REPENTANCE
Repentance

Introduction

This article will seek to establish what repentance is and specifically, what it is in relation to the non-believer as well as the believer. In other words, we will seek to establish what constitutes repenting for the non-believer as well as the believer. We will also look at the vocabulary of the New Testament in relation to this subject. Lastly, we will see the basis for repentance the non-believer and the believer.

Vocabulary of Repentance

There are two New Testament Greek words which are translated “repentance” in the modern English translations: metanoia (and its verbal counterpart metanoeo) and metamelomai. The former term is so translated fifty-eight times in the New Testament; the latter only six times. This study will be concerned primarily with metanoia.

The Greek word in the New Testament for “repentance” is the noun metanoia, which means “a change of mind” and its cognate verb is metanoeo, which means “to change your mind, to change your attitude toward something.”

Metanoia is found 24 times in the Greek New Testament and metanoeo is found 35 times. Metanoeo is a compound verb, which means that it is composed of two words. The first is meta meaning “change,” and the second is noeo, “mind,” therefore, the correct meaning of repentance is “to change one’s mind,” or “to change your attitude toward something.” Both words have absolutely nothing to do with feeling sorry for your sins. They have nothing to do with your emotions.

There is another word in the Greek New Testament which has an emotional connotation and that is the verb metamelomai which means “to regret, change the mind” and may connote the idea of sorrow, but not necessarily. It is translated by “regret, change the mind, and feel
“remorse” in the NASB and NIV, and in all but one of the passages where it is used, the primary idea is a change of mind (cf. Matt. 21:29, 32; 27:3; 2 Cor. 7:8; Heb. 7:21).

Metanoia, the primary word, without question, means “a change of mind.” It refers to the thinking of people who thought one thing or made one decision and then, based on further evidence or input, changed their minds. So, the basic sense is “a change of mind.” This is its meaning and use outside the New Testament and in the New Testament.

It is a change of mind that leads to a different course of action, but that course of action must be determined by the context. In a context that deals with forgiveness of sin or receiving eternal life as a gift from God, the course of action is a change of trust because one now sees Jesus as the only means of salvation from sin. Let me illustrate this for you in the Scriptures and I’ll point out when each word is used.

John the Baptist used the verb metanoeo.

Matthew 3:2 Now in those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, “Repent (metanoeo, “change your mind”), for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” (NASB95)

What were John’s listeners supposed to change their minds about?

Mark 1:14 And after John had been taken into custody (put into prison), Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, 15 and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand (Jesus Christ the Savior is right in front of them.); Repent (metanoeo, “change your mind”) and believe in the gospel.” (NASB95)

They were to change their minds about Christ. They were unbelievers and they were to change their minds about Christ and believe in Him for salvation. They were to change their minds concerning the gospel, which is the “power of God for salvation to everyone who believes” (Rom. 1:16).

So, you can see that repentance has nothing to do with emotion but is a change of mind about Christ.

Now, the first occurrence of metamelomai is in Matthew 21:29-32 in the parable of the two sons. In the parable, one son said to his father that he would go in the vineyard while the second son said he would not but then he metamelomai, felt badly, regretted not going and then went. The first son, who said he would go, but didn’t.

Metamelomai occurs twice in this passage. It is found in verse 29 which the New American Standard translates as “regretted,” and it is found in verse 32 where it is translated “remorse.”

In Matthew 27:3, metamelomai is used in connection with Judas Iscariot, an unbeliever who betrayed the Lord Jesus Christ.
Matthew 27:1 Now when morning had come, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put Him to death; 2 and they bound Him, and led Him away, and delivered Him up to Pilate the governor. 3 Then when Judas, who had betrayed Him (Jesus), saw that He (Jesus) had been condemned, he felt remorse (metamelomai, “he felt sorry”) and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests, 4 saying, “I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.” But they said, “what is that to us? See that yourself.” 5 And he (Judas) threw the pieces of silver into the sanctuary and departed; and he went away and hanged himself. (NASB95)

Judas felt sorry for his sin and yet he went to the Lake of Fire. We know that he went to hell because the Lord Jesus Christ said so Himself.

John 17:12 “While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name (God the Father’s) which You have given Me; and I guarded them, and not one of them perished (the apostles and His disciples) but the son of perdition (Judas Iscariot), that the Scripture might be fulfilled.” (NASB95)

Now, what is important to note is that Judas felt sorry for his sin for betraying the Son of God and yet he was not saved because of his emotions. The apostle Peter denied Christ three times and he felt sorry and wept.

Matthew 26:75 And Peter remembered the word which Jesus had said, “Before a cock crows Peter, you will deny Me three times.” And he (Peter) went out and wept bitterly. (NASB95)

Both men felt sorry for their sins, and yet one was saved and the other was not. Each committed a terrible sin, one was saved and the other was not. Emotion could not save Judas. Peter wept bitterly and yet his tears did not save him but rather his faith in Christ saved him.

There is only one-way of salvation which excludes human works and emotion and that is to “believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved” (Acts 16:31; John 3:16, 36). Judas could have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ but did not. Peter did believe on the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 16:13-16).

The word metamelomai also occurs in 2 Corinthians 7:8 where the apostle Paul is talking about his first letter to the Corinthians in which he sharply rebuked the believers in Corinth,

1 Corinthians 7:8 For though I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it (metamelomai); though I did regret it (metamelomai)-for I see that that letter caused you sorrow, though only for a while-9 I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance (metanoia, “a change of mind”). For you were made sorrowful according to the will of God, in order that you might not suffer loss in anything though us. 10 For the sorrow that is according to the will of God
produces a change of mind (*metanoia*) WITHOUT REGRET (*metamelomai*), leading to salvation; but the sorrow of the world produces death. (NASB95)

This passage deals with confession of sin followed by obedience to the Word of God. Paul was talking to people who were believers. They had already believed in Jesus Christ as Savior and were saved forever.

The repentance that Paul is talking about is the confession of sin and their recovery from that sin through obedience. This sin knocks them out of fellowship yet does not cost them their salvation.

*Repentance and the Non-Believer*

In relation to receiving eternal salvation and the non-believer, sin is *never* an issue in repentance according to the Scriptures but rather one’s attitude toward Jesus Christ is the issue (cf. Ps. 103:10; John 1:29; Rom. 5:12; 1 Cor. 15:3; Gal. 1:3-4; Heb. 8:12; 10:17; 1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18; 1 John 2:2; 3:5; Rev. 1:4-5). In relation to receiving eternal salvation, the Scriptures never teach repentance of sins but of a change of attitude regarding Christ as one’s personal Savior. An individual’s personal sins are not an issue because they were all paid for at the cross by the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, with respect to the non-believer, repentance would involve simply faith along in Christ alone (John 3:16-18; Acts 16:31).

The only issue in repentance that the Scriptures teach is regarding the Person and Work of Jesus Christ (Matt. 16:13-20). The sins of the entire world-past, present and future were paid for at the cross through the death of Jesus Christ. He paid for these sins with His voluntary substitutionary spiritual and physical deaths on the cross.

Therefore, repentance in relation to the non-Christian with respect to receiving eternal salvation has nothing to do with their sins but rather their attitude toward Jesus Christ. The issue in repentance is simply, “Will you change your mind about Jesus Christ and accept Him as your Lord and Savior?” Each person must decide for himself. Salvation is through faith alone in Christ alone and nothing more and nothing less (John 3:16-17, 36; Acts 16:31).

Our Lord makes an interesting comment concerning the person who changes their mind about Christ and accepts Him as Savior.

**Luke 15:7** “I tell you that in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents (*metanoeo*, “changes their mind about Christ and accepts Him as Savior”), than over ninety-nine righteous persons (people who have accepted Christ as Savior) who need no repentance (*metanoia*, “change of mind about Christ”).” (NASB95)
Luke 15:10 “In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents (metanoeo, “changes their mind about Christ and believes in Him for salvation”).” (NASB95)

Repentance and the Believer

What is repentance for the child of God? In relation to the Christian, repentance involves confession of sin to be restored to fellowship with God (1 John 1:9). This fellowship is maintained by obedience to the Word of God (1 John 2:3-6). Therefore, in contrast to the unbeliever, repentance involves two steps for the believer. First, they must confess their sins to be restored to fellowship. The second involves maintaining that fellowship which demands that the believer obey the voice of the Spirit who communicates the Father’s will to the believer. Of course, the Spirit inspired the Scriptures and speaks to the believer through the communication of the Scriptures by their pastor or some other believer in fellowship with God. The Spirit can also speak to the believer during a prayerful study of the Word of God.

The Confession of Sin

As we noted, repentance for the child of God involves the confession of sin to the Father in order to be restored to fellowship with their heavenly Father and obedience to God’s Word in order to maintain that fellowship.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (NASB95)

“If we confess our sins” is composed of the following: (1) conditional particle ean (ἐάν), “if” (2) first person plural present active subjunctive form of the verb homologeō (ὁμολογέω), “we confess” (3) articular accusative feminine singular form of the noun hamartia (ἁμαρτία), “sins” (4) genitive first person plural form of the personal pronoun ego (ἐγώ), “our.”

The apostle John employs the figure of asyndeton in 1 John 1:9 in order to emphasize the solemn nature of the fifth class conditional statement which is contained in this verse. He is being solemn because the content of the fifth class conditional statement contained in this verse will ensure the fact that the recipients of this epistle will continue to experience fellowship with God. The purpose of this figure is to ultimately persuade the Christian community reading this letter to make personal application of this fifth class conditional statement which will ensure that they will continue to experience fellowship with the Trinity.

In 1 John 1:9, the apostle John employs once again the conditional particle ean. However, this time he is using it with the subjunctive mood of the verb homologeō,
“we confess” in order to introduce the protasis of a third class condition which offers a condition, the fulfillment of which is realized in the present time which is also called a fifth class condition. The idea with this first class condition is to persuade the reader of the importance of confessing their sins when necessary in order to protect their fellowship with the Trinity.

The protasis contains the conditional particle *ean* (ἐάν), “if” with the subjunctive mood of the verb *eipon* (εἶπον), “we say.” The apodosis contains the present indicative form of the verb *pseudomai* (ψεύδομαι), “we lie.”

The protasis is “If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness” and the apodosis is “we lie and do not practice the truth.”

John is offering no indication about the likelihood of the protasis being fulfilled and there is no hint of uncertainty about this event not occurring nor some eventuality being presented. Rather, the fifth class condition is expressing an eternal spiritual principle or spiritual axiom with regards to fellowship with God.

The subjunctive mood is employed because the subject is undefined and not because the time is future. It is undefined because this spiritual principle who is applicable for each and every believer including himself. Thus, he is not speaking of any one individual in particular. This is because John and all his readers, as well as all believers have an indwelling sin nature (cf. 1 Jn. 1:8; Rm. 6:6; Rm. 7:24).

Thus, an unidentified hypothetical individual in the Christian community is being referred to in the protasis since John is not speaking of a specific individual but rather he is communicating an eternal spiritual principle with regards to fellowship with God.

The relationship between the protasis and the apodosis is “cause-effect.” The cause: “If we confess our sins.” The effect: “He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

Now, in 1 John 1:9, John employs the word *homologeō* for the believer’s “confession” of their sins to the Father. The English word “confess” is more accurate a translation of this word than “admit,” or “acknowledge” because “confess” means stating somewhat formally an admission of wrongdoing, crime or shortcoming whereas “acknowledge” implies making a statement reluctantly often about something previously denied and “admit” implies acknowledging something under pressure.

In 1 John 1:9, the present tense of the verb *homologeō* is a gnomic present used to make a statement of a general, timeless fact. In 1 John 1:9, it expresses the spiritual principle that the believer who “does” at “any” time confess their sins to the Father, then the Father is faithful and just to forgive the believer of these sins and thus He restores the believer to fellowship with Himself.

This is not an iterative present for repeated action or a customary present for habitual action because the fifth class conditional statement is communicating an
eternal spiritual principle with regards to fellowship with God. Therefore, John’s point is not how often a believer confesses their sins to the Father that they are restored to fellowship with God but rather that they do confess their sins.

The active voice of this verb is a simple active voice where the believer is to produce the action of the verb homologeō, “to confess” and expresses volitional responsibility of the believer to confess their sins to the Father.

The subjunctive mood of the verb homologeō is employed with the conditional particle ean in order to form a fifth class conditional statement which is expressing a spiritual principle with regards to the fellowship with the Trinity.

The noun hamartia is used with reference to mental, verbal and overt acts of sin from the perspective that these mental, verbal and overt acts of sin miss the mark of the absolute perfection of God’s character, i.e. His holiness. It is used of the sins of the Christian. This word speaks of any thought, word or action on the part of the Christian which is in disobedience to God’s laws.

This noun functions as an accusative direct object meaning it receives the action of the verb homologeo indicating that the believer’s personal sins are receiving the action of being confessed by the believer.

The article preceding this noun is also employed with the genitive first person plural form of the personal pronoun ego to denote possession. This personal pronoun refers of course to the Christian community as a corporate unit. It also used in a distributive sense emphasizing no exceptions.

God is Faithful and Just

“He is faithful and righteous” is composed of the following: (1) nominative masculine singular form of the adjective pistos (πιστός), “faithful” (2) third person singular present active indicative form of the verb eimi (εἰμί), “is” (3) conjunction kai (καί), “and” (4) nominative masculine singular form of the adjective dikaios (δίκαιος), “righteous.”

The verb eimi means “to possess certain characteristics,” which are identified by the adjectives pistos, “faithful” and dikaios, “righteous.” This indicates that God possesses the characteristic of being faithful and righteous to forgive the believer their sins when they confess them to Him.

The present tense of the verb eimi is a gnomic present referring to a general, timeless fact indicating that God is “as an eternal spiritual truth” faithful and righteous to forgive the believer when they at any time do confess any of their sins to Him. Thus, it denotes that God is “characterized by” faithfulness and righteousness.
The present tense of the verb is customary or stative present indicating that God “exists in the state of being” faithful and righteous to forgive the believer when they at any time do confess any of their sins to Him.

The active voice of the verb is also stative indicating the subject exists in the state indicated by the verb. This would mean that God exists in the state of being faithful and just to forgive the believer when they at any time do confess any of their sins to Him.

The indicative mood is declarative presenting this assertion as a non-contingent or unqualified statement.

The verb eimi is employed here in 1 John 1:9 as a substantive verb and functions as the subject. It is used of persons and specifically here of God the Father. The copula is used to equate the subject (God the Father) who is implied and the predicate nominative, which is the adjectives pistos, “faithful” and dikaios, “righteous.”

This is a convertible proposition meaning that both nouns have an identical referent. God is faithful and righteous and faithful and righteous is God are identical statements.

The adjective pistos in 1 John 1:9 is used by John to describe God the Father and means “faithful.” This adjective describes the Father as firmly adhering to His promises to forgive sin when the believer confesses any sin to Him.

The adjective pistos, “faithful” functions grammatically here in 1 John 1:9 as a predicate nominative and is making an assertion about the Father’s character. This is a convertible proposition where the subject (“He”-God the Father) is interchangeable with the predicate nominative pistos, “faithful.” This means that both words have an identical referent meaning we could say not only that “God is faithful,” but also that “faithful is God.” There is a complete interchange between the pronoun “He” and the predicate nominative “faithful.”

The adjective pistos is in the anarthrous first predicate position to the subject “He,” (God the Father) who is implied in the copula eimi. As we noted we have an equative clause where the subject, “He,” which is implied in the copula eimi, is interchangeable with the anarthrous adjective pistos, “faithful.”

An equative clause makes an assertion about the subject, thus its main verb whether expressed or implied is the copula. In equative clauses the general rule is that an anarthrous adjective related to an anarthrous noun is normally predicate and this is especially true when the order is noun-adjective.

Here in 1 John 1:9 the anarthrous adjective pistos is predicate and is making an assertion about the anarthrous subject, namely, God the Father who is implied in the verb eimi.

The conjunction kai is adjunctive meaning it is introducing a word which presents an additional description of the Father which characterizes His
relationship to the believer when they confess their sins to Him. This word is expressing the correlation between the Father’s attribute of faithfulness and His attribute of righteousness. It expresses the perfect agreement between God the Father’s being faithful to forgive the believer their sins when they confess them to Him and His being just to forgive them their sins when they confess these sins to Him.

In 1 John 1:9, John describes the Father’s as dikaios means “just” because the Father executes the judgments of His government that are in perfect agreement with His perfect character and nature and that are also based upon the merits of the death of His Son Jesus Christ on the cross. Therefore, He is dikaios, “just” to execute the law of the forgiveness of sins that is based upon the merits of the death of His Son Jesus Christ on the cross. It also denotes the agreement between the Father’s nature and His acts.

The adjective dikaios, “just” functions grammatically here in 1 John 1:9 as a predicate nominative and is making an assertion about the Father’s character. This too is a convertible proposition where the subject (“He”-God the Father) is interchangeable with the predicate nominative dikaios, “just.” This means that both words have an identical referent meaning we could say not only that “God is just,” but also that “just is God.” There is a complete interchange between the pronoun “He” and the predicate nominative “just.”

The adjective dikaios, “just” is in the anarthrous first predicate position to the subject “He,” (God the Father) who is implied in the copula eimi. As we noted we have an equative clause where the subject, “He,” which is implied in the copula eimi, is interchangeable with the anarthrous adjective dikaios, “just.”

Here in 1 John 1:9 the anarthrous adjective dikaios, “just” is predicate and is making an assertion about the anarthrous subject, namely, God the Father who is implied in the verb eimi.

*The Forgiveness of Sins*

“The Forgiveness of Sins” is composed of the following: (1) conjunction hina (ἵνα), “to” (2) third person singular aorist active subjunctive form of the verb aphiēmi (ἀφίημι), “forgive” (3) dative first person plural form of the personal pronoun ego (ἐγώ), “us” (4) articular accusative feminine singular form of the noun hamartia (ἁμαρτία), “sins.”

The conjunction hina is employed with the subjunctive form of the verbs aphiēmi, “forgive” and katharizō, “to cleanse.” It is interpreted by some as an epexegetical meaning it is clarifying or explaining the two adjectives pistos, “faithful” and dikaios, “just.” The idea would be that if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just, “namely” or “specifically” to forgive these sins for our benefit, in
other words, to purify each one of us from each and every unrighteous thought, word, or action. It would be introducing a clause which identifies or explains specifically what John means when he describes God as faithful and just. It would identify specifically how God is faithful and just when the believer confesses their sins to Him.

The conjunction *hina* could also be interpreted as a marker of result. This use of the conjunction expresses the result of the action of the main verb, which in our context would be the first person plural present active subjunctive form of the verb *homologeō*, “we confess.” It indicates a consequence of the verbal action that is not intended. Therefore, if this interpretation is correct then this would indicate that this word and the subjunctive form of the verb *homologeō* express the result of the believer confessing their sins to the Father. It would mean that the Father will forgive the believer their sins and purify them from all unrighteousness as a result of confessing these sins to Him.

The conjunction *hina* can also be interpreted as a marker of purpose. This use of the conjunction emphasizes the intention of the action of the main verb, whether this action is accomplished or not. We must not assume that this use of the subjunctive with this conjunction necessarily implies any doubt about the fulfillment of the verbal action on the part of the speaker. This may or may not be so. Therefore, if this interpretation is correct, then this would indicate that subjunctive form of the verb *homologeō* and the subjunctive form of the verbs *aphiēmi* and *katharizō* express the purpose of the believer confessing their sins to the Father. It would indicate that God forgiving them their sins and purifying them from all unrighteousness is the purpose for which the believer is to confess their sins to Him.

The conjunction *hina* could also be interpreted as being employed with the subjunctive mood of the verbs *aphiēmi* and *katharizō* in order to form a purpose-result clause that indicates both the intention and accomplishment of the action of the verb *homologeō*. This indicates that the conjunction is introducing a clause which presents both the purpose and the result for the believer confessing their sins to the Father. A purpose clause emphasizes the “intention” of the action of the main verb whereas a result clause emphasizes the consequence of the verbal action that is “not intended.” Now sometimes the conjunction *hina* can introduce a clause that indicates both purpose and result meaning that it indicates both the intention and its sure accomplishment. Therefore, if this interpretation is correct, then the Father forgiving the believer their sins and purifying them from all unrighteousness is both the result and the purpose of the believer confessing their sins to the Father. It would emphasize that the purpose of the believer confessing their sins to the Father is accomplished which is that He forgives them these sins and purifies them from all unrighteousness. In other words, the Father forgiving the believer their
sins, i.e. purifying them from all unrighteousness is not only the direct result of the believer confessing these sins to Him but also His purpose for having the believer confess their sins to Him.

It is the view of this author that the best interpretation of the conjunction *hina* and the subjunctive moods of the verb *aphiēmi* and *katharizō* is that they form a purpose-result clause. This is indicated by the fact that the purpose-result clause is not only communicating God’s purpose for the believer confessing their sins but also the action He takes as a result of the believer confessing their sins. Therefore, John not only wants the Christian to know God’s desire to forgive them their sins and purify them from all unrighteousness when they confess these sins to Him but he also wants them to know the Father will forgive them and purify them from all unrighteousness as the direct result of confessing their sins to Him. In other words, John wants his readers to know there is a definite purpose for wanting them to confess their sins to the Father. He also wants to reassure them that God will in fact forgive and purify them from all their sins when they confess their sins to Him. Thus, the purpose-result clause expresses John’s desire to instruct or remind his readers of the purpose of confessing their sins and his desire to reassure them that when they do, they are forgiven and purified from each of these sins. Therefore, this is not a result, purpose or epexegetical *hina* clause.

The verb *aphiēmi* means, “to grant a full pardon from crimes committed” against a holy God. It is attested since Homer and is derived from the preposition *apo*, “from,” and the verb *hiemi*, “to put in motion, send.” Thus, the word literally means, “to send off, to send away, to send forth,” but is used with the sense of “to hurl, to let go, release.” The word meant a “voluntary release of a person or thing over which one has legal or actual control.”

The verb *aphiēmi* in 1 John 1:9 is used with God the Father as the subject and the believer’s sins as the object. Therefore, this verb expresses the idea that the Father forgives the believer their sins as a result of the believer confessing these sins to Him.

The word pertains to removing the guilt resulting from wrongdoing. It speaks of the Father removing the guilt from the believer as a result of the believer sinning against Him. It expresses the idea that the Father lets go of the obligation that the believer owes Him as a result of sinning against Him.

This verb *aphiēmi* means to release someone from the guilt or penalty of sin as one would a financial debt. To forgive means to give someone a release from the wrong that he has done to you. It means to give up any right of retaliation.

The aorist tense of the verb *aphiēmi* is a culminating or consummative aorist, which emphasizes the cessation of an act or state. So here it emphasizes the completion of the act of the Father forgiving the believer their sins when they confess these sins to Him.
The active voice is a simple active voice indicating that God the Father as the subject is producing the act of forgiving the believer their sins when the believer confesses these sins to Him.

Once again, we have the noun *hamartia* which is used again with reference to mental, verbal and overt acts of sin from the perspective that these mental, verbal and overt acts of sin miss the mark of the absolute perfection of God’s character, i.e. His holiness. This word speaks of any thought, word or action on the part of the Christian which is in disobedience to God’s laws.

This noun functions as an accusative direct object meaning it receives the action of the verb *aphiēmi* indicating that the believer’s personal sins are receiving the action of being forgiven by the Father when they confess these sins to Him.

The articular construction of this noun is anaphoric meaning that it is indicating that this word is found in the previous context, namely in the protasis of this fifth class conditional statement and is retaining the same meaning and referent here in the apodosis of 1 John 1:9.

The plural form of the personal pronoun *ego* refers of course to the Christian community as a corporate unit. It also used in a distributive sense emphasizing no exceptions.

The word is in the dative case and functions as a dative of advantage indicating that the believer benefits from the Father forgiving them their sins when they confess these sins to Him.

### Purified from All Unrighteousness

“**And to cleanse us from all unrighteousness**” is composed of the following: (1) conjunction *kai* (καί), “and” (2) third person singular aorist active subjunctive form of the verb *katharizō* (καθαρίζω), “to cleanse” (3) accusative first person plural form of the personal pronoun *ego* (ἐγώ), “us” (4) genitive feminine singular form of the noun *adikia* (ἀδικία), “unrighteousness.”

The conjunction *kai* is epexegetical meaning it is introducing a statement which identifies in a different way or perspective the act of the Father forgiving the believer’s their sins when they confess these sins to Him. This word introduces a statement which asserts that the Father purifies the believer from all unrighteousness. Therefore, this statement *kai* expresses the idea that the Father forgives the believer their sins when they confess these sins to Him can also be described as purifying them from all unrighteousness. This interpretation is indicated by the fact that all sin is unrighteousness. It can also be supported by the fact that when the Father forgives the believer their sins, He is in effect purifying them from the guilt of sin which is described by John as “unrighteousness.”
In 1 John 1:7, we saw that the verb *katharizō* means “to purify” from sin and the sin nature so that one is acceptable to God who is holy. Here in 1 John 1:9, the word again means “to purify” but this time sin is identified as unrighteousness. Therefore, this word in 1 John 1:9 denotes that the Father “purifies” the believer from all unrighteousness when they confess their sins to Him.

The verb *katharizō* in 1 John 1:9 should not translated “cleanse” since the English word “cleanse” has the connotation of being clean in the sense of certain parts of the body, whereas “purify” has the connotation of the body being clean all over. Of course, John is referring to the soul, which is not “cleansed” from personal sin but “purified” meaning totally and completely.

The aorist tense of the verb *katharizō* is a culminative or consummative aorist, which emphasizes the cessation of an act or state. So here it emphasizes the completion of the act of the Father purifying the believer from all unrighteousness, i.e. sin, when they confess these sins to Him.

The active voice is a simple active voice indicating that God the Father as the subject is producing the act of purifying the believer from all unrighteousness, i.e. sin, when the believer confesses these sins to Him.

The plural form of the personal pronoun *ego* refers of course to the Christian community as a corporate unit. It also used in a distributive sense emphasizing no exceptions.

The word is in the accusative case and functions as a accusative direct object meaning that the word is receiving the action of the verb *katharizō* indicating that the believer receives the action of the Father purifying them from all unrighteousness, i.e. all sin when they confess their sins to Him.

In 1 John 1:9, the noun *adikia* means “unrighteousness” and is used to describe the sins of the believer. The word is antithetical in meaning to the noun *dikaiosune*, “righteousness,” which is a general term for “virtue” and “integrity” of character, thus, *adikia* is the state of possessing no virtue or integrity. Therefore, the noun *adikia* describes the believer’s sins as thoughts, words or actions that do not adhere to the will of God, and that are not upright, honest, perfectly whole, thus leaving them in an unsound, impaired and in a bad condition. It describes these thoughts, words and actions as having no virtue in the sense that they have no moral excellence, goodness, and do not conform to the will of God.

This word is modified by the adjective *pas* which expresses an attributive relation to *adikia* and is in the first attributive position. This adjective is used here without the article modifying the noun *adikia* and is used in the distributive sense emphasizing no exceptions. The believer is purified from “each and every” unrighteous thought, word or action that they commit when they confess these sins, i.e. unrighteousness to the Father.
The noun *adikia* is the object of the preposition *apo* which is a marker of separation or disassociation indicating that the Father purifies the believer “from” each and every unrighteous thought, word or action when they confess these sins to Him.

Therefore, this prepositional phrase indicates that the Father “separates” the believer from each of their sins and the guilt associated with these sins when they confess them to the Father.

**Exposition of 1 John 1:9**

1 John 1:9 If any of us does, at any time confess our sins, He is, as an eternal spiritual truth characterized as being faithful as well as just to forgive these sins for the benefit of each one of us, in other words, to purify each one of us from each and every unrighteous thought, word or action. (Author’s translation)

1 John 1:9 contains a fifth class conditional statement which communicates a spiritual principle pertaining to experiencing fellowship with the Father which is in addition to the fifth class conditional statements presented in 1 John 1:6-8.

Verse 9 is the fourth in a series of six fifth class conditional statements which pertain to experiencing fellowship with God (1 John 1:8, 9, 10; 2:1). Each of these fifth class conditional clauses consist of three pairs that can be divided into two: (1) Negative statement in the apodosis (1 Jn. 1:6, 8, 10). (2) Positive statement in the apodosis (1 Jn. 1:7, 9; 2:1). The negative statements 1 John 1:6, 8 and 10 reflect the claims of the false teachers located in geographical region of the recipients of this epistle whereas the positive statements in 1 John 1:7, 9 and 2:1 reflect the apostolic teaching with regards to fellowship with God.

The recipients of this epistle were located in the Roman province of Asia. The occasion of the epistle itself and the context of the entire book clearly indicates that they were already believers in Jesus Christ who were experiencing fellowship with God and each other. However, they were now being exposed to Docetic and Cerinthian Gnostic teaching that denied the human nature of the Lord Jesus Christ. John emphatically refutes this teaching in the prologue of the epistle. If they believed this false teaching, it would prevent them from continuing to have fellowship with God since fellowship with God is based upon the Person, Work and Life of the Lord Jesus Christ. This false teaching the apostle John was seeking to protect the recipients of this epistle from, were propagating an “incipient” form of Gnosticism since it was not a full blown threat to orthodox Christianity in the mid to late part of the first century as it did become in the middle of the second century.
John’s teaching in the prologue and throughout the book concerning the person of Christ is designed to protect his readers from these heretical teachings and to ensure that their fellowship with God and other believers might continue or be maintained. That John’s readers were already experiencing fellowship with the Father and the Son and that this letter is a protection from the false teaching concerning the person of Jesus Christ is indicated in 1 John 2:13-15, 21, 26-29, 3:7-9, 4:1-3, 5:9-11, 13. Therefore, John’s teaching in 1 John 1:6-2:2 is designed to protect the Christian community from these false teachers.

1 John 1:6-2:2 are also connected to 1 John 1:5 which asserts that God is, as an eternal spiritual truth existing in the state of being light. Then, John states in emphatic terms that there is absolutely no darkness in His nature, none whatsoever. 1 John 1:6-2:2 presents the implications of these assertions in verse 5. These verses are an inference from verse 5 and communicate spiritual principles with regards to fellowship with God. Specifically, they present spiritual principles which the recipients of this epistle can employ for themselves in order to determine if they are in fact experiencing fellowship with God or not. These principles are designed to protect the recipients of this epistle from the false teaching which was being propagated where they lived.

This fifth class conditional statement contains a protasis and an apodosis as well as a result clause. The relationship between the protasis and apodosis is “cause-effect.” The cause: “If any of us does, at any time confess our sins.” The effect: “He is, as an eternal spiritual truth characterized as being faithful as well as just to forgive these sins for the benefit of each one of us, in other words, to purify each one of us from each and every unrighteous thought, word or action.”

This fifth class conditional in 1 John 1:9 asserts that if any believer does, at any time confess their sins, He (God the Father) is, as an eternal spiritual truth characterized as being faithful as well as just to forgive these sins for the benefit of the believer. He then describes this forgiveness as purifying the believer from each and every unrighteous thought, word or action.

Thus, 1 John 1:9 stands in contrast to 1 John 1:8 in that confessing one’s sins to the Father is the complete opposite of a believer entering into the claim that they have never experienced the guilt of sin. It is the very opposite of deceiving oneself into thinking that you have not committed a sin.

This confession of sin to the Father is to be in the privacy of their royal priesthood and does not refer to the public confession or acknowledgement of sin. This is indicated by the fact that John is clearly informing his readers that they must confess their sins to the Father which would be a matter between the believer and the Father and no one else.
The believer is adjusted to the holiness of God when they apply the principle stated in 1 John 1:9. It is absolutely essential to apply this principle and confess their sins to the Father in order to experience fellowship with the Father since He is holy and does not tolerate sin or evil.

The Lord Jesus Christ’s substitutionary death on the cross is the basis for the forgiveness of the believer’s sins both in the positional, experiential and perfective sense.

It is extremely important for the believer to understand that this verb homologeō in 1 John 1:9 has no emotional connotation attached to it and was used in classical Greek for confessing one’s guilt in court. The Bible does not teach that the believer is to feel sorry for their sins but rather they are to confess their sins to the Father. God is not concerned with the believer emoting, but rather God is interested in what His Son did at that cross of Calvary 2000 years ago when every sin in human history, past, present and future was imputed to His Son and was judged by His justice. This is why the Scriptures state in Hebrews 8:11 that God remembers the believer’s sins no more. His Son paid the penalty for those sins, which was His death.

However, we must keep in mind that as the believer grows up spiritually committing sin will become more and more repulsive. Eventually, God wants the believer to adopt His view of sin and not take joy in committing sin.

In 1 John 1:9, the apostle John asserts that the Father is characterized as being faithful and just. By “faithful,” he means that the Father firmly adheres to His promises to forgive sin when the believer confesses any sin to Him.

Webster’s New Universal Unabridged Dictionary defines the adjective “faithful,” “strict or thorough in the performance of duty; true to one’s word, promises, vows; steady in allegiance or affection; loyal; reliable, trusted, or believed; adhering or true to fact or an original.” They also state, “faithful implies long-continued and steadfast fidelity to whatever one is bound to by a pledge, duty or obligation.

If we paraphrase these definitions, we could say that the Father forgives the believer their sins when they confess these sins to Him because: (1) He is true to His promise in His Word to forgive the sins of those who express faith in His Son. (2) He is steady in allegiance to His promise of the forgiveness of sins.

The Father is pistos, “faithful” to forgive the believer their sins when they confess these sins to Him because the Father always fulfills His promise and His agreement in the New Covenant with Israel to forgive sins based upon the merits of the death of His Jesus Christ on the cross. Those Jews who have expressed faith alone in Christ alone enter into that New Covenant promise and agreement that provides the forgiveness of sins (cf. Jer. 31:34). Those Gentiles who have trusted in Jesus Christ as Savior are engrafted into regenerate Jews according to Romans
11:17. Consequently, these regenerate Gentiles benefit from the New Covenant promise stipulating the forgiveness of sins to those who trust in the Messiah.

The believer’s confession of sins to the Father points the Father’s attention to His New covenant agreement and promise to forgive sin. The believer’s confession of their personal sins to the Father obligates the Father to execute His promise of the forgiveness of sins because the believer has met the requirements of this agreement at the moment of justification when they expressed faith alone in Christ alone.

Faithfulness is one of the attributes of God as related to moral beings (Deut. 7:9; 32:4; Lam. 3:23; Isa. 49:7; Hos. 11:12; Ps. 25:10; 33:4; 89:1-8; 91:4; 96:13; 98:3; 100:5; 119:75; 1 Cor. 1:9; 10:13; 2 Cor. 1:18; 1 Thess. 5:23; 2 Thess. 3:3; 1 Thess. 2:13; 1 Cor. 10:13; 1 Pet. 4:19; Rev. 19:11). It is one of the relative attributes of God meaning that it is related to God’s relationship to men. Faithfulness characterizes God’s loyalty to His covenant people Israel and the Church.

Faithfulness is one of the relative attributes of God. There are two kinds of attributes: (1) Absolute or intrinsic: those attributes that God possesses of Himself such as life and love. (2) Relative: those attributes related to His creation and especially men and angels.

For example, by nature God is truth but when God relates that truth to man, God’s truth becomes faithfulness. Love is one of God’s intrinsic or absolute attributes but when His love is directed towards sinners, it becomes grace and mercy and compassion.

God is faithful to His promises found in the Old Testament, which speak of the forgiveness of sins. The promise of the forgiveness of sins is of course rooted in the Old Testament (Is. 43:25; 53:11; Ps. 103:12-13; Ezek. 36:24-26; Jer. 31:34; Mic. 7:18-20). In Christ, all the promises of the Old Testament prophets are fulfilled including the forgiveness of sins. The Lord is faithful to His promises in the Old Testament and specifically the New covenant to forgive sins. This is what Paul is referring to here in 1 John 1:9.

The voluntary substitutionary spiritual and physical deaths of Jesus Christ on the cross paid the penalty for every sin in human history—past, present and future and is the basis for the forgiveness of sins (1 John 2:12). The Lord in the institution of the Lord’s Table speaks of this promise of the forgiveness of sins, which is based upon His voluntary substitutionary spiritual and physical deaths on the cross, which is denoted by the phrase “My blood.” (Matt. 26:28)

Therefore, the promise of the forgiveness of sins is related to this substitutionary spiritual and physical deaths of the Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14; 1 John 1:7). The Father remains faithful to the unfaithful Christian with
regards to His promise to forgive sin, and which forgiveness of sins was based upon His death on the cross.

The apostles proclaimed that this promise of the forgiveness of sins is appropriated through faith in the Lord Jesus because in Him is the fulfillment of all the promises that were made through the Old Testament prophets (Acts 2:14-41; 10:33-44; 13:16-39; 26:1-18; 2 Cor. 1:18-20). It is through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone that an individual receives the forgiveness of sins. This forgiveness of sins is based entirely upon the merits of the Lord Jesus and His finished work on the cross and for Christ’s sake the Christian’s sins forgiven (Rom. 4:1-17; 11:6; Gal. 2:16; 3:5-9; Eph. 2:1-9; Titus 3:5-7).

The believer is no longer under judgment because of their faith in Jesus Christ which took place at their conversion which resulted in their being declared justified by the Father (John 3:18; 5:24). The believer is no longer under condemnation because of his union with Christ through the baptism of the Spirit (Rom. 8:1; Col. 2:13-14). God remembers the believer’s sins no more because of the merits of His Son Jesus Christ’s death on the cross (Ps. 51:1-9; Heb. 8:12; 10:17).

The New Covenant to Israel is mentioned by our Lord in instituting the communion service in Luke 22:20 and by Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:25. Although the church is not Israel, she still benefits from the promise of forgiveness of sins which is offered in the New Covenant. As we noted, those Gentiles who have trusted in Jesus Christ as Savior are engrafted into regenerate Jews according to Romans 11:17. Consequently, these regenerate Gentiles benefit from the New Covenant promise stipulating the forgiveness of sins to those who trust in the Messiah. A Gentile benefits from the promise of the forgiveness of sins in the New Covenant when they exercise faith in Jesus Christ as Savior.

Paul’s teaching in Romans makes clear that both Jew and Gentile sinners can receive the forgiveness of their sins and the gift of righteousness when they exercise faith in Jesus Christ. Salvation is of the Jews not only in the sense that the Savior Jesus Christ is a Jew but also the promise of salvation and the forgiveness of sins is rooted in the New Covenant promises to Israel.

The church age believer is restored to fellowship with God when they confess their sins to the Father because He is faithful to His covenant and His promise to provide for the forgiveness of sins, which is based upon His Son’s death on the cross.

After conversion, the believer experiences, that which is true of themselves positionally when they confess their sins to the Father. God is faithful to His covenant and promise to forgive the believer’s sins because He was propitiated meaning He is totally and completely satisfied with His Son’s death on the cross as the payment for every sin in human history-past, present and future (1 John 2:1-2).
Therefore, the believer who confesses their sins to the Father is in a sense reminding the Father of His covenant promise to forgive sins (1 John 1:9). This is of course is from the human perspective since God does not need to be reminded. The Father is true to His promise to forgive the sins of those who express faith in His Son. His steadfast fidelity to His promise in His Word to forgive sins obligates the Father to forgive the believer their sins when they confess them since the believer has met the requirements of the agreement at the moment of justification when they expressed faith alone in Christ alone.

As we noted, John asserts in 1 John 1:9 that God is “just” in the sense that the execution of His judgments of His government are in perfect agreement with His perfect character and nature and are also based upon the merits of the death of His Son Jesus Christ on the cross. Therefore, He is “just” to execute the law of the forgiveness of sins that is based upon the merits of the death of His Son Jesus Christ on the cross. It also denotes the agreement between the Father’s nature and His acts.

The adjective dikaios here in 1 John 1:9 should be translated “just,” rather than “righteous” since the former more accurately expresses the meaning of the word in the Greek.

Webster’s New Universal Unabridged Dictionary defines the adjective “righteous,” “characterized by uprightness or morality; morally right or justifiable; acting in an upright, moral way; virtuous.” They define the adjective “just,” “guided by truth, reason, justice and fairness; done or made according to principle; equitable; proper; based on right; rightful, lawful; agreeable to truth or fact; true; correct; given or awarded rightly; deserved; as a sentence, punishment, reward; in accordance with standards or requirements; proper or right; especially in Biblical use, righteous.”

If we paraphrase the definition of “just” we could say that the Father is dikaios, “just” to forgive the believer their personal sins when they confess them to Him because: (1) He is guided by His attribute of truth, which proclaims the forgiveness of sins to those who have believed in His Son. (2) He is guided by His attribute of justice, which executes the judgment of the forgiveness of sins because the righteous demands of the Father have been propitiated by the merits of His Son Jesus Christ’s death on the cross. (3) He always operates according to His perfect principles. (4) He is equitable because His righteous demands have been propitiated by the merits of His Son Jesus Christ’s death on the cross. (5) He always does everything based upon what is right, rightful and lawful and it is right, rightful and lawful to forgive the believer’s his sins when he confesses them because the Father’s righteous demands that the believer’s sins be judged has been propitiated by the death of His Son Jesus Christ on the cross. (6) He always does what is agreeable to His attribute of truth, which proclaims the forgiveness of sins
to those who have expressed faith alone in Christ alone. (7) He rightly rewards the believer with the forgiveness of their sins experientially when they confess them to the Father because the Father’s righteous demands that the believer’s sins be judged has been propitiated by the death of His Son Jesus Christ on the cross. (8) He always operates according to His perfect standards and principles because of perfect holy character and nature.

The Father is “just” to forgive the believer their sins when they confess these sins to Him because the Father always fulfills His promise and His agreement in the New Covenant with Israel to forgive sins based upon the merits of the death of His Jesus Christ on the cross. Those Jews who have expressed faith alone in Christ alone enter into that New Covenant promise and agreement that provides the forgiveness of sins (cf. Jer. 31:34). As we noted earlier, those Gentiles who have trusted in Jesus Christ as Savior are engrafted into regenerate Jews according to Romans 11:17. Consequently, these regenerate Gentiles benefit from the New Covenant promise stipulating the forgiveness of sins to those who trust in the Messiah.

The believer’s confession of sins to the Father points the Father’s attention to His New covenant agreement and promise to forgive sin. The believer’s confession of their personal sins to the Father obligates the Father to execute His promise of the forgiveness of sins because the believer has met the requirements of this agreement at the moment of justification when they expressed faith alone in Christ alone.

The verb *aphiemi*, “forgive” in 1 John 1:9 pertains to removing the guilt resulting from wrongdoing. It speaks of the Father removing the guilt from the believer as a result of the believer sinning against Him. It expresses the idea that the Father lets go of the obligation that the believer owes Him as a result of sinning against Him. It means to release someone from the guilt or penalty of sin as one would a financial debt. To forgive means to give someone a release from the wrong that he has done to you. It means to give up any right of retaliation.

Again, the basis for releasing the believer from this obligation is Jesus Christ’s death on the cross which satisfied the demands of the Father’s holiness that required that sin be judged and bear the full brunt of His righteous indignation.

1 John 1:9 ends with John asserting that the Father purifies the believer from all unrighteousness or each and every unrighteous thought, word and action. This is an explanatory statement which expresses the idea that the Father forgiving the believer their sins when they confess these sins to Him can also be described as purifying them from all unrighteousness. This interpretation is indicated by the fact that all sin is unrighteousness. It can also be supported by the fact that when the Father forgives the believer their sins, He is in effect purifying them “experientially” from the guilt of sin which is described by John as
“unrighteousness.” They are purified “positionally” and in a “perfective” sense as we have noted earlier.

Jesus Christ’s substitutionary spiritual and physical deaths is the basis for the Father purifying the believer when they confess their sins to Him. In other words, the Father purifies them when they confess their sins to Him because His Son Jesus Christ’s substitutionary spiritual and physical deaths on the cross was the payment for their sins. They propitiated the Father whose holiness demanded that they be judged for committing these sins against Him.

In 1 John 1:9, the noun adikia means “unrighteousness” and is used to describe the sins of the believer. The word is antithetical in meaning to the noun dikaiosune, “righteousness,” which is a general term for “virtue” and “integrity” of character, thus, adikia is the state of possessing no virtue or integrity.

Webster’s New Universal Unabridged Dictionary defines “integrity”: (1) Soundness of and adherence to moral principle and character; uprightness; honesty (2) The state of being whole, entire, or undiminished (3) A sound, unimpaired, or perfect condition.

Webster’s New Universal Unabridged Dictionary defines “virtue”: (1) Moral excellence; goodness; righteousness (2) Conformity of one’s life and conduct to moral and ethical principles; uprightness, rectitude.

Therefore, the noun adikia describes the believer’s sins as thoughts, words or actions that do not adhere to the will of God, and that are not upright, honest, perfectly whole, thus leaving them in an unsound, impaired and in a bad condition. It describes these thoughts, words and actions as having no virtue in the sense that they have no moral excellence, goodness, and do not conform to the will of God.

The Basis for Repentance

Repentance for both the believer and non-believer is made possible through the unique theanthropic Person of history, the Lord Jesus Christ, the God-Man. It is based upon Jesus Christ’s substitutionary spiritual and physical deaths on the cross, which reconciled all of sinful humanity to a holy God, propitiated the holy demands of the Father that sin and sinners be judged and redeemed every member of the human race out of the slave market of sin. The Father accepted these deaths as the propitiation for our sins and sin nature problem because Jesus Christ is His Son. In other words, these deaths on the cross have merit with the Father because Jesus of Nazareth is His Son and therefore, the perfect sacrifice for sin which the Father requires. If not for the cross of Jesus Christ and His finished work on the cross, there would be no need for repentance because there would be no possible way to save sinful humanity.
We have access to God in fellowship because of the Lord Jesus Christ’s merits and finished work on the cross. Eph 2:18, “for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father.”

