might understandably have sought to clarify the text by substituting a word that 'meant' the same thing, but that was less likely to be misconstrued. And so the term *genesis* in Matthew 1:18 would represent an orthodox corruption.

Bart D. Ehrman, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture* (Oxford University Press, N.Y., 1993), pp. 75,76. See also Chapter 13 on "The Expansion of Piety."

¹⁴ The concept of "the pre-existence" of Christ, and its companion concept, "the incarnation, has caused many problems for theologians. We discuss the issue in detail in Chapter 17.

The chief property of a seed is that it has “life in itself.” That is what enables it to reproduce after its kind. One day, as we will see in Chapter 12, Jesus Christ will produce a new race for a new age. He will do this by reproducing himself after his kind.” This truth is clearly communicated in the following verses.

Philippians 3:20,21 (NRSV)

(20) But our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

(21) He will transform the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, by the power that also enables him to make all things subject to himself.

Adam: The Pattern of the Coming Redeemer—Two Men, Two Acts, Two Universal Results

The plan of redemption summed up in Genesis 3:15 is from then on unfolded throughout the rest of Scripture. Another “Adam,” who could exist only by means of birth, had to come and live a life of perfect obedience to God, all the way to a torturous death on the Cross. As we have pointed out earlier, some say that the redemption of mankind could have been accomplished only by God becoming a man and laying down his life, and this is known by the non-biblical term, “the incarnation.”¹⁵ The answer to this very common teaching is so important that we must repeat it here. Such a “man” could not be a *true* man, as Adam was. As we are seeing, Scripture makes it plain that the Redeemer had to be a *man* so that he could *die* for the sins of all mankind (Heb. 2:9,14; Rom. 5:17). Is it really plausible that *God*, who is the Author and very essence of life, could *die*? Justice required that a representative of the race of those who sinned be the one to die to atone for that sin. This is the irrefutable logic of Romans 5:12-17, to which we will refer many times in discussing who Jesus is.¹⁶

15. “The incarnation” is the phrase some theologians have coined to describe “when God became a man.” We assert that the Bible does not teach that God became a man, but rather that He had a Son. Allow us to point out that the word “incarnation” never appears in Scripture. See Chapter 17.

16. It is common for Trinitarians to argue that Christ must be God because “a man could not atone for the sins of mankind.” Theologians through the ages have varied greatly in their opinions of exactly how Christ could accomplish redemption for fallen man, and these theological musings can be found in any good theological dictionary under the heading of “Atonement.” However, a standard argument goes something like this: “Mankind has sinned against an infinite God, and therefore the sin is infinitely great. It takes an infinite being to atone for infinite sin, and the only infinite being is God. Therefore, since Christ atoned for sin, Christ must be God.” This argument, which seems reasonable to some people, is man-made, and nothing like it can be found in Scripture. What can be found in Scripture is simple and straightforward: “For just as through the disobedience of the one **man** the many were made sinners, so

Jesus Christ's original *genetic* purity, coupled with his subsequent *behavioral* purity, made him the perfect sacrifice for both the *sin nature* all men inherited from the first Adam and the corresponding *sinful behavior* of all men who would ever live.¹⁷ Because of His Son's sinless life and substitutionary sacrifice, God then had the legal right to extend grace to mankind. Jesus Christ became the perfect sacrifice and died in place of all men. Thus, those who appropriate unto themselves the benefits of this sacrifice by faith in Christ's atoning death exchange their inherent guilt for his righteousness. Hallelujah!

Not only did the Last Adam have to be able to die; he had to be able to *sin* as well. Many Christians have been taught that it was impossible for Jesus to sin, but, logically, the Last Adam, of necessity, had to have had the same freedom of will that the first Adam had. To say anything less is to devalue Jesus' walk of righteousness. His behavioral perfection was ultimately dependent upon himself alone. He had the choice of whether or not to obey God, and hence he was temptable. Scripture makes it clear that *God* cannot be tempted (James 1:13). If Jesus had not been able to sin like the first Adam, his temptations would have been inauthentic, and his "accomplishment" of perfect obedience would have been a foregone conclusion rather than truly praiseworthy. We will examine this subject further in the next chapter.

Remember that the whole Bible is essentially the story of two men and their affect upon mankind—the first Adam and the Last Adam. It points up the contrast between the first Adam's disobedience, death and production of a race of mortals (people destined to die), and the Last Adam's obedience, life and his production of a race of people who will live forever. This truth is clearly highlighted in the Book of Romans, which is the foundational doctrinal treatise of the Church Epistles. The key passage we need to examine is found in Romans 5:12-19, where we see summarized the stark contrast between the first Adam and the Last Adam. Verse 12 delineates the twofold problem of sin and death that all mankind faces due to the sin of the first Adam.

also through the obedience of the one *man* the many will be made righteous" (Rom. 5:19). There is not a single verse anywhere in Scripture that hints in any way that "God" was a sacrifice for sin.

"The Church Fathers" tried to explain in great detail how Christ could atone for the sins of mankind, and offered many different theories as to how atonement could be accomplished. Origen, Augustine and others believed that Christ was a payment made by God to Satan. Others taught that Christ was not a substitute for man, but rather a representative of man, and somehow the effect of his sufferings and resurrection extend to all mankind. In the Middle Ages, Anselm taught that mankind's sin offended God, and that Christ's redemption was an act of "satisfaction," to appease God. Abelard explained Christ's atonement in terms of love and the response of love elicited from the sinner due to Christ's example. The list of man's theories about exactly how our atonement was accomplished is long, and entire books have been written on the subject.

The reason for the varying theories is that the New Testament does not set forth a "theory of atonement," it just states the facts of the case, *i.e.*, that Christ's death paid for sin. Scripture makes many and varied references to the atoning work of Christ. Christ is called a "sacrifice" (Eph. 5:2; Heb. 9:26), a "sin offering" (Isa. 53:10; 2 Cor. 5:21 [*NIV* alternate reading]), a "ransom" (Matt. 20:28; 1 Tim. 2:6; Heb. 9:5) and an "atoning sacrifice" (Rom. 3:25; 1 John 2:2; 4:10). We do not see the need or reason to build a "theory of atonement" when none is offered in the Word of God. The words of the Word are sufficient. As far as the subject of this book is concerned, the most important conclusion that can be drawn from what is revealed in the Word of God is that it is unbiblical to assert that Christ had to be God to pay for the sins of mankind when the Bible explicitly says that payment for sin came "by man." See also Chapters 16 and 17.

17. There can be a distinct difference in the usage of the terms "sin" and "sins" in the Word of God. Often, "sins" refers to the "fruit" of the old nature, while "sin" refers to the "root," or the old nature itself. See E. W. Bullinger, *The Church Epistles* (1991 reprint Johnson Graphics, Decatur, MI, 1905) pp. 27,28.

Romans 5:12-14 (NRSV)

(12) Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all, because all have sinned—

(13) Sin was indeed in the world before the law, but sin is not reckoned when there is no law.

(14) Yet death exercised dominion from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam, who was a **type of the one to come**.

There are many people in the Old Testament who could be called “types of Christ.” But this is the only place in the New Testament that directly points back to a particular person who would be *the* pattern for who the Messiah would be like. Adam was a “type (pattern) of the one to come,” in that both Adam and Jesus Christ had a universal effect on mankind by one act, as the next verses in the context elucidate:

Romans 5:15-19 (NRSV)

(15) But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by **the one man's trespass**, much more surely have the grace of God and the free gift **in the grace of the one man**, Jesus Christ, abounded for the many!

(16) And the free gift is not like the effect of **the one man's sin**. For the judgment following **one trespass** brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brings justification.

(17) If, because of the **one man's trespass**, death exercised dominion through that **one**, much more surely will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness exercise dominion in life through the **one man**, Jesus Christ.

(18) Therefore just as **one man's trespass** led to condemnation for all, so **one man's act of righteousness** leads to justification and life for all.

(19) For just as by **the one man's disobedience** the many were made sinners, so by **the one man's obedience** the many will be made righteous.

It is easy to see the contrast between the two men in the above verses. This truth about the two Adams is also featured in another Church Epistle closely related to Romans—1 Corinthians. It addresses the practical failure of the Corinthians to adhere to the doctrine set forth in Romans.¹⁸ It is therefore logical that the theme of the Last Adam should be revisited, and it is:

1 Corinthians 15:21,22 (NRSV)

(21) For since death came through a **human being**, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a **human being**.

(22) For as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ.

18. The truth about the position and structure of the Church Epistles is vital for each Christian to understand. See Appendix J.

These verses sum up what we already saw in Romans 5:12-19. The question is, *how* did the Last Adam's "one act of righteousness," his dying on the Cross, make available everlasting life to all who believe in him? First, we will sum up the answer, and then we will look at a magnificent section of Scripture that expands upon it in more detail. The answer in a nutshell is this: only another "Adam," that is, *a man*, could rectify the tragic situation caused by the sin of the first Adam and accomplish the complete redemption of mankind. This is how we know that the Last Adam was a total human being.

As stated earlier, the problem God faced was twofold: *sin* and *death*, not just for the first Adam, but for all his descendants. The way in which the Last Adam would *solve* the problem would be in direct contrast to how the first Adam *caused* it. The first Adam *disobeyed*; the Last Adam was *obedient* unto death, even the death of the Cross. The first Adam's disobedience brought *death*; the Last Adam's obedience unto death brought *life*, via his *resurrection*. The first Adam produced a race of people *born dead* in sin; the Last Adam made it available to be *born again to life*, and he is now in the process of producing an *everlasting* race of perfect people.¹⁹

God's original plan was to have many sons and daughters living together in Paradise forever. The first Adam was *supposed* to have been the father of that perfect race; the Last Adam *will* be the "father" of such a race. Since the ultimate problem that mankind faced was death, the Last Adam had to defeat this daunting and terrifying enemy. The only way he could do so was by *dying*, so that God could then *raise him from the dead*, thus conquering death and giving him everlasting life. This truth is clearly conveyed by the following verses:

Romans 6:9,10

(9) For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him.

(10) The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives [by resurrection], he lives to God.

Hebrews 2:9,14 (NRSV)

(9) But we do see Jesus, who for a little while was made lower than the angels [being made a man of flesh and blood who could die], now crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

(14) Since, therefore, the children [of Adam] share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that **through death** he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil.

What was God's goal? The restoration of His original dream of humans living forever on a perfect earth. The entire Bible points to the one who would be God's agent for bringing this about—Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ saw in the Old Testament Scriptures that if he would be obedient unto death, God would raise him from the dead and give him the power to produce a new race for a new age, an age in which he would rule on earth with God. Jesus Christ defeated our ultimate enemy, death, and he has guaranteed the same victory to all who believe on him.

19. See Chapter 14, and also the audiotapes *A New Race for a New Age* and *The Purpose of the Ages* (available from CES).

As we see in the following verses, when Jesus Christ has completely accomplished the restoration of Paradise and produced a new race for a new age, he will report to God, his Father, and say, in essence, "Last Adam reporting; mission accomplished; Paradise regained." Then he will take his place as the Head and Firstborn of a great company of redeemed brothers and sisters in an everlasting family reunion in Paradise with his Father and his spiritual siblings. This awesome truth is communicated clearly in a section of Scripture that we will be visiting often in our journey to understanding the relationship between God and His Son Jesus Christ. It is particularly relevant here in connection with the completion of the Last Adam's work:

1 Corinthians 15:24-28

(24) Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power.

(25) For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.

(26) The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

(27) For he "has put everything under his feet." Now when it says that "everything" has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ.

(28) When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to Him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.

This magnificent passage attributes the glory for the entire plan of redemption to its original Architect, God.

We have now squared off one aspect of the cornerstone for the Christian faith: *in order for him to redeem mankind, Jesus had to be whatever Adam was before his fall*. Jesus Christ is the Last Adam, a man like Adam who could undo what Adam did. The Last Adam, by dying on the Cross, sacrificed himself as an offering for the sin that the first Adam introduced into the world. This Adamic parallelism establishes one of the most foundational biblical truths regarding Christ, one that allows us to see the entire span of the Bible: two men, two gardens, two commands, two decisions, two deaths, two universal results, two races of people and two Paradises.

With such a simple but profound basis for biblical understanding, why engage in theological speculation about Christ's identity that can only complicate and compromise the beautiful literary symmetry and integrity of Scripture? We will now continue to compare and contrast the two Adams by looking at how both first and last are related to the important phrase, "the image of God."

The Destiny of Mankind

Man As “The Image of God”

We will now continue to explore the Adam—Christ parallel as it relates to the original destiny of mankind and the concept of the “image of God.” In America, “Madison Avenue” advertising moguls would have us believe that “image is everything.” All too often, however, the “images” that advertisers create make people look like something they really are not, enabling them to misrepresent themselves. God, because He is invisible, is especially concerned about His image, but in His case He wants this image to exactly represent His true nature. Who was the *first* “image” of God? The first *Adam*. And, in the beginning, Adam was an able representation or “image” of God.

Genesis 1:26 (NRSV)

Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.”

Adam was the absolute pinnacle of God’s creative activities during the six days recorded in Genesis 1. In fact, Adam (and therefore mankind) was designed to be “the image of God,” the glorious head of a race of people who would serve as the overlords of God’s creation, sharing authority and dominion with Him over all that He had made. Man was equipped with godly attributes that enabled him to speak and act on God’s behalf. Thus, he began his tenure on earth “crowned with glory and honor,” as the following verses show.

Psalms 8:3-8 (NRSV)

(3) When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have established,

- (4) what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?
- (5) Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and **crowned them with glory and honor.**
- (6) You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet:
- (7) all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field,
- (8) the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.

Sections from these verses are quoted in the Book of Hebrews:

Hebrews 2:6-8 (NRSV)

- (6) But someone has testified somewhere [Ps. 8]: “What are **human beings** that you are mindful of them, **or mortals** that you care for them?
- (7) You made them for a little while a little lower than the angels; **you have crowned them with glory and honor,**
- (8) subjecting all things under their feet.”

What we read in Psalm 8 (then quoted in Hebrews 2) is exactly what Scripture tells us in Genesis 1 and 2, and the writer of Psalms is in awe that God would put “a little dirt man” in charge of His magnificent creation.¹ In other words, that God would have such gracious regard for man is to His glory, and not due to man’s intrinsic greatness. It is evident that from God’s perspective, man was a lot more than a mere upright, animated dustball with opposable thumbs. God had big plans for him. But this first man, Adam, fell from his glorious position of responsibility and authority and ended up bringing suffering upon himself and all mankind. Thus, God’s intention to glorify man was cut short because Adam disobeyed, but it would later be fulfilled and amplified in the Man Jesus Christ. If we are ever going to understand the nature and role of Jesus Christ, we must first clearly understand God’s exalted purpose for mankind.

We have found that when we assert that Christ is the Last Adam, a fully human being and not God, orthodox Christians accuse us of making Christ a “mere man.”² This argument has force, but only because of what the word “man” has come to mean. To clarify the issue biblically, we must look past mankind’s present sorry state and see the awesome beauty and perfection of what God originally intended “man” to be. He never intended for people to be dominated by sin nature—stubborn and rebellious against Him. God created mankind to be a race that would

1. The Hebrew word *adam* literally means “red earth,” an economical way of describing man whose body is essentially dust with blood coursing through it.

2. We would call this accusation an example of a logical fallacy called “attacking a straw man.” This fallacy is committed when one party in a dispute misrepresents the position of the other in order to make it easier to refute. Just as it is easy to knock over a straw man, so it is easy to topple an argument that is patently false. The “mere man” argument is a straw man because it does not consider the true biblical significance and destiny of mankind as originally conceived by God. See Appendix K for more detailed listing and explanation of logical fallacies employed in the field of Christology.

represent Him well, reflect His character and rule the world in loving submission to Him. Although today we speak of a “mere man” because sin so dominates our lives, God’s original intention was not to create a “mere man,” but a *masterpiece*.