The Lord Jesus Christ is the incarnate Word of eternal life. It is His eternal life that He gives at the moment of justification through regeneration that provides the believer with the capacity to enjoy and experience fellowship with God.

The Person of Christ

The Preexistence of Christ

John 8:58 Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.” (NASB95)

This statement by our Lord to the Jews clearly affirms His preincarnate state or preexistence as the eternal Son of God. It will be noted that Christ’s existence prior to becoming a human being is nowhere in Scripture argued as a doctrine, but is everywhere assumed and used as the basis of the doctrines of the incarnation, hypostatic union and atonement for sin.

Our Lord’s birth in Bethlehem 2000 years ago was not His origin, only His incarnation. There could be no incarnation and hypostatic union without our Lord having a previous existence. To deny the preexistence of our Lord renders the incarnation and hypostatic union impossible. To go back further, could there be a Trinity were there no preexistent Son of God? The one necessarily presupposes the other. Christ’s preexistence is not a matter of purely academic interest but in fact it is the foundation on which the whole superstructure of the Christian faith rests. If our Lord is not preexistent, He cannot be God, and if He is not God, He cannot be the Creator or Redeemer.

Jesus was unique among men in that His birth did not mark His origin, but only His appearance as a man on the stage of time. Of no other person would it be possible to distinguish between His birth and origin, or to say that His life did not begin when He was born. He was the meeting place of eternity and time, the uniting of deity and humanity, the junction of heaven and earth. His origin was not related to His birth, or His nature dependent only on human ancestry. His nature was derived from His eternal being.

The Lord Jesus Christ did not become God’s Son at the incarnation or when He rose from the dead. His resurrection in fact demonstrated that He was the eternal Son of God who has no beginning. He is God, supreme and without beginning. Our Lord was conscious of a previous existence. He spoke of the glory He had with the Father before the foundation of the world.
John 17:5 “Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.” (NASB95)

He claimed preexistence in explicit and unmistakable terms.

John 16:26 “In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I will request of the Father on your behalf; 27 for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me and have believed that I came forth from the Father. 28 I came forth from the Father and have come into the world; I am leaving the world again and going to the Father.” (NASB95)

Our Lord’s first appearance on earth was not when born of His virgin mother. Every other man in history entered life as the result of a biological process and as a new being, but the Lord Jesus knew neither beginning of days nor end of life (Heb. 7:3).

The Old Testament abounds in references to our Lord’s preexistence or preincarnate state. In these appearances He is often called the “Angel of the Lord.” They also are called in theology, “theophanies” or “Christophanies,” which are theological terms used to refer to either a visible or auditory manifestation or both of the Son of God before His becoming a man permanently in Bethlehem.

The first of these appears in Genesis 1:1 where He is presented as the Creator of the heavens and the earth.

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. (NASB95)

“In the beginning” refers to eternity past when there was only the Trinity and no creation or creatures.

A comparison of Genesis 1:1 with other Scripture clearly teaches that all of creation is the work of the second Person of the Trinity, God the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Colossians 1:15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 16 For by Him all things were created, {both} in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been created through Him and for Him. 17 He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. (NASB95)

The preincarnate Christ appeared to the patriarch Abraham (Genesis 18:1) and his son Isaac (Genesis 26:23-25), and Isaac’s son Jacob whose name was later changed to Israel (Genesis 28:10-22; 31:10-13; 32:24-32; 35:1). The Lord also appeared to Moses (Exodus 3:2) and his successor Joshua (Joshua 5:13-15). It was the Lord who was in the fiery furnace with Daniel’s three friends (Daniel 3:19-30).

The prophet Isaiah presents His testimony concerning the preexistence of Christ in Isaiah 9:6-7. The expression “the Everlasting Father” means that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God in human flesh (Jn. 8:58).

The prophet Micah also testifies to the preexistence of Christ.
Micah 5:2 “But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity.” (NASB95)

“From the days of eternity” is an obvious reference to the fact that the baby named Jesus by Mary in Bethlehem existed from eternity past.

The apostle Paul teaches in Philippians 2:6 that Jesus Christ existed from eternity past.

Philippians 2:5, “Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. 8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9 For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name, which is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (NASB95)

In this passage, the apostle presents a three-fold division of Christ’s career: (1) His preincarnate state as the Son of God in eternity past. (2) His incarnate state as the “Theanthropos” during His first advent. (3) His glorified state as resurrected humanity.

Philippians 2:6-11 consists of two main sections, which are built up in parallel style. The first section is contained in verses 6-8 and forms the “catabasis” of our Lord. This refers to His gradual descent from existence in eternity past to His substitutionary spiritual and physical deaths on the cross. The second section is contained in verses 9-11 and forms the “anabasis” of our Lord. This refers to His gradual ascent from resurrection out from the dead to the Great Genuflex at the conclusion of human history. These verses express the true humility of the Lord Jesus Christ and His servanthood. The passage emphasizes His obedience as the Last Adam in contrast to the disobedience of the first Adam. It records a succession of events from our Lord’s preexistence in eternity past to the incarnation, the cross and culminating in His glorification.

“Although He existed” is the nominative masculine singular present active participle form of the verb huparcho. This verb occurs as early as Homer in the eighth century B.C. It is a compound word composed of the preposition hupo, “under,” and arche, “a beginning.”

The preposition hupo is often prefixed to other words to intensify or alter their meaning. The prepositions apo, ek, para, and hupo all denote “issuing, proceeding from.” As we noted in 1 John 1:1, the term arche means “eternity past.” Huparcho is a word used to denote existence, which proceeds or issues from eternity past.
Paul does not use the simple verb of being here which is eimi but instead employs the stronger huparcho to denote existence, which proceeds or issues from the beginning. The latter denotes the inherency and expression of the divine attributes by our Lord in His preincarnate state. It refers to eternity past in which our Lord functioned as infinite and eternal God. The verb expresses the fact that prior to entering the human race permanently in Bethlehem, He was the eternal Son of God who expressed all the attributes of deity.

In Philippians 2:6, the verb huparcho is what we call a concessive participle, which is used by Paul to call attention to the fact that God the Son did something for us under unfavorable circumstances, i.e., He became human! He became for a little while lower than the angels (Heb. 2:9).

2 Corinthians 8:9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich. (NASB95)

The Creator left heaven where He received the worship of angels in order to become a human being and to suffer the humiliation of dying as a criminal on a cross as well as spiritual and physical death! God the Son condescended by becoming human.

The Deity of Christ

The preexistence of Jesus of Nazareth who is called the Christ testifies to the fact that He is infinite, eternal Son of God (John 1:1-2; John 8:58; 10:30a; Col. 2:9a; Rev. 1:8). There are several titles ascribed to Jesus Christ that signify His deity. He is called “the Son of God” (Luke 1:35), “the Son of the Most High” (Luke 1:32), “mighty God” (Isaiah 9:6), “eternal Father” (Isaiah 9:6), “His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity” (Micah 5:2) “Lord” (Rom. 15:30; Eph. 1:22; Phil. 2:11) and “God” (Titus 2:13).

The Scriptures assign to Jesus Christ the same divine essence as God the Father and God the Holy Spirit meaning that He possesses all the attributes of deity. The Scriptures teach that He is sovereign (Matt. 28:18a; Col. 2:10b), that He is perfect righteousness (John 8:46a; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 7:26; 1 Pet. 2:22; 1 John 2:21b) and justice (John 8:16a; 2 Tim. 4:8; Ps. 9:8; Deut. 32:4; Rev. 15:3b). Furthermore, the attribute of love is ascribed to Him (John 13:34; Rom. 5:8; Eph. 3:19; 1 John 4:9-10) as well as eternal life (1 Tim. 1:17; 1 John 5:11), omniscience (Luke 11:17; John 2:24-25; 6:64; 21:17), omnipresence (Matt. 18:20; Prov. 15:3), omnipotence (John 1:3, 10; 5:21; 1 Cor. 1:23-24; Phil. 3:21; Heb. 1:3; Rev. 1:8), immutability (Mal. 3:6; Heb. 1:10-12; 13:8) and veracity (John 1:14; 14:6a; 1 John 3:16).

The Word of God presents Jesus Christ as the Creator and Sustainer of the universe (John 1:3, 10; Col. 1:16-17; Heb. 1:3, 10). His deity is referred to in that
He is said to have authority to forgive sins (Matt. 9:6; Luke 5:24; Col. 3:13). He has the power to raise the dead (John 5:21; 6:40; 11:25).

The Bible teaches that all judgment belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ (John 5:22; 1 Cor. 3:11-15; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 20:11-14), and that He receives worship from both men and angels (Ps. 99:5; Phil. 2:10; Rev. 5:13-14) since He is equal with the Father (John 10:30, 37-38; 14:9; 17:5, 24-25).

Then there is the subject of the Old Testament Messianic prophecies that Jesus literally fulfilled, which substantiate His claims to being God. The Old Testament was written over a 1000 year period and contains nearly 300 references to the coming Messiah. All of these were literally fulfilled in the Person of Jesus Christ, and they establish a solid confirmation of His credentials as the Messiah. These Messianic prophecies extend over hundreds of years and yet find their literal fulfillment in the short 33 ½ year life span of one person, Jesus of Nazareth. Many of these prophecies were fulfilled in one day. These prophecies truly accomplish the purposes of the Gospel writers as they carefully pointed to the Person, words, and works of Christ. The early church evangelized unbelievers by appealing to these fulfilled Messianic prophecies, therefore, Christians today should follow suit. For these fulfilled prophecies substantiate Christ’s claims as being the Son of God.

John 20:31 but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name. (NASB95)

Matthew 26:56, “But all this has taken place to fulfill the Scriptures of the prophets.” (NASB95)

Luke 24:25 And He said to them, “O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken. 26 Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory? 27 Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.” (NASB95)

Luke 24:44 Now He said to them, “These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” (NASB95)

The Lord Jesus Christ said He came to fulfill prophecy.

Matthew 5:17 “Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.” (NASB95)

Jesus appealed to these Messianic prophecies many times during His ministry. These Messianic prophecies were uttered by many different voices and over a period of five hundred years yet they were all fulfilled within twenty hours on the day that the Lord died for the sins of the world.
There is the prophecy that He would be sold for thirty pieces of silver. Prophecy: Zechariah 11:12 I said to them, “If it is good in your sight, give {me} my wages; but if not, never mind.’ So they weighed out thirty {shekels} of silver as my wages.” (NASB95)
Fulfillment: Matthew 26:14 “Then one of the twelve, named Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests 15 and said, “What are you willing to give me to betray Him to you?’ And they weighed out thirty pieces of silver to him.” (NASB95)
Then we have the prophecy that He would be betrayed by a friend.
Prophecy: Psalm 55:12 “For it is not an enemy who reproaches me, then I could bear {it;} nor is it one who hates me who has exalted himself against me, then I could hide myself from him. 13 But it is you, a man my equal, My companion and my familiar friend; 14 We who had sweet fellowship together walked in the house of God in the throng.” (NASB95)
Fulfillment: Matthew 26:49 Immediately Judas went to Jesus and said, “Hail, Rabbi.” and kissed Him. 50 And Jesus said to him, “Friend, {do} what you have come for.’ Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and seized Him.” (NASB95)
There is the prophecy of the money cast to the potter.
Prophecy: Zechariah 11:13 Then the LORD said to me, “Throw it to the potter, that magnificent price at which I was valued by them.’ So I took the thirty shekels of silver and threw them to the potter in the house of the LORD.” (NASB95)
Fulfillment: Matthew 27:5 And he threw the pieces of silver into the sanctuary and departed; and he went away and hanged himself. 6 And the chief priests took the pieces of silver and said, “It is not lawful to put them into the temple treasury, since it is the price of blood. 7 And they counseled together and with the money bought the Potter’s Field as a burial place for strangers.” (NASB95)
The disciples forsook Him, again true to prophecy.
Prophecy: Zechariah 13:7 “Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, And against the man, My Associate,” declares the LORD of hosts. ‘Strike the Shepherd that the sheep may be scattered; And I will turn My hand against the little ones.’” (NASB95)
Fulfillment: Matthew 26:56 “But all this has taken place that the Scriptures of the prophets may be fulfilled.” Then all the disciples left Him and fled.” (NASB95)
He was accused by false witnesses.
Prophecy: Psalm 35:11 Malicious witnesses rise up; They ask me of things that I do not know. (NASB95)
Fulfillment: Matthew 26:59 Now the chief priests and the whole Council kept trying to obtain false testimony against Jesus, in order that they might put Him to death; 60 and they did not find any, even though many false witnesses came forward. But later on two came forward. (NASB95)

Jesus of Nazareth was smitten and spit upon, again another fulfillment of prophecy.

Prophecy: Isaiah 50:6 “I gave My back to those who strike Me, And My cheeks to those who pluck out the beard; I did not cover My face from humiliation and spitting.” (NASB95)

Fulfillment: Matthew 27:30 And they spat on Him, and took the reed and began to beat Him on the head. (NASB95)

Then there is the prophecy that He would be dumb before His accusers.

Prophecy: Isaiah 53:7 He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, So He did not open His mouth. (NASB95)

Fulfillment: Matthew 27:12 And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He made no answer. 13 Then Pilate said to Him, “Do You not hear how many things they testify against You?” 14 And He did not answer him with regard to even a single charge, so that the governor was quite amazed. (NASB95)

Isaiah prophesied that He the Messiah would be wounded and bruised.

Prophecy: Isaiah 53:5 But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed. (NASB95)

Fulfillment: Matthew 27:26 Then he released Barabbas for them; but after having Jesus scourged, he delivered Him to be crucified. . . . 29 And after weaving a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand; and they knelted down before Him and mocked Him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews.” (NASB95)

One thousand years before Jesus of Nazareth appeared on the pages of history, David prophesied that the Messiah would have His hands and feet pierced. David spoke of crucifixion centuries before it was invented by the Persians. The Romans perfected it.

Prophecy: Psalm 22:16 “For dogs have surrounded me; A band of evildoers has encompassed me; They pierced my hands and my feet.” (NASB95)

Fulfillment: Luke 23:33 And when they came to the place called The Skull, there they crucified Him and the criminals, one on the right and the other on the left. (NASB95)

The prophet Isaiah wrote that the Messiah would be crucified with thieves.
Prophecy: Isaiah 53:12 “Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, And He will divide the booty with the strong; Because He poured out Himself to death, And was numbered with the transgressors; Yet He Himself bore the sin of many, And interceded for the transgressors.” (NASB95)

Fulfillment: Mark 15:27 And they crucified two robbers with Him, one on His right and one on His left. 28 And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “And He was numbered with transgressors.” (NASB95)

Then there is the prophecy that people would ridicule Him.
Prophecy: Psalm 22:8 “Commit yourself to the LORD; let Him deliver him; Let Him rescue him, because He delights in him.” (NASB95)

Fulfillment: Matthew 27:41 In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking Him, and saying, 42 “He saved others; He cannot save Himself. He is the King of Israel; let Him now come down from the cross, and we shall believe in Him. 43 He trusts in God; let Him deliver Him now, if He takes pleasure in Him; for He said, ‘I am the Son of God.” (NASB95)

There is the prophecy in the book of Psalms that the suffering Messiah would have His garments parted and lots would be cast for them. Again, Jesus of Nazareth fulfilled this perfectly.
Prophecy: Psalm 22:18 “They divide my garments among them, And for my clothing they cast lots.” (NASB95)

Fulfillment: John 19:23 Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His outer garments and made four parts, a part to every soldier and also the tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece. 24 So they said to one another, “Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, to decide whose it shall be”; this was to fulfill the Scripture: “They divided My outer garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots.” (NASB95)

There is the prophecy of His forsaken cry.
Prophecy: Psalm 22:1 “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me? Far from my deliverance are the words of my groaning.” (NASB95)

Fulfillment: Matthew 27:46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?” that is, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” (NASB95)

The Psalms state that gall and vinegar would be given to Him.
Prophecy: Psalm 69:21 “They also gave me gall for my food, and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.” (NASB95)

Fulfillment: John 19:28 After this, Jesus, knowing that all things had already been accomplished, in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, “I am thirsty.” 29 A jar full of sour wine was standing there; so they put a
Each of the following prophecies was literally fulfilled by Jesus of Nazareth.

Prophecy: Psalm 38:11 “My loved ones and my friends stand aloof from my plague; and my kinsmen stand afar off.” (NASB95)

Fulfillment: Luke 23:49 And all His acquaintances and the women who accompanied Him from Galilee, were standing at a distance, seeing these things. (NASB95)

Prophecy: Psalm 34:20 He keeps all his bones; not one of them is broken. (NASB95)

Fulfillment: John 19:33, 36, but coming to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs; . . . 36 For these things came to pass, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, Not a bone of Him shall be broken. (NASB95)

Prophecy: Isaiah 53:9 His grave was assigned with wicked men, Yet He was with a rich man in His death, because He had done no violence, nor was there any deceit in His mouth. (NASB95)

Fulfillment: Matthew 27:57 When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. 58 This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given over to him. 59 And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, 60 and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the entrance of the tomb and went away. (NASB95)

There is no way short of being supernatural that Jesus could have manipulated the events and people in His life to respond in exactly the way necessary for it to appear that He was fulfilling all these prophecies, including John’s heralding Him.

So there were many prophecies concerning the Messiah that were simply beyond the human control of Jesus: (1) Place of birth (Mic. 5:2). (2) Time of birth (Dn. 9:25; Gen. 49:10). (3) Manner of birth (Is. 7:14). (4) Betrayal (5) Manner of death (Ps. 22:16). (6) People’s reactions (mocking, spitting) (7) Piercing (John 19:34) (8) Burial (Mt. 27:59; Mk. 15:46).

The following probabilities are taken from Peter Stoner’s book entitled Science Speaks which shows that coincidence is ruled out by the science of probability. Stoner says that by using the modern science of probability in reference to the eight prophecies, Stoner states the following: “We find the chance that any man might have lived down to the present time and fulfilled all 8 prophecies is 1 in $10^{17}$…that would be 1 in $100,000,000,000,000,000,000$…17 zeros.

In order to help us comprehend this staggering probability, Stoner illustrates it by supposing that we take $10^{17}$ silver dollars and lay them on the face of Texas.
They will cover all of the state two feet deep. Now mark one of these silver dollars and stir the whole mass thoroughly, all over the state. Blindfold a man and tell him that he can travel as far as he wishes, but he must pick up one silver dollar and say that this is the right one. What chance would he have of getting the right one? Just the same chance that the prophets would have of writing these eight prophecies and having them all come true in any one man, from their day to the present time, providing they wrote them according to their own wisdom.

Now these prophecies were either given by inspiration of God or the prophets just wrote them as they thought they should be. In such a case the prophets had just one chance in 10 to the 17th power of having them come true in any man, but they all came true in Christ. This means that the fulfillment of these eight prophecies alone proves that God inspired the writing of those prophecies to a definiteness which lacks only one chance in 10 to the 17th power of being absolute.

The resurrection is fundamental to the gospel because it demonstrates that Jesus of Nazareth is in fact God. It demonstrated the substitutionary spiritual and physical deaths of our Lord were acceptable to the Father as the atonement for sin. The resurrection of Jesus from the dead was central to the preaching of the apostles, who were witnesses of His resurrection (see Acts 2:24, 32; 3:15, 26; 4:10; 5:30; 10:40; 13:30, 33, 34, 37; 17:31). The resurrection of Christ demonstrated to all that He was indeed who He claimed to be, namely, the incarnate Son of God (Rm. 1:1-4).

Romans 1:1 Paul, a slave owned by Christ who is Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel originating from God, 2 which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures 3 concerning His Son, who was born as a descendant of David with respect to His human nature. 4 The One demonstrated as the Son of God by means of divine power with respect to a nature characterized by holiness because of the resurrection from the dead ones, Jesus Christ, our Lord. (Author’s translation)

Later in this article, we will discuss in greater detail the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The Incarnation of the Son of God

The word “incarnation” is from the Latin: In and caro, the stem carn means, “flesh.” In the context of Christian theology, the “incarnation” is the act whereby the eternal Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, without ceasing to be what He is, namely God the Son, permanently clothed His deity with a sinless human nature, which He did not possess before the act, thus making Him, the unique theanthropic person of the cosmos. The “hypostatic union,” which we will note in chapter five, is the result of the incarnation. It was accomplished by means
of the incarnation, which itself was accomplished by means of the virgin pregnancy.

The virgin birth was the means by which the incarnation became a reality.

**John 1:14** And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only uniquely born One from the Father, full of grace and truth. (NASB95)

**1 Timothy 3:16** And by common confession great is the mystery of godliness: He who was revealed in the flesh, was vindicated in the Spirit, beheld by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory. (NASB95)

The second person of the Trinity, the Lord Jesus Christ, entered permanently into the human race by means of the virgin birth. He is the only member of the Trinity to take upon Himself a human nature. Therefore, He is different from the other members of the Godhead.

He is different from the Father and the Spirit in that He clothed His deity with a sinless human nature. He is different from the other members of the human race in that He is God, and without a sin nature because He did not have a human father. He did not cease to be God because He became a man, nor was He less of a man because He was God. He was every bit of a human as the rest of the human race. However, He did not possess a sin nature since the Holy Spirit impregnated Mary and not a man. Therefore, there is no one like Him in the universe; He is a totally unique person, because He combined forever in Himself undiminished deity along with perfect sinless humanity.

When speaking of the incarnation, we must of course discuss the virgin birth since, as we noted, the incarnation was the result of the virgin birth (Isa. 9:6-7; Micah 5:2; Luke 1:30-35).

The virgin birth was predicted in the Old Testament. In 700 B.C., the prophet Isaiah was used by God the Holy Spirit to prophecy of the birth of our Lord.

**Isaiah 7:14** “Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.” (NASB95)

“Immanuel” is the Hebrew proper name `immanuel’el, which means “with us is God.”

“Virgin” is the noun `almah, which means a “young woman who has not had sex yet with a man, but is at the age to be married.” That a virgin would give birth to Immanuel obviously signals a miraculous birth.

Contrary to Jewish tradition, no father is mentioned. The omission fits with the fact that the Child is virgin-born. Matthew 1:23 tells us who “Immanuel” is, the Lord Jesus Christ, and “the virgin” is, Mary.
The phrase “The Lord Himself will give you a sign” points to the fact that the omnipotence of God will perform the miracle of implanting the seed for the formation of the human body of Christ.

Matthew 1:18, Luke 1:35 and Hebrews 10:5 says that God the Holy Spirit prepared a human body for God the Son.

Matthew 1:18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. (NASB95)

Luke 1:35 The angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God.” (NASB95)

The prophet Isaiah also speaks of the incarnation in Isaiah 9:6-7.

Isaiah 9:6 For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. 7 There will be no end to the increase of {His} government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this. (NASB95)

The phrase “will be born” is the person feminine singular pual perfect form of the verb yaladh, “to bear a child, to give birth.” The perfect tense of the verb says that in 700 B.C. when this was written, God saw the virgin birth as already having occurred. The Pual stem is an intensive passive stem meaning that the divine promise to the house of Israel of the virgin birth is certain to occur or pictured in the mind of God as already having taken place. The pual passive means that the house of Israel will receive the virgin birth from God.

“Will be given” is the third person masculine singular niphal perfect form of the verb nathan, “to give.” The pual stem is used in the passive sense meaning that the nation of Israel is going to be acted upon by God when God the Holy Spirit will produce a sinless human body for the Son of God. The perfect tense indicates that God already considers that the birth of Christ is a certainty since He knows all things because He is omniscient and He is sovereign and has determined this to take place.

“The government will rest on His shoulders,” is a prophecy that our Lord would be a King.

The Holy Spirit’s description that our Lord would be “wonderful” was manifested in His “wonderful” character, life, words and works (cf. Matt. 21:15; Lk. 4:22; Acts 2:22; 4:30). “Wonderful” means He will be a supernatural wonder, a marvel (Ex. 15:11; Judges 13:18).
The Holy Spirit’s description that our Lord would be a “Counselor” was expressed by our Lord’s perfect wisdom and in fact He was the personification of divine wisdom.

“Mighty God” is the Hebrew name El Gibbor which refers to the fact that the Child will be the omnipotent God.

The expression “the Everlasting Father” means that Jesus Christ would be the eternal Son of God in human flesh (Jn. 8:58).

The expression “Prince of Peace” (Sar-Shalom) means that Jesus Christ would reconcile fallen humanity to God through His death on the Cross (Eph. 2:14, 17).

The fulfillment of the prophecies of Isaiah 7:14 and 9:6-7 are recorded in Matthew 1-2 and Luke 1-2.

The gospel of Matthew provides us with one of two accounts of the birth of Christ.

Matthew 1:18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. 19 And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly. 20 But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.” (NASB95)

“Joseph” who was engaged to Mary is said to be a “son of David,” which is intended to show Jesus’ legitimate claim to the throne of David through his legal father Joseph (see verse 31). The marriage of Mary and Joseph made our Lord the “adopted” son and “legal heir” of Joseph, which reflects God’s sovereignty, omniscience and omnipotence.

The angel tells Joseph that Mary conceived by the omnipotence of the Holy Spirit. God the Holy Spirit was the source of Mary’s pregnancy (Matt. 1:18) since the divine omnipotence of God the Holy Spirit created the human body of our Lord.

Hebrews 10:5 Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, “SACRIFICE AND OFFERING YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED, BUT A BODY YOU HAVE PREPARED FOR ME; 6 IN WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS AND sacrifices FOR SIN YOU HAVE TAKEN NO PLEASURE.” (NASB95)

An act of divine omnipotence produced the sperm that fertilized the egg in Mary’s womb and as a result the Lord Jesus Christ had no sin nature like we do because He did not have a human father. Mary’s womb was only the vehicle for the formation of the human body of our Lord and the omnipotence of God the Holy Spirit provided 23 perfect chromosomes to fertilize Mary’s normal, pure ovum,
which produced a fetus in Mary’s womb that was uncontaminated by Adam’s old sin nature.

Matthew 1:21 “She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.” 22 Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet. 23 BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL,’ which translated means, “GOD WITH US.” 24 And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took Mary as his wife 25 but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus. (NASB95)

The name “Jesus” means, “Yahweh saves” and expresses that Jesus would be the long awaited Savior of the world and would be the fulfillment of the prophecy of Genesis 3:15.

The gospel of Luke gives us more details regarding the birth of Christ than Matthew.

Luke 1:26 Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. (NASB95)

The phrase “in the six-month” refers to six months after the angel Gabriel had been sent to Zechariah to announce that his wife Elizabeth would be pregnant in her old age and the child that she would bear would be the forerunner of Jesus Christ, namely, John the Baptist.

“Virgin” is the noun parthenos, which denotes “a young, unmarried girl who has not had sex with a man yet.”

Joseph and Mary were legally considered to be married but had not consummated the marriage by having sex. The Jews had a tradition called betrothal or engagement period, which was considered preparation for marriage but was legally binding. It was an agreement that included witnesses, a marriage contract, and the payment of the bridal price and was the first stage of the marriage and usually began when the girl was about 12 years of age. This period was generally concluded after a year when the woman would go to live at the man’s house instead of her parents. If the marriage did not take place because of a breach of contract such as the dowry not paid to her parents or if she had sex before marriage, the young woman could not be married to another man until she was freed by due process and a certificate of divorce.

Luke 1:28 And coming in, he said to her, “Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.” (NASB95)
“Favored one” is the verb charitoo, which means that God the Father was bestowing upon Mary the gracious honor of bearing the human nature of the Messiah.

“The Lord is with you” is an Old Testament greeting preparing Mary for her service to bear the human nature of the Savior, including the assurance of divine assistance in accomplishing this service and indicates that Mary was experiencing fellowship with the Lord at this time.

Luke 1:29 But she was very perplexed at this statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was. (NASB95)

The statement “she was very perplexed at this statement” indicates that Gabriel’s greeting confused Mary and she could not understand why she is being singled for such a wonderful and gracious greeting.

The statement “(she) kept pondering what kind of salutation this was,” indicates that Mary carefully considered the implications and nature of this extraordinary manner of greeting she received from the angel Gabriel.

Luke 1:30 The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God.” (NASB95)

Gabriel tells her not to be afraid since she would be the recipient of an extraordinarily gracious and fantastic honor, which is described in the following verses. He tells her that she has found favor or grace in the eyes of God meaning that God is going to bestow a great honor upon her that she did not earn or deserve but does indicate that she was experiencing fellowship with God since God would not choose her to bear the Savior if she were not.

Luke 1:31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. (NASB95)

The name “Jesus” means, “Yahweh saves” and expresses that Jesus would be the long awaited Savior of the world and would be the fulfillment of the prophecy of Genesis 3:15.

Luke 1:32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. (NASB95)

The statement “He will be great” emphasizes the importance of Jesus to the fulfillment of the Father’s plan to rule over the works of His hands (cf. Ps 8; Heb. 2:5-10). It also means that Jesus would possess superiority in rank over both men and angels and would be great in power and in wisdom, and in dominion on both earth and in heaven since He will be the God-Man Savior (cf. Phlp. 2:5-11).

The prophecy that Jesus would be “called the Son of the Most High” emphasizes the fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah 9:6.

The prophecy “the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David” refers to the fact that Jesus would fulfill the Davidic covenant in which God
promised David that a descendant of his would sit on his throne forever ruling over the nation of Israel (See 2 Samuel 7:12-13; Jeremiah 23:5).

**Luke 1:33** and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end. (NASB95)

The prophecy that Jesus would “reign over the house of Jacob forever” refers to the fact that He would be the King of Israel and the prophecy “His kingdom will have no end” refers to the fact that Jesus’ reign will never end on planet earth.

**Luke 1:34** Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” (NASB95)

Mary’s question was not an expression of unbelief like Zechariah recorded in Luke 1:18-19 but rather it was an expression of faith since she believed the promises but did not understand how they would be fulfilled with her since her marriage with Joseph was not yet consummated.

**Luke 1:35** The angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God.” (NASB95)

In Luke 1:35, the term “overshadow” is an Old Testament image of the cloud of God’s presence that descended upon the tabernacle (Ex. 40:35) and is a metaphor for the presence of God.

**Luke 1:36** And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age; and she who was called barren is now in her sixth month.

37 For nothing will be impossible with God.

38 And Mary said, “Behold, the bondslave of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her. (NASB95)

When Mary said, “be it done to me according to your Word” (Luke 1:38), she was saying yes to the plan of God and expresses her faith in the Lord.

Mary had to agree with God’s plan before the omnipotence of God the Holy Spirit could implant the seed that would form the perfect humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ, thus revealing a spiritual principle that our faith appropriates the omnipotence of God in our lives (cf. Matt. 17:20).

**Luke 2:1** Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth. (NASB95)

According to Luke 2:1, our Lord’s birth took place during the reign of Caesar Augustus who was the great nephew and adopted son of Gaius Julius Caesar who was one of the greatest men of the ancient world. The title Augustus was a religious title and an attempt to claim deity and he took the name Caesar by adoption and was the first Roman Emperor who ruled from 31 B.C. to 14 A.D.

Rome was a Republic and then became an Empire under Octavius meaning he was the sole ruler of Rome, and whose rulership stretched over most of the
inhabited world at that time and was the fourth kingdom described in the prophecies of Daniel 2:40 and 7:23.

Rome took a census every fourteen years for both military and tax purposes and each Jewish male had to return to the city of his fathers to record his name, occupation, property and family. Augustus issued a decree that a census be taken of everyone in the Roman Empire but it was God who moved Augustus to issue this census so that the prophesy in Micah 5:2 could be fulfilled.

**Proverbs 21:1** The king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the LORD; He turns it wherever He wishes. (NASB95)

The phrase “all the inhabited earth” refers to the entire Roman Empire. The spiritual condition among members of the human race was spiritually bankrupt and morally decadent since the Gentiles were polytheists, as were the Romans, and the Greeks also worshipped many gods along with philosophy.

The spiritual condition of the Jews was no better as evidence by their reception of Jesus as recorded in John 1:11, “He came unto His own and His own received Him not.” But it does appear that many in Christ’s day were expecting and looking for Messiah to come, which is demonstrated by the fact that they knew where Messiah was to be born (cf. Matthew 2:4). Luke 2:25-38 records that Simeon was looking for the consolation of Israel, the Messiah.

**Luke 2:2** This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. (NASB95)

Quirinius was governor of Syria on two different occasions (First: Luke 2:2; Second: Acts 5:37) and so the census in Luke 2:2 took place during his first reign as governor of Syria in 4 B.C.

**Luke 2:3** And everyone was on his way to register for the census, each to his own city. 4 Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David 5 in order to register along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child. 6 While they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth. 7 And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. (NASB95)

Each man went to the town where his family’s register was kept and Joseph and Mary who were of the house of David, lived in the town of Nazareth but both Joseph and Mary’s family registers were in the town of Bethlehem. The last three months of Mary’s pregnancy were spent in Bethlehem away from the gossip and the turmoil that would have surrounded her in Nazareth.

Notice that Luke records that Jesus was Mary’s “first-born,” and not Joseph’s indicating clearly that Joseph was the legal father by adoption, but not by conception.
Mary wrapped the Child in strips of cloth like bandages used to keep the infant’s limbs straight and to limit movement. This type of treatment was considered appropriate and also served to identify a newborn (Luke 2:12). The mother who bore the child had to wrap the child herself. The custom of the day included cleaning and rubbing the baby with oil, usually olive oil. Then the arms were placed at the baby’s side and were wrapped in strips of cloth. This also served as a sign to the shepherds who were in field and were told by the angel of the Lord that they could see the Messiah wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger (Luke 2:12).

The word for “manger” is the Greek noun phatne, which means, “feeding trough” and was employed by Mary and Joseph as a crib for the baby Jesus. The mangers in the ancient world were often made of stones laid like blocks, then plastered over with a substance to make them waterproof. These feeding troughs could also be carved from a single block of stone. Placing our Lord in one of these troughs speaks of the believer feeding from our Lord who is the Word of God (John 6:54-56).

Therefore, we see that at the birth of our Lord there were no trappings of royalty, no purple robes, and no signs of wealth or of position, even though this One was born to be the King of kings and Lord of lords. The King of glory condescended to be cradled in a manger that was to hold food for cattle. He who had come to provide heaven’s bread descended to a manger.

We do not have any information regarding these Palestinian inns but in the Roman Empire, we know they were places of ill repute and travelers, whenever possible, stayed with friends, thus, the New Testament emphasizes hospitality to strangers. Jewish inns may have been better, but this is only conjecture and some believe the word “inn” should be translated “caravansary” and another translation might be “guest house” because the word can mean “guest room” but it was, however, a place where travelers stayed.

The earliest non-scriptural reference to the birth of Christ is found in Justin Martyr, an early church father, and is dated about A.D. 140 who stated that Christ was born in a cave and Origen said the same in A.D. 248 as did Jerome, one of the most brilliant scholars of the early church. Tradition says it was a cave in the side of the hill behind the inn or guest house of the village but the point is that whatever the exact nature of the place, the city was so crowded with people because of the census that the only place left for them was a cave.

Luke 2:8 In the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. 10 But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the
people 11 for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. 12 This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” 13 And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, 14 “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.” 15 When the angels had gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds began saying to one another, “Let us go straight to Bethlehem then, and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us.” 16 So they came in a hurry and found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as He lay in the manger. 17 When they had seen this, they made known the statement, which had been told them about this Child. 18 And all who heard it wondered at the things, which were told them by the shepherds. 19 But Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart. 20 The shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as had been told them. (NASB95)

The announcement of the birth of Christ was not given to the religious people in Jerusalem, the Pharisees but rather it was given to a despised class of people, the shepherds. The Pharisees despised them, putting them under the same classification as publicans and tax collectors, depriving them of certain rights in the community. They were not allowed to hold a judicial position and could not be admitted as a witness in court. The reason for this harsh treatment was that the shepherd was out alone in the fields for months at a time without supervision, which was a great temptation to steal some of the increase of the flock.

The Pharisees hated the shepherds but our Lord identified with them, calling Himself the Good Shepherd (John 10:11, 14). In fact, He is described in Hebrews 13:20 as the Great Shepherd of the sheep. Peter describes Him as the Shepherd (1 Pet. 2:25). The fact that the good news of the Savior being born in Bethlehem was given to the shepherds provides a striking picture of the mission of Christ on earth who reached out to the forsaken, disenfranchised and offscouring of society.

There are many reasons for the incarnation. First of all, it was important since it resulted in Satan being judged. Our Lord’s obedience to the Father’s will defeated Satan in the angelic conflict.

John 12:31 “Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world shall be cast out.” (NASB95)

John 16:7 “But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. 8 And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; 9 concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; 10 and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father
and you no longer see Me; 11 and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.” (NASB95)

Without the incarnation, there would be no cross and without the cross, there would be no victory over Satan.

Colossians 2:15 When He (the Father) had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He (the Father) made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through him (Christ). (NASB95)

Not only did the incarnation bring about the defeat of Satan but of course it also provided all of mankind with a Redeemer.

Galatians 4:4 But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, 5 so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. (NASB95)

If not for the incarnation, there would be no cross and resurrection and therefore there would be no salvation or hope for mankind.

Titus 2:11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men. (NASB95)

If there was no incarnation, there would be no cross and if no cross, no resurrection, thus leaving the entire human race lost in sin.

1 Corinthians 15:17 and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied. (NASB95)

The incarnation provided hope for mankind.

1 Timothy 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus according to the commandment of God our Savior, and of Christ Jesus, who is our hope. (NASB95)

Man would not be reconciled to God without the incarnation.

Romans 5:10 For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. 11 And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation. (NASB95)

2 Corinthians 5:18 Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, 19 namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. (NASB95)

Colossians 1:19 For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, 20 and through Him to reconcile all things to himself, having
made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven. 21 And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, 22 yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach. (NASB95)

1 Peter 3:18 For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, in order that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit. (NASB95)

Thus, since Christ reconciled sinful humanity to a holy God, He is also the only “mediator” between God and man. Thus, without the incarnation, there would be no mediator between sinful humanity and a holy God.

Job 9:32 “For He (God) is not a man as I am that I may answer Him, that we may go to court together. 33 There is no umpire between us, who may lay his hand upon us both.” (NASB95)

1 Timothy 2:5 For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony borne at the proper time. (NASB95)

The incarnation provided the human race with a “kinsman redeemer” who is someone who pays a price to set someone free who is under bondage to another.

1 Corinthians 6:20a For you have been bought with a price. (NASB95)

There would be no high priest to represent the believer before God without the incarnation.

Hebrews 2:17 Therefore, He (the Lord Jesus Christ) had to be made like His brethren (incarnation) in all things, that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. (NASB95)

Hebrews 3:1 Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the Apostle and high priest of our confession. (NASB95)

Hebrews 4:14 Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. 15 For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need. (NASB95)

Hebrews 6:19 This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil, 20 where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek. (NASB95)

Hebrews 7:25 Therefore, He (the Lord Jesus Christ) is also able to save forever (eternal security) those who draw near to God through Him, since He
always lives to make intercession for them. 26 For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separate from sinners and exalted above the heavens; 27 who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people, because this He (the Lord Jesus Christ) did once for all when He offered Himself. (NASB95)

Hebrews 8:1 Now the main point in what has been said is this: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens. (NASB95)

Hebrews 9:24 For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; 25 nor was it that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the holy place year by year with blood not his own. 26 Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested (a reference to the incarnation) to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. 27 And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment, 28 so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him. (NASB95)

Jesus Christ functions as the believer’s “advocate” before the Father when the believer is accused by Satan. This ministry is connected to His great high priesthood.

1 John 2:1 My little children, I am writing these things to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. (NASB95)

“Advocate” is the word parakletos, which is a legal term used of “someone who assists or defends another who has been accused of something.”

Satan accuses the believer before the Father day and night. However, Jesus Christ intercedes for the believer and defends the believer against Satan’s accusations.

Revelation 12:10 “Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, who accuses them before our God day and night.” (NASB95)

Therefore, without the incarnation, the believer would have no advocate in heaven.

There would be no “new creation” without the incarnation.

2 Corinthians 5:17a Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature. (NASB95)
Ephesians 2:14 For He Himself (the Lord Jesus Christ) is our peace, who made both groups into one, and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, 15 by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, that in Himself (the Lord Jesus Christ) He might make the two (Jew and Gentile) into one new man, thus establishing peace. (NASB95)

There would be no one to sit upon David’s Throne without the incarnation.

Isaiah 9:7 “There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this.” (NASB95)

Luke 1:32 “He (the Lord Jesus Christ) will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of his father David.” (NASB95)

There would be no millennium without the incarnation.

Revelation 20:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshipped the beast (Anti-Christ) or his image, and had not received the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. (NASB95)

Revelation 20:6 Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him (the Lord Jesus Christ) for a thousand years. (NASB95)

There would be no manifestation of God to man without the incarnation.

John 1:18 No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God (the Lord Jesus Christ), who is in the bosom of the Father, He (the Lord Jesus Christ) has explained Him (the Father). (NASB95)

“Explained,” is the verb exegeomai, which means, “to lead out, to show the way to.” The Lord Jesus Christ “led, who God is, out into the open.” In other words, He explained or manifested through His words and actions the character and nature of the Father. The Lord Jesus Christ fully revealed who God is and made known the complete revelation of God to man.” Hence, He “explained” God to man.

John 10:30 “I and the Father are one.” (NASB95)

John 14:8 Philip said to Him (the Lord Jesus Christ), “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.” 9 Jesus said to him, “Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen me has seen the Father; how do you say, ‘show us the Father’?” (NASB95)

God’s love for mankind is revealed through the incarnation.
John 3:16 “For God so loved the world that He (God the Father) gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him (the Lord Jesus Christ) should not perish, but have eternal life.” (NASB95)

Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (NASB95)

1 John 3:16a We know love by this that He (the Lord Jesus Christ) laid down His life for us. (NASB95)

1 John 4:10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. (NASB95)

The prophecy of Moses that God would raise up a Man who would be a prophet like himself is fulfilled through the incarnation.

Deuteronomy 18:15 “The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, you shall listen to Him.” (NASB95)

Deuteronomy 18:18 “I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in His (the Lord Jesus Christ) mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. 19 And it shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which He (the Lord Jesus Christ) shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him.” (NASB95)

Matthew 17:5 While he (Peter) was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!” (NASB95)

John 7:16 “My teaching is not Mine, but His (God the Father) who sent Me.” (NASB95)

John 8:28b “I do nothing of My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me.” (NASB95)

John 12:47 “And if anyone hears My sayings, and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. 48 He who rejects Me, and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day. 49 For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me commandment, what to say, and what to speak. 50 I know that His commandment is eternal life; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me.” (NASB95)

The grace of God towards mankind was manifested through the incarnation.

John 1:17 For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. (NASB95)

Romans 5:15 But the free gift (Christ’s act of obedience to the Father’s will in going to the cross) is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression (Adam's sin) of the one (Adam) the many died (imputation of Adam's sin to
all members of the human race), much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many. (NASB95)

Titus 2:11 For the grace of God has appeared bringing salvation to all men. (NASB95)

The Humanity of Christ

The incarnation of the eternal Son of God resulted in of course, our Lord becoming a human being.


The Scriptures teach that the Lord Jesus Christ has a human body like ours but without a sin nature (John 1:14; Heb. 10:5; 1 John 1:1; 1 John 4:2-3), that He has a human soul (Matt. 26:38a; Isa. 53:11a) and a human spirit (Luke 23:46; John 13:21; 19:30). He did not have an old sin nature like every human being born in Adam because of the virgin birth. He did not have a sin nature because He did not have a human father (Luke 1:35). The father passes along the sin nature in the human race. However, our Lord did not have a human father since the Holy Spirit impregnated Mary. Therefore, Jesus Christ was totally free from the sin nature, which means He was perfect or flawless. He remained free from all three categories of sin in the human race: (1) Old sin nature (2) Adam’s original sin (3) Personal sins.

Therefore our Lord was found to be without sin in His humanity (John 8:46a; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 7:26; 1 Pet. 2:22; 1 John 3:5). He was tempted in all things as sinful humanity (Heb. 4:15). However, even though He was tempted to act and live independently from God the Father’s plan for His life, He never once sinned (Luke 4:1-4; Matt. 16:21-23). He even was tempted not to go to the cross (Luke 22:39-44).

The Word of God also testifies to the fact that our Lord performed the following human functions and suffered circumstances common to humanity. First of all He was said to have “wept” (John 11:35; Heb. 5:7). He “slept” (Mark 4:38) and became “hungry” (Luke 4:2). He was “thirsty” (John 19:28), “ate” and “drank” (Mark 2:16; Luke 5:30). The Scripture tells us He was “weary” (John 4:6) and was in “agony” (Luke 22:44). He had to “grow” physically and mentally (Luke 2:40) and had to “learn” the Scriptures (Luke 2:52). He also had to learn “obedience” (Heb. 5:7). Our Lord also “prayed” (Luke 21:41-42; Heb. 5:7). He also was “tempted” (Luke 4:2; Heb. 2:18; 4:15) and was a Man of “sorrows” (Isaiah 53:3).
He was “despised” and “forsaken” of men (Isaiah 53:3). He is also said to have “rejoiced” (Luke 10:21). He “died” physically (John 19:33) and “died” spiritually (Matt. 27:45-46).

Now, it must be remembered that the Scriptures teach that in His human nature, the Lord Jesus Christ, the God-Man was subordinate to the Father. However, in His deity, He is of course as we established in chapter two co-infinite, co-equal and co-eternal with both the Father and the Spirit.

The apostle John in his gospel and first epistle refutes Docetic Gnosticism, which denied the humanity of Christ.

**John 1:14 And the Word** (Jesus Christ) **became flesh** (a Man), and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only uniquely born One from the Father, full of grace and truth. (NASB95)

“Word” is the noun *logos*, which is used here in John 1:1 and 14 with reference to the Son of God and is used in this manner in 1 John 1:1. It emphasizes the deity of Christ. This word designates a distinct personality in the Trinity, namely the second person of the Trinity, the Son of God. The Word reveals God to men, thus He is the perfect and complete revelation of God. He is the perfect manifestation of the Trinity. The Word is the personal manifestation of deity and the life of the Trinity, which is eternal. The noun *logos*, “the Word” expresses Jesus Christ’s relationship to other members of the Trinity.

“Became” is the verb *ginomai*, which means, “to enter into a new condition or state, to become something you weren’t before,” thus the word is used of God the Son, the Word entering into the human condition through the virgin birth. This entrance into the human race as we noted in chapter three refers to the “incarnation” of the Son of God.

“Flesh” is the noun *sarx*, which refers to the human nature of Jesus Christ, which is how the word is used in many other passages in the Greek New Testament.

Therefore, the apostle John makes it absolutely clear in John 1:14 that the Son of God who is the eternal Word of the Father became something that He was not before, namely a human being. He clothed or veiled His deity with a sinless human nature.

In Romans 1:3-4, Paul identifies to his readers the subject of the epistle, who is the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Romans 1:1 Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, 2 which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures, 3 concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh.** (NASB95)

The phrase “His (God’s) Son” emphasizes the deity of our Lord.
“Who was born” is the verb *ginomai*, which means, “to enter into a new condition or state, to become something you weren’t before,” thus the word is used of God the Son entering into the human condition through the virgin birth.

The phrase “a descendant of David according to the flesh” emphasizes the human nature of Jesus Christ, which descended from King David. Together, this phrase and “His Son” express the uniqueness of Jesus Christ as the God-Man, which theologians define as the “hypostatic union” of Jesus Christ, which we will note in the next chapter.

“According to” is the preposition *kata*, which in context denotes the relationship between the human nature of Christ to His unique Person and means, “with respect to.”

Therefore, the expression “a descendant of David according to the flesh” could be translated “a descendant of David with respect to his human nature.”

Jesus Christ Himself echoes this statement by Paul.

Revelation 22:16 “I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.” (NASB95)

This is why He is identified in the Gospels as the “the Son of David” (Matt. 1:1; 20:30; Mark 10:47-48; Luke 1:32; 2 Tim. 2:8; Rev. 3:7; 5:5; 22:16), which is a royal title referring to the fact that He is the Ruler of Israel (Matt. 1:1; 20:30; Mark 10:47-48; Luke 1:32; 2 Tim. 2:8; Rev. 3:7; 5:5; 22:16).

The expression “a descendant of David according to the flesh” also is a reference to the “Davidic” covenant, which deals with the dynasty that will rule the nation of Israel. It refers to God’s promise to David that a descendant of his would sit on his throne forever, which will be literally fulfilled by Jesus Christ during His millennial reign. (See 2 Samuel 7:16; Psalm 89:34-37).

“Christ” is proper name *Christos*, which is a technical word designating the humanity of our Lord as the promised Savior for all mankind and signifies that He is unique as the incarnate Son of God and totally and completely guided and empowered by the Spirit as the Servant of the Father.

“Jesus” is the proper noun *Iesou*, which is the Greek spelling of the Hebrew word Jehoshua meaning, “Jehovah saves,” and refers to the perfect human nature of our Lord.

“Lord” is the noun *kurios*, which indicates the following: (1) Jesus of Nazareth’s equality with the Father and the Spirit. (2) His joint-rulership with the Father over the entire cosmos. (3) His highest ranking position as Chief Administrator in the divine government. (4) His absolute sovereign authority as Ruler over all creation and every creature. (5) His strategic victory over Satan and the kingdom of darkness in the angelic conflict.

In His deity, Jesus Christ is “Lord” (See Luke 20:42), however in His human nature He received this title as a result of His obedience to the Father’s will, which
called for Him to suffer spiritual death on the cross as a substitute for every member of the human race—past, present and future (See Philippians 2:5-11).

The apostle Paul’s teaching in Romans 8:3 supports the doctrine of the humanity of Jesus Christ.

Romans 8:3 For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh. (NASB95)

“In the likeness of” is composed of the preposition en, “in” and the dative neuter singular form of the noun homoioma, “the likeness of.”

Homoioma is “what is made similar, copy, like-shaped, likeness, image.” The stress lies on correspondence and similarity with the reference to the concrete, individual form. The word appears six times in the Greek New Testament (Rom. 1:23; 5:14; 6:5; 8:3; Phil. 2:7; Rev. 9:7). The noun is used to indicate something that is similar, though not necessarily identical, with something else, but resembles in some important way that with which it is compared.

In context, the word in Romans 8:3 is used of Jesus Christ’s humanity, which was similar to the rest of the human race but not identical since He was first of all, God and also He did not have a sin nature and was sinless because He did not have a human father that passed the sin nature down. Therefore, the noun homoioma indicates that Jesus Christ did not have a sin nature and implies He did not have a human father since the sin nature is passed down through sex.

Paul’s thought here is that the Son of God clothed or veiled His deity with a sinless human nature. The noun homoioma maintains the sinless or impeccability of Jesus Christ in the sense that in His human nature Jesus Christ was similar but not identical in essence to the rest of humanity in that He was not only God but also did not possess a sin nature and was therefore sinless.

In Romans 8:3, the noun homoioma functions as the object of the preposition en, which functions as a marker of a state or condition indicating that the Son of God was in the state or condition of being in the likeness of sinful humanity.

“In the flesh” is composed of the preposition en, “in” and the articular dative feminine singular form of the noun sarx, “the flesh.” As was the case in John 1:14 and Romans 1:3 and Romans 8:3, the noun sarx, “flesh” refers to the human nature of Jesus Christ.

The preposition en functions as a marker of means or the instrument employed by the Father to execute the judgment against the sin nature. The noun sarx is a “dative instrumental of means” indicating that the physical death of the human nature of Jesus Christ was the “means by which” the Father executed the sin nature. This indicates that the “physical death” of the impeccable human nature of Jesus Christ in hypostatic union was the “means by which” God executed the sin nature whereas His spiritual death dealt with the issue of personal sins.
In Romans 8:3, the apostle Paul is referring to the physical death of Jesus Christ, which the Christian was identified with through the baptism of the Spirit, which in turn delivers them or sets them free from the tyranny of the sin nature and real spiritual death.

The apostle Paul in Philippians 2:7-8 teaches that Jesus Christ is not only the Son of God but also a human being as well.

Philippians 2:6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. (NASB95)

“Being made” is the verb ginomai, which refers to the virgin birth when God the Son entered into a new condition, namely that of a human being. This word is used of acquiring or experiencing a new state, i.e., a human nature through physical birth. The verb means here to become something that you weren’t before. It means to acquire and experience an existence that you did not possess or experience before.

“In the likeness of men” is composed of the preposition en, “in” and the locative singular neuter noun homoioma, “likeness,” and the masculine plural genitive anthropos, “men.”

The preposition en is used here to denote a state of being or condition which God the Son entered into at the virgin birth.

We saw the noun homoioma in Romans 8:3 where it was used in the same way as here in Philippians 2:7. It is used of Jesus Christ’s humanity, which was similar to the rest of the human race but not identical since He was first of all, God and also He did not have a sin nature and was sinless because He did not have a human father that passed the sin nature down. Therefore, the noun homoioma indicates that Jesus Christ did not have a sin nature and implies He did not have a human father since the sin nature is passed down by the male through sex.

Again, Paul’s thought here in Philippians 2:7 as it was in Romans 8:3 is that the Son of God clothed or veiled His deity with a sinless human nature. The noun homoioma maintains the sinlessness or impeccability of Jesus Christ in the sense that in His human nature Jesus Christ was similar but not identical in essence to the rest of humanity in that He was not only God but also did not possess a sin nature and was therefore sinless. We will note in detail the impeccability of our Lord in chapter six.

Philippians 2:8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. (NASB95)

“In appearance” is the noun schema, which is used of Christ comprising everything in His human nature which strikes the senses, the figure, bearing, discourse, actions, manner of life, etc. The word refers to the appearance of His human nature. It signifies here His whole outward presentation to other men. So,
schema refers to the humanity of Christ that is to say His outward appearance, His behavior and conduct in the eyes of men, that which appealed to the senses of mankind.

“Man” is the noun anthropos and denotes that the eternal Son of God was a human being. The statement “He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” is a further indication that Jesus Christ was a human being since deity cannot die, only humanity can.

In 1 Timothy 3:16, Paul teaches that it was a common belief throughout the churches in the first century that the Son of God became a human being.

1 Timothy 3:16 By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness: He who was revealed in the flesh, was vindicated in the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory. (NASB95)

The statement “He who was revealed in the flesh” teaches that the Son of God was manifested in a human being, Jesus Christ. The phrase “was vindicated in the Spirit” denotes that Jesus Christ was proven to be the Son of God by the omnipotence of the Holy Spirit through His miracles and of course resurrection.

The Hypostatic Union

The Scriptural evidence is overwhelming that Jesus of Nazareth who is the Christ is both God and man forever. The two distinct natures, which as to their attributes differ significantly, were brought together into personal union, which will continue forever.

In theology or specifically Christology (the study of Christ), the term “hypostatic union” is used by theologians to describe the teaching of the Scriptures that Jesus Christ is undiminished deity and true sinless humanity in one person forever.

The word “hypostatic” is a Bible Word meaning that it is derived from the original language of Scripture (Heb. 1:3).

Hebrews 1:3 And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. (NASB95)

“Nature” is the noun hupostasis, which was a word that belonged to the realm of science and medicine, and has a variety of meanings in classical Greek and means “essence,” “nature” or “substance.”

Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary defines essence, “the properties or attributes by means of which something can be placed in its proper class or identified as being what it is.” The word essence refers the “nature of something.”
The doctrine of the hypostatic union teaches that our Lord’s divine nature and His human nature were united forever.

Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary defines the word union as, “an act or instance of uniting or joining two or more things into one.” To unite is to put together two things to form a single unit.

Jesus Christ unites in Himself, the essence or nature of God and the essence or nature of man. This union forms a new hupostasis, or “essence,” the hypostatic union, the God-Man. If we were to make the hypostatic union a mathematical equation, it would look like this: The nature of God + the nature of man = the hypostatic union.

The hypostatic union is the complete unique person of Christ. Therefore, the Lord Jesus Christ is the unique theanthropic person of the universe as Lewis Sperry Chafer declared.¹ He is different from the other members of the Trinity in that He is true humanity. He is different from the rest of humanity in that He is God and sinless. This makes our Lord the unique theanthropic person of the universe. There is no one like Him in the universe and there will never be someone like Him ever again.

Now, it must be remembered that the Scriptures teach that in His human nature, the Lord Jesus Christ, the God-Man was subordinate to the Father. However, in His deity, He is of course co-infinite, co-equal and co-eternal with both the Father and the Spirit. The New Testament emphatically teaches that in His person, Jesus of Nazareth who is the Christ was both God and man, which we established in chapters two and four respectively (John 1:14; Rom. 1:1-4; 8:3; 9:1-5; Phil. 2:5-11; Col. 1:19-22; 1 Tim. 3:16; Heb. 2:14; 1 John 1:1-4; 4:1-3; 2 John 7). Many of these passages such as Romans 1:3-4, 8:3, Philippians 2:6-11, John 1:14 and 1 John 1:1-3 make it clear that the eternal Son of God clothed and veiled His deity with a sinless human nature and became a human being.

The act of incarnation was not temporary but rather permanent according to the testimony of the Scriptures. His human body is now glorified in that it is a resurrected body, thus His human nature continues forever. Matthew 26:64, Mark 14:62 and Luke 22:69-70 make clear that Christ’s humanity will continue forever. The appearances of Christ after His resurrection also provide further evidence that His humanity will continue forever (Matthew 28:9; Luke 24:30-31, 39-43; John 20:17, 22, 27-28; Acts 1:1-11; 7:56). 1 John 2:1 teaches that He now sits at the right hand of the Father as the believer’s Advocate interceding for the believer when Satan accuses the believer (Compare Zechariah 3:1-7; Revelation 12:10). This is further evidence of the continuance of Christ’s humanity. Furthermore,

¹ Systemic Theology, volume 3, chapter 2, The Person of the Savior)
passages dealing with the rapture of the church in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17 and Philippians 3:20-21 make clear the continuance of Jesus Christ’s humanity. The many passages that deal with His Second Advent to terminate Daniel’s seventieth week make this clear as well (Zechariah 12; 14:1-9; Romans 11:25-27; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; 2:8; 2 Peter 3:3-4; Jude 14-15; Revelation 1:7-8; 2:25-28; 16:15; 19:11-21).

The term “hypostatic union” means that deity and true humanity are combined in one personality, forever and that personality is Jesus Christ. He did not have two personalities because He had two natures. Because He is a man does not make our Lord less than God. Nor, does His being God prevent Him from being truly a man. The integrity of the attributes of His divine nature, were not corrupted or compromised by the fact that His divine nature was united permanently with a human nature. Nor were the integrity of the attributes of His human nature corrupted or compromised by the fact that He was God.

His two natures, though united, retain their separate identities. There was no mixture of His divine nature with that of His human nature. His divine attributes are always united to His divine nature. His human attributes are always united to His human nature. Deity remains deity and humanity remains humanity. The infinite cannot become finite and the immutable cannot be changed. No attribute of deity was altered when our Lord became a man through the incarnation. The same holds true when He died on the cross. To take away a single attribute from His divine nature would destroy His deity. To take away from His perfect human nature a single attribute would destroy His humanity.

Walvoord writes, “Though Christ sometimes operated in the sphere of His humanity and in other cases in the sphere of His deity, in all cases what He did and what He was could be attributed to His one person. Even though it is evident that there were two natures in Christ, He is never considered a dual personality. The normal pronouns such as I, You and He are used of Him frequently.”

The two natures of Christ are not only united without affecting the attributes of the two natures but they are also combined in one person. As Charles Hodge writes, “The Son of God did not unite Himself with a human person but with a human nature.”

The hypostatic union is “eternal,” which means “no beginning, and no end.” Christ as eternal God will never cease to be a member of the human race (Heb. 13:8). Our Lord in His deity always existed.

The attributes of His divine nature are never attributed to the attributes of His human nature. However, the attributes of both natures are properly attributed to his

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2 Jesus Christ our Lord, page 112
person. Thus, there seems to be a contradiction. Our Lord could be weak and yet omnipotent. He increased in knowledge yet He was omniscient. He was finite yet infinite. These qualities of course are traced to their respective natures.

Walvoord commenting on the relationship between the two natures of our Lord, writes, “One of the difficult aspects of the relationship of the two natures of Christ is that, while the attributes of one nature are never attributed to the other, the attributes of both natures are properly attributed to His person. Thus, Christ at the same moment has seemingly contradictory qualities. He can be weak and omnipotent, increasing in knowledge and omniscient, finite and infinite. These qualities can, of course, be traced to their corresponding nature but, as presented in Scripture, a variety of treatment can be observed. At least these seven classifications of this aspect of the truth can be observed in what is called the communion of attributes: (1) Some attributes are true of His whole person such as the titles Redeemer, Prophet, Priest and King. As Redeemer, Christ is both Man and God, both natures being essential to this function. It is therefore an attribute or characteristic true of His whole person. (2) Some attributes are true only of Deity, but the whole person is the subject. In some cases, the person of Christ is related to an attribute peculiar to the divine nature. For instance, Christ said: ‘Before Abraham was, I am’ (John 8:58) - The whole person is the subject, but the attribute of eternity applies only to the divine nature. It is possible, however, to say of the person of the incarnate Christ that His person is eternal even though humanity was added in time. (3) Some attributes are true only of humanity, but the whole person is the subject. In contrast to John 8:58, in some cases attributes true only of His humanity are mentioned but the whole person is in view. On the cross Christ said: ‘I thirst’ (John 19:28). The statement can be attributed only to the human nature, but the whole person is involved. This type of reference disappears after His resurrection and ascension and the resulting freedom from the limitations of His earthly life. (4) The person may be described according to divine nature but the predicate of the human nature. A seeming contradiction is sometimes found when the person of Christ is described according to His divine nature, but that which is predicated is an attribute of the human nature. An illustration is afforded in the revelation of Christ in glory in Revelation 1:12.18 where the deity of Christ is in evidence. Yet Christ is revealed as the One who ‘was dead’ (v. 18), an attribute possible only for the humanity of Christ. (5) The person may be described according to human nature but the predicate of the divine nature. In John 6:62 (ASV) the significant statement occurs: ‘What then if ye should behold the Son of man ascending where he was before?’ The title ‘Son of man’ describes Christ according to His human nature, but the predicate of ascending up where He was before could have reference only to the divine nature. (6) The person may be described according to the divine nature, but the predicate of both natures.
According to John 5:25-27, Christ as the Son of God spoke to those who were spiritually dead, and those who heard lived. As the Son of man, however, Christ is said to execute judgment in the future. Hence, Christ is described as the Son of God, but the predicate of speaking can be attributed to both natures as demonstrated by the fact that the human nature is specifically mentioned as in view in the future judgment. (7) The person may be described according to human nature but the predicate of both natures. According to John 5:27 mentioned above, Christ will judge the world as One possessing both human and divine natures. Another example is found in Matthew 27:46 where Christ said: ‘My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?’ Christ was speaking from the viewpoint of His human nature in His prophetic cry, addressing His Father as His God, but the pronoun ‘me’ seems to refer to both natures or His whole person. Christ was being judicially forsaken because He was bearing the sin of the world. It was not simply the divine nature forsaking the human nature as some have held.”

The Lord Jesus Christ was always aware of His deity and humanity. He was always aware in Himself with respect to His deity and He grew in self-consciousness with respect to His humanity. There was no point in the life of our Lord when He suddenly became aware that He was the Son of God. His divine self-consciousness was always fully operative when He was an infant in the arms of Mary and this was the case as a mature adult. However, it is clear from the Scriptures that His human nature developed. There was a corresponding development of His human self-consciousness as His human nature developed. Therefore, our Lord had a divine and human self-consciousness. However, there was never any conflict between the two. Sometimes He spoke and acted from His divine self-consciousness and other times from His human self-consciousness. The Gospels make clear that Jesus Christ’s divine consciousness was expressed in both His words and actions.

Our Lord was conscious that not only was He the Son of God but also a King and that He was the fulfillment of the Old Testament Messianic promises and key to the fulfillment of the promises contained in the four unconditional covenants to Israel (Abrahamic (Gen. 12:1-3; 13:16; 22:15-18; 26:4; 28:14; 35:11; Ex. 6:2-8); Palestinian (Gen. 13:15; Ex. 6:4, 8; Num. 34:1-12; Deut. 30:1-9; Jer. 32:36-44; Ezek. 36:21-38); Davidic (2 Sam. 7:8-17; Ps. 89:20-37); New (Jer. 31:31-34; cf. Heb. 8:8-12; 10:15-17). Jesus Christ was also conscious of being omnipotent and that He was the promised Savior of the world.

The question arises that since Christ had a divine and human nature, did each nature have a corresponding “will”? In order to answer this question, we must define “will.” If we speak of “will” in terms of a desire, then it is clear that there

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3 Jesus Christ our Lord, pages 116-118
would be conflicting desires in the divine and human natures of Christ. However, if by will we mean volition then we know that one person can have only one will. As we noted earlier from Charles Hodge, “The Son of God did not unite Himself with a human person but with a human nature.”

The mark of personhood whether of an angel, a man or God Himself is that of volition. Volition does not help to compose the divine nature or human nature or the nature of angels since it is not unique to the nature of God, the nature of man or the nature angels for that matter. God has a volition and men and angels do. Therefore, when we speak of our Lord having a human nature, or that He has human attributes, we are not including volition since it is not unique to the divine nature, or human nature or angelic nature for that matter rather it is the mark of personhood.

Therefore, our Lord had only one volition but yet clothed His divine nature with human attributes that do not include volition since again volition does not help to compose the divine nature, human nature or angelic nature but rather helps to constitute personhood. Thus, when the Son of God became a man, He did not attach Himself to another human being or add a human will since He was already a person but rather He clothed His divine nature with the attributes of a human being.

We also must not confuse God’s volition with His attribute of sovereignty though they are obviously related to each other. The term “sovereignty” connotes a situation in which a person, from his innate dignity, exercises supreme power, with no areas of his province outside his jurisdiction.

As applied to God, the term “sovereignty” indicates His complete power over all of creation, so that He exercises His volition or will absolutely, without any necessary conditioning by a finite will (volition) or wills (volitions). Therefore, God exercises His volition absolutely without any necessary conditioning by the volition of His creatures whether men or angels, which constitutes His sovereignty over them.

Therefore, Jesus Christ did not have two volitions but rather one, namely, the volition that is related to His divine nature. When the Son of God clothed His divine nature with a human nature, this did not include a human volition since the implication of that would be that the Son of God attached Himself to another person.

Our Lord praying in the Garden of Gethsemane demonstrates the exercise of His sovereign will in relation to His human nature’s desire to not lose fellowship with the Father by experiencing a substitutionary spiritual death.

Luke 22:39 And He came out and proceeded as was His custom to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples also followed Him. 40 When He arrived at the place, He said to them, “Pray that you may not enter into temptation.” 41
And He withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and began to pray, 42 saying, “Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done.” Now an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him. (NASB95)

The “cup” that our Lord refers to in His prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane refers to not only His physical sufferings but also His substitutionary spiritual death, which is recorded in Matthew 27:46.

Matthew 27:46 About the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “ELI, ELI, LAMA SABACHTHANI?’ that is, ‘MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?’” (NASB95)

“Spiritual death” means that our Lord in His perfect human nature “lost fellowship with God the Father” during those last three hours on the Cross. His spiritual death was “unique” in that He suffered spiritual death as a “sinless” human being whereas every member of the human race suffers spiritual death the moment they are born into the world.

Our Lord’s spiritual death was “voluntary” in that our Lord in His impeccable humanity “chose” to lose fellowship with His Father during those last three hours of darkness upon the Cross because He loved the entire world.

In our Lord’s deity, His fellowship with the Father and the Spirit was “never” broken at any time. However, in His perfect human nature He suffered temporarily loss of fellowship with the Father so that all of sinful mankind might not be separated forever from God. The person of the Son of God was able to experience spiritual and physical death as well as being resurrected through His sinless human nature.

In His human nature, our Lord’s desire was to avoid losing fellowship with His Father. It was natural for the sinless human nature of Christ to desire to avoid this as it was in keeping with His divine nature’s desire to avoid being judged for sin. However, the will or more accurately the desire of the Father was that Christ would die both a substitutionary spiritual and physical death on the cross in order to provide salvation for all men and this our Lord did willingly. This desire of the Father was not hindered or prevented from being fulfilled by the function of the volition of men or angels.

The union of Christ’s divine and human natures are related to His acts as an incarnate person. Though His divine nature was immutable, His human nature could suffer and learn through experience so that as a result the person of Christ with two natures came into new experiences. The Son of God came into a new experience of suffering by becoming a human being.

The voluntary substitutionary spiritual and physical deaths of Christ on the cross were based on the hypostatic union. The act of Christ redeeming sinners through His substitutionary spiritual and physical deaths on the cross was an act of
His whole person in that these deaths originated from both natures and not merely to the human nature alone or divine nature.

As a human being Christ could die spiritually and physically but only as God could these deaths have infinite value, sufficient to redeem sinners. Thus the substitutionary spiritual and physical deaths of Christ have eternal and infinite value because they were experienced and suffered by the divine-human person. They have value because of who He is as a person, the Son of God.

Our Lord’s great high priesthood is also based upon the hypostatic union. In order to be our great high priest, He had to be both God and man. As a man, he could act as human priest and as God this priesthood could be forever after the order of Melchizedek. Thus, He could be the mediator between God and man because of His hypostatic union. As a man, his priesthood could sympathize with the human experience (Hebrews 4:15) but as God, He was assured of always being heard by the Father.

Our Lord’s office as a prophet was based as well on having two natures since it was God’s purpose to reveal Himself through a man, which required God becoming a human being (John 1:18). His office as King depends on both the divine and human natures since the Davidic covenant, which promised that a descendant of David’s would sit on his throne forever could not be fulfilled unless God become a human being.

**Impeccability of Christ**

The Scriptures clearly teach that Jesus Christ never committed an act of sin and neither did He possess a sin nature.

**John 8:46a** “Which one of you convicts Me of sin?” (NASB95)

**2 Corinthians 5:21** “He (Christ) who never knew sin experientially (Christ was impeccable), on behalf of us (as our Substitute), was made (the representative of) sin in order that we might become the very righteousness of God in Him. (Author’s translation)

**Hebrews 4:15** For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. (NASB95)

**Hebrew 7:26** For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens. (NASB95)

**1 Peter 1:19** But with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ. (NASB95)

**1 Peter 2:22** Who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth. (NASB95)
1 John 3:5 And you know that He appeared in order to take sins; and in Him there is no sin. (NASB95)

Most orthodox theologians agree that Jesus Christ never committed an act of sin. Walvoord writes, “This seems to be a natural corollary to His deity and an absolute prerequisite to His work of substitution on the cross. Any affirmation of moral failure on the part of Christ requires a doctrine of His person which would deny in some sense His absolute deity” (The Person and Work of Christ Part VII, The Impeccability of Christ).

There has been debate regarding whether the sinlessness of Christ was the same as that of Adam before the fall or whether it possessed a unique character because of His divine nature. Could the Son of God be tempted as Adam was tempted and could He have sinned as Adam sinned? Was there any potential of Him sinning once? Most theologians who are orthodox agree that Christ could be tempted because of the presence of a human nature, but there is great division as to whether being tempted He could have sinned or was there the potential of Him ever sinning.

The term used to describe the teaching that there was a potential that Christ could sin is called “peccability.” The term used to designate that there was never any potential of Christ sinning is called the “impeccability” of Christ.

Both positions are in agreement that Christ did not sin. Both contend that Jesus Christ is infinite and eternal God (John 1:1-2; John 8:58; 10:30a; Col. 2:9a; Rev. 1:8). They both agree that in His Deity, Jesus Christ always occupied a place of equality and fellowship with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. They both agree that as God, He is equal with the Father (John 10:30, 37-38; 14:9; 17:5, 24-25).

Both views are in agreement that He has the same divine essence as God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. They agree that our Lord possesses all the attributes of deity: (1) Sovereignty (Matt. 28:18a; Col. 2:10b). (2) Perfect righteousness (John 8:46a; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 7:26; 1 Pet. 2:22; 1 John 2:21b). (3) Justice (John 8:16a; 2 Tim. 4:8; Ps. 9:8; Deut. 32:4; Rev. 15:3b). (4) Love (John 13:34; Rom. 5:8; Eph. 3:19; 1 John 4:9-10). (5) Eternal life (1 Tim. 1:17; 1 John 5:11). (6) Omniscience (Luke 11:17; John 2:24-25; John 6:64). (7) Omnipresence (Matt. 18:20; Prov. 15:3) (8) Omnipotence (1 Cor. 1:23-24; Rev. 1:8). (9) Immutability (Heb. 13:8). (10) Veracity (John 1:14; 14:6a).

Both views are in agreement that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe (Col. 1:16-17), that He has authority to forgive sins (Matt. 9:6). They agree that the Lord Jesus Christ has the power to raise the dead (John 5:21; 6:40) and that all judgment belongs to Him (John 5:22), and that He receives worship from both men and angels (Ps. 99:5; Phil. 2:10; Rev. 5:13-14).
Both views agree that the Lord Jesus Christ has a human body like ours but without a sin nature (John 1:14; Heb. 10:5; 1 John 1:1; 1 John 4:2-3), that He has a human soul (Matt. 26:38a; Isa. 53:11a) and a human spirit (Luke 23:46; John 13:21; 19:30).

In regards to our Lord’s humanity, both the peccable and impeccable view are in agreement that our Lord was totally free from sin, which means He was perfect or flawless. They both agree that Christ remained free from all three categories of sin in the human race: (1) Old sin nature (2) Adam’s original sin (3) Personal sins.

These two views are in agreement that because of the virgin birth our Lord did not have an old sin nature like every human being born in Adam. They agree that He did not have an old sin nature because He did not have a human father (Luke 1:35). The peccability view and the impeccability view both agree that the Lord Jesus Christ was found to be without sin in His humanity (John 8:46a; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 7:26; 1 Pet. 2:22; 1 John 3:5). They agree that in His humanity that our Lord was tempted in all things as sinful humanity (Heb. 4:15). They agree that in His humanity, He was tempted to act and live independently from God the Father’s plan for His life (Luke 4:1-4; Matt. 16:21-23) and that He was tempted not to go to the cross (Luke 22:39-44).

Therefore, both views are in agreement that our Lord did not sin, but the peccability view contends that He could have sinned. They say that there was a potential of Him sinning. While on the other hand, the impeccability view contends that our Lord could never have sinned meaning there was absolutely no potential of Him ever sinning once because He is the Son of God.

The impeccability position has been challenged. Can an impeccable person be tempted in any proper sense? Since Christ had a human nature that was subject to temptation, does this mean that He could have sinned? The point of view of those who believe that Christ could have sinned is expressed by Charles Hodge, he writes, “This sinlessness of our Lord, however, does not amount to absolute impeccability. It was not a non potest peccare. If He was a true man, He must have been capable of sinning. That He did not sin under the greatest provocations; that when He was reviled He blessed; when He suffered He threatened not; that He was dumb as a sheep before its shearers, is held up to us as an example. Temptation implies the possibility of sin. If from the constitution of his person it was impossible for Christ to sin, then his temptation was unreal and without effect and He cannot sympathize with his people.”

John Walvoord makes the following comment in response to Hodge, he writes, “The problem that Hodge raises is very real, and, judging by our own experience,

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4 Charles Hodge, Systematic Theology, II, 457
temptation is always associated with peccability. Hodge, however, assumes certain points in his argument which are subject to question. In order to solve the problem as to whether Christ is peccable, it is necessary, first of all, to examine the character of temptation itself to ascertain whether peccability is inevitably involved in any real temptation and, second, to determine the unique factor in Christ, i.e., that He had two natures, one a divine nature and the other a sinless human nature. It is generally agreed by those who hold that Christ did not commit sin that He had no sin nature. Whatever temptation could come to Him, then, would be from without and not from within. Whatever may have been the natural impulses of a sinless nature which might have led to sin if not held in control, there was no sin nature to suggest sin from within and form a favorable basis for temptation. It must be admitted by Hodge, who denies impeccability, that in any case the temptation of Christ is different than that of sinful men. Not only is there agreement on the fact that Christ had no sin nature, but it is also agreed on the other hand, that as to His person He was tempted. This is plainly stated in Hebrews: ‘For we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin’ (4:15). It is also clear that this temptation came to Christ in virtue of the fact that He possessed a human nature, as James states: ‘Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempteth no man’ (1:13). On the one hand, Christ was tempted in all points except through that of a sin nature, and on the other hand His divine nature could not be tempted because God cannot be tempted. While His human nature is temptable, His divine nature is not temptable. On these points all can agree. The question is, then, can such a person as Christ is, possessing both human and divine natures, be tempted if He is impeccable? The answer must be in the affirmative. The question is simply, is it possible to attempt the impossible? To this all would agree. It is possible for a rowboat to attack a battleship, even though it is conceivably impossible for the rowboat to conquer the battleship. The idea that temptability implies susceptibility is unsound. While the temptation may be real, there may be infinite power to resist that temptation and if this power is infinite, the person is impeccable. It will be observed that the same temptation which would be easily resisted by one of sound character may be embraced by one of weak character. The temptation of a drunken debauch would have little chance of causing one to fall who had developed an abhorrence of drink, while a habitual drunkard would be easily led astray. The temptation might be the same in both cases, but the ones tempted would have contrasting powers of resistance. It is thus demonstrated that there is no essential relation between temptability and peccability. Hodge’s viewpoint that temptation must be unreal if the person tempted is impeccable is, therefore, not accurate.
Temptability depends upon a constitutional susceptibility to sin, whereas impeccability depends upon omnipotent will not to sin.\(^5\)

The doctrine of the impeccability of Christ acknowledges the reality of the temptations of Christ due to the fact that our Lord had a human nature which was temptable. Our Lord might have sinned if His human nature had not been sustained by His divine person, nature and sovereign will.

Adam sinned because he was not sustained by divine power, nor did he have a divine nature to sustain him of course. However, there is absolutely no possibility or potential that Christ could have sinned since He was infinite and eternal God, having a divine nature and also having a sinless human nature as well.

The concept of peccability in the person of Christ is refuted by the attributes of immutability and omnipotence. For example, the immutability of Christ (Hebrews 13:8) supports the impeccability of Christ in the sense that since Christ was infinite and eternal God in eternity past, it is absolutely essential that this divine attribute as well His others be preserved unchanged eternally. Therefore, our Lord must be impeccable since He is immutable. It is ridiculous to think that God could sin in eternity past, thus, it was impossible for God to sin in the person of Christ incarnate. The nature of His person forbids susceptibility to sin. To say that He could have sinned, you would have to separate the deity of Christ from His humanity.

Also, the omnipotence of Christ makes it impossible for Him to sin. We must remember that peccability always implies weakness on the part of the one tempted in the sense that He is weak to the extent that He can sin. However, with our Lord, this was impossible. It is true that if the human nature of Christ was left to itself, He would have been both peccable and temptable, but since His human nature was permanently united to an omnipotent divine nature, this made our Lord impeccable. The infinite quality of our Lord’s omnipotence makes it clear that Christ is impeccable.

The debate surrounding peccability and impeccability is easily resolved by an accurate understanding from the Scriptures of the Person of Christ and the nature of His testings. As we have noted in chapter two, the Bible teaches that Jesus Christ is infinite and eternal God (John 1:1-2; John 8:58; 10:30a; Col. 2:9a; Rev. 1:8). In His Deity, He always occupied a place of equality and fellowship with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. The Lord Jesus Christ as God was equal with the Father (John 10:30, 37-38; 14:9; 17:5, 24-25). Therefore, as to His divine nature, there is no inherent propensity for Him to sin. In other words, there is nothing in the divine nature of Christ that could incite Him to sin. No temptation of

\(^5\) The Person and Work of Jesus Christ Part VII: The Impeccability of Christ
Satan would be attractive to Him since His divine nature would be repulsed by anything that contradicted or rejected the will of the Father.

**James 1:13a When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil. (NASB95)**

As we noted, our Lord is a human being. The Word of God teaches that He had a human body and now has resurrected human body. The difference between Jesus Christ and the human race is that He did not have a sin nature resident in the genetic structure of His human body (John 1:14; Heb. 10:5; 1 John 1:1; 1 John 4:2-3). Unlike the human race, Christ did not have a sin nature and thus did not have an inherent propensity to sin like we do!

Therefore, since Jesus Christ is fully human, yet without a sin nature, as to His human nature, there was no inherent propensity to sin just as there was no inherent propensity to sin in His divine nature. In other words, there was nothing in His human nature that would incite Him to sin because He did not have a sin nature.

Thus, if there was nothing in both His divine and human natures that could incite Him to sin or tempt Him to sin, then, there could have been no possibility whatsoever, that Christ could have sinned. There was nothing in His divine nature that would be attracted to the temptations of the devil and likewise there was nothing in His human nature that would be attracted to those temptations since He did not have a sin nature.

The temptations that the Lord’s human nature had undergone were from without. However, those temptations unlike the first Adam did not incite in Him anything that could cause Him to sin since there was nothing in both His divine and human natures that would be enticed to sin or attracted to the temptations of the devil. Jesus Christ could always bring to bear His divine omnipotence that is inherent in His deity to withstand any temptations.

There are some in Christianity who argue that God would be unfair to Satan in his appeal trial if there was no possibility for Christ to sin. However, this view is based upon a misunderstanding of God’s holiness, His justice and righteousness.

Matthew 25:41 teaches that God sentenced Satan to the Lake of Fire for his rebellion. God would have been fair if He executed that sentence. However, in His grace, He did not as evidenced by the fact that Satan is the god of the world according to 2 Corinthians 4:4 and that he deceives the entire world according to 1 John 5:19 and Revelation 12:10.

To say that God would have been unfair to Satan if there was no possibility for Christ to sin fails to recognize that God would have been fair to execute Satan’s sentence immediately. The fact that God did not execute the sentence immediately indicates that God was operating in grace towards Satan. To say that in order to be fair to Satan that there had to be a possibility that Christ could sin is to call into question God’s justice and righteousness, His integrity since God did not have to
prove His fairness to His creatures since He would have been fair in the first place to execute Satan’s sentence immediately.

What God was doing for Satan and the angels was demonstrating His grace and love towards them by not executing their sentence immediately. Therefore, the argument that it would have been unfair to Satan if there was no possibility of Christ sinning is a faulty argument that in fact attacks God’s integrity and character.

Also, the fact that Christ did die on the Cross for sinners in obedience to the Father’s will demonstrated the righteousness of God itself and that God is integrity (Romans 3:21-26; 5:6-8)! To say that God demonstrated His integrity through the potential of Christ sinning is without Scriptural basis. However, the fact that Christ dying on the Cross for sinners demonstrated God’s justice and righteousness does have wealth of Scripture to support it.

The Work of Jesus Christ

The Need for Repentance and Jesus Christ’s Death

The Lord Jesus Christ’s substitutionary spiritual and physical deaths on the cross provided the forgiveness of sins for sinful mankind. Faith in Him appropriates what our Lord’s deaths accomplished on the cross. This faith appropriates therefore, the forgiveness of sins.

There are many reasons why there is a need for sinful human beings to repent and inextricably tied to this is the reason why Jesus Christ had to suffer crucifixion and spiritual and physical death on the cross. He had to suffer because the entire human race was in desperate need of deliverance from eternal condemnation, condemnation from the Law, spiritual and physical death, the sin nature, personal sins and enslavement to Satan and his cosmic system. This is why God commands the non-believer to repent by trusting in Jesus Christ as their Savior.

The Lord Jesus Christ, through His human nature, suffered a spiritual and physical death on the cross, as a substitute for each and every member of the human race-past, present and future. These substitutionary deaths dealt with all these problems facing sinful humanity. Sinners appropriated this deliverance by exercising faith alone in Jesus Christ alone.

Through the function of human volition, the sin nature produces personal sin, mental, verbal and overt acts of sin. Spiritual death is the direct result of Adam’s original sin in the Garden of Eden. His progeny, namely the human race are now sinners by nature because of his disobedience. His sin not only plunged him into spiritual death but also his progeny which results in physical death and ultimately
eternal condemnation. Therefore, in order to solve these problems of the human race, our Lord had to suffer these deaths as a substitute for sinful humanity.

The Scriptures teach that salvation is deliverance from eternal condemnation. It is also a deliverance from being condemned by the Law. Furthermore, it is a deliverance from real spiritual death, the sin nature, personal sins, the devil and his cosmic system.

At the moment of their conversion or we can say justification the Christian was delivered from all these things in a positional sense. They initially experience this deliverance at their conversion but lose this experience as a result of committing sin. This problem is resolved by the confession of sin (1 John 1:9) which restores the Christian to experiencing their deliverance. This is maintained by obedience to the Word of God. Thus, the Christian can experience this deliverance in time through fellowship. They will experience this deliverance in a perfective sense when they receive their resurrection body at the rapture of the church.

*The Sin Nature*

The Bible teaches that each and every member of the human race is a sinner by nature as well as by practice.

**Ecclesiastes 7:20** There is not a righteous man on earth who does what is right and never sins. (NASB95)

**Galatians 3:22** But the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe. (NASB95)

The Bible teaches that every person born into the world without exception received the imputation of Adam’s original sin in the Garden of Eden and the nature of Adam. This nature is always disobedient to God and making them all physically alive but spiritually dead, having no capacity whatsoever to have a relationship with God.

The first man, Adam, brought sin and death into the human race resulting in a curse whereas the “Last Adam,” Jesus Christ, brought life and blessing to the human race and so therefore, the entire human race boils down to these two men.

**1 Corinthians 15:22** For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. (NASB95)

**Romans 5:12** Therefore, based on this (principle), just as, through one man, the sin nature entered into the human race so that spiritual death entered through this sin nature. Thus, in this manner, spiritual death spread to each and every member of the human race without exception because each and every member of the human race sinned (the moment Adam sinned). 13 For you see, prior to the giving of the Law, personal sin was habitually taking
place among the individual members of the human race however personal sin is never, as an eternal spiritual truth, charged to one’s account while the Law does not exist. 14 Yet, in spite of this, spiritual death reigned as king from the fall of Adam to the giving of the Law to Moses, specifically, over those who had not sinned according to the same exact transgression committed by Adam, who is, as an eternal spiritual truth, an illustration of the One destined to come. 15 However, on the other hand, absolutely not like this transgression is, as an eternal spiritual truth, also, in the same way, the gracious act. For if and let us assume that it is true for the sake of argument that by means of this transgression committed by the one, the entire human race died. Of course, we know this is true. How much more then has the grace originating from God and the gracious gift on the basis of grace, which is specifically, on the basis of the obedience of the one Man, who is Jesus, who is the Christ been generously and graciously offered to the entire human race. 16 In fact, the condemnation through the one who sinned is absolutely not, as an eternal spiritual truth, like the gift itself. On the one hand the verdict arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation while on the other hand, the gracious act arose from innumerable transgressions resulting in justification. 17 For if, and let us assume that it is true for the sake of argument that by means of the transgression committed by the one, spiritual death reigned as king through this one. Of course, we know this is true. Then, how much more those who do receive His transcendent grace, specifically, the gracious gift, which is His righteousness, will, as a certainty, reign as kings by means of life through the One, who is Jesus, who is the Christ. 18 Therefore, as previously stated, just as through the one who committed the transgression resulted in condemnation affecting each and every member of the human race without exception in the same way also through the One who committed the righteous act resulted in the basis for the offer of justification, which produces (eternal) life, affecting each and every member of the human race without exception. 19 For you see, just as through the one man’s disobedience, the entire human race has been rendered sinners in the same way also through the One’s obedience, many will, as a certainty, be rendered righteous. 20 Now, the Law was an addendum in order that the transgression might increase but where personal sin increased, grace infinitely abounded. 21 In order that just as, the sin nature reigned as king in the realm of spiritual death in the same way, also grace would reign as king through righteousness resulting in eternal life through Jesus, who is the Christ, who is our Lord. (Author’s translation)

Because of the imputation of Adam’s original sin to the genetically formed old sin nature, every member of the human race is born physically alive but spiritually dead. Adam’s original sin plus Adam’s sin nature equals “spiritual death,” which
means that every member of the human race is separated from God and has absolutely no capacity to have a relationship with God who is holy. This is what we call in theology “real spiritual death” meaning that Adam’s original sin is imputed to the genetically formed old sin nature, thus, the need for everyone to become born-again by believing on the Lord Jesus. The Lord taught in John 8:34 that the human race is enslaved to sin and that only He could set them free.

John 8:34 Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. 35 The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever. 35 So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.” (NASB95)

The book of Genesis and the book of Romans both teach that the sin nature entered the human race through Adam’s original sin in the Garden of Eden when he disobeyed the divine prohibition to not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The apostle Paul in Romans 5:12-21 gives us an extensive treatment of the origins of the sin nature and its consequences and how God has dealt with it.

Romans 5:12 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned. (NASB95)

The prepositional phrase “through one man” is composed of the preposition dia, “through” and the genitive masculine singular form of the cardinal number heis, “one,” which is followed by the genitive masculine singular form of the noun anthropos, “man.”

This prepositional phrase parallels the prepositional phrase that appears at the end of Romans 5:11, “through whom we have now received this reconciliation.”

The noun anthropos signifies a member of the human race without reference to sex or racial background and is equivalent to “a person.”

The cardinal number heis functions as an adjective modifying the noun anthropos, thus the word is describing a particular human being.

The genitive expression henos anthropou, “one man” is an obvious reference to the first man, Adam, as indicated in that Paul states in Romans 5:12 that sin entered the world through this one man, which Genesis 3:1-14 identifies as Adam.

The preposition dia is used with the genitive form of these two words as a marker of personal intermediate agency. This indicates that the first man, Adam, was the personal intermediate agency by whom the first act of sin entered the world. Although, Adam’s wife actually committed the first sin, Adam is mentioned here since he was in authority over his wife and thus responsible for his wife.

“Sin” is the articular nominative feminine singular form of the noun hamartia, which refers to the sin nature that through the function of human volition produces personal sins.
The noun *hamartia* is not in the plural but rather in the singular and is articular indicating the sin nature is in view rather than personal sins. In other words, the word in the singular emphasizes sin as an entity and not sins in general. The noun refers to the inherent propensity in mankind to commit acts of mental, verbal and overt acts of sin.

In fact, the sin nature is being personified as indicated by the fact that Paul teaches that sin “reigns” (5:20; cf. 6:13-14), it can be “obeyed” (6:16-17), it pays wages (6:23), it seizes opportunities (7:8, 11), it “deceives” and “kills” (7:11, 13).

“Personification” is the ascribing of human characteristics or actions to inanimate objects or ideas or to animals. Paul is ascribing the human actions of reigning, obeying, paying wages, seizing opportunities, deceiving and killing to the sin nature.

In Romans 3:9 and 20, the noun *hamartia* is also used with reference to the sin nature.