Adam was intended as a prototype of that new model of creature that God unveiled in Genesis 1. But, like many prototypes, he failed to pass the test. However, God did not throw away the drawings. He hung onto them until the time when he could create another prototype patterned like the first one, a man who would fulfil mankind’s destiny to be the crowning achievement of God’s creation. Jesus Christ was God’s second attempt at creating a masterpiece, the ultimate representation of that “masterpiece race” made in the image of God. There is nothing “mere” about Adam as conceived by God, and nothing “mere” about Christ who was made according to the same design.

Thus, by his sin, Adam turned the image of God into an image of sinful man.³ Although that ended his rulership and dominion, Adam and his progeny continued to dimly reflect “the image of God.” Although mankind no longer really lives up to the title of “image of God,” God continued to use it as a reminder of man’s destiny and purpose, and to communicate the value of man from His perspective.⁴ It also served to point to the coming one, the Messiah, who would ultimately fulfill this destiny. Indicative of this is the following verse in Genesis 9, which occurs many hundreds of years after Adam’s sin, in the context of God instructing Noah about the new arrangement He would have with mankind after the Flood.

Genesis 9:5,6 (NRSV)

(5) For your own lifeblood I will surely require a reckoning: from every animal I will require it and from human beings, each one for the blood of another, I will require a reckoning for human life.

(6) Whoever sheds the blood of a human, by a human shall that person’s blood be shed; for in his own image God made humankind.

Immortality is a fundamental aspect of God’s being and nature, and man, as “the image of God,” was also made to be immortal. Though he lost this privilege, it is clear that man still reflected other aspects of God’s “image,” no matter how dimly. He can appreciate beauty and manifest artistic and musical creativity.⁵ He has a moral sense of right and wrong, and can

3. See Genesis 5:3, where Adam is said to have a son “in his own likeness, in his own image.” This son, Seth, was made in the image of his sinful father Adam.

4. Only by perceiving mankind as made in the image of God is true human compassion possible. If mankind is merely the leading edge of blind and random evolutionary processes, his value is not patterned after anything, and he has no destiny. So, as a god-like being relative to lower life forms, man creates his own meaning and purpose by the things he chooses to do. He is answerable to no higher being, reflects no higher purpose and is headed toward no glorious or certain future. The concept of man made in the image of God is ultimately the only basis for an ethical system that values humans for their own sake and discourages the abuses of tyrants, murderers and others who see their fellow men as nothing more than a means to their own ends.

5. Some may object to the use of the term “create” in connection with man, but we use it not in the sense of truly “bringing into existence what has not been before,” which is only God’s domain. Man has “creativity” by virtue of his ability to fill an empty canvas with colorful images, a blank page with noble thoughts, or a concert hall with beautiful sounds.

choose to do right. He can reason from the known to the unknown. He can use language and other symbols to communicate his thoughts and intentions. In short, man can exhibit qualities that are more like those that God has than those that animals have.⁶

Because man was still the bearer of His image, God expected him to govern himself in a godly manner. Once all unrighteous people had been eliminated by the Flood, God held man accountable to maintain order by investing him with the ultimate civil authority, that of punishing murderers by putting them to death.⁷ God did not tolerate man murdering his fellow man, because He had invested a lot of Himself in man, and was committed to preserving the species. Why? Because it was to be through mankind that the Messiah, true Man, the Last Adam and the Redeemer would come. He would be everything God had hoped for man, fulfill man's destiny of co-rulership of Creation and become God's true and ultimate "image."

From Image Bearer to Image Maker

Sadly, man's spiritually childish inclination is to play God, in ways that range from the subtle to the blatant. Indeed, the essence of "religion" is that man is the *subject*, the "creator," if you will, and what he calls "God" is simply the *object* of his own vain reasonings. Since this "god" comes from the mind of man (often with help from Satan), it usually takes on an image made to look like mortal man" (Rom. 1:23). In other words, man brings God down to his level, or even beneath himself. The irony of this is that man ends up groveling before the very things over which God originally gave him dominion. Because of His love for Man, God strictly forbade the Israelites to make "graven images" of Him, knowing that any such attempt would result in at best a grossly distorted representation of Him. But even the Israelites, like the pagans around them, often made statues and other images of "God."

Romans 1:18-23 (NRSV)

(18) The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of those who by their wickedness suppress the truth,

(19) For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them.

(20) Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made. So they are without excuse;

(21) for though they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their senseless minds were darkened.

6. Ephesians 4:24 provides additional insight into the meaning of the term, "the image of God." The "new self" or the "new man" that Christians receive in the New Birth is said to have been "created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness." Therefore, God has provided the means by which mankind can return to the state of being he had when he was originally created "in the image of God," and reflected the true character of his Creator.

7. See *The Bible and Civil Law*, an audiotape available from CES.

(22) Claiming to be wise, they became fools;

(23) and they exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling a mortal human being or birds or four-footed animals or reptiles.

God's incredible handiwork, which is often called "nature," is in reality displaying *His* nature and goodness. The wonders of creation, which beg awe and thankfulness, are God's continual advertising campaign designed to alert people to both His existence and His beneficence (see also Heb. 11:6). No statue is big enough to block out a sunset. Psalm 115:1-8 compares the living God with dead pagan idols:

Psalm 115:1-8 (NRSV)

(1) Not to us, O LORD, not to us, but to your name give glory, for the sake of your steadfast love and your faithfulness.

(2) Why should the nations say, "Where is their God?"

(3) Our God is in the heavens; he does whatever he pleases.

(4) Their idols are silver and gold, the work of human hands.

(5) They have mouths, but do not speak; eyes, but do not see;

(6) they have ears, but do not hear; noses, but do not smell;

(7) they have hands, but do not feel; feet, but do not walk; they make no sound in their throats;

(8) those who make them will be like them; and are all who trust in them.

The pagan nations surrounding Israel designed their idols just as we read in Romans—in the image of mortal men. As such, these senseless idols were always idle. No image of God fashioned by human hands would ever be sufficient to make known His glory. Through the Law that God gave to Moses for Israel, He provided a foreshadowing of His magnificent blessings yet to come.

Hebrews 10:1 (KJV)

For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect.

A shadow is only a dark shape, with few defining characteristics. It is not at all a detailed image. This verse compares a shadow to the "very image [*eikon*]." Barclay describes the force of the word *eikon* in this verse: "a real, true, accurate, essential reproduction and representation, as contrasted with that which is shadowy, vague, nebulous, unreal and essentially imperfect. It is the complete perfection of the reproduction..."⁸

8. William Barclay, *Jesus As They Saw Him* (Harper and Row, NY, 1962), p. 89).

The New Testament Greek word *eikon*, translated “image,” means “that which resembles an object, or which represents it, hence, image, likeness.”⁹ Our corresponding English derivative, “icon,” is “a sacred image usually painted on wood or metal,” or “an object of religious devotion.”

In the Old Testament, God was adamant that His people not attempt to fashion an image of His likeness. He gave His people His Word, both spoken and written, by way of prophets who represented Him. From His Word they could know about Him and His love for them, yet all His revelation to them was but an introduction to His heart, a foreshadowing of a coming reality. It all pointed toward His ultimate communication to mankind—the Messiah, Jesus, the Christ, the living Word.

Hebrews Two: Christ As True Man

The New Testament book of Hebrews provides an important and foundational understanding of Man as he was made in the image of God, and this insight is crucial to understanding the identity of the Last Adam. Hebrews 1:4-2:4 establishes the superiority of the post-resurrection Christ over the angels.¹⁰ Then, Hebrews 2:5-18 elaborates on the necessity that the Redeemer had to be a true man, another Adam. As we begin to look at this section, the subject in question is who will be in charge in the world to come.

Hebrews 2:5 (NRSV)

Now God did not subject the coming world, about which we are speaking, to angels

This verse tells us who will *not* be in charge—angels. However, that does not tell us who *will* be in charge. Though we have already looked at these next verses in connection with mankind’s original dominion, we now want to examine them more fully.

9. E. W. Bullinger, *A Critical Lexicon and Concordance to the English and Greek New Testament* (Zondervan, Grand Rapids MI, 1976), p. 401. This definition is confirmed by Thayer’s Lexicon, which says that *eikon* “adds to the idea of likeness the suggestions of representation (as a derived likeness) and manifestation.” [Robert H. Thayer, *The New Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon*, (Lafayette, IN, Book Publisher’s Press), 1981, p. 175]. Thayer cites Lightfoot’s definitive study on Colossians 1:15 that identifies two main ideas in the word *eikon*: representation and manifestation. Barclay, *op. cit.*, p. 393: “If when we say that Jesus is the *eikon* of God, it means that Jesus is the *representation* of God; God is the divine archetype and Jesus is the human likeness of Him.” The other meaning is *manifestation*. The *eikon* is the visible manifestation of the invisible and the unseen, of that which in itself cannot be seen. Plummer: “Jesus is ‘the visible representative of the invisible God.’ ” Vine’s, p. 576: “In Hebrews 10:1, the contrast between the shadow and the very image has been likened to the difference between a statue and the shadow cast by it.” The statue is the *eikon*, representing the real thing. The statue is obviously not the person himself.

10. We will discuss the prologue of Hebrews (1:1-3) in the next chapter, because it is a key element in the scriptural depiction of Jesus Christ as “the purpose of the ages.”

Hebrews 2:6-8

(6) But there is a place where someone has testified: "What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?"

(7) You made him a little lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honor

(8) subjecting all things under his feet."

In putting everything under him, God left nothing that is not subject to him. Yet at present we do not see everything in subjection to them

We must look at Hebrews 2:8b again carefully: "In putting everything under him [the first Adam], God left nothing that is not subject to him."¹¹ Yet at present we do not see everything subject to him [Mankind]." By revelation, the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews refers back to Psalm 8, but after quoting it, he makes it clear that something has happened to change things from the way God originally set them up. The word "yet" is a contrasting conjunction, informing us that something has drastically changed. We can see now that mankind no longer has dominion over creation, but rather is at its mercy in many ways.¹² Paradise is definitely "lost," and the devastating evidence of that is all around us each day. Thank God that the next verse in Hebrews begins with *another* contrasting conjunction.

Hebrews 2:9

BUT we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

What do we have in verses 8 and 9 but, once again, the *two Adams*? The first Adam wrecked everything, and the Last Adam is fixing it. The phrase set off by commas, "now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered," ought to be considered as a parenthetical insertion, but let us hold that in abeyance for a moment while we consider the verse by reading around that phrase. What it clearly says is that Jesus Christ had to be a man like the first Adam (each was "made a little lower than the angels") so that he could *die* in place of all men. Had Jesus not been a *man*, he could not have *died*. The parenthesis tells us what we have already seen: *because* Jesus was obedient unto *death*, God has highly exalted him (Phil. 2:8ff). In contrast to Jesus who died, *God* is "immortal" and therefore cannot die.

11. Note in the words "God left nothing that *IS* not subject to him" the use of the figure of speech *prolepsis* or "anticipation," wherein future events are spoken of as having already occurred in the present. We know that the use of "is" is figurative here because the verse goes on to say that "at present we do not see everything subject to him," pointing to its future literal fulfillment in Christ. We have a related figure in English that is called the "historic present." This important figure of speech is vital to the proper understanding of the Gospel of John, which so anticipates Christ's glory that it speaks of it in the present narrative of the events of his life. For more on this figure, see Chapter 8.

12. As Jesus demonstrated authority over creation ("even the winds and the waves obey him"—Matt. 8:27), so those who believe in him can exercise a measure of authority over fallen creation by obedience and faith in the risen Lord. This is the significance of Mark 16:15-18, which describes the authority the disciples could exercise over poisonous snakes and the like as they went forth to preach the Gospel. This authority is not absolute, however, but relative to faith and particular revelation from God concerning what is available in any given situation.

Not only did Adam die, he brought death upon all men. He also brought suffering to himself and all human beings after him. Adam began in glory and ended in suffering; Jesus began in suffering, but was glorified in his resurrection and thereby led many "sons to glory," as the next verse shows.

Hebrews 2:10

In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering.

Here again is the critical truth that we have seen before. The first "son of God," Adam (Luke 3:38), was intended to be the source of *many sons* living a glorious everlasting life, but he disobeyed God and became the author of death instead. So it would be the *other* "son of God," Jesus Christ, the Last Adam, who would be the "author of salvation" for people who believe in him. The Greek word *archegos*, here translated "author," means the "first one in line in a rank or file."¹³ Jesus Christ has blazed a trail of perfect faith to the heart of God, and thus he has become "the way" to life everlasting.

There is another great truth in verse 10: Jesus was "made perfect" through suffering. Although through the virgin birth Jesus was given *genetic* perfection by his heavenly Father, he was not given *moral* (behavioral) perfection, which he had to learn and earn by obedience, as the following verses make crystal clear.

Hebrews 5:8,9 (NRSV)

(8) Although he was a Son, he **learned obedience** through what he suffered;

(9) and having been **made perfect** [by overcoming his trials, including death], he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him

The obvious and necessary conclusion of this truth is that it was possible for Jesus to sin. Just as he had to be able to *die* to be the Redeemer, so he had to be *able* to sin, but then resist the temptation to do so. This rounds out the parallel between Adam and Jesus, because if Jesus could not have sinned, he would not have truly been a man like Adam, who could and did sin. Neither Adam nor Jesus had a sin nature from birth, that is, a predisposition to sin, but each had the freedom and responsibility to choose between obedience and sin. Satan knew this, and thus unleashed his full arsenal of temptations upon Jesus.

We must repeat this truth for emphasis: *without having the potential for moral imperfection, Jesus would not have truly been like the first Adam.* Although it was possible for Jesus to have sinned like the first Adam, he chose instead to obey his Father.¹⁴ If Jesus Christ could *not*

13. E. W. Bullinger, *A Critical Lexicon and Concordance to the Greek and English New Testament* (Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 1978), p. 133.

14. By definition, "to sin" means to disobey the will of God. If Jesus were "God," he could not have disobeyed the *will* of "God" because his will, by definition, would be "God's" will. Trinitarians will argue that he was fully tempted in his humanity, but not tempted in his "divinity." This "dual nature" doctrine is meant to protect him from the charge that he could have sinned in any way. But this theological device creates a more serious problem: it breaks the logical parallel between the first Adam and the Last Adam. Adam did not have a "dual nature" or a "divine nature" that lessened his

have sinned, then he could not have genuinely been “tempted in *all* ways,” as Scripture says, and certainly not in any way that *we*, as human beings, can identify with. God’s Word makes it clear that we are to draw strength from his example, so we must be able to relate to his experience of temptation. How could we possibly draw strength from knowing that “God in human flesh” resisted temptation? How could anyone be encouraged to overcome temptation from the example of *God* doing so? God’s Word in Hebrews continues to reinforce this point.

Hebrews 4:15

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who **has been tempted in every way, just as we are, yet was without sin.**

If Jesus had a “divine side” that equipped him to avoid temptation, as tradition teaches, then he was not tempted “[exactly] as we are.” The rest of humanity must face temptation without such an advantage, for *we* are not “100 percent God and 100 percent man.” If Jesus were “God,” in any sense that affected his experience, could he really have been tempted *just as we are*? James 1:13 says that God *cannot* be tempted, much less succumb to any temptation. If Jesus could not have actually given in to temptation, then his “temptation” is neither *genuine* temptation nor a *real* test of character. In fact, if Jesus were “God,” to say that he was able to resist temptation is to say nothing about him at all. In that case, his moral courage and sterling character become presupposed as a necessary part of his “deity,” a concept that actually demeans Jesus rather than exalts him. In fact, in our experience, the more the identity of Christ is pushed toward “deity,” the less meritorious his accomplishments become. They then become the anticlimactic work of a “God-man” for whom nothing is particularly difficult, and whose experience is certainly not an authentic struggle against sin to which *we* “mere humans” can relate.¹⁵

Hebrews 5:8 is God’s Word, and it clearly says that *He made Jesus Christ perfect through suffering*. In other words, Jesus had to go through a process of purification and trial before he could be properly termed “perfected.” He did not have this status by virtue of some intrinsic “deity” derived from his “incarnation,” independent and transcendent of how he lived and behaved. If that were the case, the monumental heroism of his dogged obedience in the face of relentless, diabolical opposition would fade into mystical insignificance.