**Romans 3:9** What shall we conclude then? Are we (Christians) as an eternal spiritual truth, superior? By no means, absolutely not! Since, we have already previously indicted both Jew and Greek, with the result that each and every one is under the power of the sin nature. (Author’s translation)

**Romans 3:20** Because each and every member of sinful humanity will never be justified in His judgment by means of actions produced by obedience to the Law for through the Law there does come about an awareness of the sin nature. (Author’s translation)

Now, Romans 1:18-3:20 teaches that the each and every member of the human race without exception, both Jew and Gentile are sinners by practice. In Romans 5:12-21, Paul teaches that they are also sinners by nature due to the fact that they are under both the “federal” and “semenial” headship of Adam.

Romans 5:12-21 and other passages of Scripture teach that every person born into the world without exception received the imputation of Adam’s original sin in the Garden of Eden and the nature of Adam. This nature of Adam is always disobedient to God and making them all physically alive but spiritually dead, having no capacity whatsoever to have a relationship with God.

**Romans 8:8** and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. (NASB95)

The first man, Adam, brought sin and death into the human race resulting in a curse whereas the “Last Adam,” Jesus Christ, brought life and blessing to the human race and so therefore, the entire human boils down to these two men.

**1 Corinthians 15:22** For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. (NASB95)

**1 Corinthians 15:45** So also it is written, “The first MAN, Adam, BECAME A LIVING SOUL.” The last Adam {became} a life-giving spirit. (NASB95)
Romans 5:12 teaches that because of the imputation of Adam’s original sin to the genetically formed old sin nature, every member of the human race is born physically alive but spiritually dead. This is why David writes that he was brought forth in iniquity and sin his mother conceived him.

Psalm 51:1 Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; According to the greatness of Your compassion blot out my transgressions. 2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. 3 For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. 4 Against You, You only, I have sinned and done what is evil in Your sight, so that You are justified when You speak and blameless when You judge. 5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me. (NASB95)

Adam’s original sin plus Adam’s sin nature equals “spiritual death,” which means that every member of the human race is separated from God and has absolutely no capacity to have a relationship with God who is holy.

Therefore, in Romans 5:12, the noun ἁμαρτία is in the singular referring to the old Adamic sin nature.

Romans 5:12 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned. (NASB95)

“Entered” is the third person singular aorist active indicative form of the verb εἰσέρχομαι, which is used in relation to the sin nature and means, “to enter” indicating that the sin nature “entered” into the human race through Adam’s act of disobedience. The fact that the sin nature is said to have “entered” the human race implies that sin was in existence prior to Adam’s act of disobedience. Of course, Satan is the first of God’s creatures to sin against Him (Isaiah 14:12-14; Ezekiel 28:12-18).

“Into the world” is composed of the preposition εἰς, “into” and the articular accusative masculine singular form of the noun κόσμος, “the world.”

In Romans 5:12, the noun κόσμος refers to the inhabitants of the earth arranged in tribes and nations or peoples or in other words, the human race (Acts 17:26; John 3:16; 1 Cor. 4:9; 1 John 2:2; 2 Pet. 2:5). Therefore, Paul is saying that the sin nature entered the human race through the personal intermediate agency of Adam.

The Fall of Adam

Genesis 3 records the account of Adam’s original sin in the Garden of Eden when he disobeyed the Lord’s prohibition to not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Consequently, he entered into “real spiritual death” and acquired a sin nature, which resided in the genetic structure of his physical body. This sin nature he passed down to his progeny through sex.
The introduction of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil appears in Genesis 2:9.

**Genesis 2:9 Out of the ground the LORD God caused to grow every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. (NASB95)**

The “tree of the knowledge of good and evil” was the only tree in the garden that had a prohibition attached to it in order that God would test the obedience of Adam and the Woman and Satan could have an opportunity to prove God unjust for sentencing him to the lake of fire for his disobedience. If Adam and the Woman ate the fruit from the “tree of life” it would continue to perpetuate their life of their physical bodies. If Adam and the Woman ate the fruit from the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil” they would separate themselves from God, which is called spiritual death. Not only did God tell Adam to not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil but He told him why, which is that he would die spiritually meaning he would be separated from God for his disobedience.

Genesis 2:16-17 records the Lord issuing this prohibition to Adam.

**Genesis 2:16 The LORD God commanded the man, saying, “From any tree of the garden you may eat freely 17 but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.” (NASB95)**

The fact that the Lord told Adam why he cannot eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil demonstrates God’s love and concern for Adam and that He had his best interests in mind.

“You may eat freely”: (1) Qal infinitive absolute complement form of the verb `akhal (pronounced: aw-kal) (2) second person masculine singular qal imperfect form of the verb `akhal.

The infinitive absolute stands before the finite verb of the same root in Genesis 2:16 in order to intensify the certainty or force of the verbal idea, thus indicating that the Lord commanded Adam that he could eat from “absolutely” any tree in the garden.

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was a literal tree. There was nothing inherently evil about the tree since the Lord created it but rather it was Adam and the Woman’s attitude towards the Lord’s prohibition attached to the tree, which was evil. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was the only tree in the garden that had a prohibition attached to it, which indicates that the Lord wanted to test the obedience of Adam.

The fact that the tree was named the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil” indicates that evil was already in God’s creation and that there was a rival kingdom in God’s creation, namely, Satan. Evil is independence from God as a result of disobedience to His commands.
“Good” refers to obedience to God’s will whereas “evil” refers to that which is disobedience to God’s will and is independent of Him. According to Genesis 3:22, as a result of disobeying the Lord and eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, Adam and his wife, like God, were able to “distinguish” between that which is according to God’s will and that which was not.

**Genesis 3:22a** Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil.” (NASB95)

Therefore, if Adam and his wife never ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they would have never experienced evil and the distinction between what is according to God’s will and what is not. By eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, Adam and his wife and their children were brought into bondage to Satan and his kingdom whereas if they obeyed the Lord and did not eat from this tree, they would have been free in the truest sense meaning they would be free to serve God exclusively. Eating from the tree of life would not have given Adam eternal life, which is the very life of God but rather would have perpetuated the life of his physical body since the soul is created to live forever and according to Genesis 3:22, eating from this tree results in living forever.

**Genesis 3:22b** “and now, he might stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever.” (NASB95)

Eternal life is received as a gift of God’s grace through faith alone in Christ alone (Jn. 3:16-18; Eph. 2:8-9). Therefore, eating from the tree of life would not give Adam eternal life.

According to Revelation 22, the tree of life will be present in the New Jerusalem providing believers greater capacity to enjoy the blessings of the eternal state in their resurrection bodies. Adam and his wife never did eat from the tree of life since their physical bodies experienced decay after disobeying the Lord and did not live forever. But, it appears that Adam and his wife were totally occupied with the tree of the knowledge of good and evil because it was the only tree in the garden with a prohibition attached to it.

**Genesis 2:17** “but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.” (NASB95)

“You will surely die”: (1) Qal infinitive absolute complement form of the verb *muth* (pronounced: mooth) (2) second person masculine singular qal imperfect form of the verb *muth*.

The infinitive absolute stands before the finite verb of the same root in Genesis 2:17 in order to intensify the certainty or force of the verbal idea, thus indicating that the Lord warned Adam that if he disobeyed the command not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he would “surely” die spiritually. So to the English speaking person this construction literally means, “dying, you shall die” but to the Hebrew mind, it simply means, “you shall surely die.”
When the Lord said to Adam that he would “surely die” if he ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the Lord meant that he would enter into “real spiritual death,” which is separation from God and does “not” mean he would die physically since Adam lived to be 930 years old according to Genesis 5:5. Not only did God tell Adam to not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil but also He told him why, which is that he would die spiritually meaning he would be separated from God for his disobedience. The fact that the Lord told Adam why he cannot eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil demonstrates God’s love and concern for Adam and that He had his best interests in mind.

In Genesis 3:1, Moses records that Satan indwelt a snake in order to disguise himself so that he might deceive Eve in the garden of Eden.

**Genesis 3:1** Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, “Indeed, has God said, ‘You shall not eat from any tree of the garden’”? 2 The woman said to the serpent, “From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat 3 but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.’” 4 The serpent said to the woman, “You surely will not die! 5 For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” 6 When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings. (NASB95)

“Serpent” is the noun nachash, which refers to a literal snake.

According to Genesis 3:14, this snake had legs but after the Fall of Adam, the Lord cursed this snake saying it would go on its belly and will eat dust all the days of its life, thus implying that it was not created to go about on its belly and therefore had legs.

**Genesis 3:14** The LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed are you more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; On your belly you will go, and dust you will eat all the days of your life.” (NASB95)

According to 2 Corinthians 11:3 and Revelation 20:2, Satan indwelt this serpent and through this serpent disguised himself to deceive Eve.

**2 Corinthians 11:3** But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ. (NASB95)
Revelation 20:2 And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. (NASB95)

Satan indwelt this literal snake in order to disguise himself and deceive Eve.

2 Corinthians 11:15 Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. (NASB95)

“The eyes of both of them were opened” means that Adam and his wife had a knowledge of sin and evil through personal experience and did not make them like God as Satan claimed it would but rather produced guilt in their souls.

They became a aware of their guilt and had nothing to hide their guilt so they attempted to hide themselves from God and cover their genitalia with loin coverings sewed from fig leaves.

The loin coverings not only were a manifestation of their alienation from God but also from each other. The sewing of fig leaves together in order to make loin coverings for themselves to cover and ease their guilt was an act of self-righteous arrogance since only God can solve the problem of guilt through the forgiveness of sins, which is available through Christ’s sacrifice on the cross. Instead of seeking out God and confessing their guilt, they attempted to conceal their guilt from both God and themselves (1 John 1:8-10).

It is interesting that the only tree that our Lord cursed was the fig tree recorded in Matthew 21:18-19 and He did this not only to teach that Israel had rejected Him as Messiah but to relate God’s attitude towards the self-righteous actions of Adam and his wife.

Adam’s sin in the garden brought a curse not only on the entire human race of which he is the “federal” head but it also brought a curse on the earth itself.

Romans 8:20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope. (NASB95)

Genesis 3:8 They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. (NASB95)

Adam and his wife hid in fear since according to Genesis 2:17, the Lord had warned Adam that if he disobeyed His command to not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, then he would surely die.

When the Lord said to Adam that he would “surely die” if he ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the Lord meant that he would enter into “real spiritual death,” which is separation from God. When the Lord says you shall surely die He does “not” mean he would die physically since Adam lived to be 930 years old according to Genesis 5:5.

The fact that Adam and his wife died spiritually and lost fellowship with the Lord is illustrated in Genesis 3:6-8. The fact that Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden demonstrates that sin not only results in loss of fellowship with the Lord but also...
Adam and his wife’s actions after disobeying the Lord are an implicit admission of guilt.

**Genesis 3:9 Then the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, “Where are you?”** (NASB95)

The Lord knew that Adam and his wife had disobeyed Him since He is omniscient meaning He knows perfectly, eternally and simultaneously all that is knowable, both the actual and the possible and thus has all knowledge of every event in human and angel history. The Lord asked Adam where He was because He wanted Adam to confess his guilt and to make Adam aware of his need for forgiveness and a Savior.

The fact that the Lord asked Adam where he was even though He knew what Adam had done and could have thrown him into the lake of fire demonstrates that the Lord is manifesting His love and mercy and grace. God permitted Adam to rebel and disobey Him, like He did with Satan in order that He might manifest His great grace and love for both men and angels. Notice that the Lord initiated a reconciliation by seeking out Adam and his wife and not vice versa, which is a demonstration of God’s love.

The Lord not only sought out the first two sinners in the human race but He seeks out the entire human race without exception and distinction since He desires all men to be saved (John 3:16-18; 1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9).

**Genesis 3:10 He said, “I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself.”** (NASB95)

Adam, like all sinners, is fearful being in the presence of God since he stands guilty and condemned before an infinitely holy God. Adam, like all sinners, is estranged from God and seeks to avoid contact with Him. This is the natural result of spiritual death.

**Genesis 3:11 And He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?”** (NASB95)

The divine interrogation continues in order to bring Adam to an admission of guilt so that he might be restored to fellowship. The Lord’s first question is designed to draw attention to the fact that something must have happened to make Adam aware of his nakedness and that he must have done something to make him aware of his nakedness.

As soon as Adam’s thoughts have been led to see that this admission is inevitable, the Lord’s next question is a direct one designed to drive Adam to still a more inescapable admission of his guilt. The Lord’s is convicting Adam of his guilt in order that he might see his need of a Savior and forgiveness.

**Genesis 3:12 The man said, “The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate.”** (NASB95)
Adam’s fallen state due to his sin and disobedience further manifests itself in his making excuses and blaming the Lord for giving him his wife. By blaming the Lord for giving him his wife, Adam is accusing the Lord of tempting him to sin, which is impossible since God cannot be tempted by evil because He is holy (cf. James 1:13-15).

By blaming the Lord for giving him his wife, Adam is not taking responsibility for his actions. Adam cannot justify his sin by blaming the Lord for giving him his wife since Adam made the decision to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He could have said no to his wife but instead he went along with her in her sin.

Once Adam recognized his wife as a great blessing but now, after disobeying the Lord, he considers her a curse. Adam’s excuse is so lame that the Lord doesn’t even dignified it with a response.

**Genesis 3:13** Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?” And the woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.” *(NASB95)*

Just like Adam, his wife failed to take responsibility for her actions and instead blamed the serpent for deceiving her. Just like Adam, his wife could have rejected eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil but instead she chose to disobey. Unlike Adam though, his wife did not attempt to deny that she had sinned but in fact admitted her guilt to the Lord.

The Lord does not question the devil who used the serpent to disguise himself since according to Matthew 25:41, the devil has already been convicted of his rebellion. Furthermore, the Lord does not question Satan since this temptation of Adam and his wife was a part of his appeal trial where Satan was attempting to justify his rebellion and independence from God. In his appeal trial, Satan is attempting to demonstrate that God does not love His creatures and that he is justified in living independently of God and that disobedience to God is a viable and justified alternative to being obedient to God.

By getting Adam and his wife to sin against God, then Satan would have witnesses that support his argument. Satan does not believe that God loves His creatures since God sentenced him to the lake of fire forever for his rebellion and by getting Adam and his wife to sin against God, Satan presumptuously and erroneously believes that he will have demonstrated this to be the case. But, Satan’s plan has backfired on him since the fall of Adam and his wife provided God an opportunity to demonstrate a side of Himself that would never be revealed if Satan and Adam had never sinned, namely, His love, which is able to love His enemies and do good to those who are unworthy and undeserving.

**Genesis 3:14** The LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed are you more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the
field; On your belly you will go, and dust you will eat all the days of your life.” (NASB95)

The fact that the Lord pronounced a curse on the serpent does not indicate direct culpability on its part since it is not a moral rational creature that can make decisions but rather this curse was a perpetual reminder to the human race of the instrument of its fall and of the final destruction of Satan himself.

Genesis 3:15 “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.” (NASB95)

The seed of the serpent does not refer to unregenerate humanity (unbelievers) since the phrase “your seed” is used in contrast to the phrase “her seed,” which refers to one individual, namely, the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, the phrase “your seed” refers to one individual, namely, the Antichrist who will be the ruler of a ten-nation confederacy constituting a Revived Roman Empire, during Daniel’s Seventieth week, which is also called by theologians as the “Tribulation Period.”

“Her Seed” refers to the Lord Jesus Christ who is the “Last Adam” (1 Cor. 15:45) and if so, then, “your seed” refers to a single individual as well.

“He (Jesus Christ) shall bruise you (Satan) on the head” is the first prophecy concerning the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ would defeat Satan at the cross by being obedient to the Father’s will with His death on the cross.

The prophecy of Genesis 3:15 is the “seed plot” of the Virgin Birth and Incarnation of the Son of God (Isa. 7:14; Mt. 1:23; John 1:14; 1 Tim. 3:16) as well as the “seed plot” of the Redemption and Salvation of mankind as well as the defeat of Satan, which is developed in further detail in the rest of the Bible (Gal. 3:13; Eph. 1:7; Col. 2:14; Heb. 2:14-15; 1 Jn. 3:8).

“You (Satan) shall bruise Him (Christ) on the heel” is a symbolic or figurative reference to the Lord’s suffering and death on the cross, which the Father used as the instrument to destroy the works of the devil.

What Satan did to the Lord at the cross was only temporary and did not defeat the Lord but what the Lord did to Satan at the cross was to achieve total and complete victory over Satan since His death on the cross redeemed mankind and demonstrated the love of God for all men. Our Lord’s death refutes Satan’s argument that God does not love His creatures.

Genesis 3:16 To the woman He said, “I will greatly multiply your pain in childbirth, in pain you will bring forth children; Yet your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.” (NASB95)

God’s judgment on Eve was to increase her pain in childbearing and that her desire or impulse would be toward her husband and he would rule over her, not as a tyrant but in the same sense as the sun rules the day (Gen. 1:16). This, of course, was not God’s original intention but now in Christ the negative aspects of this are
removed and the husband and wife are restored to a healthy partnership where the husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church (Eph. 5:22-33) and the wife is to obey and respect her husband as to the Lord. Because, Eve chose to disobey God and did not eat from the tree of life resulting in immortality, she would now have to bear children, which in one sense was a curse but in another sense opened the door to redemptive history.

Genesis 3:17 Then to Adam He said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat from it’; Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it all the days of your life.” (NASB95)

“Cursed is the ground” means the basic material of the physical creation and the elements themselves, the “dust of the earth,” out of which all things had been formed and produced were brought under the bondage of decay and disintegration.

Genesis 3:18 “Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you will eat the plants of the field. 19 By the sweat of your face you will eat bread, till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken; For you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

“By the sweat of your face you will eat bread” means that Adam would have to perform hard labor in order to get the earth to produce food for him.

Work was originally designed by the Lord to be a blessing for man but after the Fall, it became a curse (Gen. 3:17-19) but this curse is lifted in Christ.

“Till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken; For you are dust and to dust you shall return” refers to the eventual death of Adam’s biological life meaning his physical body. This curse on Adam also included the entire human race, both male and female, of which Adam is the “federal” head of the old creation and is removed through faith in Christ who is the “federal” head of the “new” creation.

The fall of Adam not only affected his fellowship with God but also it effected his environment and his physical body! The physical body of human beings eventually ceases to function and decompose into the dust of ground because they are inherently sinful. They are inherently sinful because of the curse the Lord put on Adam and his posterity.

The sin nature resides in the genetic structure of the human body according to Romans 6:6.

Romans 6:6 This we are very familiar with through instruction, namely, that our old man was crucified with Him in order that the sinful body would be deprived of its power with the result that we are no longer in a perpetual state of being slaves to the sin nature. (Author’s translation)

Physical death is the result of possessing a sin nature since it resides in the human body. Spiritual death entered the human race through the sin nature.
Romans 5:12a, Therefore, based on this (principle), just as, through one man, the sin nature entered into the human race so that spiritual death entered through this sin nature. (Author’s translation)

Spiritual death is the result of possessing a sin nature and is perpetuated by the sinner through committing personal acts of sin. It means that the sinner has no capacity whatsoever to experience or establish a relationship with a holy God since he has absolutely no merit with a holy God. Spiritual death spread to the entire human race because of the imputation of Adam’s sin according to Romans 5:12b and 15a.

So the Lord put a curse upon man’s body and on his entire environment. This would not only force him to recognize the seriousness of his sin as well as his helplessness to deliver himself and his dominion from eventual destruction but also it would force him to recognize that Satan’s tempting promises had been nothing but lies. This curse on the First Adam will ultimately be lifted when the Last Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ returns with church, the sons of God, at His Second Advent to deliver Israel from Antichrist and the Tribulational armies in order to establish His millennial reign (Rom. 8:18-22).

Spiritual Death

Romans 5:12 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned. (NASB95)

“And death through sin” presents the result of the sin nature entering into the human race through Adam’s disobedience.

“Death” is the articular nominative masculine singular form of the noun \( \text{thanatos} \), which refers to “real spiritual death” and is the result of the imputation of Adam’s sin to our genetically formed old sin nature at the moment of physical birth (Gen. 2:17; Prov. 14:12; Ezek. 18:20; Rom. 5:12; 6:23; 1 Cor. 15:22; Eph. 2:1, 5). Therefore, in Romans 5:12 is presenting a progression-Adam’s original sin plus Adam’s sin nature equals “spiritual death.” “Spiritual death” means that every member of the human race is separated from God and has absolutely no capacity to have a relationship with God who is holy.

There are five major consequences for “Spiritual death”: (1) Slavery to the sin nature and the devil and his cosmic system. (2) Physical death (Genesis 5:5). (3) Imprisonment in Torments after physical death prior to the Great White Throne Judgment (Luke 16:19-31). (4) Eternal condemnation in the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:11-15). (5) Unique voluntary substitutionary spiritual and physical deaths of Christ (Matt. 27:45-46; Mark 15:34; Phlp. 2:8; Heb. 2:9, 14).
Spiritual death in the human race resulted in the Father sending His Son to die spiritually and physically on the cross as a substitute for members of the human race in order to deliver them from spiritual death and the sin nature. The problem of “real spiritual death” is resolved when God gives life to those members of the human race who exercise faith alone in Christ alone (John 3:16-18).

“Through sin” is composed of the preposition dia, “through” and the articular genitive feminine singular form of the noun hamartia, “sin.”

As was the case earlier in Romans 5:12, the noun hamartia is in the singular referring to the old Adamic sin nature. The preposition dia is used with the genitive form of the noun hamartia as a marker of personal intermediate agency and does not indicate means or instrumentality since the sin nature is being personified by the apostle Paul. This indicates that the sin nature is the personal intermediate agency through which spiritual death entered the human race.

Not only does Romans 5:12 teach that the sin nature entered into the human race through Adam’s sin in the Garden of Eden and spiritual death through the sin nature but also this passage teaches that spiritual death spread to each and every person in the human race because of the imputation of Adam’s sin to each and every member of the human race.

“And so death spread to all men, because all sinned” presents the result of spiritual death entering the human race through the sin nature. Adam’s original sin in the Garden of Eden resulted in the sin nature, which in turn “resulted in” spiritual death.

“So” is the adverb of manner houtos, which is drawing a comparison with the preceding statement and the one to follow. In the preceding statement, Paul taught that through Adam, the sin nature entered into the human race and consequently spiritual death entered through the sin nature. In the statement to follow, he teaches spiritual death spread to each and every human being without exception or distinction. Therefore, houtos draws a comparison between the manner in which spiritual death entered the human race and the manner in which spiritual death spread to the entire human race.

The manner in which spiritual death entered the human race and the manner in which spiritual death spread throughout the entire human race is one and the same, namely, through Adam’s act of disobedience in the Garden of Eden.

The emphatic position of the prepositional phrase di’ henos anthropou, “through one man” clearly indicates this to be the case. The fact that Paul is emphasizing that Adam’s act of disobedience was the manner in which spiritual death entered into the human race and spread to the entire human race is clearly indicated by the context.

We have to remember that in Romans 5:12-21 Paul is making a comparison between the consequences of Adam’s act of disobedience and the results of
Christ’s act of obedience to demonstrate to his readers the destiny of each member of the human race is tied up with these two.

Romans 5:15b For if by the transgression of the one the many died. (NASB95)

Romans 5:16a The gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation. (NASB95)

Romans 5:17a For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one. (NASB95)

Romans 5:18a So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men. (NASB95)

Romans 5:19a For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners. (NASB95)

So we can see that Adam’s act of disobedience that brought condemnation to his posterity in comparison with Christ's act of obedience that resulted in justification of life to all men underlines the entire discussion in Romans 5:12-21. Therefore, the adverb of manner houtos is comparing the manner in which the sin nature and spiritual death entered the human race with the manner in which spiritual death spread to the entire human race.

Adam’s act of disobedience was the manner in which both the sin nature and spiritual death entered the human race and also spread to each and every member of the human race without exception or distinction.

“Death” is the articular nominative masculine singular form of the noun thanatos, which refers once again to real spiritual death.

Although, in Romans 5:12, thanatos is used of spiritual death, we must be aware of the fact that spiritual death also resulted in three other categories of death: (1) Physical death is the separation of the human soul (and in the case of the believer, the human spirit also) from the body (Matt. 8:22; Rom. 8:38-39; 2 Cor. 5:1-8; Phil. 1:20-21; 2:27, 30). (2) Second death is the perpetuation of spiritual death into eternity or eternal separation from God and it is the final judgment of the unbelievers in the human race and fallen angels whereby they are cast in the Lake of Fire (Matt. 25:41; Heb. 9:27; Rev. 20:12-15). (3) Unique voluntary substitutionary spiritual death of the impeccable humanity of Christ in hypostatic union on the cross (Matt. 27:45-46; Mark 15:34; Phlp. 2:8; Heb. 2:9, 14).

Christ’s spiritual and physical deaths on the cross were needed to resolve the first three categories of death since physical death and the second death are the result of spiritual death.

“Spread” is the third person singular aorist active indicative form of the verb dierchomai, which is a compound word composed of the preposition dia,
“through” and the verb *erchomai*, “to go,” thus the word literally means, “to go through, to pass throughout.”

In Romans 5:12, the verb *dierchomai* denotes that spiritual death “spread throughout” the entire human race. As many commentators believe, the word has a distributive force to it meaning that spiritual death spread to each and every member of the human race. This is correct since the adjective *pas* is obviously used in a “distributive” sense modifying the noun *anthropos*, “person.” Therefore, the verb along with these two words indicates that through Adam’s act of disobedience, spiritual death “spread to each and every person” in the human race.

In the same way, a deadly contagious virus can spread completely throughout an entire population so spiritual death spread throughout the entire human race. Spiritual death infected the entire human race because each person receives a sin nature that is received through imputation at the moment of physical birth and is passed down through sex. This sin nature is the result of Adam’s original sin in the Garden of Eden and manifests itself through the function of human volition.

This verb *dierchomai* speaks of the imputation of Adam’s sin in the Garden of Eden that every member of the human race receives at the moment of physical birth.

Imputation is the function of the justice of God in crediting something to someone for cursing or for blessing.

At the moment of physical birth, every member of the human race becomes a sinner because he has received the imputation of Adam’s sin in the garden. The imputation of divine righteousness at the moment of spiritual birth is made possible by the imputation of Adam’s sin in the garden at the moment of physical birth (Romans 5:12-19).

The imputation of Adam’s sin at physical birth results in every person having the nature of Adam, which resides in the genetic structure of the physical body and can never please God but is selfish and self-centered and always disobedient to God. This imputation means that every person born into the world is born physically alive but spiritually dead, yet qualified for the imputation of divine righteousness through faith alone in Christ alone.

The imputation of Adam’s sin in the Garden also resulted in the imputation of the sins of the world to Christ on the Cross.

The reason why God imputed Adam’s sin in the garden to every member of the human race at physical birth is given in two passages of Scripture:

* Galatians 3:22 But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. (NASB95)
Romans 11:32 Therefore, God the Father has confined the entire human race to unbelief in order that He may extend the offer of grace to the entire human race. (NASB95)

Therefore, through a comparison these two passages, we can see that God’s purpose in imputing Adam’s sin to the entire human race was so that He might show grace to the human race by making the promise of justification by faith in His Son Jesus Christ and the blessings that result from it.

Romans 5:12 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned.

“To all men” is composed of the preposition eis, “to” and the accusative masculine plural form of the adjective pas, “all,” which is modifying the accusative masculine plural form of the noun anthropos, “men.”

The noun anthropos denotes a “person, human being” and is used in a generic sense for the human race. It is modified by the distributive use of the adjective pas referring to “each and every” member of the human race without exception, both Jew and Gentile. Therefore, Paul is saying that spiritual death resulting in physical death spread to “each and every person in the human race without exception and without distinction.”

The preposition eis is employed with the verb dierchomai, “spread” as a marker of extension indicating the extent to which spiritual death spread among members of the human race.

The fact that the statement houtos eis pantas anthropous ho thanatos dielthen, “in this manner (through Adam’s sin), spiritual death spread to each and every member of the human race without exception” refers to the imputation of Adam’s sin to each member of the human race at the moment of physical birth is clearly indicated by the context.

Romans 5:12 also teaches us that the result of God imputing Adam’s original sin to the entire human race was that the entire human race was under the headship of Adam.

“Because” is composed of the preposition epi and the dative neuter singular form of the relative pronoun relative pronoun hos.

The expression eph’ ho has been said by some as being the most mistranslated expression in the Greek New Testament. It has been translated “in whom” by Augustine and others. For this to be the correct rendering of the expression, its antecedent would have to be the expression henos anthropou, “one man” a reference to Adam, which appeared earlier in the verse. If this is the case, then this would mean that “in Adam all sinned.”

However, grammatically and syntactically this does not make sense since the distance between the expression henos anthropou, “one man” and the
prepositional phrase *eph’ ho* is too great for this to be correct. Also, the relative pronoun *hos* is neuter in gender and not masculine, which it would need to be if it were referring to Adam. Furthermore, Paul would have used a simpler or more obvious construction, which would be *en ho*.

The fact that *eph’ ho* does not mean “in whom” is further substantiated in that this expression is usually used as a conjunction. In fact, it is used as a conjunction in Philippians 3:12 and 2 Corinthians 5:4 and in the papyri. As a conjunction, this expression has been rendered “from which it follows, with the result that, inasmuch as,” or “because.” The last rendering is the most popular among modern Bible scholars.

Many modern exegetes contend that the prepositional phrase *eph’ ho* is not looking back at any antecedent but rather is functioning as a causal conjunction meaning that it is introducing a statement that gives the reason why spiritual death spread to each and every member of the human race. This would mean that spiritual death resulting in physical death is universal for the precise reason that committing acts of personal sin is universal. This would emphasize that personal sin is the result of this sin nature. We are not responsible for what Adam had done but for what we have done.

Wallace says that this interpretation finds support in the papyri and in the rest of the Pauline corpus (cf. 2 Cor. 5:4; Phlp. 3:12). However, this interpretation emphasizes the human race committing sin. The context does not support this interpretation since Paul is comparing the results of Adam’s disobedience with that of Christ’s act of obedience. He is emphasizing Adam’s actions and not his posterity!

Mounce offers another interpretation saying that the prepositional phrase *ep’ ho* functions not as a causal conjunction but rather has a consecutive sense, he writes, “the primary cause of our sinful nature would be the sin of Adam; the result of that sin would be the history of sinning on the part of all who enter the human race and in fact, sin of their own accord.”

Moo commenting on this view, writes, “Death, then, is due immediately to the sinning of each individual but ultimately to the sin of Adam; for it was Adam's sin that corrupted human nature and made individual sinning an inevitability.”

Though this is true theologically, it is not the correct interpretation. The aorist tense of the verb *hamartano* is speaking of a particular point of time in the past, which the context indicates is Adam’s sin in the Garden of Eden.

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6 Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics, page 342  
7 The New American Commentary, volume 27, page 142; Broadman and Holman Publishers  
8 The Epistle to the Romans, page 325
Interpreting *eph’ ho* as introducing a result clause emphasizes the personal acts of sin by each member of the human race. However, the context clearly indicates that Paul’s is comparing the results of Adam’s disobedience with the results of Christ’s obedience and thus emphasizing Adam’s actions and not his posterity. Therefore, not only does it make more sense grammatically and syntactically that *eph’ ho* should be taken as a causal conjunction but also the context supports this interpretation. This interpretation emphasizes that God considered the entire human race as sinning the moment Adam committed his act of sin in the Garden of Eden.

“All sinned” is composed of the nominative masculine plural form of the adjective *pas*, “all” and the third person plural aorist active indicative form of the verb *hamartano*, “sinned.”

The adjective *pas* is again used in a distributive sense referring to “each and every” member of the human race without exception, both Jew and Gentile.

The verb *hamartano* is used intransitively (without a direct object) and refers to any mental, verbal or overt act of sin that is contrary to the will and law of God.

The distributive of *pas* along with this constative aorist tense of the verb *hamartano* indicates that Paul is teaching that each and every member of the human race sinned the moment Adam sinned. In other words, Adam is both the “federal” and “seminal” head of the human race, we thus became sinners by nature, the moment Adam sinned.

The verb *hamartano* means, “to miss the mark,” and which mark is the absolute perfection of God’s character, which is His holiness. Each and every member of the human race has missed the mark of the absolute perfection of God’s character, i.e. His holiness that was perfectly manifested by the Lord Jesus Christ during His First Advent.

The aorist tense of the verb *hamartano* is a “constative” aorist describing in summary fashion that the entire human race without exception or distinction sinned the exact moment Adam disobeyed the Lord’s prohibition to not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and which disobedience involved his posterity.

Some like Calvin contend that in the verb *hamartano* is referring to the personal sins of each person in the human race. However, the verb *hamartano*, “sinned” is in the aorist tense and not the present tense.

The present tense could emphasize a habitual or continuous or repetitive action. The aorist tense emphasizes that this action of sinning took place at a particular point in time in the past. The context clearly indicates that the aorist tense of the verb is referring to Adam’s act of disobedience in the Garden of Eden.

Some maintain that all sinned in the sense that the human race follows the example of Adam in sinning but our sin is our own. Again, the aorist tense of *hamartano* refutes this interpretation since the verb would be in the present or
imperfect tense if Paul was writing about the continued, habitual or repeated acts of sin committed by members of the human race. The aorist tense does not say we were imitating Adam.

Also, again, the statements 5:15b, 16a, 17a, 18a and 19a do not mean that the human race is following Adam’s example. Paul’s emphasis in Romans 5:12-21 is to compare the results of Adam’s disobedience with Christ’s act of obedience. This means that in the same way that we are declared justified by God and reconciled to God through one man’s act of obedience, the God-Man, Jesus Christ so also we were condemned by God through man’s act of disobedience, Adam’s. This does not imply that Paul is teaching that each person is not responsible for his own actions since this is not his emphasis. He is concerned with what Adam did and the consequences of his actions in the Garden of Eden.

Therefore, the aorist tense of the verb *hamartano* along with the distributive use of the adjective *pas* and Paul’s statements in Romans 5:15b, 16a, 17a, 18a and 19a indicate clearly that the entire human race was condemned by God the moment Adam sinned. This interpretation emphasizes that Adam’s sin brought condemnation upon Adam’s posterity and the only way to be delivered from this condemnation is through One Man, Jesus Christ.

So when Paul says that “all sinned” he is referring to the fact that the moment Adam sinned, he not only died spiritually and then eventually physically but also his posterity did the same. Therefore, in Romans 5:12, Paul is saying that because of Adam’s act of disobedience each and every member of the human race possesses a sin nature, which through the function of human volition produces mental, verbal and overt acts of sin resulting in spiritual death and eventually, physical death and the second death for those who reject Jesus Christ as Savior.

*Headship of Adam*

*Romans 5:12* Therefore, based on this (principle), just as, through one man, the sin nature entered into the human race so that spiritual death entered through this sin nature. Thus, in this manner, spiritual death spread to each and every member of the human race without exception because each and every member of the human race sinned (the moment Adam sinned). *(Author’s translation)*

Paul is teaching in Romans 5:12 that each and every member of the human race-past, present and future, are sinners by nature since they are under both the “federal” and “seminal” headships of Adam. The entire human race was condemned before they ever committed an act of sin because of Adam’s sin. Again, God condemned the human race through one man so that He could save the
human race through one man. So, in Romans 5:12-21, Paul presents Adam and Christ as “federal heads” of two groups of people.

Dr. Thomas L. Constable commenting on the headship of Adam and Christ, writes, “The apostle viewed Adam and Christ as federal heads of two groups of people. A federal head is a person who acts as the representative of many others and whose actions result in consequences that the individuals he represents inevitably experience. Examples of federal heads include a king, a president, a member of congress, and a parent, among others. In this section, Paul was not looking primarily at what individual sinners have done, which had been his interest previously. Rather he looked at what Adam did in the Fall and what Jesus Christ did at the Cross and the consequences of their actions for humanity. Adam's act resulted in his descendants sinning and dying. We inherit Adam's nature that was sinful, and this accounts for the fact that we all sin. We are sinners not only because we commit acts of sin but also because Adam's sin corrupted the human race and made punishment inevitable for his descendants as well as for himself. However, Christ's act of dying made all who trust in Him righteous apart from their own works.”  

Bible Knowledge Commentary writes, “The federal headship view considers Adam, the first man, as the representative of the human race that generated from him. As the representative of all humans, Adam’s act of sin was considered by God to be the act of all people and his penalty of death was judicially made the penalty of everybody.”

There is also the “seminal” or “natural” headship view.

Bible Knowledge Commentary writes, “The natural headship view, on the other hand, recognizes that the entire human race was seminally and physically in Adam, the first man. As a result God considered all people as participating in the act of sin which Adam committed and as receiving the penalty he received. Even adherents of the federal headship view must admit that Adam is the natural head of the human race physically; the issue is the relationship spiritually. Biblical evidence supports the natural headship of Adam. When presenting the superiority of Melchizedek’s priesthood to Aaron’s, the author of Hebrews argued that Levi, the head of the priestly tribe, ‘who collects the 10th, paid the 10th through Abraham, because when Melchizedek met Abraham, Levi was still in the body of his ancestor’” (Heb. 7:9-10).

S. Lewis Johnson favors the ‘immediate federal imputation view’ which says that “Adam is the federal head of the race. Men are regarded as having stood their probation in him as their representative. His act was, therefore, deemed to be their

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9 Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible; page 54
act. He, the covenantal head of the race, fell, and in him the race fell. The fact that
he was the head of the race is indicated by the fact the threats that were given him
by God on the condition of his failure of the probation have been carried out on
Adam and his posterity. All men, and not simply Adam, die."

Both the “federal” and “natural” or “seminal” headship views are present in
Romans 5:12-21. In Romans 5:12, the expression “because all sinned”
emphasizes that Adam is the “federal” head of the human race in that he is the
representative of the human race that generated from him so that God considered
his act of sin to be the act of all people and his penalty of death was judicially
made the penalty of everybody.

The constative aorist tense of the verb hamartano along with the distributive
use of the adjective pas and Paul’s statements in Romans 5:15b, 16a, 17a, 18a and
19a, which we noted earlier, support this interpretation.

The expression “because all sinned” also emphasizes that Adam is also the
“seminal” or “natural” head of the human race in that the entire human race was
seminally and physically in Adam so that God considered the entire human race as
participating in the sin Adam committed and receiving the penalty he received.

Paul’s statement in Romans 5:12 that “through one man the sin nature
entered the human race so that spiritual death entered through the sin
nature” supports this view as well since the sin nature has been passed down
through the male in copulation.

Total Depravity

In Romans 5:12, Paul is teaching his readers of the “total depravity” which
means not only that the corruption has extended has extended to all aspects of
man’s nature, to his entire being as well but also that because of that corruption
mankind has no merit with God. The implications of depravity are critical in
relation to salvation in that man has no ability whatsoever to save himself or justify
himself before a holy God.

The Lord labeled His disciples evil in Matthew 7:11 because of their depraved
nature. Romans 1:28 and Ephesians 4:18 teach that the mind of mankind is
affected and Hebrews 9:14 says that the conscience is unclean. The heart is
deceitful according to Jeremiah 17:9 and by nature mankind is under the righteous
indignation of God, i.e. His wrath according to Ephesian 2:3 and Romans 1:18.
Depravity affects the soul (Mark 7:20-23), thus defiling man’s thought process,
which manifests itself in sinful words and actions.

The concept of total depravity does not mean that mankind cannot perform
actions that are good or helpful to others or in God’s sight. What it does mean is
that man can perform no action that could gain him merit with God. Total
depravity means that man has absolutely no merit with God since he does not measure up to God’s perfect standards. It also means that man’s conscience has been affected by the Fall of Adam so that it cannot be a safe and reliable guide. Nor, does total depravity mean that people will indulge in every form of sin or any sin to the greatest extent possible.

The fact that the entire human race is totally depraved is manifested through the practice of sin among both Jew and Gentiles. In Romans 1:18-32, Paul demonstrates that the Gentiles are unrighteous and totally depraved by virtue of their sinful conduct and failure to worship God in light of God’s self-revelation in creation as well as their failure to obey the moral law inherent within them. In Romans 2:1-29, he demonstrates that the Jews are unrighteous and totally depraved as well as manifested in their failure to obey perfectly the written Law of God and committing the same sins that the Gentiles committed. In Romans 3:9-20, Paul summarizes his statements in Romans 1:18-2:29 and teaches the totally depravity and universal unrighteousness of mankind, both Jew and Gentile.

There are other passages of Scriptures that address the issue of man’s total depravity (cf. Job 14:1-4; 15:14-16; Jeremiah 17:9; Matthew 15:19-20).

**Location of the Sin Nature**

As we noted briefly, Genesis 3 and Romans 6:6 teach us that the sin nature resides in the genetic structure of the human body.

**Romans 6:6** Knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin. (NASB95)

“Our body of sin” is composed of the articular nominative neuter singular form of the noun *soma*, “our body” and the articular genitive feminine singular form of the noun *hamartia*, “of sin.”

The noun *soma* is a reference to the human body. The noun *hamartia* is not in the plural but rather in the singular and is articular indicating the sin nature is in view rather than personal sins. In other words, the word in the singular emphasizes sin as an entity and not sins in general. The noun refers to the inherent propensity in mankind to commit mental, verbal and overt acts of sin.

The articular construction also emphasizes that Paul is speaking of sin as an entity emphasizing the underlying root cause of personal sins or the principle of sin.

The noun *soma* is modified by the articular genitive form of the noun *hamartia*, “sin,” which functions as an “attributive genitive” meaning that it specifies an attribute or an innate quality of the head noun, which is *soma*, “body.” This type of genitive expresses quality like an adjective but with more sharpness and
distinctness. Thus, it emphasizes the “sinfulness” of the human body or in other words, that it is “inherently sinful” because it is corrupted by the sin nature, which resides in its genetic structure. This would agree with what we see in our own bodies, which deteriorate with age and eventually cease to function and decompose. This is further indication that the sin nature resides in the genetic structure of the physical body.

The fact that the sin nature resides in the genetic structure of the physical body is why the justified sinner needs a resurrection body to replace his sinful body. This is one of the reasons why Christ had to die physically and rise from the dead in a resurrection body because the sin nature resides in the human body. Therefore, the human body is inherently sinful, which is the result of the curse that the Lord put on Adam and his posterity (See Genesis 3:18-19).

Douglas Moo and others disagree with this interpretation. Commenting on the usage of the words *soma* and *hamartia* in Romans 6:6, Douglas Moo writes, “The ‘body’ to which Paul refers is naturally often understood to refer to the physical body. If so, the qualification ‘of sin’ would not mean that the body is inherently sinful (a Greek notion rejected by the Bible) but that the body is particularly susceptible to and easily dominated by sin...There is little evidence that Paul conceived of the physical body as the source or reigning seat of sin. However, we should not go so far as to say simply that ‘body of sin’ means ‘man in his fallenness.’ Paul chooses *soma* to connote the person as the instrument of contact with the world, a choice especially appropriate in a context that speaks of crucifixion. It is that ‘aspect’ of the person which ‘acts’ in the world and which can be directed by something else: either by that person’s new, ‘higher nature’ or by ‘sin.’ Here, then, Paul wants to say that our capacities to interact with the world around have been rescued from the domination of sin.”  

Some like Dodd define *soma* in Romans 6:6 as “the self as the organization of the sinful impulses inherent in the flesh.”

Murray, Lloyd Jones and others contend that it means that the body is dominated by sin. The body is sin’s body; it belongs to sin; sin has made it its own.

Mounce contends that the expression *to soma tes hamartias*, “the body of sin” refers “not to the physical body as inherently sinful but to the whole person under the control of sin.”

J.R.W. Stott interprets as “our fallen, self-centered nature.”

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12 The Epistle to the Romans, pages 375-376; William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, U.K.

13 Cited by Morris, The Epistle to the Romans; page 251; W. B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press

14 The New American Commentary, volume 27, Romans, page 151; Broadman and Holman Publishers

15 Romans [Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1994], page 175
Morris contends that the expression “body of sin” in Romans 6:6 refers to the human body, which so easily responds to sinful impulses.

As we can see from Moo’s statement, in order for him to come to his interpretation of this expression “body of sin” he must interpret soma, “body” as being “the person as the instrument of contact with the world.” If he doesn’t then as he even noted, then this expression means that the body is inherently sinful.

The problem with Moo’s interpretation is that soma is never used this way by the apostle in all of his writings. In the writings of the Paul, the noun soma refers to the following: (1) The human body whether the body of mortals or Christ’s human body (Romans 1:24; 4:19; 6:6, 12; 7:24; 8:10, 11, 13, 24; 12:1; 1 Corinthians 5:3; 6:13, 15, 18, 19, 20; 7:4, 34; 9:27; 12:14, 15, 16, 17, 18; 13:3; 15:35, 40, 44; 2 Corinthians 4:10; 5:6, 8, 10; 12:2; Galatians 6:17; Ephesians 5:28; Philippians 3:21; Colossians 2:11, 23; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 10:5, 10, 22) (2) Figuratively for the body of Christ (Romans 12:4, 5; 1 Corinthians 10:16, 17; 12:12, 13, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27; Ephesians 1:23; 2:16, 4:4, 12, 16; 5:23, 30; Colossians 1:22, 24; 2:17, 19; 3:15; Hebrews 13:3 (3) Figuratively for the Person of Christ in the Lord’s Supper (1 Corinthians 11:24, 27, 29) (4) Resurrection body of the believer (1 Corinthians 15:37, 38, 44) (5) Moon, stars and planets (1 Corinthians 15:40). (6) Bodies of animals (Hebrews 13:11).

Furthermore, up to this point in the book of Romans, soma has always been used with reference to the human body by Paul with no reference whatsoever that it denotes the person as the instrument of contact with the world.

**Romans 1:24** Therefore, God gave them over in the lust of their hearts to impurity, namely, they degraded their bodies between themselves. (NASB95)

**Romans 4:19** In fact, without becoming weak with respect to his faith, after careful consideration and observation he was thoroughly aware of his own physical body as now being sexually impotent while already being approximately a hundred years of age as well as the impotence of Sarah’s womb. (Author’s translation)

Also, the noun soma is used in Romans 6:12, 7:4, 24, 8:10, 11, 13 and 23 and in every instance it refers to the human body and not the person as the instrument of contact with the world.

**Romans 6:12** Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts. (NASB95)

**Romans 7:24** Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? (NASB95)

Notice that Paul calls the human body, the “body of this death” meaning that the sin nature is the reason why human beings are born spiritually dead and eventually die physically.
Romans 8:10 If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. (NASB95)

Notice again, Paul says that the “body is dead” because of the sin nature. Paul could not be more explicit.

Romans 8:11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

Paul not only teaches that the sin nature resides in the genetic structure of the human body but also the Holy Spirit indwells the believer’s body and will raise the believer’s body at the resurrection.

Romans 8:13 for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. (NASB95)

Romans 8:23 And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. (NASB95)

Although an excellent and able expositor of the Scriptures, Moo’s exegesis in this particular instance is strained to say the least. It seems that maybe there were some preconceived notions as to what the body of sin is, rather than letting the text speaks for itself. The body is inherently sinful.

As we noted earlier, the fact that the sin nature resides in the human body is further indicated in that Jesus Christ’s human body was not the result of the sexual union between Mary and Joseph but rather the result of the Holy Spirit impregnating Mary (Luke 1:35; cf. Hebrews 10:5-7). He could not have a human body that was the result of human copulation because the sin nature is passed down in this manner and resides in the body. This is significant in that it makes clear that Jesus Christ did not have the principle of the sin nature residing in Him since the Holy Spirit impregnated Mary. He did not have a human father who could pass down the sin nature in sex. This makes clear that our Lord was not under the headship of Adam like the rest of the human race.

Every member of the human race is under the headship of Adam due to physical birth. However, Jesus Christ did not have a sin nature because He did not receive a human body as a result of human copulation.

Now, because He did not have a human father and that His human body did not have a sin nature residing in it, it is then clear that the rest of the human race are sinners due to the fact that they possess a sin nature that resides in their physical bodies since it is passed down through copulation. The human body of Adam became corrupted as a result of his disobedience, which he passed down to his posterity. Also, in Romans 6:6, the noun hamartia could also be interpreted as a “genitive of production,” which takes place when the genitive substantive
“produces” the noun to which it stands related. Therefore, we could translate the expression *to soma tes hamartias*, “the body, which produces sin.” Either way you slice it, the text makes clear that the sin nature is resident in the physical body, thus making the human body inherently sinful.

Genesis 3:18-19 teaches that the fall of Adam not only affected his fellowship with God but also it effected his environment and his physical body! The physical body of human beings eventually ceases to function and decompose into the dust of ground because it is inherently sinful. They are inherently sinful because of the curse the Lord put on Adam and his posterity. Therefore, in Romans 6:6, the noun *soma* is obviously a reference to the human body.

In Romans 6:6, commenting on the meaning of the noun *soma* in Romans 6:6, Thayer writes, “Since the body is the instrument of the soul (2 Corinthians 5:10) and its members the instruments of righteousness or of iniquity (Romans 6:13, 19), *soma tes hamartias*, the body is subject to, the thrall of, sin.”

Bauer, Gingrich and Danker say that *soma* in Romans 6:6 refers to man’s mortal body “because it is subject to sin and death.”

Therefore, we can see that every member of the human is born into this world, physically alive yet spiritually dead and in need of justification. Thus, the status of spiritual death was passed down to Adam’s posterity since spiritual death entered the human race through the sin nature.

So, spiritual death is the status of possessing a sin nature due to the imputation of Adam’s original sin in the Garden of Eden. Physical death is passed down to the entire human race through the sin nature. Adam died spiritually first (Genesis 3:6-8) and then physically (Genesis 5:5). This pattern holds true for his posterity, the human race.

Now, personal sin is the result of obeying the desires of the sin nature. It is a manifestation that one has a sin nature. The penalty for committing personal sin is spiritual death. This is what Adam and Eve suffered the moment they ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Spiritual death is the result of possessing a sin nature and committing personal sin perpetuates this status. Physical death is the result of possessing a sin nature that resides in the genetic structure of the human body. Spiritual death is the product of the sin nature and personal sin perpetuates this status of spiritual death. The human race is under the status of real spiritual death because of the sin nature, which was passed down from Adam. Therefore, spiritual death is the consequence of not only possessing a sin nature but also obeying its desires and committing personal sin.

Spiritual reigned over the entire human race because of Adam’s transgression.

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16 The New Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon, page 611
17 A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, page 799
Romans 5:17a For if, and let us assume that it is true for the sake of argument that by means of the transgression committed by the one, spiritual death reigned as king through this one. Of course, we know this is true. (Author’s translation)

The entire human race was condemned because of Adam’s transgression.

Romans 5:18a Therefore, as previously stated, just as through the one who committed the transgression resulted in condemnation affecting each and every member of the human race without exception. (Author’s translation)

Eternal condemnation, the second death (Revelation 20:11-15) is the ultimate consequence of possessing a sin nature, committing personal sin, being spiritually dead. Therefore, the problems of the sin nature, spiritual, death, physical death, personal sins and eternal condemnation are all interconnected.

Jesus Christ’s spiritual and physical deaths dealt with all of these. Instead, of the human race suffering the consequences of possessing a sin nature and obeying its desires and committing personal sin, Jesus Christ died spiritually in their place as their Substitute. Thus, His spiritual death negates one of the effects of Adam’s sin, which is spiritual death that is the result of possessing a sin nature and committing sin.

Our Lord had to die physically to solve the problem of the sin nature since the sin nature resides in the body of every human being. Our Lord’s resurrection body replaces the sinful body of Adam. The believer will receive a resurrection body like Christ in order to replace his physical body that possesses the sin nature, the Adamic body. Christ also died physically in order to deprive the indwelling sin nature its power over the justified sinner. He was raised from the dead to permanently eradicate the indwelling sin nature in the human race and that eradication of the sin nature from the human race will take place with the creation of the new heavens and new earth.

The sinner who is declared justified through faith in Christ is identified with Christ in His spiritual death in order to solve the sinner’s problem of real spiritual death. Therefore, God the Father viewed His Son’s spiritual death as negating spiritual death in the human race (see Romans 6:3). Christ’s spiritual death also addressed and solved the problem of personal sins, which perpetuates the status of spiritual death. The Father viewed His physical death as negating the sin nature. The sinner is identified with Christ in His physical death in order to solve the sinner’s problem with the old sin nature (cf. Romans 6:4-7). Therefore, Christ’s spiritual and physical death resolved the human race’s problem with the sin nature, personal sins, spiritual and physical death and eternal condemnation.

The first Adam sinned and then, he died spiritually while simultaneously acquiring a sin nature and then he died physically (Genesis 5:5) and this sin nature is passed down to his posterity at physical birth. The last Adam obeyed the Father,
died spiritually as a Substitute for Adam and his posterity, and then died physically to break the power of the sin nature. Then, the last Adam was raised from physical death and received a resurrection body, which would be passed down to His spiritual posterity, namely, those who trust in Him as Savior.

**Substitutionary Spiritual Death of Jesus Christ**

Often in the New Testament, when the word “death” is used for Jesus Christ’s death on the cross, the word contains the figure of speech called “heterosis of number,” which means that the singular form of a word is put for the plural form of the word. The New Testament writers use this figure many times when referring to the death of Jesus Christ on the cross indicating that when they are speaking of this death, they are referring to both His spiritual and physical deaths on the cross. This is indicated by the fact that the first Adam died first spiritually as a result of his disobedience in the Garden of Eden and then physically. Therefore, the Last Adam, Jesus Christ had to die spiritually first and then physically to negate the fall of Adam and to reconcile the first Adam and his progeny, i.e. the human race to a holy God.

His spiritual death was “unique” in that He suffered spiritual death as a “sinless” human being whereas every member of the human race suffers spiritual death the moment they are born into the world. His physical death was “unique” in that He died physically of His own volition. The Lord Jesus Christ did “not” die from suffocation or exhaustion, nor did He bleed to death, or die of a broken heart but rather He died unlike any person in history, namely by His own volition according to John 10:18.

Our Lord’s spiritual death is recorded in Matthew 27:46.

**Matthew 27:45** Now from the sixth hour darkness fell upon all the land until the ninth hour. 46 About the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “ELI, ELI, LAMA SABACHTHANI?” that is, “MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?” (NASB95)

When the Lord Jesus Christ cried out “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? He was experiencing spiritual death meaning that in His human nature he was separated from His Father.

In John 19:30, the Lord triumphantly said “It is finished” while He was still alive and which statement refers to the payment of our sins.

**John 19:30** Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, “It is finished!’ And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.” (NASB95)

Therefore, it was His spiritual death that was the payment for our sins and not His physical death since the consequences of the human race possessing a sin nature and committing personal sins is spiritual death. In His sinless human nature,
our Lord suffered the loss of fellowship with the Father during those last three hours of darkness on the Cross so that we might never suffer the second death in the eternal lake of fire, which is eternal loss of fellowship with God. Therefore, God the Father considers Christ’s spiritual death to be the believer’s since this death dealt with the believer’s problem of spiritual death.

Every person that is born into the world is physically alive yet spiritually dead and possesses a sin nature as a result of God imputing Adam’s sin in the Garden of Eden to his posterity, i.e. the human race. This sin nature and spiritual death manifest itself in the life of a human being through the function of the volition in obeying the desires of the sin nature.

The fact that our Lord’s spiritual death was the payment for our sins and not His literal blood is illustrated in Isaiah 53.

Isaiah 53:10 But the LORD was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief; If He would render Himself as a guilt offering, He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, and the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand. 11 As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied; By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, as He will bear their iniquities. (NASB95)

“Anguish of His soul” refers to the intense suffering of our Lord’s human soul as a result of being separated from the Father on the Cross and experiencing spiritual death as a perfect sinless human being. This suffering no angel or man will ever be able to identify with since no angel or man has kept themselves experientially sinless.

Notice that Isaiah says that the anguish of the Son’s soul while experiencing spiritual death “satisfied” the Father, which refers to propitiation. This passage further substantiates that it was the Lord Jesus Christ’s spiritual death that propitiated the Father and not His literal blood.

The greatest suffering the humanity of Christ endured on the cross was “not” the physical and mental torture of the cross but rather when He experienced separation from His Father during those last three hours on the Cross as a result of receiving the imputation of the sins of the entire world by the justice of God the Father.

The physical suffering that our Lord endured through the scourging and beatings at the hands of the Jews and Romans as well as the crucifixion itself were in fact part of His bearing the judgment for our sins.

Remember, the unbeliever will suffer eternity in the Lake of Fire in a resurrection body according to Daniel 12:1, Romans 2:7, Revelation 20:11-15 and many other passages. This suffering is not only spiritual death but also physical suffering. Thus, since our Lord died spiritually so that no human being will be separated from God for all of eternity in the Lake of Fire so Christ suffered the
physical torture so that no human being will suffer physically forever in the Lake of Fire.

Our Lord’s loss of fellowship with His Father in His humanity during those last three hours in darkness on the Cross was infinitely more painful to our Lord than the physical suffering He had endured and was enduring. Our Lord’s loss of fellowship with His Father in His humanity during those last three hours in darkness on the Cross was valued infinitely more by the Father than the shedding of His literal blood or His physical suffering.

This is not to say that the Father did not value the physical suffering of His Son, or His literal blood, which was sinless, He did, but literal blood though sinless cannot resolve man’s problem of separation from God under spiritual death. A sinless human being suffering the loss of fellowship with the Father was the penalty that had to be paid in order to redeem human souls from the curse of Adam sin of disobedience and spiritual death.

Our Lord died spiritually and was separated from His Father during those last three hours on the cross so that we might never be separated from God for all of eternity due to sin.

During the last three hours on the cross, God the Father imputed every sin in human history-past, present and future to the impeccable humanity of Christ in hypostatic union. Consequently, Christ voluntarily suffered the penalty for this imputation as our Substitute, which was spiritual death (cf. 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13). This spiritual death served as the propitiation for these sins, the reconciliation of the world to God, the redemption of the entire human race out of the slave market of sin and the basis for the forgiveness of sins and eternal salvation.

Imputation is the function of the justice of God in crediting something to someone for cursing or for blessing. Sin is any thought, word or action that is contrary to the will and holy character of God and is thus disobedience to the commands and prohibitions of God. Therefore, during the last three hours on the cross, God the Father imputed every sin in human history-past, present and future to the impeccable humanity of Christ in hypostatic union.

During the last three hours on the cross, God the Father credited to the impeccable humanity of Christ something, which did not belong to Him, namely the sins of the entire world-past, present and future! When the sins of mankind were imputed to the impeccable humanity of Christ, the justice of God took action and pronounced a guilty verdict.

Therefore, when Christ was receiving the imputation of the sins of the world, God was not projecting into the soul of the human nature of Christ the sins of the world, nor does imputation put Him into contact with sin. This imputation made the Lord a curse for us and set Him up to receive the penalty for our sins, which is spiritual death, i.e. separation from God.
When Christ cried “My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?” He was suffering the “consequences” for our sins, which was separation from the Father and was “not” coming into contact with our sins, nor was He becoming literal sin.

Christ could not experience or come into contact with sin unless He Himself chose to sin. You cannot experience or come into contact with sin unless one chooses to sin. Therefore, there is no way possible that the Lord could come into contact with our sins or experience them. Furthermore, the imputation of every sin in history to Christ does “not” mean that Christ became literal sin, which is a heretical statement. If the Lord did become literal sin, then He would no longer be qualified to be our perfect Substitute.

Therefore, Jesus Christ died spiritually meaning that in His human nature, He was separated from His Father in the sense that He lost fellowship with His Father during those last three hours on the Cross. He suffered this spiritual death so that no member of the human race should have to for all of eternity. Thus, the believer is identified with our Lord’s spiritual death since this death spared the believer from the second death in the eternal lake of fire.

Substitutionary Physical Death of Jesus Christ

The physical death of our Lord is recorded in the Gospels (Matthew 27:47-50; Mark 15:22-40; Luke 23:33-49; John 19:16-30). The Lord Jesus Christ did “not” die from suffocation or exhaustion, nor did He bleed to death, or die of a broken heart but rather He died unlike any person in history, namely by His own volition. Remember what our Lord said in John 10:18. If He had bled to death, He would have fainted. The Lord Jesus Christ was in total control of His faculties and was totally and completely alert throughout all His suffering on the cross. Our Lord’s voluntary physical death was another indication to those observing Him at the Cross that He was indeed the Son of God. He died like no other man in history, namely, of His own choosing. This is why the centurion stated that our Lord was the Son of God.

Matthew 27:50 And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. (NASB95)

“Yielded up” is the aorist active indicative form of the verb *aphiemi*, “to dismiss, to release, to let go.” The aorist tense of the verb is a culminative aorist, which views an event from its existing results, the Lord Jesus Christ’s physical death. The active voice expresses the fact that the Lord Jesus died of His own volition since the active voice indicates that the subject produces the action of the verb.
The Lord is the only human being in history to dismiss His own spirit from His body. Every human being that dies physically as a result of a sovereign decision of God but here the Lord chooses to die physically.

Our Lord’s voluntary physical death was another indication to those observing Him at the Cross that He was indeed the Son of God. He died like no other man in history, namely, of His own choosing. Our Lord’s burial is recorded in John 19:38-42.

The perfect sinless humanity of Christ was born trichotomous: (1) Body (2) Soul (3) Spirit. Therefore, our Lord’s physical death was unique because it was a trichotomous separation: (1) His physical body went to the grave (Luke 23:50-53). (2) His human spirit went to heaven (Luke 23:46; John 19:30). (3) His human soul went into Paradise a compartment of Hades (Luke 23:43; Acts 2:27; 2:31; Eph. 4:9).

The Lord was brought back from the dead by three categories of divine omnipotence: (1) Omnipotence of God the Father sent back our Lord’s human spirit to the body in the grave (Acts 2:24; Rom. 6:4; Eph. 1:20; Col. 2:12; 1 Thess. 1:10; 1 Pet. 1:21). (2) Omnipotence of God the Holy Spirit sent back our Lord’s human soul to the body in the grave (Rom. 1:4; 8:11; 1 Pet. 3:18). (3) Omnipotence of God the Son raised His physical body from the grave (John 2:20-23; 6:39-40, 54 10:17-18).

The Lord Jesus Christ died physically in order to deal with the problem of the sin nature in the human race, which is located in the physical body of a person as a result of God imputing Adam’s sin in the Garden of Eden to every person at the moment of physical birth.

Therefore, the Christian’s problem with his indwelling Adamic sin nature is resolved when he is identified with Christ in His physical death through the baptism of the Holy Spirit the moment they were declared justified through faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior (Romans 6:1-10).

Redemption

One of the results of our Lord’s substitutionary spiritual and physical deaths on the cross is that He redeemed the entire human race out from the slave market of sin. “Redemption” refers to that aspect of Christ’s finished work on the Cross—that “purchased” all of humanity out of the slave market of sin. It is appropriated through the non-meritorious decision to believe in Jesus Christ for salvation. Redemption is one of the three major doctrines of Soteriology: (1) Redemption: inward (2) Reconciliation: manward (3) Propitiation: Godward.

The doctrine of redemption refers to the fact that Jesus Christ’s spiritual and physical deaths on the cross were a substitutionary ransom for the benefit of each
and every member of the human race. These unique substitutionary deaths redeemed the entire human race out from the slave market of sin in which each and every member of the human race was born physically alive but spiritually dead.

There are many references in the New Testament to the Lord Jesus Christ “purchasing” the entire human race out of the slave market of sin by means of His voluntary, substitutionary spiritual and physical deaths on the Cross.

Mark 10:45 “For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (ESV)

Matthew 20:28 “even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (ESV)

Acts 20:28 Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. 29 I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. (ESV)

Romans 3:24 being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. (NASB95)

1 Corinthians 1:30 But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption. (NASB95)

1 Corinthians 6:20 for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body. (ESV)

1 Corinthians 7:23 You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men. (ESV)

Galatians 3:13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”—14 so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith. (ESV)

Galatians 4:4 But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. 6 And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” (ESV)

Ephesians 1:7 In whom (the Beloved) we have the redemption through His blood (Christ’s substitutionary spiritual death), the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace. (NASB95)

Colossians 1:13 For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (NASB95)

1 Timothy 2:1 First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, 2 for kings and all who are
in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and
dignity. 3 This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who
desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. 5 For
there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man
Christ Jesus, 6 who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at
the proper time. (NASB95)

Titus 2:11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all
men, 12 instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live
sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, 13 looking for the blessed
hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ
Jesus, 14 who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and
to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.
(NASB95)

Hebrews 9:11 But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things
to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not
made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; 12 and not through the
blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy
place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. 13 For if the blood of
goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been
defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, 14 how much more will the blood
of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to
God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? 15 For
this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that, since a death has
taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed
under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise
of the eternal inheritance. (NASB95)

1 Peter 1:17 If you address as Father the One who impartially judges
according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of
your stay on earth, 18 knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable
things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your
forefathers 19 but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless,
the blood of Christ. (NASB95)

2 Peter 2:1 But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there
will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive
heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon
themselves swift destruction. (ESV)

Revelation 5:9 And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are you to take
the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you
ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and
nation. (ESV)
Revelation 14:1 Then I looked, and behold, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father’s name written on their foreheads. 2 And I heard a voice from heaven like the roar of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder. The voice I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps, 3 and they were singing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and before the elders. No one could learn that song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth. 4 It is these who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are virgins. It is these who follow the Lamb wherever he goes. These have been redeemed from mankind as firstfruits for God and the Lamb, 5 and in their mouth no lie was found, for they are blameless. (ESV)

The Lord Jesus Christ is the Redeemer of the entire human race. He is mankind’s Kinsman-Redeemer. The Lord is the Redeemer of Israel (Ps. 78:35; Isa. 43:14; 44:24; 49:7; 54:5, 8; 60:16). He is redeemer of the Church (1 Cor. 1:30; Gal. 3:13; Eph. 1:7, 14; Col. 1:14; Titus 2:14).

A Kinsman-Redeemer must be related to the one who is being redeemed and must be able to afford the ransom price and thus fulfill its righteous demands. Our Lord fulfilled this in His incarnation by becoming true humanity. As our Kinsman-Redeemer, our Lord had to be like us. The second Person of the Trinity became a man (John 1:14; 1 Tim. 3:16; Heb. 2:14; 1 John 1:1). The Lord Jesus Christ is the one and only Redeemer of mankind and the only sacrifice that God will accept (Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:45; 1 Tim. 2:6). He is the only one qualified to be mankind’s Redeemer due to the fact that He is impeccable (1 Pet. 1:19).

The doctrine of the Kinsman-Redeemer originates in the Old Testament. The Hebrew word in the Old Testament for Redeemer is goel. Kinsman redemption was of persons, estates, and inheritance (Lev. 25:25, 48; Gal. 4:5; Eph. 1:7, 11, 14). The Lord Jesus Christ is a type of Kinsman-Redeemer in that He became like one of us-human. He was able to afford and pay the ransom price which was His substitutionary spiritual and physical deaths, and was also willing to pay the ransom price. Christ as the Kinsman-Redeemer fulfills the type of being willing to redeem. The Kinsman-Redeemer type states that the Redeemer: (1) Must be a kinsman or related by blood (Lev. 25:48-49; Ruth 3:12-13; Heb. 2:14-15) (2) Must be able to pay the redemption price (Ruth 4:4-6; cf. Jer. 50:34; John 10:11, 18) (3) Must be able to pay the righteous demands (Lev. 25:27; Gal. 3:13; 1 Pet. 1:18-19) (4) Must be “willing” to pay the redemption price (John 10:18).

Romans 3:24 teaches that justification is a gift of God’s grace and is made possible by the work of redemption that Jesus Christ accomplished with His voluntary, substitutionary spiritual death on the Cross.

Romans 3:24 being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. (NASB95)
“Through the redemption” is composed of the preposition *dia*, “through” and the articular genitive feminine singular form of the noun *apolutrosis*, “the redemption.”

The noun *apolutrosis*, which means, “to buy back a slave thus making him free by payment of a ransom, the act of release or state of being resulting in release or redemption” (Luke 21:28; Rom. 3:24; 8:23; 1 Cor. 1:30; Eph. 1:7; 1:14; 4:30; Col. 1:14; Heb. 9:15; 11:35).

The noun *apolutrosis* is a compound word composed of the preposition *apo*, which intensifies the meaning of the verb *lutrosis*, “redemption.” The word was used as a technical term for money paid to buy back and set free prisoners of war or to emancipate, to liberate a person from subjection or domination, to free from restraint, control, or the power of another) slaves from their masters.


So, in Romans 3:24, Paul employs the word in a soteriological sense.

In Romans 3:24, the preposition *dia*, “through” is employed with the genitive form of the noun *apolutrosis*, “redemption” as a marker of the means by which makes another event possible. Therefore, it indicates that redemption is the means which makes possible the justification of the sinner who exercises faith in Jesus Christ.

The noun *apolutrosis* functions as a “genitive of means” indicating the “instrumentality” or “means” by which God declares a sinner justified. Therefore, as a “genitive of means” the noun *apolutrosis* indicates that the redemption is “the means, which makes possible for God to declare the sinner justified.

Where the instrumental of means *charis*, “grace” answers the question as to “why” or on “what basis” God can declare the sinner justified, the genitive of means *apolutrosis*, “redemption” answers the question as to “how” God can justify the sinner.

Where the instrumental of means *charis*, “grace” indicates that God’s grace is the “basis” in which He can declare the sinner justified, the genitive of means *apolutrosis*, “redemption” indicates the “means” by which He can do so. This is not a “genitive of agency” even though *apolutrosis* is the object of the preposition *dia*, which ordinarily indicates “intermediate agency” with the genitive case. The reason for this is that the noun *apolutrosis* does not signify a personal agent by whom the action in view is accomplished.
The definite article preceding the noun *apolutrosis* is “kataphoric” meaning that it is pointing to something in the text that immediately follows. The “kataphoric” article before the noun *apolutrosis* is anticipatory and is followed by a phrase that qualifies for the reader who accomplished this redemption for the sinner so that he might be declared justified by God.

**Romans 3:24, “being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.”**

“Which is” is the genitive feminine singular form of the definite article *ho*, which functions as a “substantiver” meaning it nominalizes (i.e. converts to a noun) the prepositional phrase *en Christo Iesou, “in Christ Jesus”* and thus we can translate it with the noun phrase “which is.”

“In Christ Jesus” is composed of the preposition *en*, “in” and the dative masculine singular form of the proper name *Christos, “Christ,”* which is followed by the dative masculine singular form of the proper name *Iesous, “Jesus.”*

The proper name *Christos* is a technical word designating the humanity of our Lord as the promised Savior for all mankind who is unique as the incarnate Son of God and totally and completely guided and empowered by the Spirit as the Servant of the Father.

The word denotes the Messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth, thus He is the Deliverer of the human race in 3 areas through His death, resurrection, ascension and session: (1) Satan (2) Cosmic System (3) Old Sin Nature.

The word *Christos* also signifies the uniqueness of Jesus of Nazareth who is the God-Man and signifies His 3-fold office: (1) Prophet (2) Priest (3) King.

The Lord’s Messiahship has a 4-fold significance: (1) Separation unto God. (2) Authorization from God. (3) Divine enablement. (4) The coming Deliverer.

*Christos* signifies that Jesus of Nazareth served God the Father exclusively and this was manifested by His execution of the Father’s salvation plan which was accomplished by His voluntary substitutionary spiritual death on the Cross. The word signifies that Jesus of Nazareth has been given authority by God the Father to forgive sins, give eternal life, and authority over all creation and every creature as a result of His execution of the Father’s salvation plan. It signifies that Jesus of Nazareth was perpetually guided and empowered by God the Holy Spirit during His first Advent.

Lastly, *Christos* signifies that Jesus of Nazareth is the promised deliverer of the human race from the bondage of Satan, his cosmic system and the old Adamic sin nature.

This word contains the figure of “metonymy of the cause” where the Person of Jesus Christ is put for His substitutionary spiritual death on the Cross, which redeemed mankind out of the slave market of sin.
The preposition *en* is a marker of means indicating that the Lord Jesus Christ and His substitutionary spiritual death on the Cross was the “instrument” or “means” that God the Father employed to redeem mankind out of the slave market of sin. Therefore, the proper name *Christos* functions as a “dative instrumental of means” indicating that substitutionary spiritual death of Jesus Christ on the Cross was the “instrument” or “the means” that God the Father used to redeem mankind out of the slave market of sin.

*Jesus* is the dative masculine singular form of the proper name *Iesous*, which refers to the impeccable human nature of the Lord Jesus Christ. This word functions as a “dative of simple apposition” meaning that it stands next a noun in the same case and clarifies who is mentioned. Therefore, the proper name *Iesous*, “Jesus” stands in apposition to the proper noun *Christos*, “Christ” and clarifies for the reader that Jesus is the Christ.

Since there were many in the first century who claimed to be the Messiah, the Christ, Paul clarifies for us who He is, namely, Jesus of Nazareth. *Christos*, “Christ” precedes *Iesous*, “Jesus” emphasizing that redemption was accomplished by the Lord Jesus functioning in His role as the Savior of all men as denoted by the former.

The impeccable human nature of the incarnate Son of God, Jesus Christ accomplished the work of redeeming mankind out of the slave market of sin since deity can never die a spiritual death, only a human being can. The spiritual death of the impeccable human nature of Jesus Christ redeemed the entire human race out of the slave market of sin in which they were born physically alive but spiritually dead and yet qualified for God’s grace, which is for the undeserving.

1 Timothy 2:1 First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, 2 for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. 3 This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time. (NASB95)

“Who gave Himself as a ransom for all” is composed of the articular nominative masculine singular aorist active participle form of the verb *didomi* (δίδωμι), “given” and the dative third person masculine singular form of the reflexive pronoun *heautou* (ἐαυτοῦ), “Himself” and the accusative neuter singular form of the noun *antilutron* (ἀντίλυτρον), “as a ransom” and the preposition *huper* (ὑπέρ), “on behalf of” and the genitive masculine plural form of the adjective *pas* (πᾶς), “of all.”
The verb *didomi* means “to give” in the sense of dedicating oneself for a specific purpose of canceling a debt on someone’s behalf. Here it is used of the Lord Jesus Christ dedicating Himself to the specific purpose of canceling the sin debt of the entire human race.

The aorist tense of the verb is a “constative” aorist describing in summary fashion the period of time when Jesus Christ was on the cross and suffered both a spiritual and physical death. The former cancelled the debt of mankind with respect to personal sins whereas the latter cancelled the debt of mankind with respect to the sin nature, which resides in the genetic structure of mankind (cf. Genesis 3:19; Romans 6:6). The active voice of the verb indicates that the Lord Jesus Christ as the subject performed the action of giving Himself for the specific purpose of canceling the sin debt of the entire human race. The verb functions as a substantive participle as indicated by the definite article preceding it, which functions as a substantiver meaning that it converts the participle into a substantive. Therefore, this can be reflected by translating the article with a relative pronoun “who.” The word also functions as a nominative subject. We will translate the verb *didomi*, “who gave.”

The reflexive pronoun *heautou* refers to the Lord Jesus Christ. It is used to highlight the participation of the subject, in the verbal action, as indirect object. Its force is frequently to indicate that the subject is also the object of the action of the verb or in other words, it reflects back on the subject. Therefore, the reflexive personal pronoun *heautou* means “Himself” and emphasizes the action of Jesus Christ giving Himself in the sense of dedicating Himself for the specific purpose of solving the human race’s problem of the sin nature and personal sins. The word denotes that the Lord dedicated Himself to the Father’s will in order to provide the offer of salvation for the entire human race. It also indicates that the Lord dedicated Himself to deliver the human race from the sin nature, personal sins, spiritual and physical death, condemnation from the Law, Satan and his cosmic system and eternal condemnation.

The word emphasizes the voluntary nature of Christ’s spiritual and physical deaths on the cross. Our Lord’s spiritual and physical deaths on the cross were “voluntary” in that He “chose” to suffer these deaths in order to solve the human race’s problem with sin. He also chose to suffer in order to accomplish the Father’s will and provide salvation for the entire human race. These deaths were also self-sacrificial in nature in that the Lord was willing to deny self in order to serve the Father and the human race and come to the aid of the human race to deal with their sin problem.
The noun *antilutron* is a rare compound word that is composed of the preposition *anti*, “instead, in place of” and the noun *lutron*, “ransom,” thus the word literally means “substitute-ransom” as Morris rightly concludes.\(^\text{18}\)

The word *antilutron* does not appear in classical Greek or the Septuagint and only once in the Greek New Testament, namely here in 1 Timothy 2:6. However, the combination of the *anti* and *lutron* does appear in other literature.\(^\text{19}\) It also occurs in Mark 10:45 and Matthew 20:28. The combination of *anti* and *lutron* in these two passage describes Christ’s spiritual and physical deaths as a substitutionary ransom on behalf of the entire human race.

Louw and Nida define the word “the means or instrument by which release or deliverance is made possible—‘means of release, ransom.’”\(^\text{20}\)

In 1 Timothy 2:6, the noun *antilutron* means “substitute-ransom” and like Mark 10:45 and Matthew 20:28, it describes Jesus Christ’s spiritual and physical deaths on the cross as a substitutionary ransom for the benefit of each and every member of the human race. These unique substitutionary deaths redeemed the entire human race out from the slave market of sin in which they were born physically alive but spiritually dead.

Redemption results in the forgiveness of sins (Isa. 44:22; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14; Heb. 9:12-15). It is the basis of justification (Rom. 3:24). It delivers from the curse of the Law (Gal. 3:13; 4:4-6). Redemption is the basis for sanctification (Eph. 5:25-27). It is the basis for the eternal inheritance of believer (Heb. 9:15). Redemption is the basis for the strategic victory of Christ in the angelic conflict (Col. 2:14-15; Heb. 2:14-15). Redemption of the soul in salvation leads to redemption of the body in resurrection (Eph. 1:14). Redemption is the ultimate status of regenerated human beings forever (Rom. 8:23; Eph. 4:30).

*Reconciliation*

Another thing that our Lord’s spiritual and physical deaths on the cross accomplished is that they reconciled sinners to a holy God. Reconciliation is God’s peace treaty with the entire human race. Reconciliation removes the Barrier, which separates God from man (Eph. 2:14-16).

The peace offering in the Old Testament depicts reconciliation (Lev. 3; 7:11-38; 8:15). The peace offering emphasizes the Person of Christ. The peace offering sets forth God as propitiated and the sinner reconciled. The Author of the Peace Treaty is God the Father (2 Cor. 5:18a; Eph. 1:3-7; 2:14-16). Man was the enemy of God (Rom. 5:6-10; Eph. 2:1-5). God the Father is the Initiator of the peace treaty with

\(^{18}\) A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, page 799

\(^{19}\) Josephus, Antiquities 14.7.1

\(^{20}\) Josephus, Antiquities 14.7.1
man. Man is totally helpless to make peace with God (Rom. 3:10, 23; 8:5-8; Eph. 2:1). The Lord Jesus Christ is the Mediator of the Peace Treaty (2 Cor. 5:18b; 1 Tim. 2:5). The Lord is the peacemaker (Eph. 2:14).

This peace treaty took place inside the Person of Christ, the God-Man (2 Cor. 5:19a; Eph. 2:14-16; Col. 1:22; 1 Pet. 2:24). God offers the entire world a full pardon of their sin through faith in Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 5:19b; Acts 13:38; Eph. 1:7; 4:32b; Col. 1:14; 2:13; 1 John 2:12). Every believer in the Church Age has been an ambassador for Christ (2 Cor. 5:20a).

The terms of the Peace Treaty is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 16:31; John 3:16, 36). Reconciliation is totally the work of God. It is God’s peace treaty with the entire human race or the removal of the Barrier, which separated God from man and is a result of the finished work of Christ on the Cross (2 Cor. 5:18; Eph. 2:14-16; Col. 1:20-21).

Romans 5:10 For if, while we were enemies (spiritual death), we were reconciled to God by the (spiritual) death of His Son, much more now being reconciled, we shall be delivered by His life. (NASB95)

2 Corinthians 5:18 Now all these things (New Creation) originate from the God (the Father), the One who reconciled us to Himself through the intermediate agency of Christ and gave to us for our benefit the ministry of this reconciliation (our Royal Ambassadorship), 19 specifically, that God the Father was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not charging their personal sins to their account and has deposited in us (the right lobes of born-again believers) the doctrine of this reconciliation (the Gospel). 20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, since the God (the Father) is urgently appealing through us: We beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

21 He (Christ) who never knew sin experientially (Christ was impeccable), on behalf of us (as our Substitute), was made (the representative of) sin in order that we might become the very righteousness of God in Him. (Author’s translation)

Ephesians 2:14 For He Himself is our peace, Who (the Lord Jesus Christ) made both one, and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, 15 by abolishing in His physical body the enmity, the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, that in Himself (the Lord Jesus Christ) He might make the two (Jews and Gentiles) into one new man, establishing peace, 16 and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it (the Cross) having put to death the enmity (the Mosaic Law). (NASB95)

Colossians 1:20 And through Him (the Lord Jesus Christ) to reconcile all things to Himself (God the Father), having made peace through the blood (substitutionary spiritual death of Christ) of His cross, through Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven. 21 And although you were formerly
alienated and hostile in mind, in evil deeds, 22 yet He (Lord Jesus Christ) has now reconciled you in His human body through death (spiritual death), in order to present you before Him (God the Father) holy (spiritual life after salvation) and blameless (in a resurrection body) and beyond reproach. (NASB95)

A peace treaty is when two enemies agree to stop fighting against each other. We are no longer enemies of God because of the Work of our Lord on the Cross.

2 Corinthians 5:18 Now all these things (New Creation) originate from the God (the Father), the One who reconciled us to Himself through the intermediate agency of Christ and gave to us for our benefit the ministry of this reconciliation (our Royal Ambassadorship), 19 specifically, that God the Father was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not charging their personal sins to their account and has deposited in us (the right lobes of born-again believers) the doctrine of this reconciliation (the Gospel). 20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, since the God (the Father) is urgently appealing through us: We beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

2 Corinthians 5:19 He (Christ) who never knew sin experientially (Christ was impeccable), on behalf of us (as our Substitute), was made (the representative of) sin in order that we might become the very righteousness of God in Him. (Author’s translation)

Outline of the Peace Treaty (2 Cor. 5:18-21): (1) Author of the Peace Treaty: 2 Corinthians 5:18a, “Now all these things (New creation) originate from the God (the Father), the One who reconciled us to Himself.” (2) Mediator of the Peace Treaty: 2 Corinthians 5:18b, “through the intermediate agency of Christ” (3) Gift for the Pardoned: 2 Corinthians 5:18c, “and gave to us for our benefit the ministry of this reconciliation (our Royal Ambassadorship)” (4) Initiator of the Peace Treaty: 2 Corinthians 5:19a, “Specifically, that God the Father was reconciling the world to Himself” (5) Location of the Peace Treaty: 2 Corinthians 5:19b, “in Christ” (6) Full Pardon for the Enemy: 2 Corinthians 5:19b, “not imputing their personal sins to their account” (7) Acceptance of the Terms of Peace: 2 Corinthians 5:19c, “and has deposited in us (the hearts of born-again believers) the doctrine of this reconciliation (the Gospel).” (8) Ambassadors of Peace: 2 Corinthians 5:20a, “Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ” (9) God’s Appeal for Peace: 2 Corinthians 5:20b, “Since the God (the Father) is urgently appealing through us: We beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.” (10) Work of the Mediator: 2 Corinthians 5:21a, “He (Christ) who never knew sin experientially (Christ was impeccable), on behalf of us (as our Substitute), was made (the representative of) sin.” (11) Purpose of the Peace Treaty: 2 Corinthians 5:21b, “in order that we might become the very righteousness of God in Him.”
Propitiation

Propitiation is the Godward side of salvation whereby the voluntary substitutionary spiritual death of the impeccable humanity of Christ in hypostatic union satisfied the righteous demands of a holy God that the sins of the entire world -past, present and future be judged.

Leviticus 1:4 “And he (sinner) shall lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering (picturing the imputation of our sins to Christ), that it may be accepted for him to make atonement (propitiation) on his behalf. (NASB95)

Romans 3:21 But now, independently of seeking to be justified by obedience to the Law, the righteousness originating from God is being manifested at the present time while simultaneously being attested to by the Law and the Prophets. 22 Namely, the righteousness originating from God through faith in Jesus who is the Christ for the benefit of each and every person who does believe for there is, as an eternal spiritual truth, absolutely no distinction. 23 For each and every person has sinned consequently they are always failing to measure up to the glory originating from God 24 with the result that they might, as an eternal spiritual truth, be undeservedly justified based upon His grace by means of the redemption, which is by means of the spiritual death of Christ who is Jesus 25 whom God the Father offered publicly as a propitiatory gift through faith by means of His blood in order to demonstrate His righteousness because of the deliberate and temporary suspension of judgment of the sins, which have taken place in the past on the basis of the tolerance originating from the character and nature of God the Father. 26 Correspondingly, in relation to the demonstration of His righteousness during this present distinct period of history, that He Himself is, as an eternal spiritual truth, inherently righteous, even while justifying anyone by means of faith in Jesus. (Author’s translation)

Hebrews 2:17 Therefore, He (the Lord Jesus Christ) had to be made like His brethren (humanity) in all things, that He might become a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. (NASB95)

1 John 2:2 And He Himself (the Lord Jesus Christ) is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world. (NASB95)

1 John 4:10 In this is love, not that we loved God (the Father), but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. (NASB95)

Romans 3:25 whom God the Father offered publicly as a propitiatory gift through faith by means of His blood in order to demonstrate His
righteousness because of the deliberate and temporary suspension of judgment of the sins, which have taken place in the past on the basis of the tolerance originating from the character and nature of God the Father. (Author’s translation)

“As a propitiation” is the accusative neuter singular form of the adjective hilasterion, which means, “propitiatory gift.” The adjective hilasterion has the following cognates: (1) hilaskomai, “propitiate, conciliate, make gracious, be gracious” (Luke 18:13; Hebrews 2:17) (2) hileos, “gracious, merciful” (Matthew 16:22; Hebrews 8:12) (3) hilasmos, “propitiatory sacrifice” (1 John 2:2, 4:10) (4) hilasterion, “that which propitiates, means of propitiation, mercy-seat, propitiatory gift” (Romans 3:25; Hebrews 9:5).

Hilasterion is related to hilasterios and belongs to a group of words, which includes the verb hilaskomai, “to make propitiation for,” and the noun hilasmos, “propitiatory sacrifice.”

In classical Greek, “propitiation” refers to the act of appeasing the Greek gods by a sacrifice and was an effort to, as Wuest writes, “to buy off the anger of the gods and buy his love.”

Kittel's Theological Dictionary of the New Testament has this remark, “Hilasmos includes various cultic acts such as prayers, sacrifices, purifications, dances and games. These may be repeated annually. Since the deities are the guardians of order, of law and morality, offences against demand hilasmos (propitiation) of the deity.”

Of course, this is not the case with the God of the Bible since His justice must be satisfied before He can do anything for us.

The LXX uses the word hilasterion 22 times for the Hebrew kapporeth, which functions as a technical term for the mercy seat on the Ark of the Covenant in both the LXX and NT. The mercy seat was the golden lid of the Ark of the Covenant.

The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament commenting on the Hebrew term kapporeth, state the following, “is not related to mercy and of course was not a seat. The word is derived from the root “to atone.” The Greek equivalent in the LXX is usually hilasterion, “place or object of propitiation,” a word which is applied to Christ in Romans 3:25. The translation ‘mercy seat’ does not sufficiently express the fact that the lid of the ark was the place where the blood was sprinkled on the Day of Atonement. ‘Place of atonement’ would perhaps be more expressive.”

Exodus 25 records God’s instruction to Israel regarding the Ark of the Covenant to cover it with a mercy seat.

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Exodus 25:10 “They shall construct an ark of acacia wood two and a half cubits long, and one and a half cubits wide, and one and a half cubits high. 11 You shall overlay it with pure gold, inside and out you shall overlay it, and you shall make a gold molding around it. 12 You shall cast four gold rings for it and fasten them on its four feet, and two rings shall be on one side of it and two rings on the other side of it. 13 You shall make poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold. 14 You shall put the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark, to carry the ark with them. 15 The poles shall remain in the rings of the ark; they shall not be removed from it. 16 You shall put into the ark the testimony which I shall give you. 17 You shall make a mercy seat of pure gold, two and a half cubits long and one and a half cubits wide. 18 You shall make two cherubim of gold, make them of hammered work at the two ends of the mercy seat. 19 Make one cherub at one end and one cherub at the other end; you shall make the cherubim of one piece with the mercy seat at its two ends. 20 The cherubim shall have their wings spread upward, covering the mercy seat with their wings and facing one another; the faces of the cherubim are to be turned toward the mercy seat. 21 You shall put the mercy seat on top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the testimony which I will give to you. 22 There I will meet with you; and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony, I will speak to you about all that I will give you in commandment for the sons of Israel.” (NASB95)

The ark was the most important and sacred object of Israel’s worship. Verses 10-15 provide the reader the instructions for building it. Verse 16 presents instructions for placing the Ten Commandments in it. In verses 17-21, we have the instructions for the mercy seat and verse 22 the meeting above it.

“Ark” is the noun ʾǎrōn (אֲרֹן), which was a chest or ornate box containing sacred artifacts of worship. The ark was the only piece of furniture within the Holy of Holies. It was called the “Ark of the Covenant” (Hebrew: ‘aron berit, Num. 10:33), or “Ark of the Testimony” (Hebrew: ‘aron ha`edut, Ex. 25:22), from the law that was kept therein. It was made of acacia wood two and a half cubits long, one and a half cubits broad, and one and a half cubits high (external dimensions) and was plated inside and out with pure gold.

Running around each side was a gold border extending above the top of the Ark, so as to keep the lid from moving. This lid was called the “mercy seat” (Ex. 25:20, 22, Hebrew: kapporet, a “covering”), and was the same size as the Ark itself, and was made of acacia wood covered with gold.

The ark was transported by means of two gold-covered poles run through two gold rings on each side, from which they were not to be moved (25:15) unless it might be necessary to remove them in order to cover the Ark when the Tabernacle
was moved (Num. 4:6). Upon the lid, or mercy seat, or at the ends of the ark, as in
the temple, were placed the cherubim, probably figures beaten out of gold, as was
the lampstand. In shape, they were probably human, with the exception of their
wings, though some authorities think they were of the same complex form as the
cherubim mentioned in Ezekiel (Ezekiel 1:5-14). They were no doubt the normal
or full height of a man and are always spoken of as maintaining an upright position
(2 Chronicles 3:13). They stood facing each other, looking down upon the mercy
seat, with their wings forward in a brooding attitude (Ex. 25:20; cf. Deut. 32:11).
The golden censer, with which the high priest once a year entered the Most Holy
Place, was doubtless set upon this lid.

The ark contained the two tables of stone on which Yahweh wrote the Ten
Commandments, or rather those prepared by Moses from the original, broken by
him when he heard of Israel’s idolatry (Ex. 31:18-34:29; Deut. 9:10-10:4); and the
copy of the law, written by Moses (31:26), presumed by some to be the Pentateuch
in full, and thought to be the same as was afterward discovered in the time of
Josiah (2 Kings 22:8).