Let us continue to follow the logic of Hebrews 2, looking again at verse 14. God’s Word continues to hammer home the truth that Jesus Christ had to be a one-hundred-percent, red-blooded human being like Adam was in order to save fallen humanity from the destruction wrought by the first man.

ability to be tempted. If Christ had a dual nature, but Adam did not, then Christ is not truly the “Last Adam.” Adam had an unblemished human nature, the commandment of God and the free choice of whether to obey it or not. The fact that God directly made Adam from the dust of the ground and spoke to him intimately did not prevent him from sinning. Similarly, the fact that God created the life in Mary’s womb and had an intimate relationship with His Son, Jesus, did not prevent Jesus from sinning either. He too had an unblemished human nature, the commandment of God and the free choice to obey it or not. Unlike Adam, Jesus *chose to obey*.

15. Dunn, *op. cit.*, *Christology in the Making*, p. xxxiv. “It might be pointed out that a Jesus who makes an Adamic choice is more of a model for Christian behavior (Phil 2:1-13) than a pre-existent Christ.”

Hebrews 2:14,15

(14) Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy [render powerless] him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—

(15) and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.

Once again we see that the reason Jesus had to be a man was so that he could *die* in order to conquer death. As the fact of death all around us makes clear, the Devil has not yet been destroyed, but his doom is certain—Jesus Christ is coming again to crush his head.

Hebrews 2:16,17 (NRSV)

(16) For it is clear that he did not come to help angels, but the descendants of Abraham.

(17) Therefore he had to become **like his brothers and sisters in every respect**, in order that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people.

Verse 17 clearly tells us that Jesus is *not a spirit being* like angels are, but rather *a human being* like unto the “brothers” he came to save. This likeness was not just superficial, or in appearance only. He was made like his brothers “*in every respect*.” He was a partaker of man’s limitations and need for dependence upon his Maker to avoid sin and find fulfillment. The only exception to this statement is that Jesus did not inherit man’s sinful nature.

It is common even for people who do not believe in the Trinity to think there is a big difference between themselves and Jesus Christ, because they know that he did not have the sin nature they inherited from Adam. Most people are so dominated by their sin nature that they cannot even imagine what life would be like without it. But we must remember that the sin nature was not part of our humanity as God designed it. Adam and Eve did not originally have it, yet they were fully human, just as we are. The sin now inherent in us is an intrusion into our lives, like a virus in our blood. Although it is infecting us, it is not an intrinsic part of who we are. It is common for Christians to believe that they are tempted only because of their sin nature, but this is clearly not the case. Both Adam and Jesus Christ were tempted, and Scripture also speaks of things such as “the lust of the flesh” and the “lust of the eyes.” The fact that we are in a human body means that we become tempted by hunger, tiredness, wanting more than we need and by many other things as well.

God’s Word tells us that as a young man, Jesus “*grew in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and men*” (Luke 2:52). It also tells us that Jesus “*learned obedience by what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him*” (Heb. 5:9). These truths are important in light of the word “become” in Hebrews 2:17 above. It took Jesus living a life of perfect obedience unto his death on the Cross for God to be able to raise him and make him the perfect High Priest who is “*touched with the feeling of our infirmities*” (Heb. 4:15 *KJV*). We have now reached the apex of this magnificent section of Scripture describing the true humanity of Christ. It is because he actually suffered when tempted that he can now relate to our suffering and help us in the hour of our need.

Hebrews 2:18

Because **he himself suffered when he was tempted**, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

The truths of God's Word that we have thus far set forth in these first two chapters are the foundation of our redemption, that is, "Christianity 101." Only a *man* could redeem fallen *mankind*, but that man would have to be a *perfect* sacrifice, one who could fully atone for both the sin nature *and* the sinful behavior of all the descendants of the first Adam. Only one man in history could have filled the bill: Jesus of Nazareth. God created him with genetic perfection just like the first Adam had. In contrast to the first Adam, however, Jesus Christ chose to obey his heavenly Father all the way to his death on the Cross. God then crowned him with glory and honor because of the things he suffered, raising him from the dead. He also made him the perfect High Priest, the Head of the Body of Christ and the Lord over all. Truly, Jesus Christ has blazed a trail of perfect faith for us to follow, and, as the Savior, he invites all men to walk in his steps. Those who accept his invitation are born into the family of God and can mature into dynamic representatives of his character and love.

The Last Adam's "Nature"

Since we have been arguing for a precise parallel between the first Adam and the Last Adam, and have asserted that neither had a "sin nature," we must address the issue of what kind of "nature" each had. This subject has been hotly debated for centuries, before and after the "orthodox" position of the "dual nature" of Christ was formulated at the Council of Chalcedon in 451 AD.¹⁶ There it was decided that the official position of the Church was that Christ had both a human *and* a divine nature. That is to say, he was 100 percent God and 100 percent man. The orthodox believers asserted his complete humanity against the Gnostics and Docetics, who argued that Christ was not really a man at all, but only appeared to be a man. On the other hand, they asserted his "divinity" against the Arians, who argued that he was not God, but rather a created being. They also defended his divinity against those who questioned his virgin birth and divine Sonship.

We have already discussed some of what is wrong with the "orthodox" position, namely that Jesus could not have been truly tempted if he were in some way "God." But let us add a few other objections to this doctrine before attempting to determine a more biblical and rational alternative. First, the Chalcedonian formula is guilty of a logical fallacy called "equivocation." Equivocation involves the changing of the meaning of a term in the middle of an argument.¹⁷ In equivocating the terms "man" and "God," Trinitarians create a separate category of being for Jesus Christ and remove him from the normal and customary meaning of each term as it is understood both biblically and experientially. Furthermore, what is asserted about Jesus Christ

16. See Chapter 19 on the seven Church Councils and their role in the development of Christian doctrine.

17. See Appendix K for a more complete discussion of logical fallacies, particularly equivocation.

could not be asserted about Adam, who was truly the archetypal “man.” Unless Jesus’ nature before his resurrection was completely comparable to Adam’s, he cannot properly and without equivocation be categorized as “man.” To teach that Jesus is “100 percent God and 100 percent man” is 200 percent logical equivocation.

But merely to say that both Adam and Jesus had a “human nature” is inadequate, particularly since this term has become identified with the sinful aspects of man’s being. We often say, “That’s human nature,” after someone has just done something wrong. Without getting mystical, theological or too speculative, we need to assess what we know about this thing called “human nature.” There are no scriptures that definitively answer the question, so we must begin our reasoning from a clear conception of what it means that Adam was made in “the image of God.”

We know that Adam was designed to represent his Maker and be able to have intimate fellowship with Him. This means that he would have to have known God well enough to act on His behalf. It seems logical that Adam would also had to have been able to relate to who God was by sharing some of His attributes and capabilities. We can see from the context of Genesis 1 that God endowed Adam with the capacity to rule and have dominion over the animals. God gave Adam a personality¹⁸ and a temperament, or disposition.¹⁹ As anyone who has raised animals knows, most have characteristics individual to their personalities. Some are more dominant than others, some are more playful, some more trainable, *etc.* Every human parent learns that his or her children are each unique from the womb with a particular temperament or “nature” right from “the factory.”

Medieval physiology proposed four basic conditions of body and mind: the sanguine, phlegmatic, choleric and melancholic. Each was a basic kind of temperament that human beings manifest, with both good and bad qualities. For instance, one with a sanguine temperament is a “take-charge” kind of person. However, he may lack sensitivity toward the feelings of those he attempts to lead. One with a phlegmatic temperament is very calm and unruffled, but may be slow to act, and tend toward laziness. Though the systems vary, human personality research continues to support the basic concept that people fall loosely into these general categories of temperament types. That is, every human being has a particular nature that predisposes him toward certain kinds of behavior. We should note that this “predisposition” does not *cause* one to act in a certain way, but it does mean that in the absence of any determination or will to the contrary, the odds are good that the predisposed behavior will be carried out, often unconsciously.²⁰

18. “The quality or fact of being a particular person; personal identity; individuality.” Also, then, “habitual patterns and qualities of behavior of any individual as expressed by physical and mental activities and attitudes; distinctive individual qualities of a person, considered collectively.” *Webster’s New Unabridged Universal Dictionary* (Deluxe Second Edition, NY, Simon and Schuster, 1983).

19. *Ibid.* A disposition is defined as “one’s customary frame of mind; one’s nature or temperament; as in an amiable or an irritable disposition.”

20. The study of personality types goes way back into ancient history. The fourfold models go back at least as far as the Greeks and were often related to air, fire, earth and water. The nine-fold enneagram goes back to long before Christ to the Middle East and perhaps specifically Babylon. The terms we use in the text of this work are Medieval in origin. Books to study these personality types are available in any good library.

These behaviors can be evaluated biblically and morally to determine whether they are right or wrong, but much sinful behavior occurs by impulse without reflection. This is the influence of what Scripture calls “the flesh,” that is, the sin nature inherent in all men. In the absence of strong moral training and education as children, humans tend toward selfish and careless behavior that the Bible defines as sinful. Also, we should note that whether people choose the kind of behavior for which they have a predisposition or whether they choose something else is a function of their free choice. Yet there seems to be nearly universal agreement among modern researchers about the influence of the genetic component on human personality and temperament. This “nature versus nurture” debate will continue to rage on, however, because of the intricate and delicate balance that seems to exist within the various aspects of human beings and their environments.

Since a genetic “nature” or “temperament” is so clearly an ongoing part of human being and personality, it stands to reason that it was also a part of the *first* human’s being. Before he fell, Adam had a nature perfectly suited to bearing the image of God. Therefore, he had a “divine” nature, meaning that he shared some of the qualities and attributes of God, who was their source. By studying the character of God in His dealings with man, and also in the actions of Jesus and other men representing God, we can conclude that God is loving, peaceful, joyful, slow to anger, kind, good, faithful, gentle and self-disciplined, just to name a few.²¹ These qualities must have been in abundance in Adam, who was the son and image of God, as he administered Paradise and carried out the will of his Creator. He had every quality in whatever measure necessary for him to exercise his dominion over the earth. And because there was no sin, there was nothing sinful in his disposition, that is, nothing that would cause him to act contrary to the will of God.

If we think of Adam as a perfect image of God’s character, one of the consequences of the Fall was to shatter that “mirror” into pieces. Now, instead of one man exhibiting the totality of God’s attributes without sin, mankind would continue to reflect these qualities in a collective way, but mixed with sin. This explains why we continue to see human beings demonstrating compassion, creativity, moral strength, intellectual and scientific brilliance and feats of selfless courage. These godly qualities in man are consistent with what we would predict if mankind were in fact made in the image of God. Obscuring these godly qualities, however, are traits such as sinful self-interest, cruelty and indifference. These seem to often characterize man’s behavior and experience, which is predicted by the Bible as a result of the consequences of sin.

Based upon this reasoning then, we believe that Jesus Christ had a perfect human nature, just as Adam originally had before it became fragmented and stained by sin. This means that Jesus exemplified in a single person every godly quality ever seen in mankind collectively. These qualities were present in his nature from his mother’s womb, even as our children’s temperaments are. He was the perfect blend of qualities and characteristics that God intended for man, as His “image,” to manifest. In observing Jesus’ behavior, we see his ability to be tough, yet tender; patient and slow to anger, yet appropriately aggressive and passionate. In short, Jesus Christ was a man as Man was intended to be—the reflection of his Creator and his Father—like Father, like Son.

21. See *The Fruit of the Spirit: The Character of Christ* (audiotape seminar by CES).

One further note: Jesus Christ did not fulfill his ministry by virtue of some inherently divine nature that he brought with him through an “incarnation.” The New Testament makes it very clear how he was able to do the messianic works that he did—by being anointed with holy spirit at the baptism of John.

Luke 3:21,22 (NRSV)

Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, and the holy spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, “you are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.”

Luke 4:18 (NRSV)

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because **he has anointed me** to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

Acts 10:38 (NRSV)

How **God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power**; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.

As wonderful a human being as Jesus was, it is not recorded that he performed any miracle or preached a word until he was empowered by holy spirit. It was this *spirit*, then, and not his temperament, personality or intrinsic “divinity,” that enabled him to do the works that he did. This is crucial to understand, and yet few Christians recognize this important point.²² This is yet another truth that should profoundly encourage us as Christians, because it explains how we can do the works that Jesus Christ did.

John 14:12 (NRSV)

Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father.

Jesus Christ received from his Father the promised holy spirit and shed it on his disciples on the Day of Pentecost.

22. One of the main reasons so few understand this is the common teaching that “the Holy Spirit” is one of the persons in a “triune Godhead.” Thus, they have difficulty explaining how Christ could be “God in human flesh” through the incarnation, yet still need to be empowered by “the Holy Spirit,” another member of the Godhead, before he could begin to do his work. To many orthodox Christians, Christ is in some sense the eternal God from his birth, yet is indwelt at his baptism by another “person” called “the Holy Spirit,” another member of the triune God. It is no wonder that some Christians refer to him as the “Christ event,” since he was apparently three persons happening at one time. If Christ were “true God” from his birth, would he not have had God’s power from his birth and not needed any subsequent anointing? See Appendix I.

Acts 2:33 (NRSV)

Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you both see and hear [*i.e.*, holy spirit]

The holy spirit enabled them to do the same works that Jesus had been doing. The Book of Acts records the disciples doing just that. But if Jesus did his mighty works by being “God,” how can we “mere men” hope to do the same?

The Last Adam's Family

Set in the heart of Hebrews 2:5-18 is a profound truth: every Christian is related to Christ in the most intimate, family way. He is not a being of such exalted status that we cannot relate to him. In fact, he is called our “brother.” Let us now look at verses 11-13.

Hebrews 2:11

Both the one [Christ] who makes men holy and those who are made holy **are of the same family** [have the same Father]. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them **brothers**.²³

This verse is brimming with truth. It clearly states that God is the original author of life for *both* Jesus Christ *and* all who believe in him. Yet Jesus Christ is the one who sanctifies those who believe in him. It was *God* who gave him the authority and the ability to do so. As Jesus is the Son of God, so those whom he sanctifies are “sons.” Jesus Christ is not ashamed to call us his brothers. Amen!

In the next two verses from the same context, there are three quotations from the Old Testament about the coming Redeemer.

Hebrews 2:12,13 (NRSV)

(12) Saying, “I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters; in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praises.”

(13) And again, “I will put my trust in him.” And again, “Here am I, and the children whom God has given me.”

The first quote is from Psalm 22:22, found in one of the sections of the Old Testament most clearly referring to Jesus Christ. It is a prophecy that the Messiah will one day stand amidst a great congregation and praise God with them. Could those people be the “many sons in glory” of Hebrews 2:10? Absolutely. It is noteworthy that Psalm 22 is a prophecy of both the *suffering*

23. Consider also the following translation of the above verse, which clarifies the distinction between God and Christ: “The truth being that he who bestows the hallowing [Jesus Christ] and those who are being hallowed derive their origin, one and all, from the One [God]. And that is why the Son is not ashamed to call them his brothers.” Heinz Cassirer, *God's New Covenant: A New Translation* (William B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI, 1989).

and the *glory* of Christ. What was Jesus thinking about when the Roman soldiers pounded the first spike into his wrist? No doubt he was thinking about his future destiny, that is, “the joy that was set before him” (Heb. 12:2).

The second quote from the Old Testament (“I will put my trust in Him”) is from Isaiah 8:17. Jesus Christ was the first man to perfectly trust God. He was the epitome of faith. Because he put his trust in God, we can put our trust in him. The *NIV Study Bible* note on Hebrews 2:13 recognizes that the point of this quotation is to assert *the perfect manhood of Christ*: “‘I will put my trust in Him.’ An expression of true dependence on God perfectly exemplified in Christ. In him, humanity is seen as it was intended to be.” Amen. We could not have said it any better. Jesus Christ was able to do what he did because of his “true dependence on God.” Man was originally made to have intimate communion with his Maker, trust in His superior wisdom and love and, through obedience to his Creator, share with Him in the management of His affairs on the earth. Jesus epitomized this dependency on his God, his Maker.