The law must, in the meanwhile, have been removed, together with all the
contents, because in the days of Solomon the ark contained the two tablets only (1
Kings 8:9). The ark also contained a golden jar of miraculously preserved manna
(Ex. 16:33-34) and “Aaron’s rod which budded” (Heb. 9:4; cf. Num. 17:10).

The materials, contents and employment of the ark of the covenant (Ex. 25:10-
22) were significant. In its materials, acacia wood and gold, the ark was a type of
the humanity and deity of Christ. The ark portrays the Lord Jesus Christ in
hypostatic union as the God-Man, in other words, undiminished deity and true
humanity in one person forever.

Acacia wood grew in the desert and fittingly portrayed Christ’s humanity as a
“root out of parched ground” (Isaiah 53:2). The fact that the Ark was overlaid with
pure gold (Ex. 25:11) suggested deity in manifestation.

The employment of the ark, particularly the mercy seat, typified the divine
throne. It was transformed from a throne of judgment to a throne of grace as far as
the sinner in Israel was concerned by the blood of the atonement that was sprinkled
upon it. The blood sprinkled on the mercy seat on the Day of Atonement typified
the substitutionary spiritual and physical deaths of Jesus Christ on the Cross, which
propitiated the holy demands of the Father.

The cherubim with outstretched wings guarded the integrity or holiness of
the mercy seat. One cherubim typified the righteousness of God and the other
cherubim typified the justice of God. Therefore, the cherubims typified the
integrity of God which cannot compromise with sin but has been perfectly dealt
with and satisfied by the voluntary substitutionary spiritual and physical deaths of
Jesus Christ on the Cross, which was typified itself by the blood of the animal.
The Ark was the commencement of everything in the tabernacle symbolism. It was placed in the Holy of Holies, showing that God begins from Himself in His outreach toward man in revelation (John 1:18; Heb. 1:3). On the other hand, in the human approach the worship begins from without, moving toward God in the very center of the holiest place. Man begins at the bronze altar, that is, the cross, where atonement is made in the light of the fire of God’s judgment.

Exodus 25:10 says that the ark was to measure two and a half cubits by one and a half cubits. The cubit is the Egyptian royal cubit equal to approximately 20.625 inches and the common estimate for the cubit is 18 inches. A cubit was the distance from the tip of a man’s middle finger to the end of his elbow when his hand was held flat and straight in the plane of his forearm, which is about 18 inches.

Verse 12 makes clear that the ark was not to touch the ground since it would have feet. Only the bottom of the feet could touch the ground. The feet had rings attached to them. One ring protruded to the side from each of the feet. This was so a gilded acacia wood pole could be run through the rings on each side (verses 13-14). The ark was lifted by the ends of the poles and thus transported.

The special quality of the ark was protected by having the rings in the feet and not in any other part of the ark. Thus, only the feet would be scratched. The poles were to remain in the rings of the ark to minimize the possibility of damage as well as wear and tear to the poles.

The ark symbolized God’s presence as well as His holiness and in addition His covenant blessing upon the Israelites who were to respect this symbol, which portrayed the reality of God’s presence.

The Shekinah glory appeared in the Tabernacle in Israel (Exodus 33:9-11, 18-23; 40:34-38). Between the cherubim was the Shekinah (Hebrew: shekina, “residence”), the cloud in which Yahweh appeared above the mercy seat (Ex. 25:22; cf. Lev. 16:2). It was not the cloud of incense (16:13), but the manifest appearance (pre-incarnate appearance of Christ or theophany of Christ) of the divine glory. Yahweh manifested His essential presence in this cloud; therefore, no unclean and sinful man could go before the mercy seat. Not even the anointed high priest could go before it of his own pleasure or without the expiatory blood sacrifice or he would be killed by the Lord instantly.

However, the ark not only had a symbolic value but also a practical value as well in the sense that it held something extremely important, namely the Ten Commandments.

“Testimony” is the noun ʿeḏūṯ (ʾĕ·ḏūṯ) (ay·dooth’), which is the Decalogue or Ten Commandments according to Exodus 24:12; 31:18 and Deuteronomy 4:13; 9:9 as well as 1 Kings 8:9. This word identifies the Ten Commandments as the witness or affirmation of God’s commandments belonging to His covenant with
Israel. It also expressed God’s will and the duty of the Israelites. In other cultures important documents were put at the feet of the gods in the temples.\footnote{Biblical Studies Press. (2006; 2006). The NET Bible First Edition Notes (Ex 25:12–16). Biblical Studies Press.}

“The Mercy seat” is the noun kāpṑ-rēṯ (כַּפֹרֶת) (kap-ō’-reth), which means “covering” and was a lid on top of the Ark of the Testimony and was the place where sins were forgiven. It was the same size as the Ark itself, and was made of acacia wood covered with gold.

Now, in Romans 3:25, Paul’s use of the adjective hilasterion, “propitiation” recalls the “gift offering” in Leviticus chapter two and not the “burnt offering” in Leviticus chapter one. The reason this is the case is that the word refers to the fact that Jesus Christ is the “propitiatory gift” from the Father whose spiritual death satisfied the demands of His holiness, which required that human sin be judged.

There were five Levitical offerings authorized by the Mosaic Law (Lev. 1-6). The “burnt offering” taught propitiation with emphasis on the work of Christ (Lev. 1) whereas the “gift offering” taught propitiation but this bloodless offering portrayed the perfect Person of Jesus Christ (Lev. 2). The “peace offering” called for the shedding of blood and taught the doctrine of reconciliation (Lev. 3). The “sin offering” taught the forgiveness of unknown sins, which John calls in 1 John 1:9, “all unrighteousness.” The “trespass offering” taught the confession of known sins (See 1 John 1:9; Psalm 32:1-5).

Therefore, hilasterion, “propitiatory sacrifice” corresponds to the gift offering in Leviticus 2:1-16, which emphasizes the Person of Christ.

The “grain” offering is really a gift offering since it is mistranslated in the NASB. The word in the Hebrew is minchah, which is from manach, “to give.” Manach is used in secular contexts of gifts to superior persons particularly kings and conveyed the attitude of homage and submission to the king. The spiritual use of the term derives its meaning from the secular, thus, minchah is a gift of grain.

The gift offering viewed propitiation from the aspect of the Perfect Person of Christ. The minchah communicates the fact that it takes a perfect gift Jesus Christ, the God-Man to satisfy or propitiate a perfect Giver (God the Father). The significance of the gift offering is that it pictured approaching God on the basis of the merits of the promised Messiah.

In Romans 3:25, Paul’s use of the adjective hilasterion also recalls the one of the seven feasts of Israel called “the Day of Atonement.”

Israel was commanded by the Lord in the Old Testament to observe seven Feasts: (1) Passover (Leviticus 23:4-5; 1 Corinthians 5:7); (2) Unleavened Bread (Leviticus 23:6-8; 1 Corinthians 5:7-8); (3) First Fruits (Leviticus 23:9-14; 1 Corinthians 15:23); (4) Pentecost (Leviticus 23:15-22; Acts 2:1-4); (5) Trumpets
(Leviticus 23:23-25; 1 Corinthians 15:52); (6) Day of Atonement (Leviticus 23:26-32; 1 John 2:2); (7) Tabernacles (Leviticus 23:33-44; John 7:2).

The Feast of Atonement was a day of confession and will represent that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Messiah and represents the Second Advent (Documentation: Leviticus 23:24-32; Zechariah 12:10; 13:1, 6).

The Day of Atonement was a most solemn of these great Feasts (Lev. 16:26-32) and is derived from the Hebrew Yom Kippur. The Day of Atonement was the only day in which anyone was ever permitted to enter the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle, or in the Temple. Only the high priest was permitted to enter it, and then only after he had brought an offering on behalf on his own sins (Lev. 16:13). Sacrificed on the Day of Atonement was a young bull (Lev. 16:6), which was for the sins of the high priest.

Also, two goats were sacrificed for the sins of the people (Lev. 16:7-10; 15-16). The high priest sacrificed the bull on the brass altar as a sin offering for himself (Lev. 16:11).

The blood of the animal represented Christ’s spiritual death on the Cross and was collected in a basin and carried past the huge curtain into the Holy of Holies and then sprinkled on the mercy seat (kapporeth). The mercy seat was the golden lid that fit over the top of the Ark of the Covenant, which contains the emblems of Israel’s sin.

The three items in the Ark: (1) A pot of manna that called to mind man’s rejection of divine provision (2) Aaron’s rod that budded that exhibited rejection of God’s plan regarding the authority of the Levitical priesthood. (3) Tables of the Law that were a reminder of Israel’s violations of the Law.

The Ark of the Covenant was overlaid with gold and stood in the Holy of Holies. The acacia wood of the box spoke of Christ’s humanity and the gold spoke of His deity. Together these materials represented Christ in hypostatic union or His uniqueness as the God-Man.

Now, on each end of the mercy seat stood the golden figure of a cherub with one representing God’s righteousness and the other His justice. Righteousness and justice looked down on sin (the emblems in the Ark) and condemned it. Once a year, the blood of the young bull was sprinkled on top of the mercy seat. When righteousness and justice looked down, they saw the completed work of Christ covering the sins of the high priest.

The high priest sacrificed one of the goats as an offering for the people. The live goat was sent off into the wilderness after Aaron had laid both of his hands on its head thus transferring the iniquities of the people to the goat (Lev. 16:20-22). The “scapegoat” represents that aspect of Christ’s work, which puts away our sins (John 1:29). The goat that was slain (the Lord’s lot) is that aspect of Christ’s death, which satisfies the demands of God’s holiness that required sin be judged.
Aaron took the goats blood and entered into the Holy of Holies a second time to sprinkle the blood on the mercy seat. This time the spiritual death of Christ on the cross was dramatized as covering the sins of all the people. God does not remember our sins for they were put away and paid for by our Lord’s spiritual death (Psa. 103:12).

The fulfillment of the Old Testament ritual came in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ has obtained a much greater ministry than Aaron (Heb. 8:6) whose priesthood was a mere shadow of Christ’s Royal Priesthood (Heb. 8:1-6).

Our Lord did not have to offer a sacrifice for Himself as the Levitical high priest had to for himself for He was without sin, impeccable (Heb. 9:26-27). Instead, the Lord Jesus Christ offered Himself up once as a sacrifice to pay for the sins of all mankind (Heb. 9:27; 9:28a).

The Tabernacle made on earth, which was made with human hands, was just a picture of the real one in heaven. The animal blood sacrifices were shadows or copies of the true sacrifice that was to take place on Calvary when our Lord died spiritually for our sins (Heb. 9:23-26). Our Lord’s sacrifice on the Cross-fulfilled completely the Mosaic sacrifices. His spiritual death paid for or covered our sins permanently, as the blood on the mercy seat covered the sins of Israel temporarily (Heb. 9:12-14; 10:4).

The Lord Jesus Christ entered the real Holy of Holies and not the shadow one on earth (Heb. 10:24). The Lord Jesus Christ entered heaven one time and sat down at the right hand of God the Father (Heb. 10:12). The animal sacrifices in the Old Testament pictured the future sacrifice of Christ and were merely shadows of Christ’s work on the cross (Heb. 10:1).

The phrase in Romans 3:25, “sins previously committed,” teaches that the sins committed in the Old Testament were not paid for by the animal sacrifices but with our Lord’s sacrifice on the Cross at Calvary. The rituals performed in the Old Testament were not the reality. The reality or the sacrifice that propitiated God was the sacrifice of His Son on the Cross and not the animal sacrifices (Heb. 10:4-10). Ritual without reality is meaningless. The animal sacrifices were merely teaching aids to communicate the doctrines of propitiation, redemption and reconciliation to those who lived in OT dispensations.

The adjective hilasterion appears in only two passages in the Greek New Testament (Romans 3:25 and Hebrews 9:5).

Many expositors consider hilasterion as functioning in Romans 3:25 as a substantive rather than as an adjective, thus effecting their interpretation and translation of the word. Thus, they translate hilasterion, “the place of propitiation” or “mercy seat” referring to the fact that Jesus Christ is the “place of propitiation” or the fulfillment of the “mercy seat” in the Old Testament. They substantiate this
interpretation and translation on the basis that the word is used in the Septuagint to translate *kapporeth*, which referred to the mercy seat on the Ark of the Covenant. However, as Robertson pointed out, citing Deissmann and even Scofield suggested *hilasterion* should be translated as an adjective meaning “propitiatory gift,” or “the gift which procures propitiation.”

This indicates then that Jesus Christ is the “propitiatory gift” from the Father whose spiritual death on the Cross satisfied the demands of God’s holiness, which required that human sin be judged. Therefore, the noun *hilasmos* in 1 John 2:2 and 4:10 refers to the “propitiatory sacrifice” of Jesus Christ.

*Hilaskomai* in Hebrews 2:17 refers to the act of propitiating the Father through Jesus Christ’s spiritual death. Whereas *hilasterion* in Romans 3:25, refers to the fact that Jesus Christ is the “propitiatory gift” from the Father.

In Hebrews 9:5, the adjective *hilasterion* should be translated as a substantive since it is clearly referring to the mercy seat on the Ark of the Covenant in Old Testament Israel. However, in Romans 3:25, the adjective should not be translated as a substantive but rather as an adjective since the verb *protithemi* in this same passage means, “to offer publicly,” thus indicating that God the Father gave His Son as a “propitiatory gift” to sinful mankind.

The adjective “propitiatory” means “serving or intended to propitiate.” Therefore, Jesus Christ was a gift from God the Father to sinful mankind whose purpose was to serve mankind by propitiating the demands of God’s holiness that required that human sin be judged.

Therefore, we can conclude in Romans 3:25 that Paul is saying that God the Father offered His Son Jesus Christ publicly at the Cross of Calvary as a propitiatory gift in the sense that His spiritual death on the Cross satisfied the demands of God’s holiness that required that human sin be judged.

The adjective *hilasterion*, “propitiatory gift” along with the words *hilasmos* and *hilaskomai* help to form the doctrine of propitiation and recall the Day of Atonement and the Burnt and Gift Offerings in the Leviticus 1 and 2.

Propitiation along with redemption and reconciliation form the “Finished Work” of Jesus Christ on the Cross. “Propitiation” is the Godward side of salvation whereby the voluntary substitutionary spiritual death of the impeccable humanity of Christ in hypostatic union satisfied the righteous demands of a holy God that the sins of the entire world-past, present and future be judged.

“Propitiation” means that our Lord’s spiritual death on the Cross “satisfied” God’s holiness, which demanded that the sins of the entire human race be judged. Remember Paul teaches in Romans 1:18-3:20 that God’s wrath or righteous indignation is against all men due to sin. The wrath or righteous indignation of God needed to be satisfied and Christ and His spiritual death did just that. Christ’s spiritual death satisfied God’s righteous indignation against human sin.
The fact that Jesus Christ’s spiritual death satisfied the demands of God’s holiness, which required that human sin be judged, permitted God to extend grace to the human race, enabling Him to offer to the entire human race the gift of salvation through faith in His Son Jesus Christ. Once God’s righteous indignation towards human sin had been satisfied by our Lord’s spiritual death on the Cross, God was free to extend grace to the entire human race the offer of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

The fact that Jesus Christ’s spiritual death propitiated the demands of God’s holiness, which required that sin be judged provided the following: (1) Basis for the unlimited atonement (1 John 2:2; 1 Tim. 2:5; 2 Pet. 3:9). (2) Basis for the forgiveness of sins (2 Cor. 5:19; Col. 1:14; Heb. 9:12-15). (3) Basis for the imputation of divine righteousness (Rom. 3:25-26). (4) Basis for justification (Rom. 3:28; 2 Cor. 5:21). (5) Basis for reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18; Eph. 2:14-16; Col. 1:20-21).

1 John 2:2 And He Himself (“Jesus Christ the righteous”) is the propitiatory sacrifice for our (personal) sins, but in fact, not for ours only, but also for sins of the whole world (unlimited atonement). (NASB95)

Only a “Righteous” Person can satisfy the justice of a “Righteous” God. Only a “Righteous” Person can produce a “righteous” act. The sins of the world are no longer an issue with God because His righteous demands that our sins be judged have been satisfied by a “Righteous” Person’s action (propitiatory sacrifice). The propitiatory sacrifice of Christ resolves the problem of the demands of God’s righteousness and justice.

Unlimited Atonement

Our Lord’s substitutionary spiritual and physical deaths on the cross were on behalf of all of sinful humanity. This is called the “unlimited” atonement, which is taught by Paul in 1 Timothy 2:4. This is why the repentance is available to every person in the human race without exception.

1 Timothy 2:1 Therefore, based upon my previous statements, I first of all urgently request specific detailed requests, reverential prayers, intercessory prayers, thanksgivings be regularly offered up on behalf of each and every member of the human race, 2 on behalf of kings as well as each and every one of those individuals who are in authority in order that we may continue to live a peaceful and tranquil life with absolute godliness as well as dignity. 3 This is, as an eternal spiritual truth noble as well as pleasingly acceptable in the judgment of God the Father, our Savior 4 who, as an eternal spiritual truth desires each and every member of the human race to be saved as well as to enter into knowing experientially the truth. (Author’s translation)
“Who, as an eternal spiritual truth desires each and every member of the human race to be saved” is a relative pronoun clause that is connected to verse 3, which itself is connected to verse 1. It reveals that the reason why intercessory prayer for each and every member of the human race is noble and pleasingly acceptable to the Father is that He desires each and every member of the human race to be saved.

The expression πάντας ἀνθρώπους, “each and every member of the human race” in verse 4 is picked up from verse 1 where it mean the same thing. Thus, as noted in verse 1 Paul taught that it is the Father’s will that the Ephesians intercede in prayer for all people or each and every member of the human race. Now in verse 4 he teaches that the Father wants the Ephesians to do this because it is His will that each and every member of the human race be saved and to come to an experiential knowledge of the truth. This expression refers to “common” or “universal grace.” God the Holy Spirit, in common or universal grace, makes the Gospel understandable to unbelievers, so that they may make a decision to either accept or reject Jesus Christ as Savior.

When Paul says that the Father desires each and every member of the human race to be saved does not imply that all will be saved automatically. Rather, he is simply teaching that the Father desires this to be the case and made it possible by making salvation possible for everyone through the gospel of His Son Jesus Christ. The offer salvation is made possible to every member of the human race because the Father’s Son Jesus Christ died on the cross for each and every member of the human race. The fact that the sinner has to make a volitional decision in relation to this offer is clearly taught by Paul in Romans 3:21-5:1 and many other passages such as Ephesians 2:8-9, Galatians 2:16 and John 3:16-17 just to name a few.

“To be saved” speaks of the act of the Father delivering each and every member of the human race without exception from personal sin, the sin nature, Satan, his cosmic system, condemnation from the Law, spiritual and physical death and eternal condemnation through faith in His Son Jesus Christ.

This statement in 1 Timothy 2:4 teaches the “unlimited” atonement and refutes those who adhere to a “limited” atonement. The latter is a false doctrine that is actually an attack instigated by Satan upon the integrity of God. The “limited” atonement doctrine contends that Christ died for only the elect or in other words, believers whereas the “unlimited” atonement contends that Christ died for “all” men, all-inclusive, without exception and thus “without racial, sexual or social distinction.” This doctrine states that Jesus Christ died for every sin committed by every single member of the human race-past, present and future (John 1:29; Rom. 5:6-8; 1 Tim. 4:10; Titus 2:11; 1 John 2:2).

The Bible emphatically states that God desires for all men to be saved and that Christ died for all people. The apostle Paul taught the Roman believers that Christ
died for the ungodly, which refers to unbelievers and reconciled us meaning believers, while we were God’s enemies. Therefore, if Christ reconciled the believer to God while he was an enemy of God, then Christ died for unbelievers as well (Romans 5:6-10). Thus, in order for God’s desire for all men to be saved to ever have any chance of becoming a reality, He would have to send His Son into the world to die for all men. Therefore, Christ’s death on the Cross was the propitiation for the sins of both believers and unbelievers. Of course, all men will not be saved because many will reject Jesus Christ as Savior.

The “limited” atonement doctrine contends that Christ died for only the elect or in other words, believers whereas the “unlimited” atonement contends that Christ died for “all” men, all-inclusive, without exception and thus “without racial, sexual or social distinction.”

This doctrine states that Jesus Christ died for every sin committed by every single member of the human race-past, present and future (John 1:29; Rom. 5:6-8; 1 Tim. 4:10; Titus 2:11; 1 John 2:2).

John 1:29 The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (NASB95)

John 4:41 Many more believed because of His word; 42 and they were saying to the woman, “It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world.” (NASB95)

Hebrews 2:9 But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone. (NASB95)

Titus 2:11 For the grace of God has appeared (the Lord Jesus Christ), bringing salvation to all men. (NASB95)

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you (unbeliever), not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to a change of mind about Christ. (NASB95)

2 Corinthians 5:14 For the love of Christ motivates us, having concluded this, that one (Jesus Christ) died for all men, therefore, all died (as a result of Adam’s sin). 15 And He (the Lord Jesus Christ) died for all men, that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf! (Author’s translation)

2 Corinthians 5:18 Now all these things are from God the Father, the One who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave to us for our benefit the ministry of this peace treaty (the Gospel). 19 Specifically that God the Father was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not charging their personal
sins to their account, and has deposited in us (believers) the doctrine of this peace treaty (the Gospel). (Author’s translation)

John 3:16 For God the Father so loved the world that He gave His uniquely virgin born Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish (go to the Lake of Fire), but have eternal life (live with God forever and ever)! (Author’s translation)

1 Timothy 2:5 For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time. (NASB95)

1 Timothy 4:10 For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers. (NASB95)

1 Peter 3:18 For Christ also died for sins once for all (the entire human race), the just (the believer) and the unjust (unbeliever), in order that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit. (NASB95)

1 John 2:2 Furthermore, He Himself is the propitiation with regards to our sins. In fact, He Himself is the propitiation not with regards to our sins only in contrast with the rest of unregenerate humanity, absolutely not, but also with regards to the entire world, without exception and without distinction. (Author’s translation)

1 John 4:14 We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. (NASB95)

The “limited” atonement doctrine contends that Christ died for only the elect or in other words, believers whereas the “unlimited” atonement contends that Christ died for “all” people, all-inclusive, without exception and thus “without racial, sexual or social distinction.”

The Bible emphatically states that God desires for all men to be saved and that Christ died for all people. The apostle Paul taught the Roman believers that Christ died for the ungodly, which refers to unbelievers and reconciled us meaning believers, while we were God’s enemies. Therefore, if Christ reconciled the believer to God while he was an enemy of God, then Christ died for unbelievers as well (Romans 5:6-10). Thus, in order for God’s desire for all men to be saved to ever have any chance of becoming a reality, He would have to send His Son into the world to die for all men. Therefore, Christ’s death on the Cross was the propitiation for the sins of both believers and unbelievers. Of course, all men will not be saved because many will reject Jesus Christ as Savior.

Christ had to die for everyone otherwise if He did not then unregenerate men could accuse God at the Great White Throne Judgment of wrongdoing by stating that they never were given a chance since their sins were never atoned for. Thus,
the fact that Christ did die for everyone gives no one an excuse at the Great White Throne Judgment. They will go to the Lake of Fire forever because they chose to and not because God wanted them to.

In Romans 1:16, Paul teaches that the gospel is the power of God for salvation to “everyone” who believes.

**Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. (NASB95)**

Therefore, the expression “who believes” refers to making the non-meritorious decision to trust or place one’s complete confidence in the Person of Jesus Christ for salvation. Then the apostle Paul notes the universal nature of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ with the phrase “to the Jew first and also to the Greek.” This phrase demonstrates that God desires all men to be saved and that Christ died for all men.

The expression “to the Jew first and also to the Greek” does “not” mean that every Jew must be evangelized before the gospel can be presented to the Gentiles but rather means that the Jews were elected by God as noted by Paul in Romans 9-11. Also, this expression “to the Jew first and also to the Greek” places the Jew on equal footing with the Gentile with respect to the need for salvation.

In Romans 1:16, the apostle Paul reveals three principles: (1) The effect of the gospel is salvation. (2) The extent of the gospel is that it is for all men. (3) The condition attached to the gospel is faith in Christ.

**The Blood of Christ**

The “blood of Christ” is a reference to the spiritual and physical deaths of Jesus Christ on the cross, which redeemed sinful humanity, reconciled them to a holy God and satisfied the holy demands of a holy God (cf. 1 Pet. 1:17-19).

**Ephesians 1:7 In whom (the Beloved) we have the redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace. (NASB95)**

The blood of Christ does not refer to the literal blood of Christ but is part of a representative analogy between the physical death of the animal sacrifice in the Mosaic Law and the spiritual death of Christ. The animal blood was the means of teaching the doctrine of redemption in the Old Testament (Ex. 12:7; 12-13; Heb. 9:22). The animal sacrifice is a “representative” analogy in which the physical death of the animal on the altar represents the spiritual death of Christ on the cross.

The animal sacrifice is also a “real” analogy which would be a literal death compared to a literal death. The physical death of the animal is compared to the physical death of Christ.
A “representative” analogy is the physical death of the animal on the altar representing the spiritual death of Christ on the cross. A “real” analogy is that the physical death of the animals is compared to the physical death of Christ. The analogy requires that the blood of Christ be taken figuratively and metaphorically.

Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary defines figurative, “representing by a figure or resemblance: emblematic; of or relating to representation of form; expressing one thing in terms normally denoting another with which it may be regarded as analogous: metaphorical.”

The term “the blood of Christ” is a metaphor. Webster’s defines metaphor, “a figure of speech in which a word or phrase literally denoting one kind of object or idea is used in place of another to suggest a likeness or analogy between them.”

Animal blood was used to represent the figurative blood of Christ. This was done from Genesis 3:21 to the Levitical offerings of Leviticus 1-5. The blood of the animal is the seat of animal life (Lev. 17:10-14). The blood of the animal was used to represent redemption to Old Testament believers (Heb. 9:18-22). The animal was real and literal but it did not represent the literal blood of Christ shed on the cross.

The animal blood represents the spiritual and physical deaths of Christ on the cross (Col. 1:20; Heb. 10:19; 13:20; 1 Pet. 1:2). The blood of the animal sacrifices were merely a shadow pointing to the reality of the cross (Heb. 9:12-24). Therefore, the phrase “His blood” refers to our Lord’s substitutionary spiritual and physical deaths on the Cross as our Substitute.

“The blood of Christ” is analogous to: (1) Redemption (2) Reconciliation (3) Propitiation. Our Lord was still alive on the Cross when He finished making the payment for our sins (John 19:30). Our Lord did not bleed to death like the animals in the Mosaic sacrifices. He didn’t pass out on the Cross from loss of blood, but in fact was in total command and was totally alert when He said, “It is finished.” He didn’t die like ordinary men who die involuntarily, but instead, He did voluntarily (John 10:17-18).

Therefore, the blood of the animal sacrifices were merely a shadow pointing to the reality of the Christ’s spiritual death on the Cross (Heb. 9:12-24). So the Lord’s spiritual death on the Cross was the payment for our sins and not His physical or shedding of His literal blood. His physical death dealt with the sin nature.

Divine Discipline and Repentance

If the child of God stubbornly refuses to repent by not confessing their sins to the Father, they have entered into apostasy and will be disciplined by God. When we use the term “apostasy” we are using it exclusively of the Christian who is living in habitual disobedience to the will of the Father which is revealed by the
Holy Spirit through the communication of the Word of God. This in turn results in God the Father disciplining this type of Christian.

The term “apostasy” is used by this author to describe the state of those Christians who were once exercising faith and obeying the teaching of the Word of God but are now in the state of unbelief and thus rejecting the teaching of the Word of God. The child of God who stubbornly refuses to confess their sins to the Father has entered into apostasy.

Therefore, “apostasy” speaks of a Christian doing a “180.” It speaks of abandoning the orthodox teaching of Scripture. It speaks of a Christian rebelling against the Word of God and no longer adhering to that which they once believed in. These Christians do not lose their salvation since the Scriptures are clear that a Christian can never lose their salvation. Rather these Christians are disciplined by God for their apostasy since they are His children whom He loves and those whom He loves, He disciplines (Heb. 12:4-11).

The apostate Christian must solve his problem with apostasy by confessing their sins (1 John 1:9) which restores them to fellowship with God. They maintain this fellowship by exercising faith in the teaching of the Word of God which will result in obedience to the commands and prohibitions in the Word of God (Eph. 5:18; Col. 3:16). Confession sin followed by faith in the Word of God resulting in obedience to the Word of God constitutes repentance for a Christian. For the non-Christian, repentance involves exercising faith in Jesus Christ as Savior which results in the imputation of divine righteousness which in turn results in the Father declaring this sinner justified.

There are two categories of divine discipline that are an expression of God’s love: (1) Negative: God expresses His love for His children by disciplining them in the sense that He “punishes” them when they are disobedient to His will. (2) Positive: God expresses His love for His children by disciplining them in the sense of “training” them when they are obedient to His will and in fellowship.

Both categories of divine discipline are designed to keep the believer on track in executing the Father’s will by becoming like Christ. The Word of God is employed in both positive and negative categories of discipline.

Hebrews 4:12 The Word of God is alive and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and the spirit, and of the joints and the marrow, and is a critic of thoughts and intents of the heart. (NASB95)

2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. (NASB95)

The Holy Spirit disciplines the disobedient child of God by rebuking them with the Word of God as it is communicated by the pastor-teacher in the local assembly
and the purpose of such rebuke is to conform the believer to the will of his heavenly Father, which results in blessing and true happiness.

Jeremiah 32:33 “They have turned their back to Me and not their face; though I taught them, teaching again and again, they would not listen and receive instruction.” (NASB95)

The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the pastor-teacher who is the delegated authority in the local assembly, to reprove and rebuke the children of God from the pulpit with the Word of God as an expression of His love.

2 Timothy 4:1 I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom, 2 preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires 4 and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths. (NASB95)

God disciplines His disobedient children by permitting adversity, trials, and irritations to come into their lives that are beyond their capacity to handle in order to get their attention and to focus upon their number one priority in life as children of God, which is to conformity to the Father’s will. God disciplines His disobedient children by permitting them to reap the fruits of their bad decisions so that they might learn that conformity to His will is the only way to true joy and happiness and blessing in life (Ezek. 16:43; Gal. 6:7-8).

There are three categories of divine discipline (punishment) for the disobedient child of God: (1) Warning (Rev. 3:20; James 5:9) (2) Intense (Ps. 38:1; 2 Th. 2:11). (3) Dying (Jer. 9:16; 44:12; Phlp. 3:18-19; Re. 3:16; Ps. 118:17-18; 1 Jo. 5:16).

God disciplines His “obedient” children through adversity and underserved suffering in order to build the believer’s confidence in his relationship with God and to get him to depend on God for his security and protection rather than money and human relationships. He disciplines His “obedient” children through adversity and underserved suffering in order to demonstrate to the believer the sufficiency of God’s Word in handling any problem or difficulty in life. The Lord Jesus Christ disciplines the believer in the sense that He rebukes, punishes and trains the believer because He personally and affectionately loves the believer (Revelation 3:14-19).

Revelation 3:19 “Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent.” (NASB95)

“Love” is the verb phileo, which means, “to personally and affectionately love someone” and expresses the Lord Jesus Christ’s personal affection, care and
concern for the believer by disciplining him whether for training when obedient or punishment when disobedient.

“Reprove” is the verb *elencho*, “to reprove, chasten” and “convict” of sin in order to “instruct” the believer and restore him to fellowship.

“Discipline” is the verb *paideuo* and was commonly used in Greek literature to mean the “upbringing” and “teaching” and “disciplining” of children.

Such “upbringing” consisted of teaching general knowledge and various kinds of training aimed at developing discipline and character. The Lord reproves us because He is trying to develop His character in us.

Revelation 3:20-22 teaches that the Lord disciplines us not only because He loves us and but also because He wants to reward us. Just as any good father disciplines his children because he loves them, so God the Father disciplines His children because He loves them. If God did not train us when we are obedient and punishes us when we are disobedient, then we would be illegitimate children, thus divine discipline in the sense of punishment and training is the mark of a child of God.

Hebrews 12:1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. 4 In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. 5 And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? “My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. 6 For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.” 7 It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? 8 If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. 9 Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? 10 For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. 11 For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. 12 Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, 13 and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed. 14 Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the
Lord. 15 See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no “root of bitterness” springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled; 16 that no one is sexually immoral or unholy like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal. 17 For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent, though he sought it with tears. (NASB95)

Hebrews 12:10 teaches us that ultimately, God disciplines us because He wants us to share in His character and integrity, which is meant by the phrase “share His holiness.”

We are not to get angry or bitter when God disciplines us through the Word, or adversity and underserved suffering but rather we are to listen to what God is trying to say to us and to learn the lesson that He is teaching us so that we might acquire the character of our heavenly Father.

Ecclesiastes 7:14 In the day of prosperity be happy, but in the day of adversity consider -- God has made the one as well as the other so that man will not discover anything that will be after him. (NASB95)

In order to receive discipline without getting bitter and complaining, the believer must recognize and submit to the authority of the Word of God, the delegated authority of the pastor-teacher and the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ who controls history and therefore our circumstances.

Proverbs 3:11 My son, do not reject the discipline of the LORD or loathe His reproof, 12 for whom the LORD loves He reproves, even as a father corrects the son in whom he delights. (NASB95)

Job 5:17 Behold, how happy is the man whom God reproves, so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty. 18 For He inflicts pain, and gives relief; He wounds, and His hands also heal. (NASB95)

Proverbs 15:32 He who neglects discipline despises himself, but he who listens to reproof acquires understanding. 33 The fear of the LORD is the instruction for wisdom, and before honor comes humility. (NASB95)

Salvation and Repentance

If the non-believer refuses to repent by trusting in Jesus Christ as their Savior, they will not be delivered from eternal condemnation, condemnation from the Law, spiritual and physical death, personal sin, and enslavement from the sin nature and Satan and his cosmic system.

The believer who repents by confessing their sins to the Father will experience their salvation. In other words, they will experience their deliverance from eternal condemnation, condemnation from the Law, spiritual and physical death, personal sin, and enslavement from the sin nature and Satan and his cosmic system.
To experience fellowship with God is to experience salvation. They are one in the same. Experiencing salvation is describing fellowship from the perspective that it is a deliverance from eternal condemnation, condemnation from the Law, spiritual and physical death, personal sin, and enslavement from the sin nature and Satan and his cosmic system.

The doctrine of salvation in the Bible is of course an extremely important one and very often misunderstood. For many Christians salvation is simply understood in relation to justification. In other words, they only think of it in relation to the sinner receiving eternal salvation through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone. However, the Scriptures teach that it involves much more than this since they teach that it is accomplished in stages. The first stage occurs at the moment of conversion or in other words, justification. The second occurs when the Christian is experiencing fellowship with God or in other words, experiencing their sanctification. The final stage takes place when the Christian receives their resurrection body at the rapture of the church.

The nature of salvation is also misunderstood by Christians today in the sense that when they think of being saved, they think of receiving eternal life and the forgiveness of sins. They often don’t understand that salvation in the Bible speaks of deliverance. The Scriptures teach that salvation is deliverance from eternal condemnation. It is also a deliverance from being condemned by the Law. Furthermore, it is a deliverance from real spiritual death, the sin nature, personal sins, the devil and his cosmic system. At the moment of their conversion or we can say justification the Christian was delivered from all these things in a positional sense. They initially experience this deliverance at their conversion but lose this experience by committing sin. Confession of sin restores them to fellowship which is maintained by obedience to the Word of God. They can experience this deliverance in time after their conversion through fellowship. They will experience this deliverance in a perfective sense when they receive their resurrection body at the rapture of the church.

Our Lord’s death and resurrection provided the entire human race deliverance from the sin nature, spiritual death, personal sins, eternal condemnation, condemnation from failing to keep the Law perfectly, Satan and his cosmic system. The sinner appropriates this deliverance by exercising faith in Jesus Christ which results in the Holy Spirit identifying them with Christ in His death and resurrection.

As we noted, the Christian’s salvation, i.e. his deliverance is also accomplished in three stages: (1) positional (2) experiential (3) perfective or ultimate. Like the church age believer’s sanctification, their deliverance from sin, Satan and his cosmic system is accomplished in three stages:
(1) Positional: At the moment the believer exercised faith alone in Christ alone, they were delivered “positionally” from real spiritual death and eternal condemnation, the devil, his cosmic system and the sin nature through the crucifixion, death, burial, resurrection and session of the Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 19:9; John 4:22; Acts 4:12, 13; 13:26, 47; 16:17; Romans 1:16; 10:1, 10; 11:11; 2 Corinthians 6:2; Ephesians 1:13; Philippians 1:28; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 2:10; 5:9; 6:9; 1 Peter 1:9-10; 2 Peter 3:15; Jude 3; Revelation 7:10).

By “positionally,” I mean that God views the believer as crucified, died, buried, raised and seated with Christ, which was accomplished at the moment of conversion through the Baptism of the Spirit when the omnipotence of God the Holy Spirit placed the believer in an eternal union with Christ. In other words, the “positional” aspect of the believer’s salvation refers to the past action of God saving us from sin, Satan, his cosmic system and eternal condemnation when we trusted in Jesus Christ as our Savior.

The believer’s deliverance positionally sets up the “potential” for him to experience this deliverance in time since this deliverance can only be experienced after salvation through obedience to the teaching of the Word of God. It also guarantees the believer’s ultimate deliverance at the rapture, which is based upon the sovereign decision of God rather than the volition of the believer.

(2) Experiential: After salvation, the believer can “experience” deliverance from the devil, his cosmic system and the sin nature by appropriating by faith the teaching of the Word of God that he has been crucified, died, buried, raised and seated with Christ. This constitutes the believer’s spiritual life after being delivered from real spiritual death (2 Corinthians 1:6; 7:10; Romans 6:11-23; 8:1-17; Philippians 2:12; Galatians 2:20; Colossians 3:5-17; 2 Timothy 2:10; 3:15; Hebrews 2:3, 10; 1 Peter 2:2). In other words, the “experiential” aspect of salvation is used of the believer’s deliverance from sin, Satan and his cosmic system in the present moment.

2 Thessalonians 2:13 But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. (NASB95)

1 Corinthians 1:18 For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. (NASB95)

1 Timothy 4:16 Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you. (NASB95)

In this verse, the verb sozo refers to Timothy experiencing his deliverance from sin and Satan and his cosmic system by obeying Paul’s previous command to continue making it his habit of persevering in exemplifying Christ-like character,
which is the direct result of obeying the first command in 1 Timothy 4:16. Timothy will continue to exemplify Christ-like character by obeying this first command to continue making it his habit of paying attention to himself, i.e. his character and conduct. Consequently, by obeying these two commands he will experience his deliverance from sin and Satan.

The verb also refers to those who adhere to Timothy’s teaching experiencing their deliverance from sin and Satan as well. They will experience this deliverance if Timothy obeys the second command in 1 Timothy 4:16 to continue making it his habit of persevering in teaching sound doctrine. This second command is the direct of the first command, which called for Timothy to continue making it his habit of paying attention to his teaching. Thus, if Timothy teaches sound doctrine, his listeners will experience their deliverance from sin and Satan as well.

(3) Perfective: At the resurrection, the believer will be delivered “in a perfective sense” and permanently from the devil, his cosmic system and the sin nature when he receives his resurrection body at the rapture of the church, which is imminent (Romans 13:11; 1 Thessalonians 5:8-9; Hebrews 1:14; 9:28; 1 Peter 1:5). In other words, the “perfective” aspect of salvation is used of the believer’s future deliverance from sin, Satan and his cosmic system (Philippians 3:20-21).

In Hebrews 9:24-28, all three stages of the believer’s salvation are referred to.

Hebrews 9:24 For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us (experiential aspect of the believer’s salvation); 25 nor was it that He would offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the holy place year by year with blood that is not his own. 26 Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. (This makes possible the “positional” aspect of salvation) 27 And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment, 28 so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him. (This refers to the “future” deliverance of the believer at the rapture). (NASB95)

Warren Wiersbe commenting on Hebrews 9:24-28, writes, “Did you notice that the word ‘appear’ is used three times in Hebrews 9:24–28? These three uses give us a summary of our Lord’s work. He has appeared to put away sin by dying on the cross (Hebrews 9:26). He is appearing now in heaven for us (Hebrews 9:24). One day, He shall appear to take Christians home (Hebrews 9:28). These ‘three tenses of salvation’ are all based on His finished work.”

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23 Wiersbe, W. W. The Bible Exposition Commentary. Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books
Just as in the believer’s sanctification, their deliverance positionally sets up the “potential” for them to experience this deliverance in time since this deliverance can only be experienced after conversion through obedience to the teaching of the Word of God through the enabling power of the Spirit. It also guarantees the believer’s ultimate deliverance at the rapture.

The believer can experience their deliverance from sin, spiritual death, Satan and his cosmic system through the omnipotence of the Spirit by appropriating by faith the teaching of the Word of God that they have been crucified, died, buried, raised and seated with Christ (Romans 6:11-23; 8:1-17; Galatians 2:20; Colossians 3:5-17).

From our study, we can see that the Scriptures teach that each and every member of the human race is a sinner by nature and practice as a result of Adam’s original sin in the Garden of Eden. Adam’s sin gave him and his progeny a sin nature. Also, Adam and his progeny were spiritually dead. Even more terrible the sin nature and spiritual death would result in eternal condemnation in the eternal lake of fire since God is holy and cannot tolerate sin or sinners. Thus, the entire human race was in an absolutely terrible predicament.

However, God in His grace provided the solution for all these problems through His Son Jesus Christ’s spiritual and physical deaths on the cross as well as His resurrection. This deliverance is available to each and every member of the human race since Jesus Christ’s spiritual and physical deaths on the cross and His resurrection were on behalf of each and every member of the human race. The Christian is a sinner who has received this great deliverance through faith in Jesus Christ. In other words, the Christian receives this deliverance as a gift from God based upon the merits of the object of their faith, Jesus Christ.

Sanctification and Repentance

If the non-believer refuses to repent by trusting in Jesus Christ as their Savior, they will not experience sanctification. If the child of God does not repent when they sin by confessing this sin, they will not experience their sanctification. A believer who is experiencing fellowship with God is experiencing their sanctification. They are one in the same. The believer who is experiencing sanctification is experiencing fellowship with God and vice versa. Experiencing sanctification is describing experiencing fellowship with God from the perspective that it is experiencing being set apart to serve God exclusively.

The church age believer’s “sanctification” is directly related to the baptism of the Spirit. “Sanctification” is a technical theological term for the believer who has
been set apart through the baptism of the Spirit at the moment of conversion in order to serve God exclusively and is accomplished in three stages: (1) Positional (2) Experiential (3) Perfective.

Sanctification deals with conforming the believer to the holiness of God and reproducing it in the believer. At the moment of the moment the believer was declared justified through faith in Jesus Christ, the omnipotence of God the Holy Spirit caused the believer to become identical and united with the Lord Jesus Christ in His crucifixion, His spiritual and physical death, His burial, resurrection and session. It also ascribes to the believer the qualities and characteristics of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The baptism of the Spirit results in positional sanctification and the potential to experience sanctification in time and the guarantee of perfective sanctification at the resurrection of the church.

By positional, I mean that God views the believer as crucified, died, buried, raised and seated with Christ since at the moment of conversion, the Holy Spirit placed the believer in union with Christ, identifying him with Christ’s crucifixion (Romans 6:6; Galatians 2:20), His death (Romans 6:2, 7-8; Colossians 2:20; 3:3), His burial (Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:12), His resurrection (Romans 6:5; Ephesians 2:6; Philippians 3:10-11; Colossians 2:12; 3:1) and His session (Ephesians 2:6; Colossians 3:1).

“Positional sanctification” is the believer’s “entrance” into the plan of God for the church age resulting in eternal security as well as two categories of positional truth (1 Corinthians 1:2, 30; 1 Peter 1:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; Ephesians 5:26-27; Hebrews 2:11; 10:10; Acts 20:32; 26:18; Romans 6:3, 8; 2 Thessalonians 2:13).

“Retroactive” positional truth is the church age believer’s identification with Christ in His death and burial (Romans 6:3-11; Colossians 2:12). In other words, when Christ, died God considers the believer to have died with Him.

Romans 6:4 Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. (NASB95)

1 Corinthians 1:30 But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption. (NASB95)

Colossians 2:12 having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. (NASB95)

“Current” positional truth is the church age believer’s identification with Christ in His resurrection, ascension and session (See Ephesians 2:4-6; Colossians 3:1-4). In other words, when Christ was raised and seated at the right hand of the Father, the Father considers the believer to have been raised and seated with Christ as well.
“Positional sanctification”: (1) What God has done for the church age believer. (2) His viewpoint of the church age believer. (3) Sets up the potential to experience sanctification in time. (4) Provides the believer with the guarantee of receiving a resurrection body.

“Experiential sanctification” is the function of the church age believer’s spiritual life in time through obedience to the Father’s will, which is revealed by the Spirit through the communication of the Word of God (John 17:17; Romans 6:19, 22; 2 Timothy 2:21; 1 Peter 3:15; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4, 7; 1 Timothy 2:15).

The will of the Father is for the believer to obey the Spirit’s teaching in the Word of God that he has been crucified, died, buried, raised and seated with Christ, which constitutes experiencing sanctification.

2 Thessalonians 2:13 But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. (NASB95)

“Experiential sanctification” is the post-salvation experience of the believer who is in fellowship with God by confessing any known sin to the Father when necessary followed by obedience to the Father’s will, which is revealed by the Spirit through the Word of God.