The third quote from the Old Testament in this section of Hebrews comes from Isaiah 8:18, and could hardly be extracted from a more pertinent context, which reveals that Isaiah and the people of God were surrounded by a much larger number of unbelievers bent on their destruction. Death was certain unless God delivered them. God did deliver them by way of Isaiah, who said in essence, “Stick with me and you will be saved.” He then referred to them as “the children God has given me.” In that record, Isaiah is a “type” of Christ.²⁴

Here we come face to face with a tremendous truth of Scripture not often realized—that those who believe in Christ are, figuratively speaking, his “children.”²⁵ To see this, let us go back to Isaiah 53, another Old Testament passage of Scripture that specifically speaks of the coming Christ. As in the initial revelation about Christ in Genesis 3:15, where God prophesied both his suffering and his glory, so Isaiah 53 portrays both his hideous death and his glorious future life.

24. A “type” is a specific parallel between two historical entities. Biblical typology involves a correspondence by analogy such that earlier persons, places or events are patterns by which later events can be better understood or interpreted. The study of typology comes out of a study of the Bible itself. The New Testament uses both the words *tipos*, or “type,” and *antitypos*, or “antitype.” The Greek word *tipos* can refer to the original model, prototype or stamp as well as to the copy, imprint or mark that was left by the original. The word *antitypos* refers only to the copy, imprint or mark and not to the original or stamp. Romans 5:14 calls Adam a “pattern” (a *tipos*) of “the one to come,” i.e., Christ, while Hebrews 9:24 calls the earthly sanctuary a “copy” (*antitypos*) of the real one in the heavens. There has been great debate among Christians as to what are the true types of Christ in the Bible and what is strained imagination and fanciful thinking. For example, just because someone was whipped in the Old Testament does not mean he was a “type” of Christ, but, on the other hand, the clear parallels between Joseph and Christ or Abraham/Isaac and Christ have been recognized for centuries. In this case, the fact that what Isaiah said is quoted in Hebrews as being prophetically spoken by the Messiah makes the type axiomatic and abundantly clear.

25. The spiritual “fatherhood” of great men of God is evident in Scripture. In Romans 4:16, Abraham is called the “father of all of us who believe.” In 2 Kings 2:12, Elisha cries out to Elijah his mentor, “My father, my father.” In 2 Kings 13:14, Jehoash the king of Israel called Elisha “My father, my father.” Paul refers to his “fatherhood” of the believers in Corinth whom he had led to Christ (1 Cor. 4:15), saying that he had “begotten” them through the Gospel. Because of his character and attributes, and being the author of everlasting life, Jesus Christ is obviously the ultimate “father” figure, even though he has no natural children. God’s Messiah, Jesus, will conquer the earth (Rev. 19), raise the dead (Judges 5:25) and reign as king in the Millennium. Thus, in Isaiah 9:6, part of the Messiah’s *name* is “Father of the coming age.” See Appendix A (Isaiah 9:6).

Isaiah 53:7-12

(7) He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.

(8) By oppression and judgment he was taken away. **And who can speak of his descendants?** For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken.

(9) He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.

(10) Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering, **he will see his offspring** and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand.

(11) After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities.

(12) Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

Verse 8 asks, "And who can speak of his descendants?" What we see here is that Jesus would die without ever having any children. In the Hebrew culture, this was considered a curse. Jesus died with no one to carry on his lineage. But look at verse 10: "He will see his offspring." What "offspring?" The "children God has given him," the "many sons in glory." Does this not specifically relate to Christ being called a "seed" in Genesis 3:15? Yes, he is the seed that will bear *much fruit after his kind*. "We know that when he appears, we shall be like him" (1 John 3:2). Praise God!

Jesus Christ: The Image of God

With all this background in mind, we can now turn our attention to the phrase "the image of God," as it is used in reference to Jesus of Nazareth. The Last Adam, now highly exalted as Lord and Christ, is the only *true* image of God. Actually, he is not referred to as "the image of God" until after his resurrection, as we shall see. So while Jesus admirably represented God's heart, love and character in his earthly ministry, he is now in a position of such glory that he is functioning "just like God."²⁶ Man's destiny as the image-bearer of God finds complete fulfillment in the glorification of Jesus Christ, because all those who believe in him will one day be made *like him*.

Even prior to his resurrection and ascension, however, Jesus brought many things to light about his invisible Father, the God who created the heavens and the earth. In fact, of all the

26. Immortality is a large part of what is meant by "the image of God," as is indicated by the fact that this phrase is only used of the *resurrected* Christ, who is now immortal himself.

“images” and representations that presume to depict the invisible, it is Jesus Christ who most vividly exemplified and made manifest the character of God by the way he lived. The heart and will of God was manifested by his life of obedience. For instance, we know it is God’s will to heal those with faith in Him because Jesus healed *everyone* who came to him with faith. So it is for everything that Jesus said and did—he revealed God’s heart and will for those who believe in him. As one scholar put it, “Christ is given to us as the image of God by which we may know what God wills and does.” ²⁷

John 1:18 (KJV)

No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared *him*.

The Greek word for “declared” means “to lead or bring out, hence to make known, declare, unfold.” ²⁸ By his personality, his character, the spirit that was upon him and by his absolute obedience to his Father, Jesus perfectly exhibited God’s heart to mankind. His language, taken as a whole, reveals that he never thought of himself as the source of his wisdom and mighty works. When he said, “He who has seen me has seen the Father” (John 14:9), he was not referring to any physical resemblance nor intrinsic deity. He was referring to his obedient way of being, his words and his works. The following are a number of statements Jesus made that help us understand this more clearly:

- “The Son can do nothing on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise” (John 5:19 NRSV).
- “The Father who dwells in me does his works” (John 14:10 NRSV).
- “I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father” (John 15:15 NRSV).
- “All that the Father has is mine” (John 16:15 NRSV).
- “Whoever sees me sees him who sent me” (John 12:45 NRSV).

Jesus shared with others everything that God showed him. His was a reflective and representative role, honoring his Father at every turn, emptying himself of any need for recognition or approval. His only desire was to do the will of God (John 4:34) and to bring Him glory.

We can learn another important thing about the word *eikon*, “image,” by observing the following verses:

Matthew 22:17-21 (KJV)

(17) Tell us therefore, What thinkest Thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?

27. Gerhard Kittel, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI, Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1964, “*Eikon*”), p. 396).

28. E. W. Bullinger, *op. cit.*, *Lexicon*, p. 210.

(18) But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye Me, ye hypocrites?

(19) Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto Him a penny.

(20) And He saith unto them, Whose is this image [*eikon*] and superscription?

(21) They say unto Him, Caesar's. Then saith He unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.

It is clear that the coin-carrying Pharisees did not pull out one with Caesar himself glued to it. The coin had an *image* stamped on it, which was obviously not *identical* to the original.²⁹ In fact, the image was perhaps only a crude likeness. The degree of similarity between the archetype or prototype and its image varies, and the uses of *eikon* reflect those variations. The range of use of *eikon* varies from gross misrepresentation (as in the case of false images of God), to similarity (as in Col. 3:10 where our new self is being renewed in similarity to Christ), to exact likeness (Heb. 1:3).

Today, through photographic technology, we can reproduce exact images of people.³⁰ Or can we? A lady friend excitedly shows you a snapshot and proclaims, "This is my fiancé, Henry." You reply, "But he's completely flat! And he's only three inches tall with half a body! I don't think the marriage will work." Obviously, an image, no matter how perfectly it reflects the original thing, is not *identical* to it.³¹

There are two verses in the Church Epistles that clearly and specifically refer to Jesus Christ as "the image of God," and we will now examine them carefully in their contexts. We will see that Christ's being called the "image of God" most specifically refers to his glorious post-resurrection ministry at the "right hand of God" since being crowned with glory and honor. Remember that Hebrews 2:9 says the Last Adam is "now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death." In other words, he didn't fully come into his "glory and honor" until after his death and resurrection. We should also point out 1 Corinthians 15:45: "The first man Adam became a living being; the Last Adam, a life-giving spirit." When did he become "a life-giving spirit?" After his resurrection and glorification. Does that mean that he did not represent his Father well

29. Logical "identity" is established by the following principle: Whatever is true of A, must also be true of B. And whatever is true of B, must also be true of A. Logically, *similar* things are not *identical*. For example, a statue (image) of George Washington is not identical to George Washington. If it were, George Washington himself would have been made of bronze. See Appendix K.

30. The diminutive form of *eikon*—*eikonion*—corresponds to the modern photograph. Barclay, *op. cit.*, p. 390: "Apion the soldier writes home to his father Epimachus: 'I send you a little portrait (*eikonion*) of myself at the hands of Euctemon.'" Barclay continues: "The word *eikon* becomes the regular word for the identifying description of a person, which was subjoined to official documents, in particular with regard to the buying and selling of slaves. The *eikon* was the official and accurate description of the person involved and the means whereby he or she could be identified. If we take it in this way, we may say that Jesus is the exact portrait and description of God."

31. Various Trinitarian scholars try to force *eikon* to mean identity or equality with the original. For example: The use of *eikon* in Colossians 1:15 "is intended to indicate the essential unity of God and Jesus, of the Father and the Son." (Barclay, *op. cit.*, p. 388-389). Kittel, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 395: "When Christ is called the image of God, all the emphasis is on the equality of the *eikon* with the original." Trinitarian theologians attempt to force the semantic range of *eikon* to include the concept of identity, but the uses of *eikon*, both biblical and secular, preclude this extrapolation (See Appendix A, Col. 1:15).

during his earthly ministry? No. We have already established that Jesus always did the will of his Father. However, whatever it is to be the complete “image of God” is found in his exaltation and glorification at the right hand of God.

Let us revisit Hebrews 1:3, which communicates this truth powerfully. Although this verse is often applied to the earthly life, ministry and being of Jesus Christ, upon closer examination we can see that it is referring to his post-resurrection life:

Hebrews 1:3a (NRSV)

The Son is the reflection of God’s glory and the exact imprint of God’s very being, and he **sustains** all things by his powerful word.

Notice that the verbs “is” and “sustains” are in the present tense and refer to his present state of being in glory at the right hand of God. We can understand how Christ would be a better representation of God at the right hand of the Father’s glory than hanging from his Cross. In fact, those who saw him thought him smitten and accursed of God (see Deut. 21:23 and Isa. 53:4). While dead, he was as far from radiating the glory of God as a person can get. Nevertheless, he was raised from the dead unto immortality and everlasting life, with a fabulous new body that enables him to act as the Head of the Church and work with every member of his Body wherever they are in the world. He is now the ultimate representative of God. If people are unable to see him for who he is, it is because they have been blinded by the Adversary, as the following verses show.

2 Corinthians 4:4-6 (KJV)

(4) But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:

In whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, **who is the image of God**, should shine unto them,

(5) For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake.

(6) For God, Who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

It is the Gospel, the good news of Christ’s accomplishments, that brings to light the glory of Christ, and thereby the glory of God whose plan it was to send him. The written Word makes known the living Word, Jesus Christ, who makes known the one true God. Thus, a “succession of representation” is clearly articulated in the above verses. We preach not ourselves, but the Gospel of Christ. Christ represented not himself, but God. And God “shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” Because Jesus Christ gave his all to represent God, God is now reciprocating by making known Christ, His perfect representative and “the exact representation of His being.”

The other verse that specifically refers to Jesus Christ as the image of God is also in the Church Epistles.

Colossians 1:15 (NRSV)

He is the **image** of the **invisible** God, the firstborn of all creation.

Let us take note of the use of the word “invisible” here. God’s invisibility has been the occasion of much rebellion and idolatry on the part of His people throughout history. They wanted something visible to worship and pray to like the pagans had, and this led to all manner of misguided activities, as even the most casual reading of the Old Testament will show. Fallen man has a “lust of the eyes,” which drives him to desire a visible object for his devotion. Even though the creation itself so clearly points to the hand of its invisible Designer that man is “without excuse” (Rom. 1:20), he continually fails to make the connection.

Man is in many respects the pinnacle of that creation his body and mind the most awesome examples of divine handiwork. The human brain has 10 billion brain cells, with each cell capable of establishing interconnections with 35,000 other brain cells. The possible interconnections are 10 billion to the 35,000th power, an incomprehensibly huge number. What man’s mind is capable of, even in its fallen condition, has yet to be fathomed. The first Adam was the “firstborn” of this magnificent creation described in Genesis 1, but, by virtue of his disobedience, he lost his privileged status as the firstborn. At his resurrection, the Last Adam became the firstborn of a new creation that began with his resurrection. He is the prototype of this new creation, his resurrected body gloriously exemplifying even greater magnificence than what we see in the present creation. That Christ is such a prototype is proven three verses later in Colossians 1, where the term “firstborn” occurs again:

Colossians 1:18 (NRSV)

He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything.

In the context, “the *firstborn* of all creation” directly correlates with his being “the *firstborn* from among the dead.” It was in his *resurrection* that he came into his glory. It was then and only then that he was fully able to reflect the entire majesty of God who exalted him. Because he was sinless and obedient during his earthly tenure, Jesus’ resurrection and exaltation catapulted him to a glorious dominion and co-rulership of God’s creation even exceeding the first Adam’s. Only when Jesus Christ was elevated to his present position of dominion and co-rulership, having sat down at the right hand of God with all authority fully delegated to him, was he said to be “the image of God” in all the fullness of the term. Thus, in this position he has fulfilled the destiny of Man, who was made in “the image of God.”

Christians: Bearers of Christ’s Image

In closing this chapter, we will look at three verses that complete our examination of the phrase, “the image of God,” and also shed some valuable light on how this teaching affects us as believers in Christ.

Colossians 3:9-11 (NRSV)

(9) Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have stripped off your old self with its practices

(10) and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge **according to the image of its Creator.**

(11) In that renewal there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free, but **Christ is all, and in all!**

Our “new self” is the divine nature of Christ that is a part of what we receive when we obey Romans 10:9 and are born again. This reality, also called the “gift of holy spirit,” the “spirit of truth,” *etc.*, is “being renewed in knowledge in the image of its creator.”³² Who is its creator? As far as giving us the potential to be like God, Jesus Christ is, because it is he who poured out the gift of God’s nature into our hearts (Acts 2:33). He *is* all, and *in* all, and he is working in us to fashion us in his image, even as he is fashioned after God’s image (cp. Eph. 1:22,23). This same truth is conveyed in the following parallel passage:

Ephesians 4:22-24 (NRSV)

(22) You were taught to put away your former way of life, your old self, corrupt and deluded by its lusts;

(23) and to be renewed in the spirit [*NIV* “attitude”] of your minds

(24) And to clothe yourselves with the new self, created **according to the likeness of God** in true righteousness and holiness.

Today each Christian has within himself the absolute guarantee of one day being made totally like Christ (1 Cor. 15:49; Phil. 3:21; 1 John 3:1,2). In the meantime, God has given us through Christ the potential to manifest his character to the world. In fact, this is the very purpose of our existence—to represent our Maker well!

Romans 8:29,30 (NRSV)

(29) For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be **conformed to the image of his Son**, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family.

(30) And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also **glorified.**

As believers, we are already partial partakers of his heavenly glory, although our final glorification awaits his final appearing. Meanwhile, as we look to him, we are being transformed into “the likeness of His [glorious] Son” more and more, day by day. What an awesome privilege it is to be a Christian!

These truths are further established in the following verses:

32. See *The Gift of Holy Spirit: Every Christian's Divine Deposit*, available from CES.

2 Corinthians 3:17,18 (NRSV)

(17) Now the lord is the [life-giving] Spirit, and where the spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

(18) And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, **are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another;** for this comes from the Lord, the the Spirit.

As the resurrected Lord, Jesus Christ is pouring out holy spirit, the spirit that is the basis for our transformation and our sharing in his glory. Now, through the life and ministry of the Last Adam, Jesus Christ, we too participate in the process whereby those of mankind who believe in him are truly able to reflect the image of God. As Perfect Man, he has fulfilled the original destiny of mankind by reclaiming the authority and dominion that the first Adam lost. Is he a *mere* man? Hardly. He is everything God ever intended for man, and more, which includes all glory and honor. And in his exaltation, we who believe on him will be exalted with him and share in his glory. Hallelujah!