Experiential sanctification is only a potential since it is contingent upon the church age believer responding to what God has done for him at the moment of conversion, therefore, only believers who are obedient to the Word of God will experience sanctification in time.

The believer who experiences sanctification is walking in “newness of life” and he does this by obeying the teaching of the Word of God, which states that the believer has been crucified, died, buried, raised and seated with Christ and which teaching is inspired by the Holy Spirit (See Romans 6).

The believer can experience this victory and deliverance by appropriating by faith the teaching of the Word of God that he has been crucified, died, buried, raised and seated with Christ (Romans 6:11-23; 8:1-17; Galatians 2:20; Colossians 3:5-17). This is what Paul did.

The believer’s faith in the teaching of the Word of God that he has been crucified, died, buried, raised and seated with Christ will express itself in obedience, which results in the believer experiencing sanctification.

The believer who appropriates by faith the teaching of the Word of God that he has been crucified, died and buried with Christ will experience deliverance from the lust patterns of the old sin nature.

Galatians 5:24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. (NASB95)
The believer is to consider the members of his body to be dead to these lust patterns of the old sin nature since they were crucified at the cross and he has died with Christ.

**Colossians 3:5** Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. (NASB95)

The Lord Jesus Christ was crucified so that the believer might not live for the lusts of the old sin nature but for the will of God (See 1 Peter 4:1-3).

Prior to salvation, the believer was enslaved to the lust patterns of the old Adamic sin nature since he was under real spiritual death meaning he had no capacity to experience fellowship with God (See Ephesians 2:1-3).

At the moment of conversion, through the baptism of the Spirit, the omnipotence of the Spirit identified the believer with Christ in His crucifixion, death, burial, resurrection and session (See Romans 6:4-7; Ephesians 2:4-6).

Also, at the moment of conversion, God gave the believer a new divine nature that gives him the capacity to experience deliverance from the lust patterns of the old Adamic sin nature (See 2 Peter 1:4).

**Galatians 3:27** For all of you who were identified with Christ have clothed yourselves with the nature of Christ. (Author’s translation)

**1 Corinthians 15:45** So also it is written, “‘The first MAN, Adam, BECAME A LIVING SOUL.” The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. (NASB95)

**2 Corinthians 5:17** Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new spiritual species; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. (NASB95)

**2 Peter 1:4** For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. (NASB95)

**1 John 3:9** No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. (NASB95)

The new Christ nature that indwells every believer is the holiness of God and is perfectly holy just as Christ is and thus cannot sin. Believers sin because they choose to obey the temptations of the old sin nature and the lies of Satan’s cosmic system. The new Christ nature provides the believer the capacity to experience the holiness of God in his life and Christ-likeness is the production or the result of having a lifestyle of living in the new Christ nature.

The new Christ nature functions when the believer is obedient to the voice of the Spirit, which is heard through the communication of the Word of God and constitutes putting on the new man or the new self or new nature.

**Ephesians 4:24** and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth. (NASB95)
Fruit bearing, i.e. Christ-like character is the result of experiencing the holiness of God, which is synonymous with “experiential sanctification” since the believer cannot experience fellowship with a holy God unless he himself is holy.

Sanctification is experiencing the holiness of God or in other words manifesting the character of God through one’s thoughts, words and actions. Since the believer has been crucified with Christ and has died with Him, he is commanded to consider himself dead to the sin nature.

**Romans 6:11** Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. (NASB95)

Therefore, since the believer has been crucified, died and buried with Christ and has been raised and seated with Him and has been given a new divine nature, he is commanded to abstain from the various lust patterns of the old sin nature, which wage war against the believer’s soul and is to flee them.

**1 Peter 2:11** Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul. (NASB95)

**2 Timothy 2:22** Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. (NASB95)

The believer is prohibited from obeying the lust patterns of the old Adamic sin nature and is commanded to put on the nature of Christ, which is accomplished by obeying the Word of Christ and this constitutes walking by means of the Spirit (See Romans 6:12-13; 13:14; Galatians 5:16; Ephesians 4:17-24).

The believer sins because he chooses to disobey the teaching of the Word of God that his sin nature was crucified with Christ at the Cross and thus allows the sin nature to control and influence his soul so that he produces mental, verbal and overt acts of sin (See James 1:13-15).

The believer’s sin nature will not be totally eradicated until he physically dies or when the rapture of the church takes place when the believer will receive a resurrection body to replace the body he now has, which contains the old sin nature (See 1 Corinthians 15:51-57; Philippians 3:20-21).

In the meantime, the believer has a battle raging within him since he has two natures, which are diametrically opposed to one another and he must choose between the two since the old sin nature wars against the Spirit.

**Galatians 5:17** For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. (NASB95)

Having died with Christ and being raised with Christ and possessing the new Christ-nature sets the Christian free from the old Adamic nature. We utilize the new Christ-nature by obeying the Word of God, which constitutes experiencing
fellowship with God (1 John 2:3-5) and walking by means of the Spirit since the Spirit speaks to the believer through the Word of God.

*Galatians 5:16* But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. (NASB95)

The believer loses fellowship through obeying the sin nature and committing personal sins. However, he is restored through the confession of sin (1 John 1:9).

*1 John 1:9* If any of us does at any time confess our sins, then, He (God the Father) is faithful and just with the result that He forgives us our sins and purifies us from each and every wrongdoing. (Author’s translation)

This fellowship is maintained by bringing one’s thoughts into obedience to the teaching of Jesus Christ, which constitutes obeying the commands of Ephesians 5:18 to be influenced by means of the Spirit and Colossians 3:16 to let the Word of Christ richly dwell in your soul since both produce the same results.

*Ephesians 5:18* And do not permit yourselves to get into the habit of being drunk with wine because that is non-sensical behavior, but rather permit yourselves on a habitual basis to be influenced by means of the Spirit. (Author’s translation)

*Colossians 3:16* Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. (NASB95)

Therefore, obedience to the Word of God will enable the believer to experience fellowship with God, which is synonymous with experiencing sanctification.

*1 John 2:5* But, whoever, at any time does observe conscientiously His Word, indeed, in this one, the love for the one and only God is accomplished. By means of this we can confirm that we are at this particular moment in fellowship with Him. (Author’s translation)

This obedience constitutes loving the Lord.

*John 14:15* If you love Me, you will observe conscientiously My commandments. (Author’s translation)

So this battle rages between the flesh, the sin nature and the Spirit. The believer’s soul is a battleground. The battle in the soul is related to whether they will live for self in the old sin nature or live for God in the new nature. Paul relates this battle in his own life as a believer in Romans 7:14-25.

“Experiential” sanctification is experiencing the holiness or in other words manifesting the character of God through one’s thoughts, words and actions (1 Peter 1:14-16).

“Perfective sanctification” is the perfection of the church age believer’s spiritual life at the rapture, i.e. resurrection of the church, which is the completion of the plan of God for the church age believer (1 Corinthians 15:53-54; Galatians 6:8; 1 Peter 5:10; John 6:40). It is the guarantee of a resurrection body and will be
experienced by every believer regardless of their response in time to what God has done for them at salvation.

All three stages of sanctification refer to the process of conforming the believer into the image of Jesus Christ, which is the Father’s plan from eternity past (Romans 8:28-30).

_Eternal life and Repentance_

If the non-believer refuses to repent by trusting in Jesus Christ as their Savior, they will not experience eternal life. If the believer refuses to repent and thus does not confess their sins to the Father, they will not experience fellowship with God, their salvation and sanctification as well as eternal life. When a believer is experiencing fellowship with God, they are experiencing eternal life. They are one in the same. If you are experiencing eternal life as a believer, then, you are experiencing fellowship with God and vice versa.

One must have the life of God in order to experience fellowship with Him. The believer must share the eternal life of God in order to experience fellowship and intimacy with God. This has been made possible through the incarnate Word of eternal life, the Lord Jesus Christ and His Finished Work on the Cross of Calvary 2000 years ago.

Eternal life is the very life of God has no beginning and no end and transcends time, matter and space. God is an “ever present now” because He is by nature, eternal life. It is received as a gift from God the moment you believe in Jesus Christ as your Savior.

**John 3:16** “For God so loved the world, that He gave His uniquely born Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” (Author’s translation)

The Lord Jesus Christ is the incarnate Son of God and therefore He is also the incarnate eternal life of God and to reject that He is God is to reject eternal life.

**John 1:4** In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. (NASB95)
**John 5:26** “For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself.” (NASB95)
**John 6:33** For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world. (NASB95)
**John 6:35** Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst.” (NASB95)
**John 6:48** “I am the bread of life.” (NASB95)
**John 6:54** “He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.” (NASB95)
John 6:63 “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.” (NASB95)

John 6:68 Simon Peter answered Him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life.” (NASB95)

John 8:12 Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, “I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.” (NASB95)

John 10:28 “and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.” (NASB95)

John 11:25 Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies.” (NASB95)

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.” (NASB95)

John 14:19 “After a little while the world will no longer see Me, but you will see Me; because I live, you will live also.” (NASB95)

John 17:1 Jesus spoke these things; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You, 2 even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life. 3 This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.” (NASB95)

John 20:31 but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name. (NASB95)

Acts 3:14 “But you disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, 15 but put to death the Prince of life, the one whom God raised from the dead, a fact to which we are witnesses.” (NASB95)

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (NASB95)

Colossians 3:1 Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. 3 For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory. (NASB95)

2 Timothy 1:8 Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God, 9 who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity, 10 but now has been revealed
by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. (NASB95)

Hebrews 7:14 For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, a tribe with reference to which Moses spoke nothing concerning priests. 15 And this is clearer still, if another priest arises according to the likeness of Melchizedek, 16 who has become such not on the basis of a law of physical requirement, but according to the power of an indestructible life. (NASB95)

The Lord Jesus Christ who is the incarnate eternal Word of life came into the world in order that He might give eternal life to men so that they could have fellowship with God.

1 John 1:1-3 teaches that the apostle John teaches that the Lord Jesus Christ who is the incarnate eternal life of God came into the world in order that He might give eternal life to men and He did this so that men could enjoy and experience fellowship with God.

1 John 2:25 This is the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life. (NASB95)

1 John 5:11 And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. 12 He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. (NASB95)

1 John 5:20 And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life. (NASB95)

At the moment of conversion, through regeneration, the Holy Spirit creates a human spirit for the imputation of eternal life by God the Father, which makes the believer a new spiritual species meaning he now possesses the divine nature.

“Regeneration” is a ministry performed by the Holy Spirit on behalf of a person the moment they believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior where He creates a human spirit for the person so that they might receive the imputation of eternal life.

Titus 3:5 He (God the Holy Spirit) saved us, not on the basis of deeds (human works) which we have done in (human power) righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit. (NASB95)

This human spirit with eternal life imputed to it composes the believer’s new nature, i.e. the new self and this new nature is the nature of Christ. This act of regeneration makes the believer a new spiritual species, which is the nature of Christ that can never sin and that is described in Scripture by many phrases such as the “new self, new man, newness of life, new creation.”

Galatians 3:27 For all of you who were identified with Christ have clothed yourselves with the nature of Christ. (NASB95)
1 Corinthians 15:45 So also it is written, “The first MAN, Adam, BECAME A LIVING SOUL.” The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. (NASB95)

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new spiritual species; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. (NASB95)

2 Peter 1:4 For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. (NASB95)

1 John 3:9 No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. (NASB95)

The human spirit is the receptacle for eternal life and together they give the believer the capacity to metabolize and apply spiritual phenomena communicated by the Holy Spirit through the teaching of the Word of God and to pray according to the will of God and to worship and serve God.

Philippians 4:23 May the grace which originates from the Lord Jesus Christ be communicated to your human spirit. Amen. (Author’s translation)

The fact that all believers received a human spirit and eternal life at the moment of salvation through regeneration makes the believer “trichotomous” in the sense that he has a body, soul and human spirit.

In His “bread of life” discourse recorded in John 6:22-69, our Lord taught that the eternal Word of God became a human being in order to give eternal life to those who would believe in Him.

The “bread of life” discourse in John 6:22-69 teaches the importance of obeying the Word of God in order to enjoy and experience fellowship with God.

Since the Word of God is food for the soul and sustains and prospers the soul. True life does not consist in an abundance of “things” but rather a relationship and fellowship with the Triune God.

As the believer appropriates the Lord Jesus, the Lord becomes the believer’s life. He can become life to the believer, because He is the “living bread.”

Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me. (NASB95)

In His Great High Priestly Prayer recorded in John 17, the Lord states that eternal life is knowing the Father experientially.

John 17:1 Jesus spoke these things (John 13-16); and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You 2 even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life. 3 This is eternal life, that they may know (ginosko, “to know experientially”) You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.” (NASB95)
Eternal life is knowing the Father and the Son experientially in the sense of personally encountering them through the process of fellowship as They are revealed in the pages of Scripture and prayer by God the Holy Spirit. It also involves being affected by this encounter with the Father and the Son resulting in the gaining of practical spiritual wisdom and more of the character of Christ.

Eternal life gives the believer the capacity to experience fellowship with God after being delivered from eternal condemnation. Experiencing eternal life after conversion is described by Paul in Romans 6:4 as walking “in newness of life.”

**Romans 6:4 Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. (NASB95)**

It is appropriated after conversion by the believer who obeys the Spirit of life who reveals the will of the Father of life through the communication of the Word of life. The believer who exercises faith in the teaching of the Word of God that he has been crucified, died, buried, raised and seated with Christ will experience eternal life in time.

At the moment of conversion, through the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the omnipotence of the Holy Spirit placed the believer in union with Christ, identifying him with Christ’s crucifixion (Romans 6:6; Galatians 2:20), His death (Romans 6:2, 7-8; Colossians 2:20; 3:3), His burial (Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:12), His resurrection (Romans 6:5; Ephesians 2:6; Philippians 3:10-11; Colossians 2:12; 3:1) and His session (Ephesians 2:6; Colossians 3:1).

The believer can not only experience victory and deliverance over sin, Satan and his cosmic system by appropriating by faith the teaching of the Word of God that he has been crucified, died, buried, raised and seated with Christ but he can also experience eternal life (Romans 6:11-23; 8:1-17; Galatians 2:20; Colossians 3:5-17).

The will of the Father for the believer is to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ (Romans 8:28-29; Ephesians 4:11-16). This is accomplished by the believer appropriating by faith the teaching that he has been crucified, died, buried, raised and seated with Christ. By doing, the believer will experience eternal life in time.

Therefore, the believer experiences eternal life in time and thus experiences fellowship with God in time by obeying the will of the Father of life, which is revealed to the believer by the Spirit of life through the communication of the Word of life.

The believer who is obedient to the Father’s will, which is revealed by the Holy Spirit through the communication of the Word of God will live in eternal life and thus experience fellowship with God.

In Romans 8:1-8, Paul teaches that those whose minds concentrate upon the things of the Spirit, which are heard through the Word of God, will experience
eternal life and fellowship with God whereas those whose minds are set upon the
lusts of the sin nature will not experience fellowship with God.

Romans 8:1 Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in
Christ Jesus. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free
from the law of sin and of death. 3 For what the Law could not do, weak as it
was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful
flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, 4 so that the
requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to
the flesh but according to the Spirit. 5 For those who are according to the
flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to
the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. 6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but
the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, 7 because the mind set on the flesh
is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is
not even able to do so, 8 and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.
(NASB95)

In Galatians 6:7-8, Paul describes setting the mind on the things of the flesh as
“sowing to one’s flesh” and setting the mind of the things of the Spirit as “sowing
to the Spirit.”

Galatians 6:7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man
sows, this he will also reap. 8 For the one who sows to his own flesh will from
the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the
Spirit reap eternal life. (NASB95)

In Romans 6:22-23, Paul taught that the believer who obeys the flesh will result
in temporal death meaning loss of fellowship whereas the one who obeys the
spiritual will experience eternal life. In Romans 6:22, he teaches that because the
Roman Christians have been freed from the sin nature and enslaved to God, the
benefit that they now possess is that of being a servant of God rather than the sin
nature, which results in sanctification and eternal life.

Romans 6:22 But now, at the present time, because all of you have been set
free from the tyranny of the sin nature and because all of you have become
slaves to God the Father all of you at the present time possess your benefit (of
being a servant of God) resulting in sanctification and the result, eternal life.
(Author’s translation)

In Romans 6:21, Paul teaches that serving the sin nature results in spiritual
death whereas in verse 22 he teaches that serving God results in eternal life. Then,
in verse 23 he explains why this is the case, namely that the wages of sin is
spiritual death but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 6:23 For you see the sin nature pays out spiritual death however
God the Father graciously gives eternal life in the Person of Christ, who is
Jesus, our Lord. (Author’s translation)
Romans 6:23 teaches that the wages of sin is spiritual death resulting in physical death and ultimately the second death in the eternal lake of fire but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

_Filling of the Spirit and Repentance_

When the believer repents of their sins by confessing them to the Father and obeying His Word, they will also be filled with the Spirit. A believer who is experiencing fellowship with God is experiencing their sanctification. They are one in the same. The believer who is experiencing sanctification is experiencing fellowship with God and vice versa. Experiencing sanctification is describing experiencing fellowship with God from the perspective that it is experiencing being set apart to serve God exclusively.

In order for the believer to experience fellowship with God, they must be filled with the Spirit or more accurately, they must be influenced by the Holy Spirit who permanently indwells them. Therefore, being filled with the Spirit and experiencing fellowship with God are one in the same. The believer who is filled with the Spirit or influenced by the Spirit is experiencing fellowship with God and vice versa.

The filling of the Spirit takes place when the believer is obeying the voice of the Spirit, which is heard through prayerful study of the Word of God. It is not an emotion (though it will result in emotions such as joy) but rather is the mental state of the believer who does not have any unacknowledged sins in the stream of consciousness and is applying the Word to his thought process. The filling of the Spirit takes place in the soul of the believer when he allows God the Holy Spirit to influence his soul, which He does through the Word of God.

The filling of the Spirit is the operational power of God the Holy Spirit, which empowers the believer to execute the will of God the Father. It enables the believer to be conformed to the image of the Lord Jesus Christ meaning to become like Him experientially in His death and resurrection. It enables the believer to become like Jesus Christ in thought, word and action or in other words, it gives the believer the ability to acquire experientially the character of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is necessary for the believer to allow himself to be influenced by the Spirit in order that he may walk by the Spirit. Walking by the Spirit is actively choosing to conduct oneself by means of the Spirit. The filling of the Spirit and walking by the Spirit are two sides of the same coin.

You cannot walk by the Spirit unless you are filled with the Spirit since the filling of the Spirit is directly related to the believer’s mental attitude whereas walking by the Spirit is directly related to how the believer conducts himself or in other words, how he speaks and acts. A person’s words and actions are governed
by his mental attitude and volition. Therefore, a believer cannot walk by the Spirit if he is not first filled or influenced by the Spirit.

The filling of the Spirit is directly related to being a doer of the Word of God since only believers who are obedient to the Word of God are filled with the Spirit since the Spirit speaks through the Word of God. Therefore, the believer who is applying the Word of God is filled with the Spirit or more accurately is influenced by means of the Spirit. The Spirit takes the doctrines of Christ, i.e., the Word of God and makes them understandable to the believer.

The Spirit does not act independently of the mind of Christ, i.e., the Word of God (John 16:13-15; 1 Corinthians 2:10-16). Therefore, the believer who is influenced by means of the Spirit is a doer of the Word. The Spirit of God and the Word of God work in concert with one another on behalf of the believer who has no acknowledged sin in his stream of consciousness and is applying the Word of God to his thought process. In fact, the Spirit inspired the Scriptures (2 Peter 1:20-21).

The filling of the Spirit is the only means of spirituality in the church age. Spirituality is the filling of the Spirit. It is an absolute meaning that you are either filled with the Spirit or you are living in carnality or in other words, you are governed by the old sin nature and thus out of fellowship with God.

The filling of the Spirit is the only means of having fellowship with God (John 4:23-24). It is the only means by which the Holy Spirit reproduces Christ-like character in the believer. The filling of the Spirit is the only means by which the believer can execute the plan of God. The filling of the Spirit is a power option meaning that the believer has to choose whether or not to allow God the Holy Spirit to fully influence his soul.

The apostle Paul who wrote the Ephesian epistle spent a large amount of time in Ephesus, which was one of the seven churches of Asia mentioned by the apostle John in the book of Revelation. Not only did Paul spend a lot of time there but John did as well. Ephesus was the gateway to the Roman province of Asia, which is now known as Turkey.

The city of Ephesus was located on the western part of Turkey and was situated at the mouth of the Cayster River. It was the entrance for shipping from the West and the point of departure for the caravans between the Ionian coast and the East. The highway led from Ephesus across central Asia Minor through the Cilician Gates to Antioch and from there across Syria to the Euphrates valley, Persian and India. It had a large harbor.

The city of Ephesus had been founded by colonists from Athens in the eleventh century B.C. They displaced the original inhabitants and began a Greek civilization on the Ionian coast. The strategic location of the city favored its growth and it
became a military prize for both the naval states of Greece and those who dominated Asia Minor thereafter, the Lydians and the Persians.

Alexander the Great received the homage of the Ephesian rulers in 334 B.C. In 188 B.C. the Romans took it from Antiochus the Great and then in turn gave it to the king of Pergamum. The Romans got it back again and incorporated it into the province of Asia. Ephesus became the chief city of the province. It was home to one of the seven wonders of the world…the Temple of Artemis or Diana of the Ephesians. There was a great marble street in Ephesus, the Arkadiane. There was also the Odieon Theater, which served the city as a council chamber.

A great library was located in the city and of course the great agora or marketplace. Carved into the great sidewalk leading to the building on the marble street is the mark of a bare foot, the ancient sign of direction to a house of prostitution—a reminder that Ephesus was a port city with many visitors and sailors. There was a stadium constructed during the reign of Nero. South of the stadium was the theater, set in the side of a mountain which was the scene of a riot when the apostle Paul was accused of ruining the business of the silversmiths in Ephesus who made a substantial prophet in relation to the worship of Artemis (Acts 19:23-24).

The silversmith’s union in the city, which made quite a profit from making idols of the fertility goddess Artemis were enraged at Paul and his teaching against worshipping idols. The business community did not like Christianity because it cut into their profits. But the riot was dispersed by the town clerk and he rebuked them for their conduct. Paul went to Macedonia but returned at a later date. Asia and in particular Ephesus was a fruitful field for evangelism. In three years, the entire region of Asia Minor heard the Christian message. Churches were founded in almost every city and town…large and small.

The city of Ephesus was steeped in paganistic worship as noted by Luke in Acts 19. This pagan worship entailed alcohol and sex and Paul in Ephesians 5:18 makes a reference to their former pagan practice. He tells the Ephesians not to permit themselves to get involved with drunkenness, which was a part of their former pagan worship of the Greek god Dionysus. In order to avoid this, they were to permit themselves to be influenced by the Holy Spirit. So, it is important to keep in mind the pagan background of the Ephesians when we view this passage.

**Ephesians 5:18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit. (NASB95)**

This passage can be divided into two sections, namely a prohibition and a command. It begins with the connective use of the conjunction *kai*, “and.” Next, we the negative particle *me*, “not,” and with it, we have the second person plural present passive imperative form of the verb *methuskomai*. 
Muthuskomai is the passive form of methusko and is related to methuo, “to drink to intoxication.” Both the active and passive forms appear in classical and Greek of the Septuagint (LXX), but only the passive appears in the New Testament. The passive form appears in the writings of Herodotus and Xenophon. The passive form means “to get drunk, to become intoxicated.” It is an inceptive or ingressive verb marking the process of entering into the state of being drunk with wine or intoxication. The word only appears three times in the New Testament (Lk. 12:45; Ephesians 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:7). All three passages warn about the dangers of drunkenness.

The Christians of the early church lived in the Roman Empire and spoke Koine or the common Greek and were raised as pagans worshipping the Greek and Roman pantheon of gods. One of these gods was called Dionysus. He was also called Bacchus or in Rome, Liber. Dionysus was the god of fruitfulness and vegetation, especially known as a god of wine and ecstasy.

The worship of Dionysus flourished long in Asia Minor. As we have already noted Ephesus was located on the western coast of Asia Minor or what is now Turkey. The worship of Dionysus flourished particularly well in Phrygia and Lydia.

The cult of Dionysus was closely associated with that of numerous Asiatic deities. The followers of Dionysus included spirits of fertility, such as the satyrs and in his ritual the male phallus was prominent. As the god of the vine, Dionysus or Bacchus, he was thought to communicate his power to his devotees through the intoxicating influence of wine, stimulating them to orgiastic excesses, wild dancing and music, and sexual promiscuity. They worshipped booze and sex. Sounds like many of our towns and cities in America.

The Ephesians were very much exposed to this cult and it was a part of their pagan background. The worship of booze and sex is still around here in the 21st century. It is a part of our hedonistic western culture.

So, the apostle Paul by employing this verb methuskomai is addressing the area of weakness of their old sin natures. This verb in the passive voice means “to get drunk, or intoxicated with alcohol.”

The verb is in the present imperative form and this form in prohibitions can have one of two senses: (1) Cessation of Activity in Progress (Progressive): “Stop continuing.” (2) General Precept (Customary).

The context of the book indicates that this is a general precept since there is nothing in the book that would indicate that the Ephesian believers were making it a habit of getting drunk. In fact, in Ephesians 1:15 Paul states that the Ephesians already “have love for all the saints,” thus the Ephesian believers were already permitting themselves to be fully influenced by the Spirit since they could not operate in the love of God if they were getting drunk.
Here we have a present prohibition, which has the force of a general precept. This kind of prohibition really makes no comment about whether the action is going on or not.

So Paul is saying with the present imperative of prohibition: “Do not permit yourselves to get into the habit of being drunk.”

The passive voice of this verb in Ephesians 5:18 is significant in that it is a rare permissive passive, which implies consent, permission, or cause of the action of the verb on the part of the subject and it indicates that the Ephesian believers are told here not to “permit” or “allow” themselves get drunk.

Then we have a dative of material, which is the masculine singular form of the noun oinos, which is oino, “with wine.” The dative substantive denotes the material that is used to accomplish the action of the verb of methuskomai or quite simply wine is what will get the Ephesian believers drunk.

So, the corrected translation of Ephesians 5:18 thus far, reads as follows: “And do not permit yourselves to get into the habit of being drunk with wine.”

Next, we have the preposition en plus the instrumental of cause, which is singular relative pronoun ho. We can translate the prepositional phrase en ho, “because that.”

The preposition en plus the instrumental of cause is used to indicate the basis for the Ephesian believers to obey the prohibition and not to get drunk. This prepositional phrase is followed by third person singular present active indicative form of the verb eimi.

The word for “dissipation” is the nominative feminine singular noun asotia. The noun asotia refers to behavior, which shows lack of concern or thought for the consequences of an action, thus it means senseless deeds.

In some languages asotia in Ephesians 5:18 may be rendered as “what one does without being able to think about it,” or “what one does when the mind is absent.” We would say that it is “non-sensical behavior.” Or we could simply say “a waste,” or “stupidity.”

This is a gnomic present. The present tense may be used to make a statement of a general, timeless fact. Drunkenness is being in a state of non-thinking or non-sensical behavior. It does not say that something is happening, but that something does happen. It expresses a general timeless fact! This is a stative active voice indicating that the subject exists in a state of non-sensical behavior or stupidity. This is a declarative indicative indicating a dogmatic statement of fact.

So, the first half of Ephesians 5:18 reads as follows: “And do not permit yourselves to get into the habit of being drunk with wine because that is stupidity.”
Then we have the strong adversative conjunction *alla*, “but rather,” which is followed by the verb *pleroo*, which is found in the second person plural present passive imperative form.

In the Greek New Testament, *pleroo* can have the following meanings: (1) to fill, make full, fill up (2) to fill up a deficiency (3) to pervade (4) to pervade with an influence, to influence fully, possess fully (5) to complete, perfect (6) to bring to an end (7) to perform fully, discharge (8) to consummate (9) to realize, accomplish, fulfill (10) to set forth fully (11) passive of time, to be fulfilled, come to an end, be fully arrived (12) of prophecy, to receive fulfillment.

Here in Ephesians 5:18 the word means, “to be fully influenced” since the English word “influence” accurately, conveys the meaning of *pleroo* here in Ephesians 5:18. The word conveys the believer’s relationship to the Holy Spirit who is a person. The word “influence” conveys this more than the words “possessed, controlled,” or “filled.”

“Filled” would be used of liquids, which we don’t have here. “Possessed” denotes ownership, which is not the sense here. “Controlled” has the connotation of someone doing something against your will, which is not the meaning of *pleroo* here in Ephesians 5:18.

The verb *pleroo* in Ephesians 5:18 in the passive voice means, “to be influenced.”

Webster’s New Universal Unabridged Dictionary defines the word influence: (1) Capacity or power of persons or things to produce effects on others by intangible or indirect means. (2) Action or process of producing effects on others by intangible or indirect means. (3) A person or thing that exerts influence.

If we were to paraphrase Webster’s definition of the word, we would say that Paul wants the Ephesian believers to permit the omnipotence (intangible means) of the Holy Spirit (Person) to produce Christ-like character (effects) in them.

The passive form of the verb is a permissive passive voice, which implies consent, permission, or cause of the action of the verb on the part of the subject. It indicates that the apostle Paul wants the Ephesians to “permit” themselves to be fully influenced by the Holy Spirit.

Now, we have the present imperative form of the verb *pleroo* here in Ephesians 5:18 where Paul is issuing a command. The present imperative form in commands has the following senses: (1) Ingressive-progressive: Begin and continue (2) Customary: Continue (3) Iterative: Repeated action, do it again and again.

We do not have an ingressive-progressive sense here since that would imply that the Ephesian believers were not permitting the Holy Spirit to influence them, but that is not true since they were already operating in the love of God, which is impossible without the omnipotence of the Holy Spirit. This sense here is not iterative involving a repeated act, although Paul does want them to repeatedly
permit themselves to be fully influenced by the Spirit, rather, the force here is customary. The force of the customary present imperative is simply *continue* and is a command for action to be continued, action that may or may not have already been going on. It is often a character building command to the effect of “make this your habit,” “train yourself in this,” etc.

The command in Ephesians 5:18 is a character building command meaning that Paul wants to build the character of Christ in the Ephesians. He wants them to “make it their habit” to permit themselves to be fully influenced by the Spirit because that will build the character of Christ in them, which is the Father’s will.

Then we have the preposition *en* plus the neuter singular instrumental form of the noun *pneuma*. The noun *pneuma* is a reference to the Holy Spirit. Now, if we look at the New American Standard translation it appears that Paul is talking about content rather than means as I have translated it. So how do we understand the word *pleroo* with regard to *pneuma*, “Spirit.”

Is the Holy Spirit the content with which one is filled, or the means by which one is filled? Some understand the Spirit as the content with which one is filled with water like a glass, but grammatically this is not the case. It is better to understand the Spirit as the means by which one is filled, not the content.

The Greek is an inflectional language that uses various cases that determine how a word is being used in a clause or sentence. And it is a rule of Greek grammar that a verb may be used with more than one case to distinguish certain ideas or to make ideas clear.

In the Greek text, “**with the Spirit**” represents the preposition *en* plus the noun *pneuma* in the instrumental dative case. If we were to interpret this construction as referring to the Spirit as the content with which one is filled would be grammatically suspect. Why? Normally a verb of filling takes a noun in the genitive case to express the idea of content and not the dative instrumental. We don’t have a genitive of content here but rather an instrumental case.

For example, the noun in the genitive case refers to material, the content of the filling, as when the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume when Mary anointed the feet of our Lord in John 12:3.

With the accusative case the noun in the accusative refers to the thing filled as when grief fills the heart in John 16:6. But when the noun is in the instrumental case it refers to the agent or instrument that causes the filling. The instrumental case indicates the means by which the action of the verb is accomplished.

Therefore, the prepositional phrase *en pneumati* indicates that the omnipotence of God the Holy Spirit is the means by which the church age believer is to continually allow himself to be fully influenced, possessed or controlled by the Spirit.
Ephesians 5:18 And do not permit yourselves to get into the habit of being drunk with wine because that is non-sensical behavior, but rather permit yourselves on a habitual basis to be influenced by means of the Spirit. (Author’s translation)

The apostle Paul is using a contrast in Ephesians 5:18. He is contrasting the mental state of someone who is under the influence of alcohol and drunk with that of one who is under the influence of the Spirit. The issue crystal clear: to be drunk with wine means to be brought under the influence of wine. Visible characteristics begin to take place as a person comes under the influence of alcohol.

In contrast, to be filled with the Spirit is to be fully influenced by the Spirit so the Spirit-influenced believer does things that are unnatural for him under the influence of the Spirit even as the drunken individual does things that are unnatural for him under the influence of the spirits.

The comparison is a matter of influence or control. A drunken person is controlled by alcohol, which he has consumed. Because of this he thinks in ways normally unnatural to him. Or he conducts himself in ways that are opposite of his norms and standards. Likewise, the believer who is under the influence of the Spirit acts in ways that are unnatural to him. In other words, the believer under the influence of the Spirit is going to act in ways that are contrary to his old Adamic-life.

The issue is not getting the Spirit within you, but rather of allowing the indwelling Spirit to take charge and move into every area of your life. So, to be fully influenced by means of the Spirit means that the believer must voluntarily surrender his old Adamic-life in exchange for the new Christ-life. The believer must make a conscious decision to acknowledge any known sins to the Father and then immediately apply the Word of God to his thought process.

So, to be fully influenced by means of the Spirit means that the believer must voluntarily surrender his old Adamic-life in exchange for the new Christ-life. The believer must make a conscious decision to confess any known sins to the Father in order to be restored to fellowship (1 John 1:9). This fellowship is maintained by obeying the Word of God, which is inspired by the Spirit.

The filling of the Spirit is the mental state of the believer who does not have any unconfessed sins in their stream of consciousness and is applying the Word to his thought process.

The filling of the Spirit takes place in the soul of the believer when he allows God the Holy Spirit to influence his soul. It is a dynamic whereas the indwelling of the Spirit is static meaning it never changes and it is eternal. The filling of the Spirit is the operational power of God the Holy Spirit, which empowers the believer to execute the will of God the Father.
The filling of the Spirit enables the believer to be conformed to the image of the Lord Jesus Christ meaning to become like Him experientially in His death and resurrection. It enables the believer to become like Jesus Christ in thought, word and action or in other words, it gives the believer the ability to acquire the character of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is called the “fruit of the Spirit” (Galatians 5:22-23). It is necessary for the believer to allow himself to be influenced by the Spirit in order that he may walk by the Spirit. Walking by the Spirit is actively choosing to conduct oneself by means of the Spirit.

The filling of the Spirit and walking by the Spirit are two sides of the same coin. You cannot walk by the Spirit unless you are filled or more accurately influenced by the Spirit. Being influenced by means of the Spirit is directly related to the believer’s mental attitude whereas walking by the Spirit is directly related to how the believer conducts himself. A person’s conduct is governed by their mental attitude (Mark 7:22-23).

The believer who is applying the Word of God is influenced by means of the Spirit, therefore, the filling of the Spirit is directly related to being a doer of the Word of God since the Spirit inspired the Scriptures (2 Peter 1:20-21).

The Spirit takes the doctrines of Christ, i.e., the Word of God and makes them understandable to the believer. The Spirit does not act independently of the mind of Christ, i.e., the Word of God (John 16:13-15; 1 Corinthians 2:10-16).

The Spirit’s job is to manifest Christ, to mediate the presence of Christ in the believer, to make the mind of Christ understandable to the believer. Therefore, the believer who is influenced by means of the Spirit is a doer of the Word since He is obeying the Spirit’s voice who speaks to the believer through the communication of the Word of God, which is the mind of Christ.

The Spirit of God and the Word of God work in concert with one another on behalf of the believer who has no unconfessed sin in his stream of consciousness and is applying the Word of God to his thought process.

The filling of the Spirit is an absolute meaning that the believer is either permitting himself or herself to be fully influenced by the Spirit or they are being fully influenced by the old sin nature and Satan’s cosmic system. It is the only means of having fellowship with God (John 4:23-24) and is the only means by which the Holy Spirit produces Christ-like character in the believer. The filling of the Spirit is the only means by which the believer can execute the plan of God. The believer who obeys the Father’s will, which is revealed by the Holy Spirit through the communication of the Word of God will be influenced by means of the Spirit and will also permit the Holy Spirit to reproduce the life and character of Christ in their life and will therefore, have the capacity to walk as a child of the Light.
In Romans 8:5-6, the apostle Paul describes the mechanics of the filling of the Spirit and reveals that it is submitting to the Spirit and being occupied in one’s mind with the things of the Spirit. Leading up to this passage, Paul taught in Romans 8:1 that there is never any condemnation, none whatsoever for them because of their union with Jesus Christ. Next, in Roman 8:2, he taught the Christians in Rome that the life-giving Spirit’s authoritative power, by means of Christ Jesus, has set them free from the authoritative power of the sin nature as well as spiritual death’s.

Then, in Romans 8:3, Paul “explains how” or presents the “reason why” the life-giving Spirit’s authoritative power, by means of (the death and resurrection of) Christ Jesus has set them free from the sin nature’s authoritative power as well as spiritual death’s. The Law was unable to deliver sinful humanity from the sin nature and real spiritual death. However, the Spirit was able to set the Christian free from the sin nature and real spiritual death because the Father executed the sin nature through Christ’s physical death.

Romans 8:4 teaches that the Father’s purpose for sacrificing His Son on the Cross was so that the righteous requirement of the Law would be fulfilled in an “experiential” sense in those Christians who are not conducting their lives in submission to the sin nature but are conducting their lives in submission to the Spirit. When approaching this passage, we must understand that Paul is speaking in the context of the Christian’s sanctification. Beginning in Romans 6:1 and ending in Romans 8:3, Paul is speaking of the Christian’s sanctification in its three stages: (1) Positional (2) Experiential (3) Perfective.

So beginning in Romans 6:1 and concluding in Romans 8:39, Paul is teaching on the Christian’s sanctification. Therefore, in Romans 8:4, he is continuing this discussion regarding the Christian’s sanctification and in particular “experiential” sanctification.

In Romans 6:1-7:6, Paul taught on all three aspects of sanctification, “positional,” “experiential” and “perfective.” However, in Romans 7:7-25, he dealt exclusively with the Christian’s problem in “experiencing” sanctification by using his own personal experience as a Christian. Then, in Romans 8:1-3, he reassures his readers that even though they fail at experiencing sanctification, they are still eternally secure.

Now, in Romans 8:4, he begins to teach how his readers can “experience” sanctification through the power of the Spirit and in particular occupying their minds with the desires of the Spirit rather than the desires of the sin nature.

So, in Romans 8:4, Paul teaches that in relation to “experiential” sanctification, the Father’s purpose in sacrificing His Son on the Cross was so that the righteous
requirement of the Law would be fulfilled in an “experiential” sense in the Christian. Specifically, in those Christians who are not conducting their lives according to the desires of the sin nature but according to the desires of the Spirit.

Now, it has been held by many expositors that Paul is contrasting the unbeliever with the believer in Romans 8:5-8. They support this interpretation by citing Romans 8:9, which teaches that if anyone does not possess the Spirit of Christ, then he does not belong to Christ and only Christians possess the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, those who hold to this interpretation state that the expression hoi kata sarka ontes, “those who are according to the flesh” that appears in verse 5 and the expression hoi en sarki ontes, “those who are in the flesh” in verse 8 are describing the non-Christian. However, this does violence to the context since Paul has been teaching on sanctification in Romans 6:1-8:3. He continues to do so in Romans 8:4-8. We must remember that Paul just got through discussing the problems he has experiencing sanctification in Romans 7:14-25. Then, in Romans 8:1-3, he reassures his readers that even if they fail to experience sanctification like he did, they are still eternally secure.

Now, beginning in Romans 8:4-9, he teaches how they can solve this problem of experiencing sanctification by occupying their minds with the desires of the Spirit rather than the desires of the sin nature. Then, in Romans 8:9-11, he reassures his readers that the Spirit indwells their bodies and that Christ does as well, which both serve as the principle of victory over the sin nature. This would give Paul’s readers assurance that they are eternally secure.

The reason why many interpret Romans 8:5-8 as contrasting the unbeliever with the believer is that they do not understand that a believer can become involved in the things they attribute to the unbeliever.

For instance, in verse 5, Paul teaches that those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh.

**Romans 8:5 For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. (NASB95)**

A Christian can set his mind on the things of the flesh if he chooses to do so and thus prevent him from experiencing sanctification.

Also, in verse 6, he teaches that the mind on the flesh is death. This too a Christian is capable of.

**Romans 8:6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace. (NASB95)**

If his mind is occupied with the desires of his sin nature, he will die spiritually, in the sense of losing fellowship with God. This too will prevent him from experiencing sanctification.
Then, in verse 7, Paul teaches that the mind set on the flesh is hostile towards God.

**Romans 8:7 because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so. (NASB95)**

In verse 8, he writes that those who are in flesh can never please God.

**Romans 8:8 and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. (NASB95)**

Each of these a Christian can become involved in and stop them from experiencing sanctification.

Those who contend that Paul is contrasting the believer with the unbeliever in verses 5-8 fail to see that a believer has the capacity to set his mind on the desires of the sin nature as indicated by the many prohibitions and commands in the New Testament that are designed to prevent this from happening. A case in point is Galatians 5:16-21.

Furthermore, in Romans 7:7-25, Paul clearly illustrates through his own personal experience as a Christian that a Christian can be governed by his sin nature if he attempts to obey the Word of God apart from the enabling power of the Spirit. Therefore, in Romans 8:3-4, Paul taught that the Father’s purpose for sacrificing His Son on the Cross was so that the righteous requirement of the Law would be fulfilled in an “experiential” sense in those Christians who are not conducting their lives in submission to the sin nature but are conducting their lives in submission to the Spirit.

Now, in Romans 8:5-8, Paul describes or explains what it means to be in submission to the sin nature and in submission to the Spirit. He gives this description or explanation in order that his readers might experience sanctification.

Therefore, in Romans 8:5-8, Paul is not contrasting a non-Christian with a Christian but rather he is contrasting a Christian who is out of fellowship with God because he is living in submission to his sin nature with that of a Christian who is in fellowship with God because he is living in submission to the Spirit. In fact, in these verses he is attempting to explain how the Christian can experience sanctification through the Spirit.

Up to this point he has not done so. In Romans 7:7-25, Paul describes his failure to experience sanctification. Then, in Romans 8:1-4, he reassures his readers that even though fail to experience sanctification they are still eternally secure. Now, in verses 5-8, he explains how they can experience sanctification. There is a natural progression in Paul’s argument. If we interpret that in these verses, Paul is presenting a contrast between the unsaved and the saved, there is never any explanation as to how to the reader is to experience sanctification. It also does not pay attention to the context.
In verse 5, the first description is that a person who is submitting to the sin nature is occupied with the desires of the sin nature whereas the person who is submitting to the Spirit is occupied with the desires of the Spirit.

**Romans 8:5** *For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.* (NASB95)

In Romans 8:5-8, Paul describes or explains what it means to be in submission to the sin nature and in submission to the Spirit. The first of these explanations or descriptions appear in verse 5. In this passage, Paul teaches that a Christian who is submitting to the sin nature has his mind preoccupied with the desires of the sin nature whereas the person who is submitting to the Spirit has his mind preoccupied with the desires of the Spirit.

“**Those who are**” is the articular nominative masculine plural present active participle form of the verb *eimi*, which means, “to exist in a particular state or condition.” The word is employed with prepositional phrase *kata sarka*, which we saw at the end of verse 4 and means, “in submission to the flesh.” Therefore, in Romans 8:5, the verb *eimi* along with this prepositional phrase denotes a Christian “existing in the state of being” in submission to the flesh, i.e. his sin nature.

There are some expositors who contend that the verb *eimi* along with this prepositional phrase in Romans 8:4 is a reference to the unbeliever. However, Paul used the verb *eimi* in a similar fashion in Romans 7:14 to describe himself as a Christian!

In Romans 7:14, *eimi* also meant, “to exist in a particular state or condition” and functioned as a copula uniting the subject *ego*, “**I myself**” with the predicate nominative *sarkinos*, “**flesh**.” This indicated that Paul as a Christian “existed in the state of being” of the flesh or unspiritual because he still possessed a nature that is totally antithetical to the spiritual or divine nature of the Law. The verb *eimi* denotes that Paul as a Christian “exists in the state of being” of the flesh meaning that he is unspiritual because he possesses a sin nature even though he has been declared justified through faith in Jesus Christ as his Savior.

Also, as we noted earlier, in Romans 7:7-25, Paul made clear through his own personal experience as a Christian that a Christian can set his mind on the desires of the sin nature, which Paul teaches on in Romans 8:5-8.

Those who contend that Paul is contrasting the believer with the unbeliever in verses 5-8 fail to see that a believer has the capacity to set his mind on the desires of the sin nature as indicated by the many prohibitions and commands in the New Testament that are designed to prevent this from happening.

In Galatians 5:16-23, Paul commanded the Christians in Galatia to walk by the Spirit and they would not fulfill the desires of the sin nature. He goes on to describe the different manifestations of this taking place in their lives.
The fact that Paul commanded the Galatians to do this and his listing of the sins that manifest that his readers are being governed by their sin nature clearly imply that it is possible for a Christian to set his mind on the desires of the sin nature and give in to these sinful desires.

Furthermore, the many prohibitions in the New Testament that are designed to govern the Christian’s conduct such as in Ephesians 4:17-32 and 5:1-9 as well as the list of sins that the Christian is to forsake clearly imply that a Christian can become involved in setting his mind on the desires of the sin nature.