CHAPTER THREE

Jesus Christ: The Purpose of the Ages

Having established the direct correlation between the first Adam and the Last Adam, we now want to establish another aspect of our cornerstone: the biblical truth that Jesus Christ is the purpose, or the “diameter,” of the ages. Perhaps the greatest purpose of Christ was the redemption of *mankind*, which he accomplished by his death on the Cross, as the following scripture says:

Ephesians 1:7 (NRSV)

In him [Jesus Christ] **we have redemption through his blood**, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace.

As we can see, redemption is spoken of here as an accomplished reality. This same truth is corroborated in other verses as well (*e.g.*, Rom. 3:24 and Col. 1:14). But if that is all there is to redemption, why a few verses later in Ephesians 1 does Scripture say that redemption is still *future*?

Ephesians 1:13,14 (NRSV)

(13) In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised holy spirit;

(14) this is the pledge of our inheritance **toward redemption** as God’s own people, to the praise of his glory.

To eliminate this confusion, we must clearly define the term “redemption,” which is *the entire process* of redeeming, or literally “buying back” or “releasing on receipt of a ransom.”¹ This word “ransom” evokes images of a kidnapping, which leads to the question, *who* kidnapped *what* or *whom*? In a manner of speaking, Satan “kidnapped” God’s creation by introducing iniquity into it. By tricking Adam, he plunged mankind into captivity through sin, death and the fear of death (Heb. 2:14). Although he is not big enough to hold creation for ransom in a literal sense, he has continually hindered [but not stopped] God’s purposes, and he continues to exercise the authority he usurped. It was this authority that he offered to share with Jesus when he tempted him in the wilderness.

1. Bullinger, *op. cit.*, *Lexicon*, p. 630.

Luke 4:5-8 (NRSV)

(5) Then the devil led him up and showed him [Jesus] in an instant all the kingdoms of the world.

(6) And the devil said to him, "To you I will give their glory and all this authority; for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please.

(7) If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours."

(8) Jesus answered him, "It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve only him.'"

There are two questions raised by the Devil's assertion that he has authority and power to bequeath on whomever he will, and the answer to them helps us understand why a complete redemption of creation has become necessary. The first question is: who "gave" Satan authority over "all the kingdoms of the world" so he could offer it to Jesus?² The answer to this takes us back again to Genesis 3. To whom had God given "dominion" over all the world? Adam. Who entered the picture to cause Adam's fall? Satan. So let's put two and two together. What was Satan's motivation to deceive Adam and Eve and cause their fall? Obviously, there had to be something in it for him. He was not just out for a cosmic stroll, playing little tricks on whomever he happened upon. Genesis 3:1 tells us that the serpent was "more crafty" than any other created being. His deliberate purpose was to trip up Adam and usurp his rulership by getting him to default on his responsibility and therefore forfeit his dominion and authority. Satan gambled that after Adam fell from grace, he would become the "top dog," since he was still an "angel of light" (even though a fallen one), and hence "superior" to Adam in spiritual ability.³

The testimony of the Bible is that he succeeded, creating a need for the redemption of God's entire creation. This would require someone to "crush" the serpent's head. Though God is his superior, and could have immediately made him dust, He chose only to make Satan "eat dust" (Gen. 3:14) until the day that he would be made ashes.⁴ God chose to delegate the task of destroying His enemy, Satan, to His Son, the Redeemer and the Purpose of the Ages. The grand purpose of Jesus Christ's life is understandable only in relationship to Satan's rebellion and its consequences in heaven and on earth. As we have already seen, the scope of redemption would require both his suffering *and* glory, for Christ would not be equal to the task of crushing the serpent's head until he entered his "glory." Not even the archangel Michael, the captain of the army of the host of Lord, goes head-to-head with his former peer (see Jude 9, and Appendix F).

Though Satan's presence and influence are almost totally veiled in the Old Testament, he is described in the New Testament as a "prince" having a "kingdom," accompanied by "rulers,"

2. Theologian John Calvin proposed the idea that God is the one who gave Satan this power in order to glorify himself and demonstrate His superiority. The Bible never says this, and we believe such a notion seriously compromises God's righteousness.

3. See E.W. Bullinger's *Companion Bible*, (reprinted; Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 1974), Appendix 19, for an interesting etymological study of the word "serpent," showing that Satan appeared to Eve as an "enlightened one," spewing out his demented "brilliance." 2 Corinthians 11:14 corroborates this truth: "Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light."

4. See pp. 27-29 of the CES book, *Don't Blame God!*

“authorities,” “powers” and “spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (Eph. 6:12). Jesus Christ totally exposed his kingdom and its effect on people (Luke 10:17-24), and is in the process of “bringing him to ashes” (Ezek. 28:18). Though Satan knows his days are numbered, he is insanely committed to hindering God’s purposes and delaying the day of his doom, if he can. He is also trying to deceive as many people as he can so they do not believe in Christ and receive everlasting life in Paradise. As the father of pride and envy, he apparently reasons that if he is going to be destroyed, he will take as many people down with him as possible.

The second question in regard to Satan’s authority is: was this authority that he offered to Jesus legitimately *his* to give, or was he lying? He is, after all, the “father of lies” (John 8:44). The most compelling answer to this question is the way Jesus answered the Devil. He did not question the fact that the Devil was making a legitimate offer. He simply recognized that there was too high a price to pay for what he was offering. We have no doubt that the Devil is still in the empire-building business, enrolling everyone he can in the pursuit of worldly fame, fortune and self-promotion. And those he cannot lure into that trap he discourages and humiliates by setting before them unattainable ideals for “beauty, brains and bucks.” In case those traps fail, he provides counterfeit religious systems for “escaping the world,” and persecution of those who choose to resist. He has all the bases covered, because he is the “systematizer” of error.⁵ Surveying the state of the world since the time of Adam’s fall, we would have to say that there is an invisible conductor orchestrating evil and masterminding events of nature and human history in a manner contrary to the will of God. But we do not have to rely on our experience for an accurate assessment, because God’s Word says that this is precisely what is happening behind the scenes:

1 John 5:19 (NRSV)

We know that we are God’s children, and that the whole world lies under the power of the evil one.

So we see that the Redeemer still has a lot of work to do, and that redemption is still being accomplished. This is because not only did Jesus come to redeem *mankind* by giving his life as a sacrifice, God sent him to redeem *all of His creation*.⁶ In the first part of his job, his enemy was sin and death, and Jesus’ orders were to endure suffering and death caused by the sin of Adam. In the latter part of his assignment, Christ’s enemy is Satan (and his demons), and his orders are to rise up in his glory and vanquish all the enemies of God.

This latter aspect of his job description requires that he deal *directly* with the one responsible for the introduction of sin and death into God’s Creation. Remember that the first

5. Satan uses strategy and systematizes error such that it continues generation after generation. The Apostle Paul wrote in Ephesians about people blown about by “craftiness in deceitful scheming” (Eph. 4:14, *NASB*). “Craftiness” is from the Greek *panourgia*, and means “craftiness, cunning, unscrupulousness, false wisdom.” It is the word used about someone who will use any and all means to achieve an end. The words “deceitful scheming” are translated from the Greek word *methodeia* (from which we get “method”) and it means “deceit, craft or trickery” that has a plan or method behind it. Thus, the Adversary has an evil plan and method, and will use any and all means at his disposal to reach his sinister goals.

6. Romans 8:19-21 clearly says that the entire creation awaits the day when it will “be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.”

time the coming Redeemer is mentioned in Scripture was when God prophesied to Satan in Genesis 3:15 that he would eventually be destroyed, not by God Himself, but by the offspring of the woman. This conflict and parallelism between Christ and the Devil is another aspect of the cornerstone of the Christian faith that must be cut correctly. When we consider this head-to-head cosmic fight-to-the-finish, we are struck with an insight concerning God's righteousness. As God *could* not legally or righteously be the Redeemer of mankind because he could not die, He *would* not be the destroyer of Satan because His righteousness is so pure that it extends even to being fair and just to His archenemy. Though he could destroy Satan as easily as He had dropped him from heaven, God delegated the destruction of Satan to one who would earn the right and the moral authority to do so—Jesus Christ! Though we cannot possibly know *all* that was in the Father's heart, we know from Philippians 2:13 that His plan of redemption is to *His* glory, and His plan involved *delegating the complete process of redemption to Christ*. God is there to help, guide and direct as always, but he has invested in Christ "all authority in heaven and earth" (Matt. 28:18), more than enough to get the job done.

Our God is not as interested in getting the job done quickly and efficiently as he is in having it done RIGHT, as in *righteously*. There is also a majestic poetic justice involved in allowing Christ to be Satan's destroyer. Because as Jesus walked the same path of temptation in the flesh that Adam walked, without sinning, so in his glorified position as Lord he is standing where Lucifer once stood, only without iniquity or pride being found in him. Hence, he is uniquely qualified to undo what Lucifer did when he scorned his privileged anointing at God's right hand as "the guardian cherub" in "the holy mount of God."

Satan Started As a Star

Let us now look at the privileged position in which Lucifer began his existence, because understanding his relationship with God and the manner in which he lost it will help us appreciate Jesus Christ and his road to glory. Where Jesus began his earthly life in humility and ended it in ignominy, Satan began in glory and will end in ashes. His downfall was his fatally flawed decision to attempt to exalt himself to an even higher position than he was already given, to a position *just like God*.

The following account in Ezekiel 28 is the most detailed reference in the entire Bible to Satan's original state, his decision to leave it and his eventual complete annihilation. Note the use of language in verse 12, making it appear that this passage is addressed only to a particular "King of Tyre." It is evident, however, that though this king may have had a few faults of his own, they pale in comparison to the criminal antics of the one this passage is really being addressed to—the Cosmic Criminal, Satan, the crafty old "Serpent." Note also that God says here that *He* will be the one to destroy Satan, but this is not a contradiction of Genesis 3:15, which says that *the promised seed* would crush his head. There is a common Hebrew idiom being employed here in which the one whose plan it is can speak of doing the work, although he has actually delegated it to an agent.⁷

7. The Jewish rule of "agency" is explained in Appendices A (Gen. 16:7-13) and D.

Ezekiel 28:12-19 (NASB)

(12) Son of man, take up a lamentation over the king of Tyre, and say to him: "Thus says the LORD God: '**You had the seal [i.e., you were the model] of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.**

(13) You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering: the ruby, the topaz, and the diamond; the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper; the lapis lazuli, the turquoise and the emerald; and the gold, the workmanship of your settings and sockets, was in you. On the day that you were created they were prepared.

(14) You were the anointed cherub who covers and I placed you there. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked in the midst of the stones of fire.

(15) You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created until unrighteousness was found in you.

(16) By the abundance of your trade you were internally filled with violence, and you sinned. Therefore I have cast you as profane from the mountain of God. And I have destroyed you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.

(17) Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor. I cast you to the ground; I put you before kings [this will happen in the future], that they may see you.

(18) By the multitude of your iniquities, in the unrighteousness of your trade, you profaned your sanctuaries. Therefore I have brought fire from the midst of you; it has consumed you, and I have turned you to ashes on the earth in the eyes of all who see you [also future, spoken of as past for the certitude of the event—"the lake of fire"—Rev. 9:20, *et al*].

(19) All who know you among the peoples are appalled at you; you have become terrified, and you will be no more."

So we see that the present Adversary of God and His Christ began as "the model of perfection," beautiful and wise beyond comparison. From this description, he seems to have been the most graciously favored of all God's created beings. Would it be going too far to assert that God had given him *everything he could give a created being* without making him *just like Himself*? We think this is what the above Scriptures are communicating. So it is all the more reprehensible that Lucifer became discontent, actually thinking that he deserved to be even *more* than he already was. Lucifer's pathetic example proves that it is *always* possible to be unthankful, no matter how much one has been given.

At this point let us turn to the description of Lucifer's fall as found in Isaiah. We have highlighted his five "I will" statements to accentuate the deliberate choice he made to reject God's grace (biblically, the number five indicates "grace"). Note that this passage ends with a revealing statement from God's perspective about who Satan really is, when stripped of all his lies and pretensions. He is very small indeed, apart from what God has given him through His grace and generosity. When he is finally revealed for who he is, and judged in righteousness by the Son of Righteousness, all will marvel at what a pretender he really is, and how unworthy of notice.

Isaiah 14:12-17 (NASB)

(12) How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! [KJV—"Lucifer"⁸] You have been cut down to the earth, you who have weakened the nations!

(13) But you said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; and I will sit on the mount of assembly, in the recesses of the north.

(14) I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High."

(15) Nevertheless, you will be thrust down to Sheol, to the recesses of the pit.

(16) Those who see you will gaze at you, they will ponder over you, saying, "Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms,

(17) Who made the world like a wilderness, and overthrew its cities, who did not allow his prisoners to go home?"

Remember that in Ezekiel 28 Satan was described as being "*full of wisdom*," until that wisdom was "corrupted...by reason of [his] splendor." Satan was, therefore, the original embodiment of God's wisdom in a created being, and it is not too big a stretch to imagine that he was God's companion in some aspects of creation.⁹ But instead of being blessed to participate with God in His divine functions, Satan desired personal "equality" with God, meaning that he would have the same powers and abilities as his Creator. He was apparently close enough to God to "taste" what it would be like to *be* Him, and considered such "equality" enough of a possibility that he thought he could get away with grasping for it. Instead, he lost his relationship with his Creator (because he apparently overlooked the fact that he was *created*), and to this day uses the awesome ability that God gave him to hinder His purposes, promote lies concerning the integrity of God's Word and bombard mankind with a plethora of possibilities for errant belief and worship. His demented goal is to make good look evil, and evil good, and the true God and His Christ look bad in any way he can. But like the primitive man who throws mud at the sun to dim its light, so all his centuries-worth of effort to obscure God and Christ from mankind will be to no avail, for one day "every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:13).

The fall of Lucifer left a big hole in heaven, so to speak, as he vacated his position of authority and power as one of three archangels (along with Gabriel and Michael). He also persuaded one-third of the angels to leave with him in his descent to oblivion. This caused a radical restructuring of heavenly authority, the faithful angels having to fill the void left in the rebels' wake. The position Satan left was not easily filled, for he was "the finished pattern"

8. The Hebrew word translated "Lucifer" in Isaiah 14:12 (KJV) actually means "shining star." The Latin Vulgate translated the Hebrew as "Lucifer," which made its way into the Roman Catholic *Douay Version* and into the *King James Version*.

9. Such an idea is implied by Proverbs 8:22-31, which describes by the figure of speech *personification* the role of "wisdom" as God's companion in Creation. Some element of irony is involved in this passage if we think about Lucifer's original wisdom, because in the same context, "wisdom" says: "I hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech. Counsel and sound judgment are mine; I have understanding and power. By me kings reign and rulers make laws that are just; by me princes govern, and all nobles who rule on earth" (Prov. 8:13-16). Satan employs his corrupted "wisdom" to administer his kingdom of darkness, and would not be able to do so except that he also employs his God-given abilities.

(mold) when God created him to be his “right hand man.”¹⁰ Christ is the new mold, patterning himself exactly after his Father, as Hebrews 1:3 communicates. God had given the position to Lucifer as his “birthright,” so to speak, since he just “woke up” one day as a created being equipped to the max. It is clear that God had already formulated a plan for filling this position with another exalted being. But we can surmise that he purposed in his heart that the next time it would be by someone *earning the right to it*, someone who would not try to grasp at equality with Him. The following passage highlights Christ’s humility in contrast to Satan’s prideful power-grab.

Philippians 2:5-8

5) Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

6) Who, being in very nature God, **did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,**

7) But made himself nothing [KJV—“of no reputation”], taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

8) And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross.

(9) **Therefore, God exalted him to the highest place** and gave him the name that is above every name,

(10) That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

(11) and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Clearly, God has exalted His wonderful Son to “the highest place,” a place that is “just like God,” or functionally equal with God. This is *the very place that Lucifer wanted to be*, but because he grabbed for it, he was cast out of heaven. In contrast, Jesus is not concerned with having personal equality with God as Lucifer was. He is content to serve God in whatever way and in whatever role God gives him. Because of this humility, God has exalted him as high as he can exalt someone—to His own right hand, equal in authority, power and dominion with Himself. As Jesus said in Matthew 28:18, “*all* authority in heaven and earth has been given to me.” The delegation of this authority occurred right after his resurrection, but was realized when he was seated at the right hand of God after his Ascension.

The authority God has given Christ has placed him in a position of *functional equality with God*. Let’s look again at 1 Corinthians 15:24-28, paying particular attention to the highlighted phrase in the last verse.

1 Corinthians 15:24-28 (NASB)

(24) Then comes the end, when He [Christ] delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father, when He [Christ] has abolished all rule and all authority and power [by exercising his own].

¹⁰ Bullinger, *op. cit.*, *Companion* text note on Ezekiel 28:12, p. 1145.

(25) For He [Christ] must reign until He [God, from Ps. 10:1] has put all His [Christ's] enemies under His [Christ's] feet.

(26) The last enemy that will be abolished is death.

(27) "For He [God] has put all things in subjection under His [Christ's] feet." But when He says "all things are put in subjection," it is evident that He [God] is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him [Christ].

(28) And when all things are subjected to Him, **then** [in the future, not now] **the Son himself will be also be subjected to the One** [God] who subjected all things to Him [Christ], that God may be all in all.

If the Son *will be* made subject to God in the future at the end of his Millennial reign on the earth, the time to which this is referring, then what does that say about his *present* relationship with God, his Father? It says that presently Christ is fully authorized as God's appointed agent of redemption, not subordinate to His Father, but in a *functionally equal* position. He is in a relationship with God like the relationship that Joseph had with Pharaoh, personally distinct from him but reigning with all his authority (we will explore this more fully in the next chapter). As the result of his resurrection and ascension, Jesus Christ has the privilege to share with God in the dominion of all His Creation, not only in this, the Church Age, but in the coming ages as well.¹¹

In reference to his original splendor, Lucifer was called a "morning star," which actually means "shining star." But he became too bright for his britches. Jesus Christ is referred to in Revelation 22:16 as the "BRIGHT morning star," indicating that he now exceeds Lucifer's original brilliance because of his virtuous character. By never trying to shine in his own light, but being content to reflect the Father's brilliance, Jesus has now been blessed by God to be a luminary of luminaries, shining alongside God at His right hand. God "broke the mold" when he created Lucifer, but Jesus Christ is *patterning himself* after his Father, as we will see later in Hebrews 1:3. What Lucifer sought for and even grabbed at—equality with God—Jesus never even considered for a moment that it could be his. But since Lucifer's rebellion, God has longed for one to be his companion and share with Him in His many divine functions. Jesus Christ is now such a one, a glorious Lord not in any way competing with the Father, but to cooperate with Him to His glory.

The question naturally arises at this point in our discussion: how can Jesus function in this exalted manner, considering that he is still a *man*? (1 Tim. 2:5). To answer that, we have to know something about his new body, and this is what we will explore next.

Two Jobs, Two Bodies

Christ's first body was perfectly suited for carrying out the first aspect of the job of "Redeemer." It was not stained with sin nature and yet it could die. Hebrews speaks of this body.

11. Ephesians 1:21 says that Christ has been given authority "not only in the present age, but also in the one to come."

Hebrews 10:5-7 (NRSV)

(5) Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said: “Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a **body you have prepared for me**;

(6) in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure.”

(7) Then I said, “See, God, I have come **to do your will, O God**” (in the scroll of the books it is written about me.¹²

The “will of God” for Jesus Christ in the “suffering” part of his calling was for him to live an obedient life and then lay down his life for mankind. His body was therefore prepared as the perfect sacrifice. What was the will of God for Jesus Christ *after* his resurrection? It was for him to be highly exalted and actually *reign with God* on high, as King David, the Psalmist, had prophesied.

Psalm 110:1,2 (NRSV)

(1) The LORD says to my Lord: “**Sit at my right hand** until I make **your enemies** [especially Satan] your footstool.”

(2) The LORD sends out from Zion your mighty scepter. **Rule** in the midst of **your foes**.

The Jews had rightly expected that the Messiah would sit on the throne of *David* in Jerusalem and rule the earth in righteousness. It was this session on the Davidic throne that the Jews were avidly anticipating at the time of Christ’s earthly ministry. But Psalm 110 referred to a time of an even greater exaltation—literally *sitting at the right hand of God*.

Clearly, to be able to perform in this exalted capacity, he would need to have a correspondingly exalted body. Reading between the lines of Psalm 110:1 and 2, we see that part of Christ’s job is to subdue his “enemies” with God’s help, but he did not subdue his enemies when he came the first time. In fact, his enemies subdued him, at least that is how it looked. In his resurrected glorification, however, he is able to subdue all things to himself (Phil 2:21). He is presently working to destroy the works of his chief enemy, Satan, even as Genesis 3:15 had prophesied. Furthermore, he is empowering his people against the enemy as well. Ephesians 6:10ff indicates that there is a spiritual war raging all about us, and to successfully stand we must be “strong in the Lord,” that is, rely on his strength in us.

So it stands to reason that part of what would equip Christ for his next assignment, ruling and reigning with God in heaven itself, was his having a body equal to the task. To begin with, this body would have to be equipped with the ability to transcend the physical limitations of earthbound existence. Five verses in Hebrews and one in Ephesians point to Christ’s passage

12. Note that the Messiah speaks of “God” in verse 7 as one wholly *other* to himself, and the One whose will he came to do. This is the same truth communicated in verse 8 of the same chapter, when it says “thy God,” meaning that even in Messiah’s exalted position, he is to recognize God’s personal superiority. His position involves only *functional* equality with God. When speaking to Mary Magdalene in one of his post-resurrection appearances, he said, “I am returning to my Father and your Father, to **my God** and your God” (John 20:17).

through “the heavens,” or the *physical* universe, into “*heaven itself*,” a spiritual place where God and angels dwell.¹³

Hebrews 1:3b (NRSV)

When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the majesty **on high** [*i.e.*, in heaven].

Hebrews 4:14 (NRSV)

Since, then, we have a great high priest **who has passed through the heavens**, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession.

Hebrews 7:26 (NRSV)

For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, **holy, blameless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens**.

Hebrews 8:1 (NRSV)

Now the main point of what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty **in the heavens**.

Hebrews 9:24 (NRSV)

(24) For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made by human hands, a mere copy of the true one, but **he entered into heaven itself**, now to appear **in the presence of God on our behalf**.

Ephesians 4:8-10 (NRSV)

(8) Therefore it is said, “When he ascended **on high**, he made captivity itself a captive; he gave gifts to his people.”

(9) (When it says, “he ascended,” what does mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth?

(10) He who descended is the same one who **ascended far above all the heavens, so that he might fill all things** [*NIV* “the whole universe.”]

So Christ now reigns in heaven in his resurrected body, which has been perfectly designed for him to function as God’s right-hand man. He “fills” the hole in heaven left by the departing Serpent and his brood of vipers. He also now reigns over *the Church* as its Head, and he will appear again from heaven to literally rule *the earth* from Jerusalem for 1,000 years. At the end of that time, he will destroy Satan and his associates, cast death and hell into the lake of fire and, having vanquished all enemies, enjoy the final Paradise that is his reward. Amazingly, we who have believed in him will enjoy it along with him, our wonderful Redeemer.

13. The Bible distinguishes between “the heavens,” which refer to the physical universe, and “Heaven,” which often refers to the spiritual home of God and angels. The entirety of the heavens is spoken of metaphorically as God’s “throne,” and the earth as his “footstool.”

Jesus Christ: The Diameter of the Ages

The first three verses in the Book of Hebrews clearly define the greatness of Jesus Christ as the "Purpose of the Ages." They are a kind of capsulation of most of the Old Testament and the Four Gospels, summarizing God's communication to mankind from His calling of the nation of Israel to His exaltation of Jesus Christ as Lord. They provide a fitting introduction to our examination of Jesus Christ as He is revealed in the Old Testament and the Four Gospels, as well as in the Book of Acts and the Church Epistles. Let us begin with the first two verses:

Hebrews 1:1-2 (NRSV)

(1) Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways through the prophets,

(2) but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through [*dia*] whom he also created the worlds [ages].¹⁴

Clearly, the essence of these verses is that God has communicated to man by the spoken Word, by the written Word and finally by the created and living Word, His Son Jesus Christ. Verse two is sometimes used to attempt to prove that Jesus is the Creator, but a closer look at it in its context reveals the error of this assumption.¹⁵ Critical to this examination is the key Greek preposition, *dia*, of which E.W. Bullinger states:

14. It is unfortunate that the *King James Version* usually renders the Greek word *aion* as "world," because it leaves the reader with the idea of place instead of time. The word *aion* means "an age, or a period of time." From it, we get the corresponding English word "*eon*." Galatians 1:4 speaks of Jesus rescuing us from "this present evil age." This brings up two questions: what is the duration of this present age and why is it evil? The answers are closely related. In Luke 4:6, while the Devil was tempting Jesus, he told Jesus that all the kingdoms of the world were his to give because they had been "delivered unto him." Jesus did not dispute this claim because he knew it was true. Had it not been true, Satan's offer would not have been a temptation to Christ. When the first Adam originally disobeyed God, he lost his God-given dominion and authority over the Earth. Thus, began the "present evil age," and it will not end until the Last Adam comes again and takes back this dominion and authority by force. In the meantime, Satan is referred to as the "god of this age" (2 Cor. 4:4). While living in this present evil age, each Christian is encouraged to not be "conformed to this age" (Rom. 12:2), but to be transformed by the renewing of his mind. Hebrews 1:2 is also badly mistranslated in the *New International Version*, which otherwise correctly translates *aion* as "age." The very trinitarian *NIV* there renders *aion* as "universe," because they believe that as "God the Son," Jesus was in on the original Genesis creation. For a thorough explanation of this verse, see Appendix A.

15. The phrase "Through whom he made the universe" has been repeatedly used to support the doctrine of the Trinity, when it actually does not. The points made by J.S. Hyndman in 1824 are still valid today:

"Through whom he made the worlds." It is really curious to observe the confidence with which this passage is brought forward in support of the idea that Jesus not only existed before he appeared as a man, but also that he created the material universe. The preposition which is here used in connection with *epoisen* ["he made"] is *dia*, which universally denotes instrumental agency, by way of distinction from *hypo*, which is almost universally used to signify primary or original causation. Supposing, then, that the notion of creation is conveyed by the original of the word translated "made," and supposing also that "world" is a correct translation of the Greek noun which occurs in the passage, what, I ask, would be the doctrine of the words? Would it be that the Son created the world as an original artificer? Surely not; but that God created it by the agency or means of Jesus Christ.

The word “through” is the Greek word *dia*, which when used with the genitive case: “...has the general sense of *through*...From the ideas of space and time, *dia*...denotes any cause *by means of* which an action passes to its accomplishment...hence, it denotes the passing through whatever is interposed between the beginning and end of such action.”¹⁶

Jesus Christ is the “diameter of the ages”; he is the golden thread woven throughout the royal tapestry of truth. He was in the mind and plan of God when Satan rebelled, when the first Adam sinned and all throughout the Old Testament as God patiently worked to preserve and protect his line of descent, the Christ line. Finally, the Redeemer was born and then lived his life flawlessly. As the exalted Lord, he will eventually bring to pass the complete redemption of Creation. Jesus Christ is the fulcrum and focus of history, which is really “His-story.” In commissioning His Son as the Redeemer of mankind, God “put all His eggs in one basket,” so to speak. Only Jesus Christ, the Last Adam, could do His will of redeeming Creation, and it would require the “ages” to consummate this master plan. As the focal point of the ages, Jesus Christ is the cause or the “means” through (*dia*=by means of) which God’s plan is being accomplished.

Regarding God’s plan of redemption through Jesus Christ, Hebrews 1:3 magnificently sets forth vital information concerning who, how and what. To see the depth of redemption relative to this entire study, a number of words in verse 3 must be examined. First, we will look at five words in the first sentence:

Hebrews 1:3

The Son is the **radiance** of God’s **glory** and the **exact representation** of his **being**, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

In the above verse, the word “radiance” is translated from the Greek word *apaugasma*, which Thayer translates as “reflected brightness.” Thayer goes on to say that Christ is called this because “he perfectly reflects the majesty of God.”¹⁷

This verse is parallel in the mode of its phraseology to the first verse. Now, as when it is said, “God spake through the Son,” the universal doctrine of the New Testament is expressed respecting the source of our Savior’s knowledge, *viz.*, that it was derived from Him who was greater than he, and that he was not the original fountain of his communications. So when it is said, “God made the worlds through his Son,” it is no less clear and no less incontrovertible that all that is attributed to Jesus in the passage is an agency that is secondary and subordinate to that of the Supreme. Indeed, as in the former sentence, so in this, the very form and structure of the phraseology are more than sufficient to determine this point....

Not in fact to admit that the words, “through whom also he made the world,” convey the idea of instrumental agency in the Son, is either to make the sentence perfectly unintelligible or absurd...

The proper and literal rendering of *aiones*, translated “worlds,” is *ages* or *dispensations*. This is its natural and only proper meaning. It is so translated in almost all its occurrences in the New Testament, and in many instances must be so as to make sense and coherency in the sentences with which it stands connected.

J.S. Hyndman, *Lectures on the Principles of Unitarianism* (Alnwick, 1824. Reprinted by CES, Indianapolis, IN, 1994), p. 125-127. (For more information on Hebrews 1:2, see Appendix A).

16. Bullinger, *op. cit.*, *Companion*, Appendix 104.

The word “glory” is defined as referring to “not the object itself, but the appearance of the object that attracts attention.”¹⁸ An apple may be nothing special, but a highly polished, glistening apple would stand out in a bowl of other apples and attract attention. A man may be nothing special, but *The Man* Jesus Christ shined among other men and attracted much attention.

“Exact representation” is *charakter*, which is found only in Hebrews 1:3. The word is derived from the verb *charasso*, meaning “to cut in, to engrave.” The word means the exact impression as when metal is pressed into a die, or as a seal upon wax.¹⁹ *Charakter* is “a distinctive sign, trait, type, or form, the image impressed as corresponding exactly with the original or pattern.”²⁰ Jesus Christ has earned and been given the distinction of being the perfect representative of Almighty God. As we saw in Chapter 2 in connection with the Greek word *eikon*, Adam was designed to be the image, or the representative of God, but in large part disqualified himself by his disobedience. In contrast, Christ has, by virtue of his faithful obedience, continued to pattern himself after his Father.

“Being” is translated from the Greek word *hupostasis*, which appears four other places (2 Cor. 9:4; 11:17; Heb. 3:14; 11:1). It means “a substructure, what really exists under or out of sight, the essence of a matter in contrast to its appearance.”²¹ Its use in Greek literature supports this definition, as it indicates “the reality behind appearances.” Its use in the *Septuagint* (a Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament) gives it the essence of a “plan” or “purpose.”²² This is added support for the idea that Jesus Christ is the “purpose of the ages.”

The first part of Hebrews 1:3 may then be paraphrased as follows:

Jesus Christ is the reflection of God’s power. He is the extraordinary Man whose appearance attracts attention. He radiates the character of God to the world, being the exact impression of God’s heart. The invisible God is the unseen foundation upon which Jesus Christ built His life. God is the Author of the master plan of salvation, and Jesus Christ is the Agent who is carrying it out.

The remainder of verse 3 illustrates *how* he does so, and what he is accomplishing for mankind. The next clause to consider is, “sustaining all things by his [Jesus Christ’s] powerful word.” Jesus Christ is bringing to pass God’s plan by his steadfast adherence to God’s Word. He continues to adhere faithfully to God’s plan for the Church Age. A mirror turned toward the sun will reflect its light very brightly, but if the mirror is turned away from the source of light, there

17. Joseph Thayer, *The New Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Associated Publishers and Authors, Lafayette, IN, 1979), p. 55.

18. Bullinger, *op. cit.*, *Lexicon*, p. 323.

19. *Ibid.*, *Lexicon*, p. 401.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 401.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 582.