Therefore, in Romans 8:5-8, Paul is teaching his readers how to avoid fulfilling the desires of the sin nature and how to fulfill the desires of the Spirit and thus experience sanctification. Evidence that a Christian’s life is being governed by the old sin nature in an experiential sense is that he is out of fellowship with God. He is grieving, quenching or lying to the Spirit. The Christian occupied with the desires of his sin nature is not obeying the voice of the Spirit, which is heard through the communication of the Word of God.

“According to the flesh” is composed of the preposition κατὰ, “according to” and the accusative feminine singular form of the noun σάρξ, “the flesh.”

We saw this same exact prepositional phrase at the end of verse 4 and we translated it “in submission to the flesh.” It retains the same meaning here in verse 5. As was the case in verse 4, here in verse 5 the noun σάρξ refers to the sin nature from the perspective of its location in the Christian, which is how the word was used in Romans 6:19, 7:5, 18, 25 and 8:3.

The root meaning of κατὰ is “down,” which in our present context suggests submission to authority. The preposition κατὰ is employed with the accusative form of the noun σάρξ, “flesh” and denotes conformity to a particular authority. Therefore, those Christians who at any time exist in the state of being “in submission to” the sin nature will be occupied with the desires of the sin nature.

A Christian who is living in submission to the sin nature is giving into the desires of the sin nature and is not appropriating by faith through the power of the Spirit the teaching in Romans 6 that he has been crucified with Christ, died with Christ and has been raised with Christ.

A Christian who is not occupied with his position in Christ will be occupied with the desires of the sin nature. It is an absolute and when this happens, the Christian will sin while on the flip side if his mind is occupied with his position in Christ, he will not sin but accomplish the will of the Father, which is to grow to spiritual maturity into Christ-likeness.

“Set their minds on” is the third person present active indicative form of the verb προθυμοῦομαι, which means, “to be preoccupied with” with the desires of the sin nature in the sense of concentrating and having one’s thought patterns focused upon the desires of the sin nature to the exclusion of the will of God or what God
desires. To be “preoccupied” means to be “completely engrossed in thought, absorbed.”

Moule defines the word in Romans 8:5, “the full preoccupation of thought and will with a chosen and engrossing object.”

In Romans 8:5, the verb phroneo is used in relation to both the sin nature and the Spirit. In relation to the sin nature, it means to be “preoccupied with” the desires of the sin nature to the exclusion of the will of God. This is how the Lord used this verb in Matthew 6:23 when dealing with Peter. When used in relation to the Spirit, phroneo means to be “preoccupied with” the things of the Spirit. Paul used it in a similar fashion in Colossians 3:2 where he commanded the Colossian believers to be “preoccupied with” the things above and not on the things that are on the earth meaning be occupied with your position in Christ where you are seated at the right hand of God (cf. Colossians 3:1). Therefore, in Romans 8:5, the verb phroneo means, “to be preoccupied with” and is used in relation to both the desires of the sin nature and the desires of the Spirit.

“The things” is the accusative neuter plural form of the definite article ho, which is used as a substantive and refers to the “desires” or in other words, the various lust patterns of the flesh, i.e. the indwelling Adamic sin nature.

The “things of the flesh” denote the various lust patterns or sinful desires that originate from the sin nature. It refers not only to sexual lust but also power lust, approbation lust, social lust, monetary lust, materialism lust, inordinate ambition resulting in inordinate competition, revenge lust, criminal lust, chemical lust, crusader lust, and pleasure lust. At the heart of such lusts is the desire to live independently of the will of God.

Paul could have used the word epithumia as he did in Romans 1:24 and 6:12 to denote these various lust patterns or desires of the sin nature. Instead, he simply employs the substantive use of the definite article since he wants the reader to focus on the conflict that takes place in them between the sin nature and the Spirit rather these various lust patterns or desires.

“Of the flesh” is the articular genitive feminine singular form of the noun sarx, which refers to the sin nature from the perspective of its location in the Christian.

The noun sarx functions as a “genitive of production” meaning that it “produces” the substantive use of the article, “the things” to which it stands related. Therefore, the noun sarx as a “genitive of production” indicates that these “things,” i.e. “desires,” or “various lust patterns” are “produced” by the sin nature.

So, Paul is saying in Romans 8:5 that those Christians who are submitting to the sin nature are preoccupied with the desires “produced by” the sin nature and which wage war against the Christian’s soul and new nature. The genitive of “production”
is similar to a genitive of “source.” However, the former suggests not only source but also involvement on the part of the sin nature in the sense that it is active by waging war against the soul of the Christian with the sinful desires it produces (Romans 7:22-23; 1 Peter 2:11).

“But those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit” is the “adversative” use of the conjunction de, which introduces a statement that presents a contrast with Paul’s statement that those Christians who are submitting to the sin nature are preoccupied with the desires produced by the sin nature. He doesn’t employ the conjunction alla since he does not want to convey a “strong” contrast. Rather, he uses de because he wants to convey a contrast but not a strong one since he wants to emphasize two alternatives or directions that the Christian can go in.

“According to the Spirit” is composed of the preposition kata, “according to” and the accusative neuter singular form of the noun pneuma, “the Spirit.”

The noun pneuma refers to the Holy Spirit. Again, as we noted earlier, the root meaning of kata is “down,” which in our present context suggests submission to authority. The preposition kata is employed with the accusative form of the noun pneuma, “the Spirit” and denotes conformity to a particular authority. Therefore, those Christians who at any time exist in the state of being “in submission to” the Spirit will be preoccupied with the desires of the Spirit.

“The things” is the definite article ho, which refers to spiritual desires produced by the Spirit in the believer.

“And the Spirit” is the articular genitive neuter singular form of the noun pneuma, which refers to the Holy Spirit.

The noun pneuma functions as a “genitive of production” meaning that it “produces” the substantive use of the article, “the things” to which it stands related. Therefore, the noun pneuma as a “genitive of production” indicates that these “things,” i.e. “desires,” are “produced by” the Spirit. So, Paul is saying in Romans 8:5 that those Christians who are submitting to the Spirit are preoccupied with the desires “produced by” the Spirit.

As we noted earlier, the genitive of “production” is similar to a genitive of “source.” However, the former suggests not only source but also personal involvement on the part of the Holy Spirit. He not only is the source of these spiritual or godly desires in contrast to the sinful desires produced by the sin nature, but also the Spirit is actively involvement in producing these desires as well. In the same way that the sin nature produces sinful desires, which wage war against the soul of the Christian, the Holy Spirit produces godly or spiritual desires that He communicates to the Christian through the communication of the Word of God and prayer.

The question then arises, “what desires does the Spirit produce in the believer?” The answer is that the Spirit desires that the Christian take part in ministering to
the body of Christ, experience fellowship, learn and apply the Word of God, pray, worship God, witness and grow to spiritual maturity. He puts in the Christian the desire to become like Christ. The Holy Spirit “produces” these desires in the believer. Therefore, the genitive of production indicates that the Spirit “produces” in the believer the desire to minister to the body of Christ, to experience fellowship, to learn and apply the Word of God, to pray, to worship God, to witness and grow to spiritual maturity and become like Christ. Also, we need to remember that the Scriptures not only teach that the Spirit produces these desires in the believer but that He also gives the believer the capacity to fulfill these desires. Now, when the Christian does not permit the Spirit to fulfill these desires, he is “grieving” the Spirit and “hindering” Him as well.

Now, in Romans 8:6, Paul teaches that the mind-set produced by the sin nature is temporal spiritual death, i.e. loss of fellowship with God whereas the mind-set produced by the Spirit is life, i.e. experiencing eternal life and peace.

Romans 8:6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace. (NASB95)

This statement advances upon Paul’s statement in Romans 8:5 and intensifies it. In the previous statement in Romans 8:5, Paul teaches that those Christians who are in submission to the sin nature, occupy their minds with the desires of the sin nature whereas those who are in submission to the Spirit occupied their minds with desires of the Spirit.

Now, in Romans 8:6, Paul’s statement advances upon his statement in verse 5 and intensifies what it means to be in submission to the sin nature and what it means to be in submission to the Spirit as a Christian.

In verse 5, he taught that the result of submitting to the sin nature is the occupation of one’s mind with the sinful desires produced by the sin nature whereas in contrast to this he teaches that the result of submitting to the Spirit is the occupation of one’s mind with the godly desires produced by the Spirit. Now, in verse 6, he is going to advance upon this statement in verse 5 and intensify it in the sense that he is going to present the ultimate result of submitting to the sin nature in contrast with that of submitting to the Spirit.

“The mind” is the articular nominative neuter singular form of the noun phronema, which occurs only four times in the Greek New Testament, Romans 8:6 twice and Romans 8:7 and 8:27. In Romans 8:27, the noun is used with reference to the Holy Spirit’s personality in the sense of His thoughts, sovereign will, desires and wisdom. In Romans 8:6-7, the word is used with reference to the Christian since in context, Paul is teaching on the Christian’s sanctification and is contrasting the believer who is out of fellowship because he is submitting to his nature with that of the Christian who is in fellowship because he is submitting to the Spirit.
Phronema in these verses refers to the content of the Christian’s thought process and his manner of thinking rather than the mind itself. It denotes the direction and orientation of human thought or a person’s “state of mind” or “mind-set.” Therefore, in Romans 8:6, the noun phronema refers to the Christian’s “mind-set” or “state of mind” or “mental attitude” and is used in relation to both the sin nature and the Spirit. Thus, Paul is saying that the “mind-set” or “mental attitude” produced by the sin nature is temporal spiritual death, i.e. loss of fellowship with God whereas the “mind-set” or “mental attitude” produced by the Spirit is experiencing eternal life and peace and thus experiencing fellowship with God.

“Set on” does not translate a word in the Greek text of Romans 8:6 since the translators interpret that Paul is using the figure of ellipsis meaning that he deliberately omits the third person present active indicative form of the verb phroneo, though it is implied. However, the fact that the noun sarx functions as a “genitive of production” meaning that this mind-set is “produced by” the sin nature indicates that there is no need for the verb phroneo since the thought in the Greek text is complete.

“The flesh” is the articular genitive feminine singular form of the noun sarx, which refers to the sin nature from the perspective of its location in the Christian.

The noun sarx functions as a “genitive of production” meaning that it “produces” the noun phronema, “the mind-set,” to which it stands related. Therefore, the noun sarx as a “genitive of production” indicates that this “mind-set” or “state of mind” is “produced” by the sin nature. It is produced by the sin nature because Paul taught in Romans 8:5 that those Christians submitting to the sin nature are preoccupied in their thinking with the desires produced by the sin nature. Therefore, the mind-set “produced by” the sin nature is the direct result of the Christian being preoccupied with the desires produced by the sin nature, which culminates in a loss of fellowship with God.

“Death” is the nominative masculine singular form of the thanatos, which refers to “temporal spiritual death” or in other words, “loss of fellowship” with God.

Spiritual death for the unbeliever is called “real spiritual death.” As we noted in detail, Paul is speaking in the context of the Christian’s sanctification. Therefore, since “real spiritual death” is used exclusively for the unbeliever and “temporal spiritual death” is used exclusively of the Christian, the latter is being referred to here by Paul in Romans 8:6.

“Temporal spiritual death” or “loss of fellowship” with God takes place when the believer commits mental, verbal or overt acts of sin as a result of obeying the desires of the sin nature.

There is a distinction between the terms “relationship” and “fellowship.” Since our relationship with God is eternal, it can never be lost. Meanwhile, our
fellowship with God, in time, can be lost due to sin and is only restored through the confession of sin to the Father (1 John 1:9).

Fellowship is made possible because of our eternal relationship and is thus taking advantage of that eternal relationship. Fellowship with the Lord demands that the believer confess any known sin to the Father when necessary in order to be restored to fellowship. The believer, therefore, must “confess” any known sins to the Father in order to be restored to fellowship (1 John 1:9). Immediately upon confessing his sins to the Father, the Christian is automatically restored to fellowship with Him. He is restored to fellowship because of the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished work on the cross. Thus, the Father is faithful and just to forgive the believer his sins. This fellowship is maintained by bringing one’s thoughts into obedience to the teaching of Jesus Christ. This constitutes obeying the commands of Ephesians 5:18 to be influenced by means of the Spirit and Colossians 3:16 to let the Word of Christ richly dwell in your soul. Therefore, obedience to the Word of God will enable the believer to experience fellowship with God, which is synonymous with experiencing sanctification (1 John 2:3-6).

Paul spoke of “temporal spiritual death” i.e. “loss of fellowship with God in Romans 6:16, 7:9-10, 13 and 24. In this passage, he teaches that if the Roman Christians if they present themselves as slaves to the sin nature then this will result in temporal spiritual death. In Romans 7:9-10, 13 and 24, Paul teaches that his inability as a Christian to render perfect obedience to the Law resulted in him losing fellowship with God or in other words, it led to his experiencing “temporal spiritual death.” Paul develops further the concept of “temporal spiritual death” for the believer in Romans 8:5-13.

“But the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace” presents a contrast with Paul’s statement that the mind-set produced by the sin nature is as an eternal spiritual truth, temporal spiritual death. He wants to convey a contrast but not a strong one since both temporal spiritual death and experiencing eternal life and the peace of God can both take place in the Christian depending upon his mental attitude.

“The mind” is the articular nominative neuter singular form of the noun phronema, which once again means, “mind set” but this time it is used in relation to the Spirit, which functions as a genitive of production indicating that this mindset is “produced by” the Spirit.

“On the Spirit” is the articular genitive neuter singular form of the noun pneuma, which refers to the Holy Spirit.

The noun pneuma functions as a “genitive of production” meaning that it “produces” the noun phronema, “the mind-set,” to which it stands related. Therefore, the noun pneuma as a “genitive of production” indicates that this “mind-set” or “state of mind” is “produced” by the Spirit. It is produced by the
Spirit because Paul taught in Romans 8:5 that those Christians submitting to the Spirit are preoccupied in their thinking with the desires produced by the Spirit. Therefore, the mind-set “produced by” the Spirit is the direct result of the Christian being preoccupied with the desires produced by Spirit, which results in experiencing eternal life and the peace of God.

“Life” is the nominative feminine singular form of the noun zoe, which refers to experiencing the eternal life the believer received from the Holy Spirit in regeneration the moment the believer exercised faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior and was regenerated by the Holy Spirit.

“Peace” is the nominative feminine singular form of the noun eirene, which refers to peace with God in an objective sense.

In Romans 8:6, the noun eirene refers to experiencing the permanent and eternal peace treaty that God established between Himself and the justified sinner through the death of His Son, Jesus Christ and became their personal possession forever, the moment they were declared justified by Him through faith in Jesus Christ. The word refers to the reconciliation between the sinner and God through faith alone in Christ alone (Acts 10:36; Romans 5:1; Ephesians 2:14, 15, 17).

This reconciliation is presented in the gospel message that God has made a peace treaty with the entire human race and the terms of that peace treaty is accepting the Gospel message through faith alone in Christ alone.

True peace is having a relationship with God, which can only be acquired by an unregenerate human being through faith alone in Christ alone. After conversion, eirene for the believer is the tranquil or serene state or condition of the soul of the believer who obeys the Father’s will, which is revealed by the Spirit through the communication of the Word of God.

The believer whose mind-set is produced by the Spirit as a result of being preoccupied with the desires produced by the Spirit will experience this peace. Like the church age believer’s salvation and sanctification, the peace of God is accomplished in the believer in three stages: (1) Positionally: The believer has peace with God because of his eternal union and identification with Jesus Christ, which received through faith alone in Christ alone. (2) Experientially: The believer can experience the peace of God by being obedient to the Word of God. (3) Ultimately: The believer is guaranteed that he will experience permanently the peace of God in a resurrection body.

By “positionally” I mean that God views the believer as being at peace with Him as a result of faith in Christ and his eternal union with His Son, which sets up the “potential” to experience this peace in time. It also sets up the “guarantee” or experiencing permanently this peace when the believer receives his resurrection body. After conversion, experiencing the peace of God is only a “potential” since it
demands obedience to God whereas the believer is “guaranteed” that he will experience the peace of God permanently in a resurrection body.

The believer is eternally united with the Lord Jesus Christ at the moment of conversion through the Baptism of the Spirit (Galatians 3:26-28) and has peace positionally at the moment of conversion. This eternal union with Jesus Christ serves as the basis for the believer having the privilege and opportunity to have fellowship with God.

After being delivered from sin, Satan, his cosmic system and eternal condemnation, in respect to himself, the believer can experience the peace of God in time by having fellowship with God, which is accomplished by obedience to God’s Word. When the believer is obeying the Spirit’s voice, which is heard through the communication of the Word of God, he enables the Holy Spirit to reproduce the peace of God in him. Therefore, reproducing the peace of God in the believer is one of the objectives of God the Holy Spirit in the process of experiential sanctification and is thus produced by Him (Galatians 5:22-23).

Therefore, in Romans 8:6, the noun eirene refers to the peace of God that the believer can experience by having a mind-set produced by the Spirit as a result of being preoccupied with the desires produced by the Spirit. These desires would include fellowship, learning and applying the Word of God, executing the Father’s will, unity, serving, and praying.

Therefore, we can see from Paul’s statements here in Romans 8:5-6 and that experiencing fellowship with God and losing that fellowship is based upon the believer’s mental attitude. The believer whose mental attitude is produced by the sin nature as a result of being preoccupied with the desires produced by the sin nature will experience loss of fellowship with God. While on the other hand, the believer whose mental attitude is produced by the Spirit as a result of being preoccupied with the desires produced by the Spirit will experience eternal life and peace and thus fellowship with God.

_Filling of the Spirit vs. Indwelling of the Spirit_

The believer must be aware of the fact that there is a distinction between the “indwelling” of the Spirit and the “filling” of the Spirit. The former is taught in John 14:16, Romans 8:9, 11, 1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:18-20, 2 Corinthians 6:16 and 1 John 2:20, 26-28.

The Holy Spirit indwells every believer in order to provide a temple for the indwelling of the Shekinah Glory, the Lord Jesus Christ, which serves as the principle of victory over the indwelling old sin nature. He provides the believer the spiritual capacity to understand the Word of God, since the Spirit serves as the believer’s true teacher and mentor in place of the absent Christ.
The “indwelling” of the Spirit occurs at the moment of conversion and is \textit{permanent} meaning it cannot be lost (Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 3:16). The Scriptures teach that the Spirit still indwells Christians when they sin indicating that the indwelling of the Spirit can never be lost due to sin, which is unlike the filling of the Spirit which can be lost due to sin but regained through the confession of sin (1 John 1:9) and maintained by obedience (1 John 2:3-6).

That the Spirit still indwells a believer when they sin is implied in that in 1 Corinthians 6:18-20, Paul commands the Corinthian believers, some of which were involved in gross sexual immorality, to flee immorality on the basis that the Spirit indwells their bodies.

The indwelling of the Spirit is “permanent” because the Lord Jesus taught that the Spirit will be with them forever, thus obedience is not a condition for the indwelling of the Spirit.

Only in the Old Testament could the indwelling of the Spirit be lost as was the case with King Saul. In fact, in Psalm 51:11, David prayed that God would not take away the Spirit from him. So, prior to the day of Pentecost the indwelling of the Spirit was temporary whereas from that day on until the conclusion of the church age, it is permanent.

The indwelling presence of the Spirit in the Christian is evidence of the Christian’s justification. It is also proof of the Christian’s salvation and of his position in Christ and identification with Christ in His death and resurrection. The indwelling of the Spirit and Christ serves as a sign that the Christian is a child of God. The indwelling of the Spirit and Christ serve as assurance for the Christian that he or she is eternally secure. It also serves as encouragement to the Christian when he or she endures undeserved suffering. The indwelling of the Spirit and Christ serves also as motivation for the Christian to grow to spiritual maturity. It is the basis for the Christian to give number one priority to his relationship with God rather giving it to people. The indwelling of the Spirit and Christ serves as a reminder to the Christian that he has divine omnipotence available to him to grow to maturity and to endure undeserved suffering. It is also a guarantee that the Christian possesses eternal life and will live with God forever. The indwelling of the Spirit and Christ serves as a guarantee that the Christian will receive a resurrection body.

The “indwelling” of the Spirit is the principle of victory over the old sin nature. The “filling” of the Spirit is the function of victory over the old sin nature. The word “principle” means that the “indwelling” is the reason or the basis for our victory over the old sin nature. The word “function” refers to how we are to operate to gain a moment-by-moment victory in our lives over the old sin nature.

The “filling” of the Spirit is “dynamic,” whereas the “indwelling” is “static.” The Christian is commanded to be “filled” with the Spirit whereas he is never
commanded to be “indwelt” by the Spirit. When you are filled with the Spirit you are appropriating by faith the indwelling presence of the Spirit.

Sins Against the Spirit

There are two types of sin committed by the unbeliever against God the Holy Spirit: (1) “Blasphemy” against the Spirit (Matthew 12:14-32) (2) “Resistance” of the Holy Spirit (Acts 7:51).

There are three sins by the believer against the Holy Spirit: (1) “Lying” to God the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3) (2) “Grieving” the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30) (3) “Quenching” the Holy Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19).

The Results of the Filling of the Spirit

The results of being filled by means of the Spirit are many. First of all, the believer can now produce divine good of intrinsic value (Galatians 5:22-23; John 15:1-8; 1 Corinthians 3:11-14). The divine good produced by the Holy Spirit in the obedient believer will result in rewards for the believer at the Bema Seat Evaluation (1 Corinthians 3:11-14). Christ is magnified in the inner life of the believer (2 Corinthians 3:3; Philippians 1:20-21). Christ is “glorified” in the believer’s human body (John 7:39 cf. 16:14; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20). The believer is able to imitate God (Ephesians 5:1-2). Christ “formed” in you, which is a reference to the character of Christ (Galatians 4:19). Christ “dWelling in the heart” of the believer which is a reference to the Word of Christ dominating one’s thinking (Ephesians 3:16-17). Christ being “exalted” in the body of the believer, which is a reference to the character of Christ being manifested through the believer’s physical body (Philippians 2:1-2). This manifestation of the character of Christ in the life of the believer is called the “fruit of the Spirit” (Galatians 5:22-23; John 15:1-8).

Another result of the filling of the Spirit or more accurately being influenced by the Spirit is that God the Holy Spirit controls the believer’s soul and is governing the believer’s decision making process and decisions (Galatians 5:16). The believer’s new nature becomes operational (Romans 13:14; 2 Corinthians 5:17a; Galatians 3:27; 6:15; Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3:10; 2 Peter 1:4) and divine power is as well (Ephesians 3:16, 20; Philippians 3:10-11; Colossians 1:11). The believer who is influenced by means of the Spirit is experiencing his union and identification with Christ in His crucifixion, death, burial, resurrection and session. He is experiencing his sanctification and salvation or in other words, his deliverance from the sin nature, Satan and his cosmic system.
The believer now has the capacity to execute the plan of God the Father for his or her life, which is to become like Christ. Also, the believer can now truly worship God (John 4:24). The believer who is filled with the Spirit or influenced by means of the Spirit is truly spiritual and is experiencing fellowship with God (1 Corinthians 2:11-14).

The soul of the believer who is being influenced by the means of the Spirit is protected from Satanic influence and false doctrine and the influence of the sin nature. It is also protected against legalism as well as arrogance, self-righteousness, self-deception, and self-absorption.

Prayer and Repentance

When a child of God fails to repent of their sins by confessing them to the Father and obeying His Word, it will hinder their prayer life. Prayer is one of the means that God has given the believer in order that he might enjoy and experience fellowship with Him.

There are seven essential elements that should be included in every prayer offered to God: (1) confession, (2) Filling of the Spirit, (3) faith, (4) worship, (5) thanksgiving, (6) intercession, and (7) petition.

Once becoming a child of God and establishing access to the Father in prayer, it is vital that a believer consistently practice the seven essential elements to a prayer. In other words, we must always be consciously aware of the seven elements to a prayer and must practice them as part of our prayers if we ever hope to experience a productive prayer life.

Confession of sin is the first essential element to a healthy and productive prayer; since, without it, the believer cannot have fellowship with God, which results in not having one’s prayer received by God, let alone receiving an answer to one’s prayer. Fellowship with the Lord demands that the believer confess any known sin to the Father when necessary in order to be restored to fellowship. Maintaining that fellowship is accomplished by obedience to the Father’s will, which will is revealed by the Holy Spirit through the communication of the Word of God.

Psalm 66:18 If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear. (NASB95)

The third essential element, therefore, is demonstrating faith that God will hear and answer our prayers (James 1:5-7).

Matthew 21:22 And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive. (NASB95)

Answered prayer requires faith and is thus an expression of confidence in God’s ability to meet one’s need (Matt. 8:10; Luke 7:9; Matt. 9:22; Mark 5:34; Luke

True faith regards what has been requested as one’s own possession even though the request has not been received. Faith is an attitude toward God, in which the believer considers God to be faithful who will perform all that which He is promised in His Word. This attitude is illustrated in Philippians 1:6.

As we have noted, the worship and reverence of God is the fourth essential part to an effective, productive, and joyful prayer (Phi 4:6). Prayer is a means by which the believer can worship, adore, and revere God. To worship is to adore God, as the Holy Spirit reveals Him in the Scriptures and through the person of Christ. It is the act of paying honor and reverence to God, and it derives from love. Where there is little love, there is little worship.

Worship is the loving ascription of praise to God for whom and what He is. It is the bowing of the soul and spirit in deep humility and admiration before Him (Psalm 2:11-12). The believer is to worship the Father spiritually by means of truth, i.e. the Word of God (John 4:23-24). The church ’s destiny is to worship the Lord, as revealed in Revelation 4-5.

The Lord Jesus Christ taught His disciples that the second part of a prayer is the worship, reverence, honor, and respect for the Father.

Luke 11:1 It happened that while Jesus was praying in a certain place, after He had finished, one of His disciples said to Him, “Lord, teach us to pray just as John also taught his disciples.” 2 And He said to them, “When you pray [proseuchomai], say ‘Father, hallowed [hagiazō: to revere, honor and respect] be Your name [onoma: the person and character of God]. Your kingdom come.’” (NASB95)

“Say” is the word lego, which “emphasizes the substance of words chosen, to carefully choose your words.” Prayer is to be a thoughtful exercise of meaningful words, not idle chatter.

“Hallowed” is the verb hagiazō and literally means, “may your person be revered, honored, and respected.” To hallow God’s name means to worship His person. Hagiazō is also used in Luke 11:2 (cf. 1 Pet. 3:15).

To revere God entails opening up our lives so that the Holy Spirit may work in making us more like His Son. Surely, this is to be a prayer of surrender and commitment, for God’s name is never hallowed, at least not by us, as long as we are walking in rebellion and self-dependence. Psalm 145 is a perfect example of how we should worship God in prayer.

Thanksgiving is a characteristic of a productive prayer life. However, it is also an essential element of a prayer. (John 6:11; Rom. 1:8; 6:17; 7:25; 1 Cor. 1:4; 11:24; 15:57; 2 Co 2:14; 4:15; 8:16; 9:11; Eph. 1:15-16; 5:4; 5:20; Phlp. 1:3; 4:6-7; Col. 2:7; 3:15; 1 Thess. 1:2; 2:13; 2 Thess. 1:3; 2:13; Phlm. 4).
One of the most important aspects of the Christian way of life, namely that of expressing thanksgiving to God in prayer. Thanksgiving to God is the response in the believer’s soul, which expresses itself in love and appreciation for who and what God is and what He has done for the believer through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The Lord Jesus Christ offered a prayer of thanksgiving to the Father when instituting the Lord’s Supper for the church (Matt. 26:26-27; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:17, 19; 1 Cor. 11:23-26). Offering up songs of praise and thanksgiving will be a part of our worship of the Lamb when we are in heaven (cf. Rev. 4:9).

The sixth essential element to a prayer is intercession, which means to pray for both the temporal and spiritual needs of believers and unbelievers, friends and enemies (Luke 23:34; Eph 1:16-23; 3:14-19; 6:18; 1 Ti 2:1-4). Intercessory prayer refers to praying for both the temporal and spiritual needs of believers and unbelievers, friends and enemies (Luke 23:34; Eph 1:16-23; 3:14-19; 6:18; 1 Ti 2:1-4). It is an expression of the love of God in our lives and, therefore, directly relates to what the Scriptures teach on love.

Intercessory prayer is a function of the church-age believer’s royal priesthood, which allows the believer to represent himself in prayer before the Father. God calls every church-age believer to intercede on behalf of all men, especially one’s fellow believers, since every church-age believer is a royal priest.

Prayer can be either general or specific. A general prayer is when a believer prays either not knowing the specific needs of the person he is interceding for or not knowing the person at all, whom he is praying for. Prayer should be specific when petitioning for ourselves, but does not have to be specific when interceding for others. Often times, when we pray for others, we have little or no knowledge of their particular needs (Rom. 1:9; 1 Thess. 1:2). Therefore, the Scriptures encourage us to “make mention” of others in our prayers, even without knowing their current situation or circumstances (1 Thessalonians 1:2; Philemon 4).

When praying for others, the believer-priest should always pray for their spiritual growth. Intercession for another believer’s spiritual growth will help him or her, no matter what specific situation he or she is going through. In addition, the believer-priest should have a routine prayer list. Whether mental or written down, a prayer list facilitates our intercessory prayers and ensures we forget no one.

The apostle Paul prayed for the Philippians and Ephesians, whom he knew, and the Colossians, whom he never came to know face to face. He prayed for their spiritual growth and enlightenment.

Philippians 1:9 Now, this I make it a habit to pray that your divine-love might continue to flourish yet more and more by means of a total discerning experiential knowledge. (Author’s translation)
As noted believers are commanded to offer up intercessory prayers for all men, since God desires all men to be saved, without exception and without distinction (1 Jn. 2:2; 1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9; John 3:16-17). Therefore, if we are to intercede for all men—and we do not know all men, much less their specific needs—then, we must pray in generalities. A specific prayer means that we pray for others, knowing their specific needs and circumstances. Often in specific intercession, we know the individual personally and know his or her adversity.

Examples of specific prayer in the New Testament include: (1) the Apostolic church praying for Peter’s deliverance from prison (Acts 12), (2) the Lord Jesus praying for the cup to pass were it not His Father’s will (Luke 22:42), (3) Paul praying to see the faces of the Thessalonians (1 Th 3:10), and (4) the Lord Jesus Christ praying that Peter’s faith would not fail (Luke 22:32).

Examples of specific prayer in the Old Testament include: (1) Elisha praying that God show his servant the angelic armies protecting them (2 Ki 6:17), (2) King Hezekiah praying for Israel’s deliverance from Sennacherib, King of Assyria (2 Ki 19:15-19), (3) Jacob praying for deliverance from Esau (Gen 32:9-12), and (4) Hannah praying for a son (1 Sa 1:11).

Whether general or specific, our prayers should always include others. After all, intercession is one of the essential parts to productive prayer. The Christian is engaged in a spiritual warfare with the kingdom of darkness, which we will discuss in detail later in this book. Understanding this principle requires that we pray with military objectives in mind.

The Christian is taught to pray for the deliverance from his or her enemies (Ps. 54:1-3; 55:1-3; 88:1-3; 102:1-2; 109:1-5; Acts 12:5; Philippians 1:19). This particular objective entails that God protect us from our enemies, but also that we pray for our enemies (Matthew 5:44-45; Luke 6:28). The Christian is taught to pray for the spiritual and temporal needs of members of the royal family of God (Ephesians 6:18; Col 1:9-10; 1 Thessalonians 5:25; 2 Thessalonians 1:11; James 5:16; 3 John 2; 2 Co 13:9; Romans 15:30-31). They are to pray for the spiritual growth of members of the body of Christ (Colossians 4:12; Ephesians 1:15-19; 1 Thessalonians 3:9-10; Philippians 1:9; Colossians 1:9; 2 Corinthians 13:9). The Christian is encouraged to particularly pray for the sick in the royal family of God (Jam 5:14-15a). They are taught to pray for those in authority (1 Timothy 2:1-2). The Christian is taught to pray for the proliferation of the Word of God in one’s community, country, and world (2 Thessalonians 3:1). We should habitually pray that the Word of God increase and spread throughout the world. For unbelievers, may the Gospel reach their ears, and for believers, may an accurate teaching of God’s Word encompass their lives.

Another objective is praying that God protect us and other believers from getting involved in evil. Also, we should pray that believers apply the Word of
God, so that God may be glorified and divine-good may increase (2 Corinthians 13:7). The Word of God does not condemn praying for material prosperity and good physical health; rather, we are encouraged to pray for our prosperity and the prosperity of others (3 John 1:2). The Christian is taught to pray for the sanctification of physical food (1 Timothy 4:4-5); hence, we say grace.

The seventh and final essential part to a productive prayer is petition. A petition is a prayer request for your own particular spiritual and temporal needs (Rom. 1:10; 2 Cor. 12:8; 1 Thess. 3:10; Heb. 4:16). God encourages us to pray for our own needs because it teaches us to depend upon Him and His wonderful provisions.

In 2 Corinthians 12:7-9, the apostle Paul prayed three times to the Father to remove a physical problem that caused him great suffering. While Paul prayed for a simple solution, namely that God—through His divine power—would remove the suffering, the answer for Paul was not to have the suffering removed, but to learn from the suffering and apply the Word of God to move past it. The Word of God, therefore, is the grace provision that helped Paul handle the thorn in his flesh.

Acts 20:32 And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build [you] up and to give [you] the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. (NASB95)

The Word of God is truly sufficient to handle our adversities. Paul prayed that God heal his physical problem but instead, God told Paul to resolve the situation with the provision of His Word.

Psalm 55:22 Cast your burden upon the LORD and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to be shaken. (NASB95)

Psalm 142:2 I pour out my complaint before Him; I declare my trouble before Him. (NASB95)

When we pray, we should remind ourselves of God’s promises, which are in His Word. Trusting in one of God’s many promises may prove to be the answer to our petition. Therefore, God may answer us as He did Paul and tell us to apply what the Scriptures teach to solve our problem. When trusting in the promises of God, we protect our soul from fear, worry, and anxiety.

1 Peter 5:6-7 encourages us to claim God’s promises and trust in them to combat any fear or worry in our lives.

1 Peter 5:6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, 7 casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you. (NASB95)

“Casting” is the verb epirrhipto, which is used in a figurative sense to mean, “to throw or hurl something upon something else.”

Peter encourages us to cast all our anxiety upon the Father because we are a personal concern of the Father. If we are His children—and we are—and He is
intimately aware of our needs and concerns—and He is—then why should we worry or be anxious about anything in life? (cf. Rom. 8:32; Phil. 4:19)

Anxiety about the future will not change the future. The only thing that should concern us is whether we are continuously loving and serving the Lord and the Body of Christ. To be anxious about anything is arrogance, since it ignores God’s faithful promises to sustain us.

The believer is not to strive after the “things” of this world, but after the “things” of God (Mat 6:33; Col 3:1-4) and become like the Lord Jesus Christ in His death and resurrection (Phi 3:7-17).

What then should we pray for, if not for the “things” of this world? The apostle Paul instructs us in what to pray for when praying for ourselves. The ultimate objective of the believer praying for himself is to become like Christ, since becoming like Christ is the Father’s will for our lives and, ultimately, glorifies Him. The greatest objective of all prayer is the glorification of God. Our petitions, therefore, should center on the Father’s will for our lives. One of the things that we should pray for is that our love for God and others would grow.

**Philippians 1:9** Now, this I make it a habit to pray that your divine-love might continue to flourish yet more and more by means of a total discerning experiential knowledge. (Author’s translation)

In Philippians 1:9, “experiential knowledge” is the noun *epignosis* and refers to an “experiential knowledge” of God’s love in Christ, in the sense of personally encountering, through the process of fellowship, the love of God in Christ, as the Holy Spirit reveals it in the pages of Scripture. This will result in us gaining practical, spiritual wisdom and more of the character of Christ.

**Ephesians 1:18**, “I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe.

**Colossians 1:9**, “For this reason also, since the day we heard of it [Colossian’s love], we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.”

In Colossians 1:9, “knowledge” is the noun *epignosis* and refers to an “experiential knowledge” of God’s will, in the sense of personally encountering, through the process of fellowship, the Father’s will, as the Holy Spirit reveals it in the pages of Scripture. Therefore, Philippians 1:9, Ephesians 1:18, and Colossians 1:9 give us insight in terms of what we should be praying for when praying for ourselves or other believers.

In conclusion, concerning these seven essential elements to prayer, it is crucial to note that confession of sin must come first before the other six, since it restores
us to fellowship and sets us on the path to a productive prayer life. Confession of sin reconnects the phone line to our heavenly Father. The filling of the Spirit must follow confession of sin, since it maintains our fellowship with the Father and keeps the phone line to heaven connected. Finally, faith must follow since it guarantees our requests are heard.

God does not stipulate a particular length for prayers, since the Holy Spirit determines the length of prayer for each individual. Moreover, God is not impressed with the length of our prayers, but rather with their content, which should reflect the Word and the Spirit of God, and intent, which should be designed to give glory to God. In fact, the Lord Jesus Christ rebuked the scribes for their long prayers, which were designed to impress people and satisfy their lust for attention and recognition (Luke 20:46-47).

Just as a productive prayer should not be repetitious and needlessly long, it should also never be a public display to be noticed by others. Instead, praying is an intimate time with God that should be reserved for a private time (Matthew 6:5-6).

While the Scriptures do not command a set time for prayer, it is important to routinely pray, either day or night (Psalm 88:1-3; 1 Tim. 5:5; 2 Ti 1:3; 1 Thess. 3:9-10; 5:17; Luke 2:36-37).

Nehemiah 1:6 “Let Your ear now be attentive and Your eyes open to hear the prayer of Your servant which I am praying before You now, day and night, on behalf of the sons of Israel Your servants, confessing the sins of the sons of Israel which we have sinned against You; I and my father's house have sinned.” (NASB95)

It is true that the Bible does not command believers to pray at a set time, but it does command believers to pray at all times or in other words, to make it a habit to pray and have a lifestyle of being devoted to prayer.

Ephesians 6:18 All of you pray on a habitual basis, at all times by means of [the omnipotence of] the Spirit through every kind of specific prayer request and for this very purpose, all of you be continually alert with every kind of persistent specific prayer request on behalf of all the saints. (Author’s translation)

1 Thessalonians 5:17 Make it your habit to pray. (Author’s translation)

The Lord Jesus Christ prayed early in the morning before sunrise (Mark 1:35-38; Luke 4:42) and in the evening after a busy day (Mark 6:46).

If prayer is a priority, as the Word of God says it is, then it is important that we, as believers, make it a priority to pray on a habitual basis. If we consider prayer a high priority, we will arrange our day to devote adequate time for it.

The amount of time we set aside for prayer indicates the real importance we attach to it. Remember, the Scriptures teach that there is an appointed time for
everything, even prayer. We, therefore, should appoint a time for prayer to accommodate God in our daily lives (Ecclesiastes 3:1).

Through the Scriptures, the Spirit will teach a believer how to utilize his time effectively, to include prayer in his routine; that is, if the believer is influenced by the Spirit and listening to the Spirit to receive such instruction (Psalm 90:12). Scripture commands a believer to make the most of his time, to conduct his life with respect toward God and according to the will of God (1 Peter 1:17-18; 4:1-2). Remember, God allots us a certain amount of time on this earth, and we are held accountable as to how we use that time. The principle of our stewardship of time is taught by our Lord in the parable of the minas in Luke 19:11-26.

Since the ultimate objective of the Father is to conform us into the image of His Son, then we must imitate the Lord Jesus Christ’s perfect example of being devoted to prayer. He is the perfect model to follow. On earth, He always employed His time strategically in prioritizing His life and always set aside abundant time for prayer. True, there are only twenty-four hours in the day; but, then again, there are twenty-four hours in a day, a sufficient amount of time to devote more than enough to God.

The Bible teaches that there are many hindrances to a productive prayer life. We tend to underestimate ten in particular as hindrances. We tolerate these ten hindrances too often. Having one or more as part of our lifestyle can severely hinder our prayers. For that reason, we should be on guard against allowing such sins to hinder our prayer life.

A chief hindrance to prayer is unconfessed sin. If you have not realized already, failure to confess sin could make or break your spiritual life. As a result, we must always be aware of our sins and humbly confess them, especially before entering into prayer.

Psalm 66:18 If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear. (NASB95)

Not only could unconfessed sin hinder our prayers, but it could also place us under divine discipline. David, for instance, was under divine discipline for failure to confess his sin of adultery with Bathsheba, and his sin of having her husband, Uriah, killed on the battlefield (Psalm 32:1-7).

Often, a believer’s prayers are hindered because he loves the world, i.e. the cosmic system of Satan (1 Jn. 2:15-17). The cosmic system is a vast system and arrangement of human affairs, earthly goods, godless governments, conflicts, riches, pleasures, culture, education, world religions, the cults, and the occult, all of which is dominated and negatively affected by Satan, god of the cosmos.

Satan promotes the cosmic system, and it conforms to his ideals, aims, methods, and character, and stands perpetually in opposition to God. Satan’s world system seduces men away from God and away from the person of Christ. It is anti-God,
anti-Christ, anti-Bible, and very anti-humanity, though it often appears humanitarian, as part of Satan’s angel of light masquerade. Therefore, any believer who remotely conforms to the standards of the cosmic system will fail at having a productive prayer life.

1 John 2:15 Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. 17 The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever. (NASB95)

We also hinder our prayers when we quit on God or are impatient with God (Ps. 27:14; Ps. 37:7; Luke 18:1). Who are we to demand a timely answer from God? He will answer us in His own perfect timing, not ours, so we must not be anxious for a response. Perhaps the reason we are not receiving an answer to our prayers is a result of our eagerness. Ultimately, failure to trust in God’s all powerful, all knowing character and nature will hinder our prayers (cf. Ps. 27:14; 37:7).

The Father will grant us our requests when we persevere in our prayers, since perseverance in prayer is a manifestation of our faith and absolute trust and confidence in the Father to grant our requests. Persistence, as we have already noted, is critical. The parable in Luke 18:1-8 illustrates this principle perfectly.

A proud and self-righteous person will always hinder his own prayers. The Scriptures teach that the Father will not hear the prayers of the proud, but will answer the humble (Luke 18:9-14; Job 35:12-13).

The most obvious reason why we do not receive certain things we desire in life is that we fail to pray or ask the Father for these things (Jam 4:2). If we do not ask, we may not receive.

A less obvious hindrance, but just as detrimental to our prayers, is our motivation. Often, the Father does not answer our requests because we ask with false motives (Jam 4:3). In everything we do, we must always be conscious of our motives.

We will receive our prayer requests if we pray according to the Father’s will. However, if we do not pray according to His will, we will not receive our requests from the Father (1 John 5:14-15). Not praying according to the will of God is a most serious hindrance.

Disobedience will always hinder our prayers (1 Jo 3:21-24). As we noted, if we obey God’s Word, then we will approach Him with requests according to His will. Obedience to the Word of God, therefore, prevents us from asking for answers against the will of God.
If we are pretentious in our prayers, we risk hindering our prayers (Matt. 6:5-6). This goes back to our motivation. If our motivation is to be acknowledged by men, then we pray with the wrong motives, and our prayers will not be heard.

Failure to pray properly, according to the protocol God designed for prayer, will most certainly hinder our prayers. As noted, we are required to pray to the Father in the name of the Lord Jesus in the power of the Spirit (Matt. 6:7-9; Jude 20; John 14:13-14). Praying in any other order is a hindrance to our prayer life.

Another subtler hindrance that believers must quickly learn to avoid is lack of forgiveness (1 Pet. 3:7; Mark 11:25-26; Matt. 6:14-15; Col. 3:12-13). Not only will failure to forgive result in broken relationships with people, but it will result in a loss of fellowship with God.

**Ephesians 4:32** Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you. (NASB95)

The Scriptures teach that bitterness towards our spouse will hinder our prayers. This principle directly relates to the proud and self-righteous. Anyone who refuses to forgive another evidently considers himself perfect. Thus, his prayers will be hindered, without a doubt (1 Peter 3:7).

Finally, lack of compassion is another reason why prayers are so often hindered (Pro 21:13). A failure to demonstrate compassion towards others will ultimately result in God not showing compassion towards you.

**Conclusion**

Our study has revealed that repentance, whether for the non-believer or a believer has nothing to do with emoting. Rather, it is a change of attitude or change of mind. For the non-believer, they must change their attitude toward Jesus Christ and accept Him as Savior by trusting in Him as Savior. This is repentance for the non-believer. On other hand, repentance for the believer involves the confession of sins to the Father to be restored to fellowship with Him. Maintaining this fellowship demands obedience to God’s Word. This is repentance for the believer. Repentance for both groups is based upon the person and work of Jesus Christ on the cross. His substitutionary spiritual and physical deaths on the cross are the basis for repentance. In other words, repentance would not be possible if not for the Lord Jesus Christ’s sacrifice on the cross.

There are eternal consequences for the non-believer who refuses to repent by refusing to trust in Jesus Christ as their Savior, namely they will suffer eternal condemnation in the eternal lake of fire (cf. Rev. 20:11-15). This is conscience torment in the lake of fire forever.

There are also consequences for the believer who refuses to repent by refusing to confess their sins to the Father to be restored to fellowship with Him and
obeying His Word to maintain that fellowship, namely, loss of rewards at the Bema Seat Evaluation of the church which immediately follows the rapture or resurrection of the church. They will not be influenced by the Spirit, and they will not experience their salvation, sanctification and eternal life. However, they do not lose their eternal salvation because they were not saved on their own merits in the first place but rather on the merits of Jesus Christ and His substitutionary spiritual and physical deaths on the cross (cf. Eph. 2:8-9; cf. 1 Cor. 3:11-15; 2 Tim. 2:11-13).