22. Gerhard Kittel, *op. cit.*, *Theological Dictionary*, Vol. VIII, pp. 578-82.

will be no reflection, even though the sun is still shining. Even at the right hand of God, Jesus Christ keeps the countenance of his life fixed upon his heavenly Father, and always reflects God's light.

The next clause in Hebrews 1:3—"after he had provided purification for sins"—shows *what* the Redeemer brought to pass by his faithfulness in acting upon the Word of God. When mankind's potential purification was complete, Jesus Christ sat down at the right hand of God. The purification of man's sins, and Jesus Christ taking his seat of authority on high, were completed once and for all. What this action accomplished for those who believe on him will be fully known only at his appearing.

While accomplishing the everlasting redemption of people who choose to believe on his name, Jesus Christ set a unique example of victorious day-by-day living. In so doing, he declared God to the world. Today, Jesus Christ is no longer on the earth, but those who are born again have "Christ" in them by way of holy spirit, his divine nature, and they can by Christlike faithfulness to God's Word manifest a similar attractive radiance. Each believer today can rise above the mediocrity of worldly men and shine extraordinarily to the end that his life is also a glory to God.

It is in the "face" of our Lord Jesus that we most clearly see the glory of God. Though we do not have a physical image of his "face," we are able to study his life and attributes in God's Word and get to know him in that way. We are also able to have a personal relationship with him via the gift of holy spirit. This is why, for successful Christian living, it is absolutely imperative that we dwell in the heart of our wonderful Savior day by day, making his attitude our attitude. The more we know and love the Lord Jesus, the more we know, love and glorify God, our Father.

One God & One Lord

Let us now cite another key passage of Scripture that corroborates the truths we just saw in Hebrews 1:1-4, and which also contains the thesis verse of this book.

1 Corinthians 8:4-6

(4) So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one.

(5) For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"),

(6) Yet for us there is but **ONE GOD**, the Father, **from whom all things came and for whom we live**; and there is but **ONE LORD**, Jesus Christ, **through whom all things came and through whom we live**.

Notice that the context in which verse 6 is found is specifically regarding the worshipping of idols, that is, false gods. Paul states that among the polytheistic heathen there are many gods and many lords, and he then draws a clear contrast between pagan polytheism and Christian monotheism [belief in only one God]. This expression of monotheism involves an absolute

distinction between “God” and Jesus Christ, precluding the idea that Jesus Christ could be “God” in the same sense that the Father is “God.”²³ In one of many clear identity statements that define who “God” is, verse 6 clearly says that the only true “God” is “the Father.”²⁴ John 17:3 also teaches this truth by recording the words of Jesus himself when he referred to God, his Father, as “the only true God.” In light of the clarity of these verses, we marvel that so many Christians can accept the orthodox teaching that Jesus is “true God from true God” as the Nicene Creed propounds. Verse 6 is, in reality, a classic summation of the heart of true Christianity. Let us look at it again, this time in more detail.

1 Corinthians 8:6

Yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from [*ek* = “out from”] whom all things came and for [*eis* = “unto”] whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through [*dia*] whom all things came and through [*dia*] whom we live.

Please bear with us as we review a bit of basic grammar and parts of speech, carefully noticing the precise use of the prepositions in this verse. Prepositions are like signposts that direct the meaning of a passage. Notice the distinct and separate use of the Greek prepositions *ek* in relation to God and *dia* in relation to Christ. This should arrest our attention and keep us from speeding past these important signs on our way to a preconceived idea (and maybe getting a ticket for violating the laws of logic). *Ek* indicates something *coming out from* its source or origin, and indicates *motion from the interior*.²⁵ Remember this last phrase, because it is central to understanding the precision of this verse. In other words, all things came *out from* the loving heart of God, or God’s “interior,” so to speak. This agrees with Genesis 1:1, which says, “In the beginning, *God* created the heavens and the earth.” Both verses say that *the source of* “all things” is the one true God, the Creator of the heavens and earth and the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The *NIV* translation of the next clause related to God—“and *for whom* we live”—contains a fabulous truth. In the Greek text, there is no word for “live,” and the word “for” is the word *eis*, usually translated “unto.” When used with the accusative case, *eis* means “into, unto, to, implying motion *to* the interior.”²⁶ It is saying, in essence, that “we were evicted, but He let us move back in.” We are *reconciled* to God. How? Through (*dia*) the agency of Christ. Jesus is like

23. Of course we do not dispute the fact that *theos* is apparently used in relation to Christ in a few verses of scripture, most notably John 1:1; 20:28 and Hebrews 1:8 (for more information on these verses see Appendix A). As Jesus himself acknowledged, in John 8:34 and 35, Scripture employs a usage of “god” that is equivalent to “God’s human representative.” What we object to is the way many Trinitarians equivocate the term “God” to mean “God the Father as distinct from God the Son.” In the vast majority of the cases, the word “God” is used of the one-and-only true God who is also the Father of Jesus Christ. Understood without the equivocation, the term “God” logically excludes “*the Son of God*,” Jesus Christ. Without equivocating the term “God,” how can anyone argue that anyone can be both “God” and “*the Son of God*” at the same time. See Appendix K.

24. See also Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:3; 15:24; 2 Cor. 1:2,3; 11:31; Gal. 1:1,3,4; Eph. 1:2,3,17; 4:6; 5:20; 6:23; Phil. 1:2; 1 Thess. 1:1,3, James 3:9, *et al.*

25. Bullinger, *op. cit.*, *Lexicon*, p. 308.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 403.

a rental *agent* who paid our back rent and restored our relationship with the landlord. Or he is like the sports agent who wins a fabulous contract for us even after we've had a terrible year.

In John 14:6, Jesus said: "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes unto the Father except through [*dia*] me," *i.e.*, through my agency. In other words, the Holy God is on the other side of an immense chasm separating Him from sinful man. Without the agency of Jesus Christ, the Messiah, spanning the chasm by means of his atoning sacrifice and resurrection, we would be forever consigned to falling short of reaching God with our pathetic religious works and good intentions.

As we have now seen several times, the preposition associated with the Lord Jesus Christ is *dia*, meaning "through." Are we seeing a pattern here? A *diameter* is a straight line running all the way from a point on one side of the circle *through* the center to a point on the other side of the circle. God is the point on one side and man is the point on the other. The Man Jesus Christ is the Mediator, the straight line, between God and men (1 Tim. 2:5). He is "the *bridge* over troubled waters." He is The Way all the way *unto* the Father. Lo and behold, that is what the last part of 1 Corinthians 8:6 says, that through (*dia*) the one Lord, Jesus Christ, all things come from God to us, and through him we come unto God. How could God make any plainer the truth that He, the Father, is **the one true God**, and that His Son Jesus Christ is **the Lord** through whom He worked to accomplish the redemption of mankind? The Lord Jesus is the one and only agent of redemption, and the one "basket" in which God put all his "eggs."

The "Dynamic Duo"

Since God and Christ are working together so intimately, we have taken the liberty of calling them "the Dynamic Duo." This phrase communicates to us the fact that *both* God and Jesus Christ are involved in our lives and the process of redemption. Building upon the foundation we have laid from 1 Corinthians 8:6, let us see further biblical evidence of this One God, One Lord paradigm.

Ephesians 4:4-6 (NRSV)

(4) There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling;

(5) **One Lord**, one faith, one baptism;

(6) **One God and Father** of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

This section also marks out a distinct separation between the one Lord, Jesus Christ, and the one God, the Father. We also see the elevation of the Father as the one to whom all glory is due as the Source of "all," and Who is *over, through* and *in* "all." Note also the precise identity established between "God" and "the Father." There is no other true God beside "the Father." And the Son is not "God," but he *is* "Lord."

Every one of the Church Epistles begins with the salutation, "Grace and peace from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ." This fits with 1 Corinthians 8:6, which states that there

is “one God the Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ.” One plus one equals two. In Scripture, the number two denotes either division and distinction or establishment and confirmation.²⁷ In fact, without a distinction between two things, there could be no confirmation of one by the other. Regarding the relationship between God and Christ, the number two indicates both a separation and connection. The connecting word, “and,” in itself indicates the distinction between God *and* Christ.

It is very important for us to see clearly the relationship between the one God, the Father, the *Author* of salvation, and the one Lord, Jesus Christ, the *Agent* of salvation.

Romans 15:8 (NRSV)

For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised (*i.e.*, Jews) on behalf of truth of God, in order that he might **confirm the promises** [that God] given to the patriarchs

This verse says that Jesus Christ came to *confirm* God’s promises to Israel, coming along as Number Two behind God, who is Numero Uno, and who made the original promises to Israel.

What other verses can we find to clarify the distinction and the cohesion of “the Dynamic Duo?”

1 Timothy 2:5 (NRSV)

For there is **one God**; there is also **one mediator** between God and humankind, the man Christ Jesus, himself human

By definition, a “mediator” is a separate person from each of the two parties between whom he mediates (Gal. 3:20). Jesus Christ is separate from God because he is a *man*, and he is separate from sinful mankind because he is God’s only-begotten *Son* who had no sin nature and lived a sinless life. If Adam and his descendants had remained sinless, they would have had no need for a mediator. The introduction of sin into the life of mankind necessitated the mediation of a sinless man. Of course, Jesus knew this, as evidenced by what he prayed shortly before his death:

John 17:3 (NRSV)

And this is eternal life [life in the coming age], that they may know you, **the only true God, and Jesus Christ**, whom you have sent.

27. E. W. Bullinger discusses the significance of the number two in his classic work on numbers in Scripture:

We now come to the spiritual significance of the number Two. We have seen that *One* excludes all difference, and denotes that which is sovereign. But Two affirms that there is a difference—there is *another*, while ONE affirms that there is not another! This *difference* may be for good or for evil...The number Two takes a two-fold colouring, according to the context. It is the first number by which we can *divide* another, and therefore in all its uses we may trace this fundamental idea of *division* or *difference*. The *two* may be, though different in character, yet one as to testimony and friendship.”

Number In Scripture, Its Supernatural Design And Spiritual Significance, (Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, MI, 1971), p. 92-106.

Jesus referred to his Father as the *only true God*, and understood that God commissioned him as the agent of salvation. As the Head of the Church, the Lord Jesus works with our heavenly Father to direct the functions of its members and to help us carry them out, as the following verses make clear.

2 Thessalonians 2:16,17 (NRSV)

(16) May our **Lord Jesus Christ** himself and **God our Father**, who loved us and through grace gave us eternal comfort and good hope,

(17) comfort your hearts and strengthen them in every good work and word.

Another verse, perhaps somewhat “obscure” but nonetheless relevant to our context here, clearly illustrates the distinction and cohesion between God and His Son, as well as the conspicuous absence of a “third person.”

2 John 9 (NRSV)

Every one who does not abide in the teaching of Christ, but goes beyond it, does not have God; whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son.

Another passage that makes the distinction between God and Christ is 1 Corinthians 15:24-28. The distinction between God and Christ in this section is so abundantly plain that even in the text itself it is called “clear.” Here the Word of God vividly declares the relationship between God and Jesus Christ as it relates to Christ having accomplished all the work God sent him to do and finally being made subject to God as His co-ruler on the new earth. We will quote this passage again from the perspective of the clear separation between the *two*, identifying to whom each pronoun is referring. The way to determine the referent of the pronouns is to remember from Psalm 110:1 and 2 that *God* is the one who puts everything under Christ’s feet, including his enemies. He gives Christ the authority to reign for a time, until his enemies are subdued.

1 Corinthians 15:24-28

(24) Then the end will come, when he [Christ] hands over the kingdom to God, the Father, after he [Christ] has destroyed all dominion, authority and power.

” (25) For he [Christ] must reign until he [God] has put all his [Christ’s] enemies under his [Christ’s] feet.

(26) The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

(27) For he [God] “has put everything under his [Christ’s] feet.” Now when it says that “everything” has been put under him [Christ], it is **CLEAR** that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ.

(28) When he [Christ] has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him [God] who put everything under him [Christ], so that God may be all in all.²⁸

This passage contains echoes of another passage of Scripture that we looked at in the previous chapter in connection with the privilege extended to mankind. The language is applied to Christ, who, as we have discussed, is fulfilling mankind's destiny and privilege.

Psalms 8:3-8 (NASB)

(3) When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;

(4) what is man that you dost take thought of him? And the son of man, that thou dost care for him?

(5) thou hast made him a little lower than God, and dost crown him with glory and majesty.

(6) Thou dost make him to rule over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet,

(7) all all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field,

(8) the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes through the paths of the seas.

A verse in the last chapter of the Bible corresponds with the Corinthians verses, and forever fixes the relationship of the "Dynamic Duo."

28. One of the reasons we quote this passage repeatedly is that it so clearly defines the relationship between God and Christ in both person and function. As such, it is very difficult for Trinitarian theologians to interpret in a way that is honest to the text. A stunning example of how a Trinitarian bias can color what would otherwise be an obvious interpretation of a passage is found in the NIV Study Bible note on the phrase "the Son himself will be made subject to him" (1 Cor. 15:28). The NIV editors attempt to elevate the Son with a distinction between person and function that, in effect, demeans the personal superiority of the Father:

The Son will be made subject to the Father in the sense that administratively [*i.e.*, functionally], after he subjects all things to his power, he will then turn it all over to God the Father, the administrative head. This is not to suggest that the Son is in any way inferior to the Father. All three persons of the Trinity are equal in deity and in dignity [*i.e.*, they have *personal* equality]. The subordination referred to is one of function. The Father is supreme in the Trinity [but only in a functional sense]; the Son carries out the Father's will (*e.g.*, in creation, redemption); the Spirit is sent by the Father and the Son to vitalize life, communicate God's truth, apply His salvation to people and enable them to obey God's will (or word).

This explanation is arbitrary. There is no mention of "equality in deity but difference in function" in these verses. The text is clear as it stands—the Son will be subject to "God" (not "the Father"). Simply reading the verses reveals the separation between "God" and Christ, and also reveals the superiority of God over Christ. The editorial bias of the NIV editors is further revealed when, after the passage in 1 Corinthians 15:24-28 has clearly separated "God" from "Christ," with no mention of "the Holy Spirit," they equivocate the term "God" to mean "the *Triune* God," instead of the God whose identity is "the Father of Jesus Christ," who is clearly the one in view. They then comment on the phrase "so that God may be all in all," as follows: "*The triune God will be shown to be supreme and sovereign in all things.*"

Revelation 22:3

No longer will there be any curse. **The throne of God and of the Lamb** will be in the city, and his servants will serve him.²⁹

Hebrews 1: Christ's Superiority over the Angels

Another important aspect of Christ as the cornerstone of our faith is his supremacy in heaven since his resurrection. This idea naturally and logically follows from the idea that Christ is functionally *equal* to God, because since God is obviously the highest authority in heaven, if he delegates that authority to someone, that person will share supremacy with God and reign over everyone else. Because Christ has been resurrected and has ascended into heaven, he now has authority and supremacy over the angels, as the following verse makes clear.

1 Peter 3:21b, 22

It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand—**with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.**

Christ's present superiority over the angels is also the subject of a detailed argument found in Hebrews 1:4-14, which we will now go through verse by verse, visiting other corroborating parts of Scripture as appropriate.

Hebrews 1:4 (NRSV)

Having **become** as much **superior to angels** as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

We know that Christ *became* superior to the angels *after his resurrection*, because of what is written in the very next chapter of Hebrews:

Hebrews 2:9

But we see Jesus, **who was made a little lower than the angels**, NOW [*i.e.*, since his resurrection] crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

If he was to perform his earthly ministry as God desired, Jesus had to be made a man and not an angel. But, as he was made "a little lower" than the angels before his resurrection, he was

29. Certainly, if there were any such thing as a "Trinity," then all three persons should be present on this august occasion. "God the Holy Spirit" would also be included in all of the above verses we have considered, such as greeting the churches, *etc.* But, absolutely, "He" would have to be there on the final throne, or the "Godhead" would be incomplete. The truth is that there is but ONE GOD and ONE LORD, and they will together rule over a literal and physical "new creation," in fulfillment of God's original dream and plan.

made “a little higher” than they after it. As *spirit* beings, angels are not subject to the laws of physics. They fly without wings, appear and disappear at will, speak from the center of burning shrubs, comfort heroic believers thrown into giant furnaces, and often minister miraculously to those who “will inherit salvation” (Heb. 1:14).³⁰

In contrast to angels, the first body that Jesus had was a distinctly *physical* body, and therefore subject to the laws of physics. He was subject to *gravity* because his body had real mass, *hunger* because his body burned food for energy, and physical exhaustion because, due to the law of inertia, energy must be continually applied to keep any physical object moving in space. When he wanted to go somewhere, he had to walk, and he got tired from journeying. His body needed rest, food and sleep as any human being’s body does. When he got a splinter in his finger while working in his carpentry shop, it hurt, and it bled. When he was beaten and crucified, his body went into shock and finally he died like any other human body.

But, when Christ was raised from the dead, he was given a glorious body that enabled him to do everything that angels do and more. He is apparently no longer limited to the laws of physics as we understand them. He “passed through” the heavens in an instant, rather than at the speed of light. If he were a true “physical” being, as defined by the present laws of physics, he could travel no faster than the speed of light, and would just now be approaching the galaxies that are relatively close to the earth—a mere 2,000 light years away! He passed through locked doors to greet the disciples who were huddled there in fear. He transformed his appearance so he would be recognizable or unrecognizable. In short, it appears that he can now do everything that angels do.

Yet, his body retains some kind of physicality, for Jesus specifically said that he is *not* “a spirit” (NIV—“ghost”): “For a ghost [*i.e.*, a true *spirit* being] does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have” (Luke 24:38). Besides having flesh and bones, he also has a digestive system, because he ate fish with the disciples, and as he stated, he will eat and drink with them again in the future kingdom. He encouraged Thomas to actually touch him to prove to himself that it was really he. And a particularly intriguing aspect of his new, glorious body is that it still bears the wounds of his injuries on the Cross—the nailprints in his hands and feet and the hole in his side, yet without blood.³¹

The first stage of Christ’s “glory” was his resurrection from the dead, which represented a qualitative new beginning of his life. Every other person who had ever been raised from the dead, like Lazarus in John 11, got up with the same body. Jesus is the only person who got up with a wholly different body. It is highly noteworthy to us that although Jesus had been conceived divinely and born of Mary more than 30 years earlier through the normal processes

30. Despite their various mysterious aspects, we do know one thing about angels biblically—they are *not dead humans*! See *Is There Death After Life?* published by CES.

31. It is a matter of intriguing speculation as to what animates his new body. We see a connection with 1 Corinthians 15:45 which calls the Last Adam a “life-giving spirit.” It appears that he has “life in himself” (John 5:26), instead of having life “in his blood,” which is characteristic of human and animal life in this present heaven and earth.

(her pregnancy, grunting, labor pains, *etc.*), his resurrection is also spoken of as a *birthday*.³² This we can see from the next verse in the first chapter of Hebrews.

Hebrews 1:5 (NRSV)

For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you"? Or again, "I will be his Father, and **he will be my Son**"?

The phrase, "today I have begotten you" is a citation of a phrase that first appeared in the second Psalm, in connection with the Messiah's future rulership of the earth.

Psalm 2:7-9 (NRSV)

(7) I will tell of the decree of the Lord: He said to me, "**You are my Son; today I have begotten you.**"

(8) Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession.

(9) You shall break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

Though the Jewish commentators at that time would have been hardpressed to see any connection between this phrase and the resurrection of the Messiah, it was clearly referring to it, as is seen in the Apostle Paul's use of it in his discourse to the Jews in Antioch of Pisidia.

Acts 13:32,33 (NRSV)

And we bring you the good news that what God promised to our ancestors he has fulfilled for us, their children, by **raising Jesus** [from the dead]; as also it is written in the second Psalm, "**You are my Son; today I have begotten you.**"

What do we have here but the exulting of a Father at the "birth" of His Son ("Gabriel, Michael, have a cigar!"). Only this time His Son was not "begotten" to be *sacrificed*—he was raised from the dead to *reign*. That was something for the Father to shout about! We will now see from the next verse in Hebrews 1 that the term "firstborn" occurs in connection with his resurrection.

Hebrews 1:6 (NRSV)

And again, when he [God] brings the firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him."

32. Trinitarian theologians who stress the "incarnation" of Christ as the cornerstone of Christianity cannot truly explain why Scripture would place such a high value on his resurrection, new body, seating at the right hand of God and being given "all authority" in heaven. To them, his incarnation represents the defining event of his life in eternity, when he divested himself of his pre-incarnate divinity and took on human flesh for a time. According to this thinking, his resurrection should then be the moment when he *returns to the glory he had before his incarnation*, including the authority that he had in heaven over angels as a co-equal member of the Trinity. We believe that the fact that Scripture places great emphasis on his resurrection is wonderful proof that he did not pre-exist his birth.

How do we know that this particular “birth” is referring to his resurrection? By the context and because Hebrews 1:5 speaks of Christ’s “birth” being his resurrection, this sets the context of verse 6, which also speaks of Christ being brought into the world. Also, at his first birth, the angels did not worship the baby. They worshiped God who brought him forth! This is evident in the only record in the Four Gospels where angels appeared at Christ’s birth.

Luke 2:13,14 (NRSV)

(13) And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, **praising God** and saying,

(14) **Glory to God in the highest heaven**, and on earth peace among those whom he favors.

The “birth” that is spoken of in Hebrews 1:5 and 6 is referring to the resurrection of God’s son from the dead. At his first birth, Christ was inferior to angels, whom God made to be glorious messengers and divine representatives:

Hebrews 1:7 (NRSV)

Of the angels he says, “He makes his angels winds, and his servants flames of fire.”

Though angels are glorious, Jesus Christ’s glory has exceeded theirs ever since he took his place at the right hand of God after his resurrection. As the *Son* of God, he has the rights and privileges of the firstborn, something never offered to the angels, as verse 5 above makes plain. And since, by grace, we believers in Christ are “*joint-heirs*” with him (Rom. 8:17; Eph. 3:6), we are therefore entitled to the same rights and privileges—including having the same kind of glorious body in the future—as the following verses indicates.

Philippians 3:20,21 (NRSV)

(20) But our **citizenship is in heaven**, and it is from there that we are expecting a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

(21) He will transform the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, by the power that also enables him to make all things subject to himself.

Thus, we also share in the benefits of the heavenly citizenship that is now ours because we are members of Christ’s figurative “body,” the Christian Church (Eph. 1:22,23). 1 Corinthians 15:45-49 also speaks of the “splendor” of the heavenly body that Christ received at his resurrection, and which we will receive also. It is a “spiritual” body that is in some ways physical, but nevertheless imperishable—meaning not subject to physical decay.

1 Corinthians 15:40-49 (NRSV)

(40) There are both heavenly bodies and earthly bodies; but the glory of the heavenly is one thing, and that of the earthly is another.

(41) There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon and another glory of the stars; indeed, star differs from star in glory.

(42) So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is **imperishable**,

(43) It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in **glory**; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in **power**;

(44) It is sown a physical body, it is raised a **spiritual body**. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body.

(45) Thus it is written: "The first man, Adam, became a living being"; the Last Adam became a **life-giving spirit**.

(46) But it is not the spiritual that is first, but the physical, and then the spiritual.

(47) The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven.

(48) As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man from heaven, so are those who are of heaven.

(49) Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, **we will also bear the image of the man of heaven**.

We assume from this passage that in the new heaven and earth, God is going to change the very laws of physics, based upon the prototype of Christ's new body. This new body is based upon new principles and physical laws that are well above our limited capacity to understand in our present bodies. But someday in the future we will know fully even as we are fully known (1 Cor. 13:12).

Hebrews 1 continues to assert the superiority of the Son over angels.

Hebrews 1:8, 9 (NRSV)

(8) But of the Son he says: "Your throne, O God,³³ is forever and ever [*i.e.*, for a long time], and the righteous scepter is the scepter of your kingdom.

(9) You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore **God, your God**, has anointed you with the oil of gladness **beyond your companions**.

Christ's "companions" in this context include *angels*, who are subordinate to him and yet dwell with him in heaven in the presence of God. Because he is superior to them, everything that an angel can do, Jesus can do in his new body, and more. But because they are on the same spiritual plane of existence, the idea of companionship is appropriate.

33. Hebrews 1:8 is often used to attempt to prove that Jesus is "God" in some intrinsic sense, equal to God by virtue of his "incarnation." But the context is clearly his post-resurrection "Sonship" and exaltation to the right hand of God, where he is granted the privilege to rule and reign alongside God. As God's representative and empowered agent, he is spoken of as "God," following an established biblical pattern. Notice in verse 9 that though Christ is a kind of "God," (meaning "God-like") he still *has* a God to whom he is accountable, namely the one true God, his Father. See Appendix A (Hebrews 1:8).

Hebrews 1:13 (NRSV)

But to which of the angels has he [God] ever said, “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet”?

Finally, verse 13 lays the capstone on this magnificent section of Scripture that has by this time firmly established two facts. First, Christ is superior to the angels, and second, this superiority occurred *after* his resurrection, ascension and exaltation. From this exalted position, he is currently in the process of completing the redemption prophesied in Genesis 3:15, wherein we find the purpose for which the Redeemer would come, a *purpose of the ages*. This purpose encompasses the entire redemption of heaven and earth, fills the vacuum in heaven created by the loss of an archangel and one third of the angels, and involves Christ sitting in a place that Lucifer could conceive of but did not have the humility to be exalted to—functional equality with God!

These truths are corroborated in Colossians 1 in a section of Scripture that also speaks of the supremacy of Christ, and one to which we will be returning often in this book. This magnificent passage will harmonize with the many verses that we have examined in this chapter, elevate Christ and thus glorify God, his Father.

Colossians 1:15-19 (NRSV)

(15) He is the image of the invisible God, the **firstborn** [by resurrection] of all creation [*i.e.*, the prototype of the new creation, the new heaven and earth]

(16) For in [*dia*] him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether [angelic] thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through [*dia*] him [*i.e.*, through his obedient agency] and for him [*i.e.*, with him in mind].

(17) He himself is before all things [in priority], and in him all things hold together [he sustains all things, as Heb. 1:3 says].

(18) He is the head of the body [of Christ], the church; he is the beginning, the **firstborn from the dead**, so that he might come to have first place in everything [*i.e.*, he is over the angels and functionally equal to God].

(19) For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.

Psalms 8 and 110 prophesied of this culminating glorification of the Son of God, the Messiah. In the next two chapters, we will examine the other messianic prophecies contained in the Old Testament in order to understand what could and could not be searched out about the Coming One.

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Other Books by CES

Speaking the Truth in Love: The Purposes of Christian Educational Services

This book sets forth a brief overview of Church history from the Book of Acts until the present. It explores the historical development of Christian denominations and movements in light of three major issues that have either united or divided Christian people: church governance, church ceremony and church doctrine. Then it gives a general picture of what is available today in Christendom.

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Is There Death After Life?

This book gives biblical answers to the following questions: What is death? Is death a "graduation?" Is death a friend or foe? What is the "soul?" Where are the dead? Why does God use the metaphor of "sleep" to describe death? When will the dead awaken? After laying the groundwork by answering these questions, the book deals with 13 sections of Scripture commonly used to "prove" that the "dead" are "alive." With numerous references to other Christian books and magazines, the authors show how Greek philosophy shaped the current "evangelical" doctrine of the immortality of the soul, and they briefly point out how and why the Reformation failed to reform this totally pagan belief that is now even more firmly entrenched in Christendom.

Don't Blame God!

The subtitle of this book is "A Biblical Answer to the Problem of Evil, Sin and Suffering." It addresses what is probably the number one question most people have about God: If He is a loving God, why is there such rampant human suffering? The book shows biblically that God is not at all to blame, that the cause of all suffering is sin, and it shows whose sin. It shows why Jesus Christ is the fulcrum of history in this regard, and resolves the seemingly apparent contradiction between the nature of the Old Testament God and that of the New Testament God, which, of course are the same changeless God.

The book exposes the myth that God is totally in control of all that happens (which would make Him responsible for it) and shows that He and His Son Jesus Christ are doing all they can to intervene in the realm of the Devil and help us. A chapter on faith shows what faith is and how it helps us access the power of God. The book shows how God does test us for our benefit, though never by tragedy or affliction. It explains what the "chastening" of God is and why it has nothing

to do with anything like punishing us. The redemptive value of the proper response to suffering is also discussed.

Letting God speak for Himself and seeing the truth of His Word about the subject of evil, sin, and suffering will help you grow immensely in love for God and His Son, in faith in their promises, and in hope of the final victory that is ours, enabling you to live with joy and peace, even in a "war zone." This book may very well be for you the most meaningful book you have ever read about the things of God.

The Gift of Holy Spirit: Every Christian's Divine Deposit

"Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" This was the question that the apostle Paul asked some disciples he visited in Ephesus, as recorded in Acts 19. The answer they gave prompted him to teach them the truth about Jesus Christ and his baptism of holy spirit. Unfortunately, their answer is very similar to the answer of many Christians today when asked about the reality of holy spirit in their lives: "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit."

Many who have heard something about the Holy Spirit are still confused about the difference between the Holy Spirit (the Giver) and holy spirit (the gift), and about how they can utilize this precious gift for powerful Christian living.

From a biblical rather than an experiential perspective, this book answers many questions that Christians today are asking about the Holy Spirit. It shows that at the moment of the new birth, every Christian is "anointed," "baptized with holy spirit" and "filled with the spirit" as long as he lives. It will also help you take practical advantage of these great truths in your own life, so that you walk with the power of God and glorify Him.

WHO DO YOU SAY THAT I AM?

Jesus of Nazareth posed this question to his followers nearly two thousand years ago, but the question hangs in the air, requesting an answer from every person. Indeed, the question of the identity of Jesus Christ is the most important theological issue of all human history, because he claimed to be the human Son of the one true God. In *One God & One Lord*, the authors carefully re-examine the biblical evidence in light of modern textual research and a thorough survey of scholarly opinion. They argue that the biblically accurate answer to the question of his identity is provided by Peter, John, Mary, Paul and other first-century believers who unanimously proclaimed him to be "the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Building an impressive and compelling case for the unity of the biblical testimony concerning the true humanity of Jesus, "the Last Adam," the authors reveal the profound significance of the two aspects of his coming: suffering and glory. They seek a view of Christ that allows for a total appreciation of his steadfast obedience to God in the face of temptation, suffering and even a humiliating death. Vindicated by his resurrection, he entered into glory and now sits in a position of functional equality with God, analogous to the relationship of Joseph and Pharaoh in the Book of Genesis. *One God & One Lord* shows how the traditional view of Jesus Christ actually demeans both his accomplishments and his heroism by attributing to him "intrinsic deity" that essentially eliminates the possibility of either authentic temptation or failure.

Because the Gospel of John is often isolated and magnified to establish and fortify orthodox Christology, the authors explore in depth the unique depiction of Christ in "the Fourth Gospel." They succeed in placing John's testimony harmoniously and understandably within the margins of the prophetic portrait of the Messiah. This portrait had already been drawn out in detail in the Hebrew scriptures and was then fleshed out in the Synoptic Gospels. Nowhere in this portrait is it clear that Messiah was "God incarnate," "God the Son," or a pre-existent divine visitor.

Appealing primarily to scriptural authority and logical reasoning, *One God & One Lord* also thoroughly examines the historical process by which traditional Christian orthodoxy came to be established. A combination of misguided Christian piety and pagan speculation are shown to be responsible for the intrusion of unbiblical concepts into basic Christian thought and doctrine.

One God & One Lord is challenging, but profoundly encourages both Christian devotion and a deep appreciation for the integrity of the Bible. It will reward the careful attention of the critic of Christianity, the new Christian, students of the Bible, pastors, teachers and scholars.

Mark Graeser, John A. Lynn and John Schoenheit are the founders of Christian Educational Services, Inc., an Indiana-based ministry with associates around the world. They have jointly authored other challenging and compelling books—*Don't Blame God!, Is There Death After Life?, The Gift of Holy Spirit: Every Christian's Divine Deposit* and *Speaking the Truth in Love: The Purposes of Christian Educational Services*.